
MILWAUKEE

ART

MUSEUM

Dear Host,

Thank you for participating in the Milwaukee Art Museum's **House of Cards** project. At this point you have, hopefully, wrangled your nearest and dearest to help you decorate the 40 cards in this kit. We kindly ask that your kit, even if only partially decorated, be returned to your Museum contact within six weeks of receiving it.

Enclosed are suggestions to make your card decorating party a hit. If you have any questions, please send them to:

designcircle@mam.org.

Happy decorating!

Event Planning Tips

BREAK THE ICE

Take a moment at the beginning of your event to have participants introduce themselves.

CREATE AN EXPERIENCE

Pinpoint a time frame during the night for everyone to come together and decorate their cards.

NO GREAT WORK EVER HAPPENED ON AN EMPTY STOMACH

Consider inviting guests to bring a dish or treat to pass. Food is fuel to creativity!

DOCUMENT YOUR FUN

If it isn't on social media, did it even happen? We're kidding, but encourage you to take pictures throughout the event, including a group photo of participants with their finished cards.

Send to designcircle@mam.org or share on social media using the hashtag #HouseofCardsMKE. We'd love to see them!

Customize your event based on your guests:

Children or teens

Choose a theme or prepare one or two prompts to get the group started. Need some ideas? Museum staff are happy to provide content tailored to your group.

Young adults or community groups

Make a Facebook event for your party, in addition to sending out invitations through email or otherwise.

Families

Make it a family affair. Encourage parents and guardians to join in the fun. Creativity is not just for the kids!

Seniors

Some participants may remember the then new wave of midcentury design, possibly even the Eameses' work. Ask them to describe their domestic space during this era to encourage conversation and spark memories.

Make a Card. Build a House.

You are invited to contribute to a work of art.

Community groups across the region are designing cards for a massive House of Cards that will be part of the exhibition *Serious Play: Design in Midcentury America*, on view at the Milwaukee Art Museum September 28, 2018–January 6, 2019. We've provided you with cards to design to be part of this exciting installation.

The House of Cards, originally designed by twentieth-century designers Charles and Ray Eames, will be a work of art designed by you and constructed exclusively for the Milwaukee Art Museum. Don't miss out!

TIPS FOR DECORATING YOUR CARD

Use permanent marker, crayon, and colored pencil.

You could also collage paper using a glue stick. Avoid charcoal, chalk pastels, or other powdery materials that smear when handled.

Keep it flat. Don't add texture or sculptural elements, or bend or fold the card. The cards need to be flat for building.

Keep the slots clear. Each card has six slots. These slots need to remain clear so the cards can be interlocked.

Think bold and bright! Make your design stand out from the many cards that will be used to create the giant structure.

Pattern is your friend. Try repeating a shape, like diamonds or circles, or a picture, such as spools of thread or snowflakes.

Fill it up. Use the whole card!

Keep it family friendly. Visitors of all ages will be visiting the exhibition.

Have fun!

Take Inspiration from the Eameses

The husband-and-wife design team Charles and Ray Eames believed that creativity and play were key to their productivity. We encourage you to approach this project with a similar sense of imaginative exploration:

Have fun. Try something new. Think outside the box.

The Eameses surrounded themselves with inspiring objects and images, including toys, textiles, folk art, books, and more. Consider things you own or collect. Look around you right now. What do you see that is fun or surprising?

Tell Me More

Tell me about the exhibition we're making these cards for.

The exhibition is *Serious Play: Design in Midcentury America*. Visitors to the exhibition will discover how playfulness served as a vital catalyst for creativity and innovation within mid-twentieth-century American design. Co-organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Denver Art Museum, *Serious Play* presents more than 200 works and immersive settings, organized into three major themes:

THE AMERICAN HOME

Following World War II, American homeowners could afford to accumulate more goods and were swept up in a DIY culture; architects and designers were happy to help Americans by suggesting new and interesting ways to decorate their homes.

DESIGNING FOR CHILDREN

Smaller-scale furniture and toys, in bright colors and with rounded corners, and outdoor play environments were among the items designers created to promote creativity and imagination in young minds.

CORPORATE APPROACHES

Corporations sought to bring playfulness to their identities and to run ad campaigns that were imaginative and fun-filled.



We're making cards for a "House of Cards." What is that?

The House of Cards is a construction set that designers Charles and Ray Eames developed in 1952 for the Tennessee-based manufacturer Tigrett Enterprises. The cards have images on them—toys, papers, knickknacks—of objects that interested, inspired, and surrounded the Eameses in their workplace. Six slots around each of the cards make it possible to fit the cards together into modular constructions. Promotional materials at the time suggested that children might use the cards to build miniature worlds in which to play.



Who are Charles and Ray Eames?

Charles and Ray Eames are among the most significant—and playful—designers of the twentieth century. Partners in life and work, this husband-and-wife team had an immeasurable impact upon American design—from the mid-century until today. They worked widely in furniture design, as well as in architecture, filmmaking, and graphics. *Serious Play* will feature numerous examples of their work, with particular attention paid to their designs for children's toys and furniture.

Why are we making these cards?

What is the House of Cards project?

In the summer of 2018, thousands throughout the community will decorate cards for a massive House of Cards that will serve as the entrance to the *Serious Play* exhibition. Community organizations, schools, businesses, senior centers, arts organizations, book clubs—diverse audiences everywhere are invited to gather together, collaborate, and use their creativity to decorate cards.

The cards themselves are from the Eames Office, which oversees the production of all Eames cards. Once completed, the community-decorated cards will be assembled into a House of Cards installation at the Museum. The structure will remain on view for the duration of the exhibition, from September 28, 2018 to January 6, 2019.

Survey

Thank you so much for hosting an event in support of the House of Cards project and the exhibition *Serious Play: Design in Midcentury America*.

Please answer the following questions for yourself and, in some cases, as best you can for your group.

Date of your Make a Card event: ____ / ____ / ____

Location/organization: _____

Number of people in attendance: _____

What does the group have in common?
(shared interests, values, etc.)

How would you describe your group demographically?
(age, gender, culturally, economically)

Do you clearly understand the connection between the House of Cards project and the *Serious Play* exhibition?

YOU	YOUR GROUP
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

Did you learn something about the designers Charles and Ray Eames in this process?

YOU	YOUR GROUP
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

What else did you or other people in your group learn during this event?

In one word, how would you best describe your group's experience designing cards?

Are you likely to attend *Serious Play* after it opens in September?

YOU	YOUR GROUP
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

Has designing a card increased your likelihood of attending *Serious Play*?

YOU	YOUR GROUP
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

Have you attended exhibitions at the Milwaukee Art Museum in the past?

Yes No

Has this experience changed your opinion of the Milwaukee Art Museum in any way?

YOU	YOUR GROUP
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

If yes, please explain:

We are hoping to attract new audiences to the Museum to see *Serious Play*. Do you have any suggestions on how best to do this?

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve Make a Card events that we can pass on to future groups?

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?