

**Vitra Design Museum**

Charles-Eames-Straße 2  
Weil am Rhein/Basel  
[www.design-museum.de](http://www.design-museum.de)

PRESS CONFERENCE  
28 September 2017, 2 pm

OPENING  
29 September 2017, 6 pm  
Opening Talk with Eames Demetrios

PRESS DOWNLOADS  
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**An Eames Celebration**

**30.09.2017 – 25.02.2018**

**Vitra Design Museum**

**Charles and Ray Eames are counted among the most important designers of the 20th century. With their furniture, films, books, exhibitions and media installations, they have influenced generations of designers and continue to shape our everyday culture. No other name in design so clearly represents technical perfection and a timeless aesthetic, and none is more closely associated with the exuberant start-up culture on the American west coast during the post-war era, in which the Eameses played a prominent role. From 30 September 2017 to 25 February 2018, the Vitra Design Museum will present »An Eames Celebration« – four parallel exhibitions that offer an unprecedented view of the work created by the legendary designer couple.**

The focal point of the exhibition sequence on the Vitra Campus is the major retrospective »Charles & Ray Eames. The Power of Design«, which will be shown in the main building of the Vitra Design Museum. In the Fire Station, a selection from the Eameses' cinematic oeuvre of more than 100 films will be presented under the title »Ideas and Information. The Eames Films«. In the Vitra Design Museum Gallery, the exhibition »Play Parade. An Eames Exhibition for Kids« invites visitors to discover and try out the many toys created by the husband-and-wife team. Finally, the Vitra Schaudepot features the exhibition »Kazam! The Furniture Experiments of Charles & Ray Eames«. Just in time for the 110th birthday of Charles Eames, the three-dimensional collection of the Eames Office will also be introduced in its full scope. These objects have been in the holdings of the Vitra Design Museum since 1988 and include the complete inventory of Eames prototypes and experimental models.

## **Charles & Ray Eames. The Power of Design**

Vitra Design Museum, 30.09.2017 – 25.02.2018

The exhibition in the main building of the Vitra Design Museum offers a comprehensive overview of the complete oeuvre and shared life of this husband-and-wife team. Featuring a large selection of original works – including films, photographs, furniture, drawings, sculptures, paintings, textiles, graphic design, models and stage props – the retrospective illustrates the congenial synergy between the personalities of Charles and Ray Eames, which formed the foundation of a lifetime of work by what was arguably the most successful design duo in history.

The first section of the exhibition documents the beginnings of the collaboration between Charles and Ray Eames. Trained as an architect, Charles Eames possessed exceptional technical skills, while Ray Eames née Kaiser had developed an infallible sense of colour, composition and form during her studies in painting. The two first met in 1940 at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan, married one year later and opened the Eames Office at 901 Washington Boulevard in Venice, California, in 1947. At this location, which remained in operation until 1988, the Eameses and their staff developed and produced hundreds of commissioned works as well as their own, often experimental projects – from early products for the US military to films, exhibitions and interiors. Moving effortlessly between disciplines, Charles and Ray Eames worked together with many leading figures of their time, such as Saul Steinberg, Alexander Girard, Billy Wilder, George Nelson, Richard Buckminster Fuller, Eero Saarinen and Isamu Noguchi.

Charles and Ray Eames gained an international reputation with their furniture designs, which are displayed in the second area of the exhibition. They initially focused their efforts on plywood, exploring the limits of its capacity to be moulded into complex shapes. In the late 1940s, they began experimenting with the increasingly popular material of plastic, creating the legendary fibreglass chairs that soon became a common fixture in many households and public spaces. Over the following years, pieces that are now regarded as milestones of 20th-century furniture design were produced: for example, the Eames Lounge Chair, the Aluminium Group and the series of Wire Chairs and bases. The Eameses paid meticulous attention to every detail of their designs from start to finish, from the development process – which was pursued in close collaboration with the Herman Miller company and often spanned a period of several years – to the design of advertising photos, print materials and showrooms.

A further section of the exhibition is devoted to the Eameses' interiors and buildings. The couple was fascinated by folk art, which they avidly collected on their travels and employed in numerous interiors together with their own designs, composing intricate arrangements. A prime example is Charles and Ray Eames's own home, built in 1949 as part of the Case Study House Program, which aimed to demonstrate innovative forms of construction and living. In the Eames House, Charles and Ray orchestrated the intermingling of work and private life: this is where they photographed their own designs, shot films and received guests – giving rise to a mythical aura that was soon associated with the Eameses' work. They also designed houses for John Entenza, the editor of Arts & Architecture magazine and initiator of the Case Study Houses, for Max de Pree, and for the filmmaker Billy Wilder.

