



## Charles and Ray Eames

A chair that looked like a potato chip. Another that resembled a "well-used first baseman's mitt." A folding screen that rippled...

With a grand sense of adventure, Charles and Ray Eames turned their curiosity and boundless enthusiasm into creations that established them as a truly great husband-and-wife design team. Their unique synergy led to a whole new look in furniture. Lean and modern. Playful and functional. Sleek, sophisticated, and beautifully simple. That was and is the "Eames look."

That look and their relationship with Herman Miller started with molded plywood chairs in the late 1940s and includes the world-renowned Eames lounge chair, now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

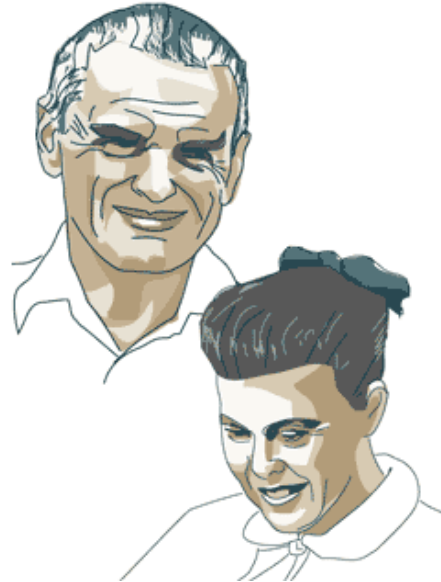
Charles and Ray achieved their monumental success by approaching each project the same way: Does it interest and intrigue us? Can we make it better? Will we have "serious fun" doing it?

They loved their work, which was a combination of art and science, design and architecture, process and product, style and function. "The details are not details," said Charles. "They make the product."

A problem-solver who encouraged experimentation among his staff, Charles once said his dream was "to have people working on useless projects. These have the germ of new concepts."

Their own concepts evolved over time, not overnight. As Charles noted about the development of the Molded Plywood Chairs, "Yes, it was a flash of inspiration," he said, "a kind of 30-year flash."

Graphic design led to showroom design, toy collecting to toy inventing. And a wooden plank contraption, rigged up by their friend, director Billy Wilder for taking naps, led to their acclaimed chaise design. A design critic once said that this extraordinary couple "just wanted to make the world a better place." That they did. They also made it a lot more interesting.



## Awards/Recognition

1. Organic Furniture Competition, Museum of Modern Art, 1940
2. Emmy Award, (Graphics), "The Fabulous Fifties," 1960
3. Kaufmann International Design Award, 1961
4. 25 Year American Institute of Architects Award, 1977
5. Eliot Norton Chair of Poetry, Harvard, 1971
6. Queen's Gold Medal for Architecture, 1979
7. Named "Most Influential Designer of the 20th Century," WORLDESIGN '85, Industrial Designers Society of America, 1985
8. The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention, Traveling Exhibition, Library of Congress, 1999

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