

*The World of Charles and Ray Eames*

Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK

21 October 2015 – 14 February 2016

Media View, Tuesday 20 October 2015, 10am – 1pm

*The World of Charles and Ray Eames is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Media Partner: Elle Decoration. Furniture Partner: Vitra. Exhibition supported by: Knaf*[www.barbican.org.uk/EamesNews](http://www.barbican.org.uk/EamesNews)

#worldofeames

**Charles and Ray Eames** are among the most important designers of the 20th century. Their enduring influence is widely acknowledged and continues to be celebrated worldwide.

*The World of Charles and Ray Eames* is a major new exhibition surveying the careers of Charles (1907-1978) and Ray (1912-1988) Eames and the extraordinary work of the Eames Office: a 'laboratory', active for over four decades, where the Eameses and their collaborators and staff produced an array of pioneering and influential work – from architecture, furniture, graphic and product design, to painting, drawing, film, sculpture, photography, multi-media installation and exhibitions, as well as new models for education. *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* opens at Barbican Art Gallery on 21 October 2015.

**Jane Alison, Head of Visual Arts, Barbican**, said: *Charles and Ray Eames' creativity, innovation and talent knew no bounds. I am thrilled Barbican Art Gallery is staging the first major UK exhibition in over 15 years about the life and work of this formidable couple. We are delighted to be working with the Eames Office and Eames Foundation whose generosity, dedication and support has been invaluable. It promises to be an unmissable show for all Eames fans and a joyful discovery for everyone.*

The work of the Eames Office is characterised for most people by designs for furniture and products, yet their avid interest in addressing the needs of any given problem led them to design and communicate using a wide variety of tools and media. The story of the Eames Office is that of the trajectory of visual and material culture in the post-war period of the last century. Charles and Ray Eames moved fluidly between the mass-production of objects for everyday use and the transmission of ideas through exhibition, film or installation, in anticipation of the global 'information age'. They were driven by philosophical ideals that favoured knowledge, discovery and discipline; embraced the potential of technology and science for the common good; and saw no separation between life and work.

**Eames Demetrios, director of the Eames Office**, said: *For Charles and Ray, design was not simply a professional skill, it was a life skill—more than that, it was an essential attribute of life itself. And not pretentiously, on the contrary, they never stopped: challenging themselves to make their most iconic designs better and better—all the while having fun. The unprecedented array of objects and stories at the Barbican is not simply for admiration, but inspiration to folks in myriad fields. That's why the Barbican's show is so important.*

Bringing together over 380 works, the exhibition presents the world of Charles and Ray Eames through objects and projects produced during their lifetime, offering an opportunity to re-examine their work and legacy, and the legacy of post-war modernism. It also features a wealth of documentation and contextual material from the professional archive of the Eames Office as well as artefacts from their personal collections. Charles and Ray Eames collaborated and associated with the leading artistic figures of the 20th century and their immediate circle included Buckminster Fuller, Alexander Girard, Sister Corita Kent, George Nelson, Isamu Noguchi, Eero Saarinen, Saul Steinberg and Billy Wilder. Alongside a rich array of Eames designs, the exhibition includes material which highlights the importance of these relationships to the Eameses' life, philosophy and working processes.

Structured thematically, the exhibition presents a complex portrait of these internationally celebrated designers in the context of the inner world of their Office and network, alongside the political, cultural and social conditions which enabled and influenced their work.

The Eameses' pioneering 'multi-media architecture' and preoccupation with different modes of visual communication, particularly film and photography as tools for modelling ideas, is foregrounded as the most vital and relevant legacy of their oeuvre. These ground-breaking installation projects were developed for both corporate and government clients and aimed to popularise burgeoning computer technologies or present visions of America at home and abroad in the context of the Cold War. An in-depth look at the Eameses' pedagogical work and self-initiated projects reveals an enduring interest in learning and creativity and their fascination with diverse cultures, modes of play and rituals. The exhibition also addresses Charles and Ray Eames' impact on 20th century concepts of modern living: their editorial 'eye' and mastery of form and material yielded some of the most iconic designs of all time, not least their own home – a construction continually celebrated since its completion in 1949.