The most famous furnishings and buildings designed by Charles and Ray Eames were created in a relatively short period of about 15 years. Beginning in the late 1950s, their attention increasingly shifted to exhibitions, films and multimedia installations, securing them a place as pioneers of the information age. Another section of the current exhibition is devoted to these works. The Eameses created several of the very first multimedia shows combining video and audio, such as »Glimpses of the USA«, a film projected simultaneously onto seven large screens at the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow, or the 22-screen slide show »Think«, which was presented in the IBM Pavilion designed by the Eameses in collaboration with Eero Saarinen for the 1964 World's Fair in New York. In 1971, they conceived and designed »A Computer Perspective«, an exhibition on the history of the computer that presciently anticipated the revolutionary effects of digitalisation.

This retrospective exhibition encompasses more than 500 objects and exhibits, including extremely rare plywood sculptures created by Ray Eames, models of the Eames House and the IBM Pavilion, a reproduction of the room installation created by the Eameses for »An Exhibition For Modern Living«, and media installations such as »Glimpses of the USA« or »G.E.M.« Lenders to the exhibition include the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Eames Office and many other museums and private collections. The presentation in Weil am Rhein is based on an exhibition of the Barbican Centre, London, and was augmented and newly staged for the sole showing in German-speaking countries.

### **Ideas and Information. The Eames Films**

Fire Station, 30.09.2017 – 25.02.2018

The exhibition in the Fire Station by Zaha Hadid presents an extensive selection of films by Charles and Ray Eames, including works from the Library of Congress archives that are being shown for the first time. In addition to multimedia installations and exhibitions on technology and the natural sciences, the Eameses created more than 100 short films, whose production was a major focus of activity for the Eames Office from the 1960s onward. Initially using film as a means of communicating their works and design concepts, they soon discovered the medium as an ideal platform for disseminating knowledge at the interface of design, art, science and technology. The films allowed them to convey complex relationships in an entertaining and precise manner that appealed to a wide audience. With this exhibition, the cinematic oeuvre of the Eameses is given due recognition for the first time as a key part of their overall work. »Ideas and Information« highlights the significance of Charles and Ray Eames as pioneers of innovative media technologies and new forms of knowledge transmission.

### **Play Parade. An Eames Exhibition for Kids**

Vitra Design Museum Gallery, 09.09.2017 – 11.02.2018

»Take your pleasure seriously!« This motto by Charles Eames is the starting point for the exhibition »Play Parade« in the Vitra Design Museum Gallery. It presents toys, short films and objects from the toy collection of Charles and Ray Eames in a spatial installation full of shapes and colours. The original objects are secured in display cases, but all kinds of replicas and re-editions are accessible for visitors to play with and explore.

Such objects include »The Toy«, a construction set consisting of wooden dowels and colourful panels, animal masks, the famous »House of Cards«, and films that show a choreography of countless spinning tops or a happy parade of dolls and toy vehicles. The exhibition demonstrates how seriously Charles and Ray Eames regarded their work and experiments with toys, and how play can be an important source of creativity – as they proved best of all.

### **Kazam! The Furniture Experiments of Charles & Ray Eames**

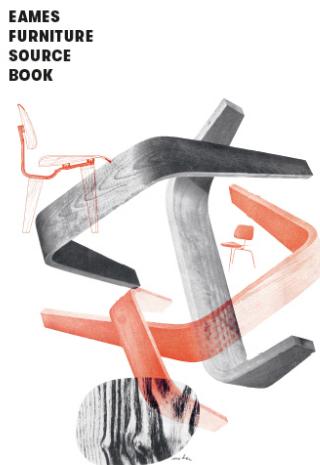
Vitra Schaudepot, 30.09.2017 – 25.02.2018

How were the furniture designs of Charles and Ray Eames actually created? The exhibition in the Schaudepot answers this question by presenting study models, experimental objects and prototypes. »Kazam!« puts a focus on the large collection of production pieces and furniture experiments from the Eames Office that entered the holdings of the Vitra Design Museum in 1988, along with later additions. Today the Vitra Design Museum maintains the world's largest collection of Eames objects, including iconic pieces like the Eames Lounge Chair, the sculptural seating object La Chaise, or vintage production models made of plywood, plastic, aluminium or wire. All of these designs emerged from a long development phase at the Eames Office, involving ongoing experimentation and, in many cases, further refinement after their initial market launch. Based on selected furniture models, the exhibition illustrates the development work of Charles and Ray Eames and shows how they repeatedly achieved new, groundbreaking solutions. One such solution is referred to in the unusual title of the exhibition: during the late 1940s, the couple constructed a machine in the kitchen of their Los Angeles apartment that could be used to mould plywood into three-dimensional shapes – the word »kazam!« was their imitation of the ear-splitting sound made by the machine.

