Byra J. and William P. Wreden Prize
for Collecting Books and Related Materials.
February, 2011

Submitted by:
Michael JG Turri
(Expected) MS Design 2011
A PASSIONATE COLLECTOR
After an exhilarating evening pounding the pavement in a cheap plastic Star Wars Storm Trooper costume, I rushed home to sort my Halloween take. With a yellow legal pad and blue felt-tipped pen in hand, I started cataloguing: Snickers bar, snack size, one; Kit Kat, full size, three...

I've always been a collector. Stickers, rocks and minerals, coins, comic books, sports cards, found objects, etc. Everything organized, labeled, catalogued and protected. From an early age, collecting taught me respect for objects, about their meaning, and the markets that are created to trade them. In retrospect, my desire to collect and organize was a manifestation of my efforts to understand the system of things.

It should come as no surprise that I studied ecology and evolutionary biology as an undergraduate at Cornell University. These fields of biology seek the systematic organization of life and study how form and function change through time. Although I decided not to pursue a career in biology, I readily apply this scientific rigor to my collecting pursuits.

CHARLES AND RAY EAMES
I first discovered the furniture of famed 20th century American designers Charles and Ray Eames in 1998. I was working as an investment banker and fell in love with design and, for the first time, became passionate about history. I read voraciously about design and began collecting, buying and selling 20th century design artifacts from all over the world, taking advantage of fluctuating currency rates and inefficient markets created by the then nascent Internet.

All the while, I learned more and more about the rich and varied work of Charles and Ray Eames, eventually shifting my collection from design objects to design information. Indeed, my most enduring collecting pursuit (10 years running) focuses on print artifacts that trace the development of the pivotal design partnership between The Eames Office and IBM during the golden era of computing.

THE EAMES OFFICE - IBM PARTNERSHIP
The Office of Charles and Ray Eames is among the most important firms in the history of design. Their 40-year career spanned architecture, furniture, exhibition design, film, graphics, books, toys, and more. Charles Eames was initially thrust into prominence by architect/designer/curator Eliot Noyes in 1940 when Charles and fellow Cranbrook faculty member Eero Saarinen won the MoMA competition for Organic Design in Home Furnishings using the molded plywood manufacturing processes that the Eameses later perfected. It is for this furniture and the process used to manufacture it that the Eames’ are most famous.
Although The Eameses designed some of the most successful furniture pieces of all time for Herman Miller and continued to innovate in this area throughout their career, their focus began to shift in the early 1950s. At this time, Charles and Ray became fascinated with the power of multimedia exhibitions and film to communicate ideas, emotions and content.

At the time The Eames Office was cultivating an interest in communicating ideas, data processing and computing were brand new phenomena, still largely the domain of government and large corporations. Indeed, the implications of this technology were only beginning to enter popular culture. IBM was the dominating force in data processing and early computing in America, a subject that was at best misunderstood, if not somewhat feared by the general public. There was a clear need to shift the public’s view of technology in 1956 when then CEO Thomas Watson Jr. hired Eliot Noyes to develop the company’s first corporate-wide design program. A year later, Noyes hired The Eames Office, the first truly human-centered designers, to help communicate the societal value of technology to America.

The Eames Office, at the request of Eliot Noyes, produced their first animated film for IBM: The Information Machine: Creative Man and the Data Processor, shown at the Noyes-designed IBM pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World Fair. This was the start of a long and fruitful partnership between the world’s biggest technology giant of the day and the top design firm of the era.
The Eames Office did a great deal more than communicate the value of technology over the next 20 years. In fact, they were the first designers to humanize computing technology. They did so by positioning computers as a natural extension of man’s own reasoning, as a tool possessing unparalleled potential to improve our decision-making capabilities. Many of these works, when reviewed today, appear prophetic.

THE COLLECTION
My collection pulls from approximately 12 small and large-scale exhibitions, including the landmark IBM pavilion at the 1964-1965 New York World’s Fair in Flushing Meadows and Mathematica: A World of Numbers...and Beyond. There are also scores of films, some of which were themselves integral parts of the exhibitions, or were used in the planning process. Other films dealt with general scientific knowledge such as Powers of 10, or even historical figures like The World of Franklin and Jefferson, which was created for a the eponymous bicentennial exhibition that toured internationally.
Charles and Ray Eames pioneered a deeply human approach to art and design. Although this human-centered approach was evident in all of their work, it was particularly powerful in their IBM projects. Their clear communication of technology’s role in society, through myriad IBM-sponsored exhibitions, short films and books, were the prototype for a new art form. Among these seminal works were the film, Powers of 10, and the marquee exhibition, Mathematica: A World of Numbers...and Beyond, whose 50th anniversary is in 2011.

In these works, one can trace the industrial beginnings of computing in America: IBM, with the design help of The Eames Office, Eliot Noyes and Paul Rand, shaped the public’s nascent perception of computing and sought to advance math and science education in America. This collaboration and the resulting works are compelling evidence for Design’s impact in storytelling, communication and user experience.

