

**Eames.
Archive Stories.**

This winter, Vitra presents Eames. Archive Stories.

Charles and Ray Eames may well be the most significant designers of the 20th century. Since the inception of the Vitra Design Museum, their work has been a cornerstone of its collection. We delved into the museum's archive to rediscover the stories behind their creations and to shine a new light on well-known pieces, today revered as design classics.



Vitra Design Museum, Schauderpot



Vitra Design Museum Collection

The Eames Archives.

After the death of Ray Eames in 1988, the Eames Office at 901 Washington Boulevard in Venice, California, was disbanded. Vitra acquired most of the three-dimensional estate of Charles and Ray Eames, which encompasses a considerable portion of the surviving experimental models and prototypes from their office.

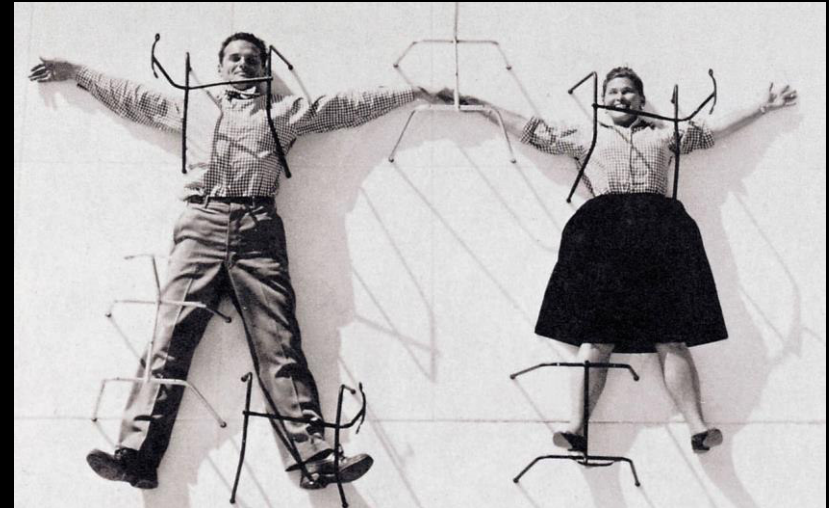
The close bond and collaboration between the Eames Office and Vitra continues today in the third generation of the two families. After initially working with Lucia Eames, Vitra now consults with Eames Demetrios, the grandson of Charles and Ray, on the production of authentic Eames designs and the communication of their oeuvre. And the presence of Charles and Ray Eames is felt at Vitra not only in connection with their furniture. The Eames design philosophy continues to profoundly shape the company's values, orientation and goals, leading to the frequently invoked question by Rolf Fehlbaum: What would Charles say?



Eames Collection,
Vitra Design Museum, Schauddepot

The most significant designers of the 20th century.

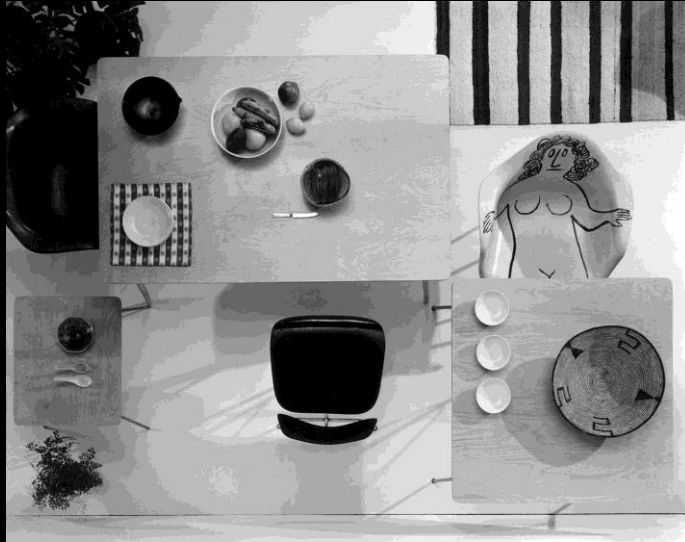
Charles and Ray Eames are two of the most influential designers of the twentieth century. Over the course of four decades, the Californian husband-and-wife team created groundbreaking films, architecture, exhibitions and toys – in addition to their prolific output of furniture. Underlying all this work was their compelling philosophy of design, which was marked by a deep commitment to problem solving, a profound scepticism of stylistic excess, and the seminal notion that the designer's role was that of a good host, anticipating the needs of the guest. Just as important, their work was infused with a joyous spirit, summed up by their expression: 'Take your pleasure seriously.'



Charles and Ray Eames 'pinned' by chair bases after a photo session for the Moulded Plywood Chair Group outside the Eames Office in Venice, California, 1946.