### **Further Presentations & Programme**

In addition to the exhibitions at the four presentation venues of the Vitra Design Museum, further insights into the work of Charles and Ray Eames are available to visitors. These include the authentic reconstruction of Charles Eames's personal office as well as views of storage shelves with holdings from the Eames Office Collection, both located in the Schaudepot. The exhibitions are accompanied by an extensive programme of lectures, discussions and workshops that provide a deeper understanding of the Eameses' ideas and show the extent of their continuing influence on design, architecture, film and everyday culture in today's world. We look forward to welcoming such prominent guests as Eames Demetrios, Ross Lovegrove, Arno Brandlhuber, Margit J. Mayer, Christ & Ganterbein and many others.

## **Exhibition Catalogue**



Eames Furniture Sourcebook  
Editors: Mateo Kries, Jolanthe Kugler  
Hardcover  
6.75 x 9.5 in, 336 pages  
Approx. 350 illustrations  
ISBN: 978-3-945852-20-0  
German retail price: 49,90€ (incl. VAT 7%)

The Eames Furniture Sourcebook, which is being published by the Vitra Design Museum in conjunction with »An Eames Celebration«, presents the first soundly researched and clearly organised survey of the furniture designs by Charles and Ray Eames. The book portrays the development of the Eameses' most important furniture designs with an array of models, material studies, prototypes and product examples from a period spanning four decades. The extensive catalogue of works is categorised according to the respective materials, such as plywood, plastic, aluminium or wire, thereby offering precise insights into the material-related constraints and possibilities of the various designs. The study is based on the three-dimensional collection of the Eames Office in the holdings of the Vitra Design Museum, which – together with other Eames objects – is the world's largest collection of Eames furniture. Anyone who is seriously interested in the furniture of Charles and Ray Eames will find this book an indispensable tool, thanks to its knowledgeable, generously illustrated essays and the precise dating of objects.

With texts by Pat Kirkham, Jolanthe Kugler, Amy Auscherman, Matthias Pühl and an interview with Eames Demetrios.

## **TALKS / WORKSHOPS / EVENTS**

### **Eames Demetrios: Introducing Charles & Ray**

**OPENING TALK (EN) | 29 September 2017**

**6 pm, Buckminster Fuller Dome**

On the occasion of the »Eames Celebration« opening, Eames Demetrios, director of the Eames Office and one of the grandchildren of Charles Eames, speaks about the work of this legendary designer couple. He discusses their diverse œuvre – from furniture to films and exhibitions – and recounts personal experiences in the garden of the legendary Eames House or at the Eames Office. His talk puts a focus on two fascinating personalities and their timeless design principles, which they continually tested and refined over the course of their lifelong collaboration.

Free admission, registration: events@design-museum.de

### **Family Day: Serious Play**

**SPECIAL (DE/EN/FR) | 1 October 2017**

**12 – 5 pm, Vitra Campus**

The Family Day at the Vitra Design Museum invites visitors young and old to discover the work of Charles and Ray Eames through play and games – with hands-on activities, a treasure hunt, special guided tours on the Vitra Campus and much more, including a kite-flying extravaganza as the afternoon highlight.

### **Pat Kirkham: The Eameses and California**

**TALK (EN) | 19 October 2017**

**6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

Charles and Ray Eames helped shape an era that transformed the west coast of the United States into a creative fulcrum and magnet for many creative figures in the arts and media. This is where Hollywood's dream factories were located, where many Pop artists worked, and where modern, expansive villas gave expression to the cosmopolitan lifestyle of an entire generation. Pat Kirkham is an acclaimed expert on the Eameses. In her lecture she talks about the many connections between this design duo and the cultural cosmos of the American west coast – be it their collaboration with Billy Wilder or their contributions to the legendary Case Study Houses, which became icons of modern architecture.

Free admission

### **Hartz IV Furniture**

**SPECIAL WORKSHOP (DE) | 21 October 2017**

**10:30 am – 5 pm, Schaudepot**

Affordable design for all – this idea, which is as old as design itself, has lost none of its relevance. The »Hartz IV Furniture« by Berlin-based architect Van Bo Le-Mentzel transports the concept to the digital age: with simple objects whose construction plans can be downloaded from the Internet and built as a DIY project. For his workshop at the Vitra Design Museum, Le-Mentzel created a brand new design – the Weil Chair – which participants will be able to build and take home with them.

