

Artist Resources – NOGUCHI Isamu 野口勇 (American, 1904-1988)

[The Noguchi Museum](#)

[Noguchi at the Guggenheim](#)

Listen to an [oral history interview](#) recorded in 1973 for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art and a 1979 [interview](#) in the Digital Collections of the New York Public Libraries.

Isamu Noguchi: Sculptural Design was the first major solo exhibition of the artist's work in Europe. The exhibition traveled 2001-2006 to institutions including the [Vitra Design Museum](#) in Weil am Rhein; [Reina Sofia](#) in Madrid; [Maison de la Culture du Japon à Paris](#) in Paris; [Kunsthal](#) in Rotterdam; and the [Japanese American National Museum](#) in Los Angeles.

View installation photos of [Isamu Noguchi: Master Sculptor](#) at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2004-2005.

The Frye Art Museum in Seattle installed [Isamu Noguchi and Qi Baishi: Beijing 1930](#) in 2014. The exhibition brought together ink paintings by both artists that reflect the influence Qi Baishi had on Noguchi while the Japanese-American was studying in Beijing.

[Isamu Noguchi, Archaic/Modern](#) at the Smithsonian American Art Museum covered six decades of the artist's career that "reflect Noguchi's striving for timelessness through the abstraction of things, places and ideas" in 2016-2017. Watch an SFMOMA [video](#) where the artist reflects on the constraints of time in relation to his work.



Noguchi portrait by Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1955 National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution



Noguchi with the plaster model for *Contoured Playground* (1941)
Photograph: The Noguchi Museum Archive

Read an article in [BOMB Magazine](#) about Noguchi's self-internment in a World War II camp in Poston, Arizona and another in [ARTnet](#). The articles were published to accompany a 2017 exhibition on display at the Noguchi Museum in New York entitled [Self-Interned, 1942: Noguchi in Poston War Relocation Center](#).

[Noguchi's Playscapes](#) was on display at SFMOMA in 2017 including models, sketches, designs, and images related to his playgrounds and other play structures.

In 2019, the Asian Art Museum installed [Changing and Unchanging Things: Noguchi and Hasegawa in Postwar Japan](#). Watch a [video](#) about the friendship, work, ideas, and mutual influence these two artists had on one another.

Read a 2020 [ARTnews article](#) by Andy Battaglia: "Love from a Stone: How Isamu Noguchi Became a Sculptor and Visionary for the Ages" on the occasion of the artist's 116th birthday.

The major retrospective *Noguchi* was organized in 2021 and traveled to the [Barbican](#) in London, the [Museum Ludwig](#) in Cologne, and [Zentrum Paul Klee](#) in Bern. Read articles about the exhibition in [Frieze](#), [AnOther Magazine](#), the [Guardian](#), and [The Art Newspaper](#) and watch a video about the Barbican edition on [YouTube](#).

NOGUCHI Isamu 野口勇 (American, 1904-1988)

Mitosis, 1962 (1963)

Bronze with black patina

Private Collection; L2022:126.3

Sculptor, landscape architect, and designer Isamu Noguchi made a major impact on both Japanese and American art in the twentieth century. The artist was born in Los Angeles, but grew up in Japan, lived throughout the United States, and traveled extensively throughout his career. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Noguchi formed a group called “Nisei [second-generation Japanese immigrants] Writers and Artists for Democracy” to advocate for Japanese-Americans held in internment camps throughout the Western United States. The artist later became the only voluntary internee at a camp in Poston, Arizona to promote the arts in the interred community.

Mitosis is one in a series of sculptures of the same name that Noguchi created in the 1960s. The organic forms evoke the biological process of mitosis, when one cell separates into two. With its bulbous design, the sculpture evokes a dynamic sense of movement at the moment of the cells’ genesis. The artist once said: “the best is that which is most spontaneous or seemingly so.”

On view February 1 – May 7, 2023

