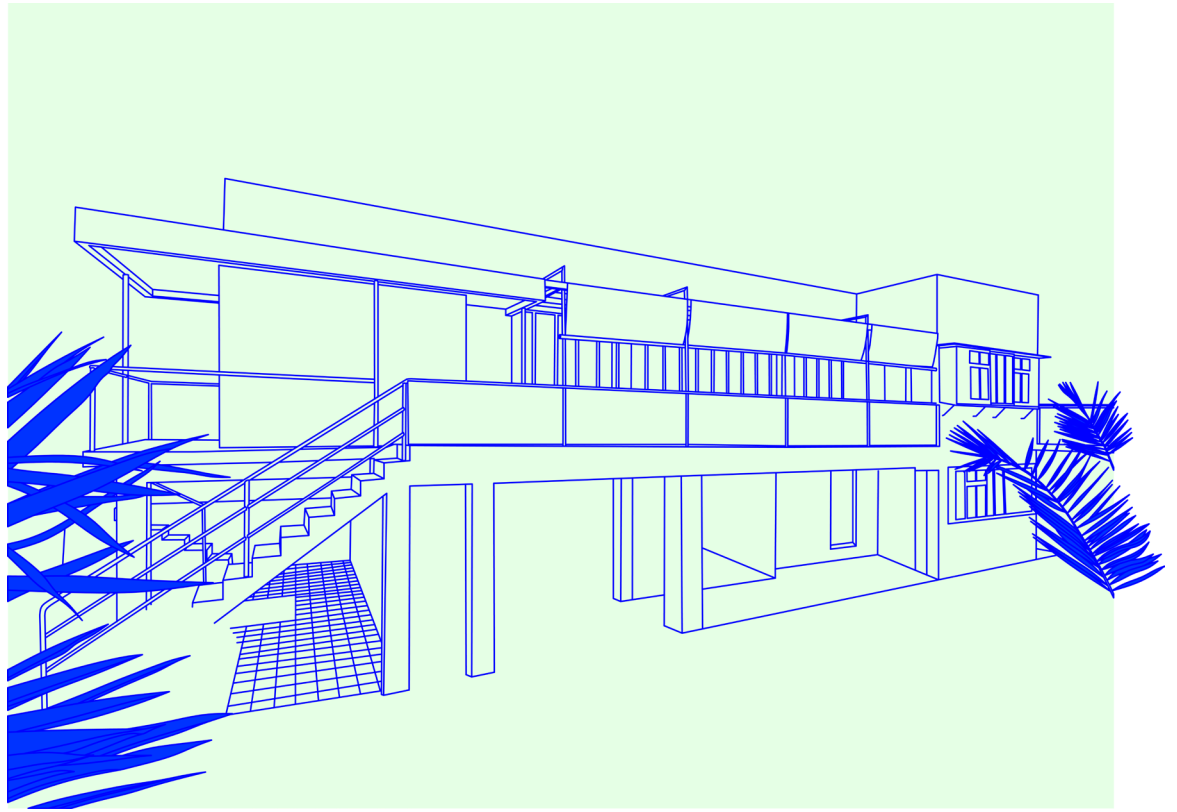


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## REMEMBERING EILEEN GRAY

- Layers of (In)visibility



### CRITICAL SPATIAL PERSPECTIVES

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In the beginning of the twentieth century Eileen Gray was one of the most influential designers and architects in Paris. Her decadent aesthetics with rich, luxurious, sensual materials positioned her as a new promising young designer. However, with a growing public interest in Eileen Gray also the rumours began to circulate. Paris was at this time a vibrant cultural city and a haven for women with queer desires. Eileen belonged to this group of creative women that had come to Paris to live their life free from prejudice. But the freedom had a price.

After the World War II Eileen Gray's contributions to architecture and design were largely forgotten. Her most famous work, villa E.1027, had instead been credited to the male architect Jean Badovici, and many of her furniture designs, rugs and lacquer screens had been destroyed or gone missing after the war. Eileen Gray's refusal to sign her work and the limited amount of text she had written about it, turned her celebrated career into scattered fragments. A few years before she died, she destroyed most of the photographs and letters that reflected her personal life.

In regard to such a background this thesis aims to contribute to the visibility of Eileen Gray by analysing the layers of invisibility that have marked her

remembrance. The first chapter introduces the work and life of Eileen Gray, and the second chapter gives a background on how women architects, historically have been made invisible. The third chapter discusses the rediscovery of Eileen Gray, performed through heterosexual male gazes, resulting in moments of silencing and oppression. The fourth chapter identifies three mechanisms behind the invisibility of Eileen Gray: Archival Research, Presence and Preservation and, Heteronormative Heritage, all related to the queerness in her life, and the fifth chapter analyses what role the World Heritage List could play for the visibility of Eileen Gray, and the visibility of queer heritage.

In recent years, feminist scholars as Katarina Bonnevier and Jasmine Rault have shed new light on what the queerness meant for the development of Eileen's career. Before that, the traces of queer desires and lesbian intimacy in Eileen's work, had been largely overlooked. Bonnevier and Rault's analyses and interpretations of Eileen's work, performed through non-heterosexual gazes, have been inspirational and influential to this project.

Keywords : Eileen Gray, Archive, Queer Heritage, Preservation, World Heritage List