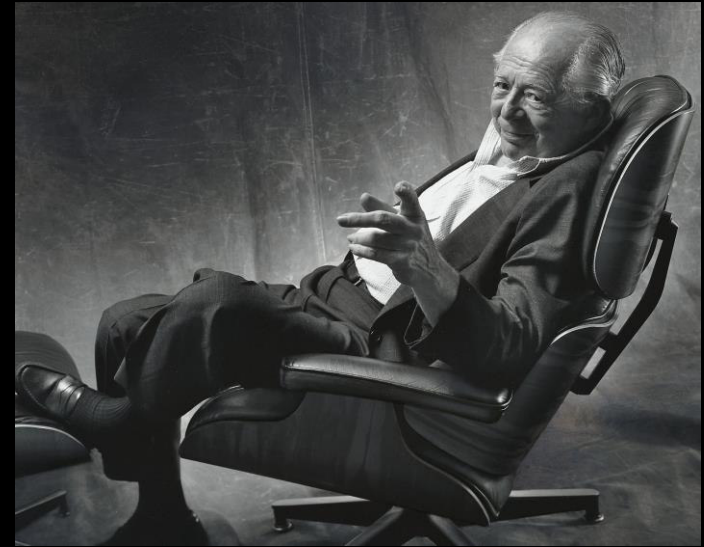
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They challenged norms and broke rules. And in the process, they created products that remain relevant up to the present day.



They created
the chair of a century,

reinvented the old
English club chair



and brought delight to children
with elephants and more.

vitra.

'A classic is not a classic from the very beginning. It starts by breaking the mould. It doesn't become a classic by conforming to established norms; instead, it questions these established norms. A classic becomes a classic because it wins the battle: first against the products that already exist and then against all of the new products that it must beat out. A classic comes from a different era and yet is contemporary and current. It is iconic without trying to be iconic. It has the qualities of a piece of art without trying to be art. It is forever fresh. When it was presented for the first time, it was new – and it will stay new until another product breaks the mould and challenges it and questions the established norms. It is important to Vitra to produce these outstanding products from the past until they are no longer relevant. At the same time, we develop products together with the most talented people of our age – in the hope that one of them will one day become a classic.'

–

Rolf Fehlbaum
Vitra Chairman Emeritus

We have delved into the Vitra Eames Archive not only to rediscover iconic pieces from the collection, but also to understand how Charles and Ray Eames originally conceived each one of them. The result is a contemporary take on classics, playing with materials, colours, fabrics, bases and functions in the spirit of Charles and Ray Eames. This curated collection includes familiar favourites, special editions and items that have been returned to their original purpose.

Eames Segmented Tables Dining • Eames Fiberglass Side Chair •
Eames Plastic Armchair LAR • Organic Chair Sheepskin • and bestsellers such as the
Eames Plastic Chair and the Eames Lounge Chair

Social gatherings at the home of Charles and Ray Eames were legendary.

This was especially true when a meal was served. In addition to planning the meal, Ray immensely enjoyed preparing the table – a round Eames Segmented Table – with the aim of bringing pleasure to each individual guest. The arrangement of tablecloths, tableware, cutlery, vases and decorative objects resembled a freshly painted picture, whose shapes and colours complemented the food that was served, creating what resembled a small piece of art.

**‘Every time I lay a table,
I am designing something.’**

—
Ray Eames



Eames Segmented Tables Dining, 1964.

The role of a table extends far beyond aesthetic considerations, as it is the communal and convivial heart of the home – a place where people can connect. The emphasis on 'connection', as a universal element in both design and everyday life, is a recurring theme in the Eameses' work.



**'The details are not the details.
They make the product.'**

—
Charles Eames

These chairs have shaped design history.

The Fiberglass and Plastic Chairs by Charles and Ray Eames are regarded as some of the most important designs in the history of furniture and number among the duo's most famous pieces. With the debut of these chairs, Charles and Ray Eames introduced a new furniture typology that has since become widespread: the multifunctional chair whose shell can be joined with a variety of different bases.



The Eames House.

The Eameses' home was more than just a home; it was a kind of laboratory, where prototypes from the Eames Office were brought in and out for temporary testing. Many of their designs stayed with them forever, one of which was their treasured Lounge Chair and Ottoman made of rosewood and upholstered with black glove leather.

**'The role of a designer is
that of a very good thoughtful host
anticipating the needs of his guests.'**

—
Charles Eames



Eames Plastic Armchair LAR, 1950.

In vintage photographs of Charles and Ray's legendary home, the Eames House in Pacific Palisades, California, the LAR can be frequently spotted in many different settings – both indoors and out.



Organic Chair, 1940.

Developed as a joint project by Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen, the Organic Chair is one of the seminal creations of mid-century modern design. One of the few surviving vintage pieces is held by the Vitra Design Museum. Close examination of this chair not only revealed the long-neglected importance of its role in design history, but also drew attention to its functional quality and timeless aesthetic. This recognition sparked the idea of a re-edition of the chair, launched by Vitra in 2004.



Eames Lounge Chair, 1956.

For their design of the Lounge Chair, Charles and Ray Eames found inspiration in the appearance of a well-used baseball mitt. The elegant and timeless combination of wood and leather allows this chair to remain eternally contemporary and to be passed on from one generation to the next.

