**Giant House of Cards, 1953**
Charles Eames and Bernice Alexandra “Ray” Eames
Mixed media
Gift of Sam Olkinetzky

Meet the artists!
Charles Eames grew up in St. Louis and originally studied architecture. Ray Eames was from California and began her career as an abstract painter. The two married in 1940 and worked together to create furniture, architecture, short films, and more.

What is a house of cards?
You may have tried to make a house of cards before. They are usually built by stacking, leaning, and balancing playing cards in “T”s and pyramids.

What’s special about this one?
Charles and Ray Eames designed their custom cards with solid colors or patterns on one side and a variety of images on the other. The cards are oversized, and each one has several slots along the edges to make construction easier and sturdier. There is no one way to put this house of cards together, so the viewer gets to help make the art!

What types of lines and patterns do you see on the cards above? What colors stand out?

What kinds of images do you notice on the cards? Some feature scientific illustrations while others are taken from art and architecture. What theme would you choose for your own deck of cards?

What do you think you could build with a deck of cards like this? Maybe a house, a tower, or a bridge? What shapes would it be difficult to make?
DO

Don’t try this at home!

Create your own house of cards.

Things you will need:
- 12-24 blank index cards or sheets of cardstock
- Something to draw with (crayons, colored pencils, or markers)
- Scissors

Steps to get started:
- For each card, cut one slot in the center of each short end and two slots on each long side. (Look at the pictures to the left to get an idea.)
- Fill in both sides of the card with whatever you like: a picture, a pattern, a solid color, numbers, letters, or even words.
- When you’ve finished decorating, it’s time to build! Use the slots to stack your cards together and see what you can make.
- Want a bigger structure? Just make more cards! Or combine your set with a family member or friend.