Registration: info@design-museum.de, € 115.00 per person

### **Curator's Tour: »An Eames Celebration«**

**WEDNESDAY MATINEE (DE) | 25 October 2017**

**10 am, Vitra Design Museum**

Curators give a tour of the various exhibitions comprising »An Eames Celebration«, elaborate on selected pieces and provide insights into the multifaceted work of the designer couple.

€ 10.00 per person

**Design Thinking – Mere Hype or a Factor of Success in the Digital Era?**

**TALK (EN) | 26 October 2017**

**6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

The changes effected by digitalization have an impact on all of us and require innovative solutions. Design Thinking is becoming an indispensable tool for strategic planners facing the constant pressure to innovate. According to the unabashed enthusiasm of advocates, Design Thinking puts the human being at the focus of attention, produces fast results, and dismantles rigid corporate hierarchies that hinder innovation. Prominent figures will engage in a critical discussion of this increasingly popular method. Panel guests include Christian von Reventlow, Head of Innovation at Deutsche Telekom, and other figures from the fields of innovation research and design theory. A collaboration with Deutsche Telekom and its Initiative on Digital Responsibility [www.telekom.com/digital-responsibility](http://www.telekom.com/digital-responsibility).

Free admission

**Eric Schuldenfrei – The Films of Charles & Ray Eames**

**TALK (EN) | 9 November 2017**

**6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

Along with furniture design, the production of films was an important area of work for Charles and Ray Eames. Over the course of their joint career, they created over 100 films that addressed topics of everyday life, architecture, design and science and demonstrated a poetic and whimsical exploration of objects, rituals and people. Eric Schuldenfrei, author of a standard work on the Eameses' cinematic oeuvre, discusses a selection of films and some of the most captivating excerpts.

Free admission

**Style Icon or Status Symbol? The Cult of Vintage Furniture**

**TALK (DE) | 23 November 2017**

**6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

Historical design objects – known as vintage designs – are currently all the rage: one of the best examples is the Eames Plastic Chair, which is rarely lacking in any style-conscious interior. But what lies behind this fashion? Is it about status symbols? Are people yearning for the patina of history? Participants in this discussion panel will examine the popularity of vintage design from social and philosophical perspectives. Our guests include Margit J. Mayer (journalist and former editor-in-chief of AD) and Frederik Frede (founder of the blog »Freunde von Freunden«).

Free admission

**John Primer and Band**

**SPECIAL | 28 November 2017**

**8 pm, Schaudepot**

John Primer is a true blues legend. Born in Mississippi, the guitarist, singer and songwriter learned his craft in the bands of Muddy Waters and Magic Slim. He has been twice nominated for a Grammy and is a repeat recipient of the Blues Music Award. Primer and his band will present an evening of classic, energy-filled Chicago Blues in the Depot Deli.

Advance tickets can be purchased at [www.reservix.de](http://www.reservix.de), € 15.00 per person at the door

**Light Sculptures**

**SPECIAL WORKSHOP (DE) | 3 December 2017**

**10 am – 4 pm, Schaudepot**

Film still from »Powers of Ten«, 1977 Light and illumination play an especially important role during the Advent season. In this design workshop, participants create atmospheric lighting for their home with light sculptures built from various materials such as wire, glass and wood.

€ 65.00 per person, registration at: [info@design-museum.de](mailto:info@design-museum.de)

**Conservator's Tour: Eames – Material and Inspiration**

**WEDNESDAY MATINEE (DE) | 6 December 2017**

**10 am, Schaudepot**

The Vitra Design Museum maintains the world's largest collection of Eames furniture. In an exclusive guided tour, curator Jolanthe Kugler and Susanne Graner, head of the museum collection, discuss examples from these holdings and give insights into the design philosophy of Charles and Ray Eames and their use of innovative materials.

€ 10.00 per person

**Arno Brandlhuber - Ruins: From Case Study House to Antivila**

**TALK (DE) | 7 December 2017**

**6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

Berlin-based architect Arno Brandlhuber is considered one of the most original and critical thinkers on the architectural scene. He gets involved in political issues, questions luxury oriented building and opposes structural regulations and restrictions. Set to begin teaching as a professor at ETH Zurich in autumn, Brandlhuber will address the topic of ruins, discussing the extent to which the reconception and repurposing of buildings in decay constitutes a sustainable architectural practice. The event is a cooperative project and part of the series archithese kontext.

Free admission

**Family Workshop: Himmeli**

**SPECIAL (DE/EN/FR) | 17 December 2017**

**12 – 4 pm, Schaudepot Lab**

Crystal-shaped Himmeli made of straw are an indispensable fixture of the Christmas season in Scandinavia. Inspired by this tradition, visitors have the opportunity to construct their own Himmeli in an open workshop at the Schaudepot Lab on the third Sunday of Advent.