*The World of Charles and Ray Eames* is produced in collaboration with the Eames Office and many exhibits, never before displayed in the UK, are on loan from the Eames Family and Eames Office, as well as a range of public and private collections worldwide. Key highlights include an experimental study for the moulded plywood nose cone of a military aircraft from The Museum of Modern Art, New York; an extraordinary full scale model of La Chaise (1948-1950), the first moulded plastic chair created by the Eameses for MoMA's International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design, also on loan from MoMA; a range of prototype furniture from the Vitra Design Museum, Basel; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; two 3-screen slideshows and a wide selection of the Eameses' innovative films from both the Eames Office and the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; a newly commissioned 1:50 scale model of Case Study Houses #8 and #9, produced by Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners; a large scale 'model' installation of *Think*, the multi-screen film presentation shown in the Ovoid Theatre of the IBM Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964-1965 recently restored by the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; and two of the original production panels used to make the influential film *Powers of Ten*, also from the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## ENDS

### Notes to Editors

#### Press Information

For further information, images or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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#### Press images available online from the Barbican Newsroom

A link to the image sheets can be found in the 'Downloads' box on the top right-hand side of the page from [www.barbican.org.uk/EamesNews](http://www.barbican.org.uk/EamesNews)

#### Public Information

#worldofeames @barbicancentre

Barbican Art Gallery, London, 0845 120 7550, [www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery](http://www.barbican.org.uk/artgallery)

Opening hours:

Saturday to Wednesday, 10am – 6pm

Thursday & Fridays, 10am – 9pm

Bank Holiday Mondays: 12noon – 6pm

Bank Holiday Fridays: 12noon – 9pm

#### Tickets

**Standard:** £14.50 (on and offline) / **Concessions (OAPs and unemployed):** £12 (on and offline)

**Students:** £10 (on and offline) / **14-17:** £8 (on and offline)

**Young Barbican:** £5 (on and offline) / **Under 14s:** FREE (just offline)  
**Barbican Members & Members Plus:** FREE / **Yellow Members:** £10.15 (30% off)  
**Art Fund Members:** £10 (on and offline) / **Access members:** £8 (offline only)  
**School groups of 10 or more:** £8 (offline only)

## Exhibition

*The World of Charles and Ray Eames* is organised by Barbican Art Gallery and produced in collaboration with the Eames Office. The exhibition is curated by Catherine Ince and designed by 6a architects, working in collaboration with graphic designer John Morgan. *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* is made possible through support from the Terra Foundation for American Art. The Media Partner is Elle Decoration, the Furniture Partner is Vitra and the exhibition is supported by Knauf.

After the Barbican the exhibition will be on show at the Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden, from 17 April to 4 September 2016 and at the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT), Lisbon, Portugal, from 4 October 2016 to 8 January 2017.

## Events

### Growing up with the Eameses

22 October, 7.30pm  
Frobisher Auditorium 2  
£5 – £9

**Eames Demetrios**, the grandson of **Charles** and **Ray Eames**, and exhibition curator **Catherine Ince** discuss life with Charles and Ray, the legacy of the Eames Office, and the work of the Eames Foundation.

### Exhibition tour with Catherine Ince

29 October, 7pm  
Art Gallery  
£14.50 (included same-day entry to the exhibition)  
Curator **Catherine Ince** gives a tour of *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* talking about the pioneering designers and their extraordinary work at the Eames Office.

### Exhibition tour with Luke Naessens

19 November, 7pm  
Art Gallery  
£14.50 Standard (includes same day entry to the exhibition)  
Exhibitions Assistant **Luke Naessens** gives a tour of *The World of Charles and Ray Eames*, discussing the fascinating and influential work of the Eames Office.

### Serious Play – Family Event Day

28 November 2015, 11am-5pm  
**Serious play** is a free one day event celebrating the wonderful world of making and play for visitors of all ages. A full day of workshops, performances, demonstrations and participatory activities led by a range of artists including Peter Marigold, Codasign, Tony Hayward, New Movement Collective, Shane Waltener, Hunt & Darton, Matheson Marcault, Rachel Long and Antosh Wojcik.  
For further information contact [creative.learning@barbican.org.uk](mailto:creative.learning@barbican.org.uk)

### Exhibition tour with Lotte Johnson

3 December, 7pm  
Art Gallery  
£14.50 (included same-day entry to the exhibition)  
Assistant Curator **Lotte Johnson** gives a tour of *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* exploring the work of Charles and Ray Eames as well as the work of the Eames Office.