The Eames Office was at the cutting edge of defining the human-centered multi-disciplinary design process. Their work presents a finely integrated model that is as relevant today as it was fifty years ago.

eamesgallery.com
SUMMARY
In summary, this collection traces the massive impact the Eames-IBM partnership had on the public perception of mathematics, science and computing technology in America. Critical examination and documentation of this largely forgotten partnership is a vehicle for remembering not only the historical precedents that link design and technology, but also as a reminder of how the human-centered design process can be used to fundamentally shift attitudes and the human experience.

IBM Computer House of Cards Prototype
John & Marilyn Neuhart Archives
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Film

Magazine

Magazine

Press Release
IBM Pavilion at the Brussels World Fair. Feb., 1958. Mentions The Information Machine: Man and the Data Processor, which was the first IBM-sponsored film created by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames. It was shown at the pavilion, which was designed by architect Eliot Noyes, head of design at IBM. One copy.

Film

Magazine

Magazine

Booklet
Photograph
Exterior shot of entire geodesic dome by R. Buckminster Fuller that houses the
Glimpses of the U.S.A. multi-screen projection designed by The Office of Charles and
Ray Eames.
One copy.

Brochure
Mathematica: A World of Numbers and Beyond.
Accordion fold brochure for 1961 eponymous exhibition designed by The Office of
Charles and Ray Eames.
Two copies. Gift of Eames Office employees John and Marilyn Neuhart.

Magazine
Comprehensive the eponymous exhibition by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.

Magazine
Coverage of IBM’s industrial design department.
One copy.

Photographs
30 unique views.

Booklet
Corporation, 1962.
Development and financial report.
Two copies.

Booklet
Corporation, 1962.
Development and financial report.
Two copies.

Booklet
Development and financial report.
Two copies.
Booklet
Development and financial report.
Two copies.

Booklet
Development and financial report.
Two copies.

Photograph
Close-up plan view of architectural model.
Two unique views (one stamped Eames). IBM.

Magazine
Coverage of the design and construction of the IBM Pavilion at the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.

Photograph
Close-up of architectural model detail.
One copy (stamped Eames). IBM.

Magazine
Coverage of the design and construction of the IBM Pavilion at the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.

Magazine
Coverage of the design and construction of the IBM Pavilion at the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.
Magazine
Complete coverage of *Think*, the multi-screen projection inside the IBM pavilion by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.

Magazine
Complete coverage of *Think*, the multi-screen projection inside the IBM pavilion by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.

Magazine
Coverage of the design and construction of the IBM Pavilion at the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy.

Advertisement
Two-page spread on the IBM Pavilion at the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy in magazine, one copy removed.

Press Packet
Complete with post-dated envelope, folder, seven press releases, and B&W photograph of the Sherlock Holmes puppet show.
One copy.

35mm Slides
A mixture of amateur and souvenir mounted slides showing all aspects of the IBM pavilion.
80 unique slides.

Souvenir Card
Handwriting Recognition. 1964.
Two-sided card detailing and demonstrating IBM’s handwriting recognition technology. 1964/5 New York World’s Fair Souvenir from the IBM pavilion designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames and architect Eero Saarinen.
Two copies.
Ticket
Admit one to the multi-screen projection in the ovoid theatre.
One copy.

Booklet
Features information on purpose-built machines at the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair.
Four copies.

Brochure
Four copies cover version A, two copies cover version B

Press Packet
Complete with folder, 11 press releases, Paul Rand designed booklet and brochure (cover version B) and 1965 newspaper article reprint.
One copy.

Booklet
The definitive design record of the IBM Pavilion.
Five copies.

Booklet
Features information pertaining to the 1964/1965 New York World’s Fair.
One Copy.

Magazine
Avant garde multimedia “magazine in a box” featuring works by many prominent artists, designers and musicians. Includes Paul Rand’s IBM Pavilion booklet.
One copy.

Magazine
Comprehensive review and critique of Eames Office work.
One copy and two bound reprints sponsored by Herman Miller.
Poster
Created following the Mathematica exhibition. Several feet long.
Two copies.

Poster
Created in conjunction with the eponymous exhibition.
One copy.

Film
Precursor to The Powers of 10.

Booklet
Limited circulation booklet detailing Eames’ architectural and exhibition proposal.
One copy.

Booklet
Selected uses of computers in society.
One copy.

Book
Hardcover edition with original glassine jacket. Following the 1970 exhibition, Computer Perspective.
One copy and one paperback edition.

Brochure
Two-sided card detailing eponymous exhibition designed by The Office of Charles and Ray Eames.
One copy. Gift of Eames Office employees John and Marilyn Neuhart.

Booklet
Exhibition catalog for the eponymous exhibition in Paris.
Two copies.
Book
Hardcover edition following the 1975-1977 eponymous exhibition.
One copy.

Poster
Horizontally oriented timeline from the eponymous exhibition in North America.
Two copies.

Poster
Vertically oriented timeline from the eponymous exhibition in Europe.
One copy.

Booklet
Notable exhibition of Eames Office works.
One copy.

Poster
The Office of Charles and Ray Eames. German Mathematica Timeline. 1978.
Created following the eponymous exhibition. Several feet long.
One copy.

Book
Following the eponymous film.
One copy.

Eames design compendium.
One copy.

Book
Eames biography.
One copy.