Free admission

**Californian Dinner with Guided Exhibition Tour**

**SPECIAL (DE) | 21 December 2017**

**6 pm, Vitra Design Museum**

Charles and Ray Eames were closely linked with the optimistic spirit of the American west coast. In California, the American way of life was densely interwoven with influences from other cultures, particularly Mexico, but also Asian countries. This lively mix provides the inspiration for a special evening that offers museum visitors the opportunity to enjoy Californian fusion cuisine along with the exhibition on Charles and Ray Eames. The evening begins with an exclusive guided tour of the exhibition, followed by a Californian dinner.

€ 52.00 per person incl. dinner, registration: events@design-museum.de

**Basel Museum Night**

**MUSEUM NIGHT (DE/EN/FR) | 19 January 2018**

**6 pm, Vitra Design Museum & Schaudepot**

The Museum Night 2018 on the Vitra Campus is wholly dedicated to Charles and Ray Eames. Visitors can view some of their most captivating films, print postcards with Eames motifs, and enjoy special guided tours. The opportunity to make replicas of legendary Eames toys will allow participants to immerse themselves in the designer couple's oeuvre. Drinks and jazz music are on offer in the Depot Deli.

**Jane Pavitt and Paul Feigelfeld –  
The Dark Side of Design: War, Militarism and Innovation  
TALK (EN) | 25 January 2018  
6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

Many technical innovations emerge from a context about which little is known, namely military purposes and war. For instance, the first moulded plywood objects made by Charles and Ray Eames during World War II were produced for the U.S. Navy. Today many innovations, especially in the field of robotics and digital technologies, are originally developed for a military environment. Design historian Jane Pavitt has taught as a professor at Kingston University in London since 2017 and co-curated the exhibition »Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970«. Paul Feigelfeld is a media theorist and researches media in a military context. Together they discuss the ambivalent relationship between war, the military and design.

Free admission

**Book Launch: Atlas of Furniture Design  
SPECIAL (DE/EN) | 2 February 2018  
6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

After more than five years' work, the moment has arrived: the Vitra Design Museum is releasing the *Atlas of Furniture Design*, the most comprehensive book ever published on the history of furniture design. The book launch ceremony features a presentation of the *Atlas* with remarks by Mateo Kries, Director of the Vitra Design Museum and Editor, and Rolf Fehlbaum, founder of the Vitra Design Museum and Chairman Emeritus of Vitra.

Free admission

**Ross Lovegrove – Convergence  
TALK (EN) | 8 February 2018  
6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

The futuristic works of British designer Ross Lovegrove have made him one of the most famous creative figures of our time. Whether he designs cars, watches or furniture – Lovegrove combines inspirations from nature with state-of-the-art materials and innovative manufacturing techniques. In 2017 the Centre Pompidou in Paris dedicated a major exhibition titled »Convergence« to his work. In his talk at the Vitra Design Museum, Ross Lovegrove explains the central themes of his work and discusses his interest in sustainability and his own research into materials, production techniques and bionic forms.

Free admission, registration: events@design-museum.de

**Christ & Gantenbein - More Than a Hundred Years  
TALK (DE) | 22 February 2018  
6:30 pm, Schaudepot**

The Basel-based architecture firm Christ & Gantenbein, founded by Emanuel Christ and Christoph Gantenbein in 1998, has achieved international renown over the past decade, especially with buildings for cultural institutions. These include the renovation and expansion of Kunstmuseum Basel and the National Museum Zurich as well as the expansion of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud in Cologne. In their talk, Christ & Gantenbein discuss the connections between historical architecture and today's world. They present unique projects that consistently explore the fundamental qualities and true essence of architecture itself.

Free admission

## **Fact Sheet**

Title:	An Eames Celebration
Curators:	Vitra Design Museum Jolanthe Kugler, Curator Tanja Cunz, Assistant Curator Heng Zhi, Curator Janna Lipsky, Curator
	Barbican Centre Catherine Ince, Curator Lotte Johnson, Assistant Curator
Location:	Vitra Design Museum Charles-Eames-Straße 2 79576 Weil am Rhein
Duration:	30 September 2017 – 25 February 2018
Opening Hours:	daily, 10 am – 6 pm
Further Information:	<a href="http://www.design-museum.de">www.design-museum.de</a> T +49.7621.702.3200
Social Media Hashtags:	#EamesCelebration #vitradesignmuseum
Press Images:	<a href="http://www.design-museum.de/press_images">www.design-museum.de/press_images</a>
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