



# Breuer in Bristol

Exhibition at the Architecture Centre  
21 October to 24 December 2010

**Press Release 11 October 2010**



© Gane's Pavilion, Bristol, England, ca. 1936 / Courtesy of the Marcel Breuer papers, 1920-1986, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian

A brief three year period in the mid thirties put Bristol on the Modernist map. This Architecture Centre exhibition, presented in association with the Gane Trust, reveals the intriguing collaboration between Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer, one of the pioneers of modern design, and Crofton Gane, Bristol furniture manufacturer.

One of the most remarkable outcomes of this partnership was an important example of early Modernist architecture, The Gane Pavilion 1936 (pictured above). Designed by Breuer, it reflected the partnership's desire to promote Modernism, and provided a modern showcase for furniture made by PE Gane Ltd to Breuer's designs.

The exhibition will reveal the reasons behind Bristol's unusual flirtation with Modernism at a time when the Arts and Crafts movement was still dominant in many areas of design; it will show how the two individuals came to work together, and how their separate life experiences forged parallel ideologies.

The Architecture Centre has worked closely with Max Gane, a descendant of Crofton Gane and James Beighton, Curator at mima in Middlesbrough, throughout the development and realisation of the exhibition. The legacy of this brief period has been largely overlooked in recent years and we aim to raise awareness of this key moment in the development of Modernism in England.

In the gallery the story of this collaboration will be illustrated through rare archive images, artefacts, Breuer-designed and Gane-manufactured furniture, and a specially made model of the Gane Pavilion.

This exhibition is kindly supported by [The Gane Trust](#).

## Events accompanying the exhibition

### Modernism and Breuer before Bristol

Lecture at Spike Island: 2 November, 18.30

£6/£4.50 Booking through the Architecture Centre: 0117 9221540

Marcel Breuer was one of the most gifted of Bauhaus students, becoming master of the carpentry workshop in 1925. This talk by Christopher Wilk, Keeper of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion at the V&A, London, looks at the wider context of Modernism in continental Europe during the 1920s and 1930s and at Breuer's work as a prolific furniture and interior designer before his arrival in Bristol.

### Breuer and Gane, from Bauhaus to Bristol

Lecture at Arnolfini: 25 November 2010, 18.30

£6/£4.50, booking through Arnolfini: 0117 917 2300

Leading expert on Breuer and Modernism Allen Cunningham will talk about the Gane Pavilion, which became a seminal Modernist work. Built for the 1936 Royal Show at Ashton Court, Cunningham will examine the impact this small temporary building had on Breuer's subsequent career in America.

Max Gane, descendent of Crofton Gane, will speak about the relationship between Breuer and Crofton Gane, and the tangible outcomes of their collaboration.

This lecture is kindly supported by the Harmsen Group, specialists in workplace design, fit-out and furniture.

### The Big Draw

Arnolfini Light Studio: Saturday 30 October, 12-4pm, Free

The Architecture Centre and Arnolfini are collaborating to host this exciting event for the Big Draw. Join us to creatively explore the theme of pavilions and temporary structures. There will be opportunities for drawing and modelling to create a mini festival of pavilions. All ages welcome, children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

To find out about the Big Draw go to: [www.thebigdraw.org.uk](http://www.thebigdraw.org.uk)



The Campaign for Drawing  
[www.thebigdraw.org](http://www.thebigdraw.org)

## **Eileen Gray: Designer and Architect**

Film at Arnolfini: Thursday 9 December 2010, 18.30  
£6/£4.50, booking through Arnolfini: 0117 917 2300

This film looks at the life and work of designer and architect Eileen Gray (1878-1976). Over 30 years after her death, her work is still considered to be the very essence of the Modern. This film chronicles Gray's artistic formation, travels, influences and her relations with fellow artists and architects of the Modernist movement.

