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| Eames, Charles and Ray (1907-1978; 1912-1988) |
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| Among the most influential modern designers of the twentieth century, Charles and Ray Eames made over 100 films, largely in collaboration with a range of talented colleagues at the Eames Office, their design studio in Venice, California. The couple met in 1940 at the Cranbook Academy of Art, where Charles began another storied partnership with modernist architect and designer Eero Saarinen, son of Cranbrook director and Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, and honed his commitments to technologies of mass production as tools of human improvement. Ray, an art student from California, trained as a painter in New York with German émigré and modernist master Hans Hoffman, and was invested in a range of artistic vanguards in design, painting, dance, and film. |
| Among the most influential modern designers of the twentieth century, Charles and Ray Eames made over 100 films, largely in collaboration with a range of talented colleagues at the Eames Office, their design studio in Venice, California. The couple met in 1940 at the Cranbook Academy of Art, where Charles began another storied partnership with modernist architect and designer Eero Saarinen, son of Cranbrook director and Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, and honed his commitments to technologies of mass production as tools of human improvement. Ray, an art student from California, trained as a painter in New York with German émigré and modernist master Hans Hoffman, and was invested in a range of artistic vanguards in design, painting, dance, and film.  In the early 1940s, the couple moved to California, and launched their design practice, while Charles worked as a set designer for MGM. Most famous today for their iconic furniture designs for the Herman Miller furniture company, which used novel materials like plywood and fiberglass in revolutionary ways, the Eameses were also life-long experimenters in photography and moving images, exposed to the avant-garde film culture of postwar Los Angeles. The Eameses made artful home movies like *House: After Five Years of Living* (1955) as yet another sign of the mobile, modern U.S. lifestyle the couple would come to embody during a postwar surge in small-gauge film production. The scale of their films is dazzling, extending from small, charming films about the beauty of everyday objects (puppets, tops, soap bubbles); to big, corporate projects for World Fairs and multi-screen experiments like *Glimpses of the USA* (1959), a masterpiece in Cold War propaganda and a pioneering work of expanded cinema; to deep-space voyages like *Powers of Ten* (1968, 1977), their best-known film, which joins the domains of the subatomic and the cosmic through the magic of exponents. Commissioned by a range of corporate and governmental clients like IBM, Polaroid, Herman Miller, Westinghouse, and the United States Information Agency, the Eameses’ film and media practice was instrumental in humanising the new information society of the postwar period, and its chief technology, the computer. What is modern about the Eameses’ films is not the kind of aesthetic difficulty or noisy demands on the senses found in the avant-garde work of their contemporaries, but rather their rationalist way of linking visual technologies to epistemological certainty. |
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