## Audio Described Exhibition Tour

8 December, 6.30pm

Art Gallery

Please contact Box Office for booking information and to notify of any special requests.

Box Office: 020 7638 8891 (10am-8pm Mon-Sat, 11am-8pm Sun). [tickets@barbican.org.uk](mailto:tickets@barbican.org.uk)

## Architecture on Film: The Films of Charles and Ray Eames +ScreenTalk

13 January, 7pm

Cinema 1

£11.50

The design duo's playful and poetic experiments in the moving image, celebrated through an evening of rare and celebrated works from the archives followed by discussion with Eric Schuldenfrei (ESKYIU), Amy Gallick (Library of Congress) and Eames Demetrios (Eames Office).

In Association with the Architecture Foundation.

## Exhibition tour with 6a architects

21 January, 7pm

Art Gallery

£14.50 Standard (includes same day entry to the exhibition)

Exhibition designers **6a architects** give a tour of the gallery and discuss how the pioneering work of Charles and Ray Eames and the Eames Office informed the design of the exhibition.

## Charles and Ray Eames: The Hollywood Connection from Billy Wilder to Charlie Chaplin

11 February, 7.30pm

Frobisher Auditorium 2

£5 – £9

Eames scholar **Pat Kirkham** explores the **Eameses'** fascinating and varied relationships with the Hollywood film industry, ranging from design commissions and advisory positions on celebrated films such as *Love in the Afternoon* (1957) and *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957) to their support of those affected by the political 'blacklisting' of Hollywood professionals during the McCarthy era. The Eameses' Hollywood connections were abundant, including writer and director **Billy Wilder**, screenwriter **Philip Dunne**, actors **Alexander Knox**, **Doris Nolan**, **Vincent Price**, **Norman Lloyd**, **Kirk Douglas** and **Janet Gaynor**, costume designers **Adrian** and **Dorothy Jeakins**, producers **John Houseman** and **Julian Blaustein**, and composer **Elmer Bernstein**.

## Catalogue

*The World of Charles and Ray Eames* is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, designed by John Morgan and co-published by Thames & Hudson, with essays by Catherine Ince, Curator at Barbican Art Gallery; Lotte Johnson, Assistant Curator at Barbican Art Gallery; Eames Demetrios, Director of the Eames Office; Prof. Pat Kirkham, Professor at Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design and Culture, NY, and Visiting Professor at Kingston University, UK; Dr. Steve Parnell, Architect, architecture critic and lecturer, Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Nottingham University; Alison Moloney, Curator and Research Fellow, International Exhibitions Programme, London College of Fashion; Sam Jacob, Architect and Professor of Architecture at UIC, Chicago, Director of Night School at the Architectural Association, London, and Visiting Professor at Yale School of Architecture; Amy Gallick, Preservation Specialist, Moving Image Section, Library of Congress, Washington DC; Kristen Gallerneaux, Curator of Communication & Information Technology, The Henry Ford Museum, Michigan; Barbara Fahs Charles, former staff member at the Eames Office and founder of Staples & Charles Ltd.; Anthony Acciavatti, Principal of architectural firm Somatic-Collaborative, NY, and PhD candidate in the History of Science, Department of History at Princeton University; and Eric Schuldenfrei, co-founder of ESKYIU and Associate Professor and the Associate Dean for Special Projects and Communications in the University of Hong Kong Faculty of Architecture. The catalogue also includes selected re-printed texts and articles from contemporaneous sources.

**Price: £45. ISBN: 9780500518304**

## Barbican Art Gallery Shop

The shop features a broad range of Eames inspired books and gifts in addition to exclusive vintage lines from the Office archive. Also featured are classic furniture pieces plus jewellery and new products by contemporary designers who have taken inspiration from the couple's work. Full press release available from [here](#) and online shop: [barbican.org.uk/shop](http://barbican.org.uk/shop)

## Barbican Newsroom

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Media Relations team's contact details are listed on our website at [www.barbican.org.uk/news](http://www.barbican.org.uk/news)

## About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.5 million people pass through the Barbican's doors annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, the Pit, Cinemas One, Two and Three, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre. The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), and Associate Producer [Serious](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue Entertainment](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). International Associates are [Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam](#), [New York Philharmonic](#), [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#), [Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig](#) and [Jazz at Lincoln Center](#).

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