

CHARLES & RAY EAMES:

LA INUSUAL BELLEZA DE LAS COSAS COMUNES *(THE UNCOMMON BEAUTY OF COMMON THINGS)*

- MARCO is hosting the first solo exhibition in Mexico dedicated to Charles and Ray Eames, two renowned American designers, exploring their body of work through 212 pieces, including furniture, photographs, design objects, documents, and videos.
- In the exhibition, visitors will be able to use furniture designed by the Eameses while watching the 13 films screened in the galleries.
- MARCO thanks the Eames Office, whose collaboration was key to producing the exhibition, which will run from June 4, 2026, to February 7, 2027.
- Herman Miller, a long-standing partner closely associated with the career of Charles and Ray Eames and part of MillerKnoll, is participating as a partner by lending key pieces of furniture that bring the designers' legacy to life and make it accessible to the public.
- The Consulate General of the United States of America in Monterrey, Daltile, and IHO Espacios have also contributed to the exhibition.
- MARCO receives support from the Government of the State of Nuevo León through the Nuevo León State Ministry of Culture, as well as from the companies Arca Continental, Cemex, Cydsa, Femsa, Frisa, Xignux, and Alberto Fernández G; it also receives support from Arte Expuesto, VivaAerobus, and VMedia Group.

The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey presents *La inusual belleza de las cosas comunes (The Uncommon Beauty of Common Things)*, the first monographic exhibition in Mexico dedicated to the American designers and artists Charles and Ray Eames.

Curated by Brenda Fernández Villanueva, the exhibition brings together 152 photographs, 26 design objects, 21 archival materials, and 13 videos.

Through eight thematic axis, the exhibition highlights how Charles and Ray Eames transformed the understanding of 20th-century visual culture. Throughout their 37-year collaboration, the Eameses continuously designed furniture while simultaneously producing films, exhibitions, toys, photography, and multimedia environments. Rather than approaching these disciplines separately, they conceived them as interconnected forms of communication, perception, spatial experience, and everyday life.

Although furniture design remained a constant throughout their careers—from their early molded plywood experiments to later works such as the Aluminum Group, the Soft Pad Group, and the teak-and-leather sofa completed at the end of Charles’s life—the Eameses progressively expanded their practice toward increasingly complex forms of visual communication and information design. Over the course of their career, they produced 125 films, 13 of which are featured in the exhibition. Through both functional objects and audiovisual works, the Eameses approached design as an expanded field centered on human experience, ultimately positioning themselves as creators working through perception itself.

Herman Miller—a company that collaborated with Charles and Ray Eames throughout much of their careers—and MillerKnoll, a global collective of design brands, underscore the historical significance of this exhibition. Beyond their functional purpose, the pieces on display bear witness to an understanding of design as a cultural and experimental practice deeply rooted in everyday life.

The 212 works are organized into eight thematic axes: “Urgency and System”, “Decomposition of the Gaze”, “Model and Abstraction”, “Discipline and Ritual”, “Economy and Transition”, “Life as Archive”, “Infrastructure of Perception”, and “Echoes”.

GALLERIES WALKTHROUGH

Charles Ormand Eames Jr., an architect born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1907, and Bernice Alexandra “Ray” Kaiser, an abstract painter born in Sacramento, California, in 1912, began collaborating in 1940. Their work has since been internationally recognized for its pioneering contributions, particularly in design and furniture.

Before their collaboration, Charles traveled to Nuevo León, Coahuila, and San Luis Potosí in 1933—a little-known formative moment in his career. The exhibition will feature documentation of his journey through northern Mexico.

The Eameses' work unfolded against the backdrop of World War II and the Cold War, a period in which knowledge was shaped by strategies such as surveillance systems and new communication technologies, amid political, scientific, and cultural tensions.