*Ends*

### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Marcel Lajkó Breuer** was born in 1902 in the small town of Pécs, Hungary and although little is known of his childhood, it is thought art seems to have played an important role in his parents' life. Studying at the Bauhaus in the 1920s, Breuer designed modernist furniture made from tubular steel and quickly became known as one of the most prolific and inventive designers at the Bauhaus. In the 1930s Breuer began to pursue his career as an architect and followed Gropius to England in 1935. Over the next three years he worked closely with Crofton Gane and the outcomes of this partnership are presented in the exhibition.

**Crofton Gane** became Director of the Bristol based furniture manufacturing company PE Gane Ltd in 1909. The family run business dates back to 1824 and had gone from strength to strength. At the time Crofton Gane took over there were also outlets of PE Gane Ltd in Cardiff and Newport. Influenced by his travels with the DIA, Crofton was eager to steer the company in a new direction, away from the traditional arts and crafts and towards a new modern style. Having admired Breuer's Harnischmacher House I (1932), when Gane heard of Breuer's arrival in England he soon approached him with the offer of appointing him artistic consultant at PE Gane Ltd and they soon began work on the Gane House refurbishment.

**Max Gane**, a descendant of Crofton Gane, received the RIBA Historical Research Trust Award in 2008 to research the impact of the working relationship between Marcel Breuer and Crofton Gane in the 1930s. This research has informed the exhibition at the Architecture Centre and will result in a report on the subject.

**James Beighton** is Curator of Craft at mima, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, with responsibility for the temporary exhibition programme, with the Fine Art Curator, and for caring for the collections of British Ceramics Art and Contemporary International Jewellery. Since the opening of mima in 2007 he has curated a number of exhibitions focusing on applied art and design, including a major Bauhaus retrospective covering the output of the school and the ambivalent attitudes towards craft over the lifetime of the school.

#### **The Gane Trust**

The Gane Trust is a small charitable trust that was set up in 1954 in memory of Crofton Gane. The trust supports and celebrates art, design, craftsmanship or welfare and social welfare and is kindly supporting the Breuer in Bristol exhibition.

**Christopher Wilk** is Keeper of Furniture, Textile and Fashion at the V&A. He started work at V&A in 1988 having worked previously as a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Breuer Designed Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mr Wilk has lectured widely on modern furniture and published several books including *Marcel Breuer: Furniture & Interiors* (MoMA, 1981). He has curated exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art including one about the work of Marcel Breuer.

**Allen Cunningham** is an architect who was in practice with Marcel Breuer in New York and Paris, Sir Leslie Martin in Cambridge, Llewelyn-Davies and Weeks in London, UK and Canberra, Australia. He was Head of Architecture at PCL (now the University of Westminster) and Visiting Professor at the University of Westminster from 1995 until 2000. He is the founder and co-editor of The Journal of Architecture, has had numerous articles published in professional journals, and was the editor of Modern Movement Heritage, 1998.

### **The Architecture Centre**

1. High resolution images are available on request from Grace Denton or Jodie Marks [grace.denton@architecturecentre.co.uk](mailto:grace.denton@architecturecentre.co.uk) or [jodie.marks@architecturecentre.co.uk](mailto:jodie.marks@architecturecentre.co.uk)

2. The Architecture Centre aims to increase people's awareness and enjoyment of architecture and the built environment, and to demonstrate the value of good design through its exhibitions, events, education and outreach programmes. The Centre is situated on the waterfront in Bristol with two exhibition spaces, a meeting room and shop.

**3. Centre opening hours:**

Tuesday to Friday, 11 am - 5pm  
Saturday and Sunday, 12 noon - 5pm  
Closed all day Monday (office open)

**4. Centre address:**

**The Architecture Centre**  
Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA  
0117 922 1540  
[www.architecturecentre.co.uk](http://www.architecturecentre.co.uk)

5. The Architecture Centre is funded by Arts Council England, CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), and creating excellence, and is a founding member of the Architecture Centre Network.