The first section, titled "Urgency and System," presents design as a solution. This is exemplified by *Leg Splints* (1942), plywood splints used to treat wounded soldiers during World War II, commissioned by the U.S. Navy, and presented here through archival materials. With access to military technology and manufacturing processes, the Eameses refined their technique of working with plywood, which they would use throughout their career. The result was a device that was lightweight, sculptural, aesthetically compelling, functional, and easy to transport.

"Decomposition of the Gaze" brings together works in which the artists explore the fragmentation of the image, as in *Blacktop* (1952), a visual exercise consisting of an 11-minute film of the movements of water and foam on asphalt, generating a series of abstractions in motion.

"Model and Abstraction" is the third module, focusing on how thought establishes visual relationships through processes of representation and the simplification of figurative form. Here, Charles and Ray Eames explore the link between visual language, logic, and structure. *Exponents: A Study in Generalization* (1973), created in collaboration with Ray Redheffer, a mathematics professor at UCLA, presents an animation that illustrates basic principles of algebra through moving images.

The video *Clown Face* (1971) functions as a study of the application of makeup on a clown's face, based on notions of symmetry and composition. This work is part of the Discipline and Ritual section, where knowledge is understood as the result of systematic practice.

The "Economy and Transition" axis examines the life cycle of an object, from its conception through its use and eventual disposal. One example is *S-73 (Sofa Compact)* (1954), which documents the development of the famous Eames sofa—a piece designed to fold for easy transport, an innovative solution for its time.

The Mexican tradition of the Day of the Dead is presented in the film *Day of the Dead* (1957), included in the "Life as Archive" axis. The work explores objects and rituals associated with this holiday, as well as the ways in which culture represents death and its meaning.

Located in the "Infrastructure of Perception" axis, the work *Think* (1964) is a video installation in which multiple sequences coexist simultaneously. Through humor and action, the work explores

how a computer can address problems of various kinds, from organizing a dinner to predicting the weather.

Finally, the “Echoes” axis is dedicated to Charles Eames’s tour of Monterrey, Saltillo, and San Luis Potosí.

The exhibition offers the public an opportunity to get to know the Eameses up close. While their designs remain widely recognized, their broader legacy is still largely unknown. Overall, the exhibition invites us to reconsider design as an expanded field, where objects not only serve a function but also shape the ways we see, think, and inhabit the world.

MUSEUM HOURS AND ADMISSION FEES

- **Open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Extended hours on Wednesdays until 8:00 p.m.**
- **Free admission on Wednesdays (for students with valid ID only) and on Sundays for the general public.**
- **General admission: 150 pesos. Discounted admission: 120 pesos (teachers, students, seniors, INAPAM members, and children under 15). Free admission every day for children under 5.**

EXHIBITION INFORMATION

Title: *La inusual belleza de las cosas comunes (The Uncommon Beauty of Common Things)* | **On display:** From Friday, June 4, 2026 - to Sunday, February 7, 2027 | **Museography:** MARCO | **Curator:** Brenda Fernández | **Number of works:** 212 | **Galleries:** 9 to 11, Second Floor | **Techniques:** Furniture, photographs, design objects, archival materials, and videos.

About the Eames Office

Charles and Ray Eames founded their Los Angeles-based design practice, the Eames Office, in 1941, and produced significant contributions to architecture, furniture design, film, textiles, toys, exhibitions, and beyond. Through their work and its ongoing impact, the Eames Office reimagined the concept of a design studio in terms of philosophy, work ethic, and process. Since Charles' passing in 1978 and Ray's passing in 1988, the Eames Office has transformed from a multidisciplinary design practice into a cultural and commercial organization. Led by the next generations of the Eames family, the Eames Office is dedicated to communicating, preserving, and extending one of the world's most influential design legacies. To carry out its mission, the Eames Office works closely with authorized manufacturers to bring original Eames designs to market, introducing their work to new generations through educational programs, curated exhibitions, and brand collaborations. Further, the Eames Office also extends Charles and Ray's legacy through its ongoing support of the Charles & Ray Eames Foundation.

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