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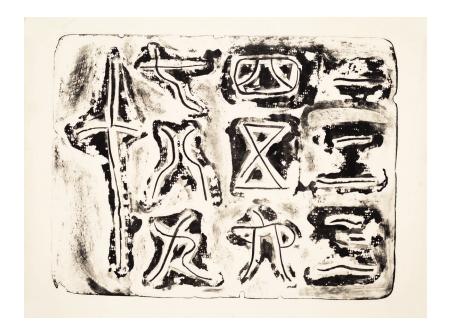
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# From the Archive

"Fragments," a letter from Saburo Hasegawa to Isamu Noguchi, August 24, 1950.

Hasegawa and Noguchi at Shisen-do Temple, Kyoto, 1950. Photograph by Michio Noguchi.



# CHANGING AND UNCHANGING THINGS Noguchi and Hasegawa in Postwar Japan

In May 1950 Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) returned to Japan for the first time in twenty years. Within a few weeks he had reunited with his deceased father's family; met a wide range of future collaborators; been offered an exhibition at Mitsukoshi department store; borrowed a studio; and, finding himself unexpectedly welcomed as a minor celebrity, given a number of interviews on the role he saw for Japan's cultural heritage in the development of its postwar arts scene. The trip was a stop on what would become a multiyear, round-the-world search for the cultural significance of sculpture. He was, Noguchi said, seeking models for evolving the relationship between sculpture and society—having emerged from the war years with a profound desire to reorient his work "toward some purposeful social end."

As unaccustomed to the attention he was receiving as he was to the over-whelming desire to belong he felt upon returning to Japan, Noguchi turned to the artist Saburo Hasegawa (1906–1957) for guidance and companionship in visiting and processing the seminal sites of Japanese culture. Hasegawa became Noguchi's ambassador and confederate: making introductions and helping him to research the basis of the culturally hybrid works he immediately began to envision. Well-matched, they rapidly established an easy rapport. Hasegawa had spent time as a painter in Paris in the early 1930s, where he mingled with the European avant-garde and absorbed many of the same influences Noguchi had. He synthesized this experience in a handful of books about Western art published in Japan, including the first in Japanese to deal with abstraction. Following World War II, which he spent in virtual exile in a rural fishing village, Hasegawa emerged as a devotee of tea ceremony and Zen,



and a leading, somewhat controversial postwar proponent of Japanese classical culture. With Noguchi's encouragement and support, Hasegawa spent 1954 in New York City: lecturing, exhibiting, and representing "the Orient" in cosmopolitan discussion about the universality of abstraction, including in conversations with Alfred Barr at The Museum of Modern Art and on the radio. After a brief return to Japan, Hasegawa relocated to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1955, where, as a professor at Alan Watts's American Academy of Asian Studies and a key transmitter of Japanese culture and philosophy, he inspired members of the Beat generation.

By the time Hasegawa and Noguchi met, both had been thinking deeply for some time about the balance between tradition and modernity, and the role of indigenous and foreign influences in the development of traditional cultures. The predicate of their brief but intense friendship was a thorough exploration of traditional Japanese culture within the context of seeking what Noguchi termed "an innocent synthesis" that he felt "must rise from the embers of the past." Their ongoing debate on these questions of balance. in which Noguchi tended to take the more reactive position that Japan should look almost entirely to its own history and traditions and eschew the West in attempting to modernize, became the centerpiece of their bond. It seems appropriate to invoke Georges Braque's famous quip about how in the early development of Cubism he and Picasso "were like mountain-climbers roped together."

Among their many shared understandings-a commitment to cultural bridging and their wartime pacifism, for instance-Noguchi and Hasegawa were brothers in intrinsic exile. Few psychically displaced global citizens in the postwar world were better qualified around 1950 to negotiate the rocky ground between a Japan struggling with its identity, a United States becoming, for better and worse, the international beacon of modernity, and a Europe caught somewhere in the middle. Between them, Noguchi and Hasegawa covered an extraordinary intellectual and experiential terrain, with just the right degree of complement, difference, and overlap. Noguchi was American, but felt increasingly drawn to Japan. Hasegawa, Japanese with a biracial daughter born of his French wife, was drawn to the freedom of expression and the role of teacher available to him in the United States. Together they brought everything they had to bear on trying to process and understand the problems of modernization facing Japan.

In a piece on his Akari light sculptures (radicalized traditional Japanese paper lanterns) written for Art and Architecture in 1955, Noguchi, with his usual penetrating economy, described the intent behind them as the "true development of an old tradition." It is a formulation that describes all of his forays into the material culture of old Japan: ceramics, the reclaimed Japanese pine bases he had made using rudimentary Japanese joinery in New York, and his variations on the Japanese garden, among many others. Hasegawa's letters to Noguchi, filled with haiku and a deep and knowledgeable passion for Japanese aesthetics and art history, echo this commitment. During their friendship, Hasegawa began an intensive engagement with ink, creating experimental calligraphy, rubbings, and block prints-often presenting abstract work in the traditional forms of hanging scrolls and folding screens.

Changing and Unchanging Things: Noguchi and Hasegawa in Postwar Japan is an account of how their joint exploration of traditional Japanese culture influenced their work. The more than eighty objects in the exhibition—by turns elegiac, assured, ambivalent, anguished, euphoric, and resigned—are organized around the major overlapping subjects of their attention: their complex biographies, the landscapes of Japan, the abstracted human figure, the fragmentation of matter in the atomic age, and Japan's traditional art forms. "Visiting Kyoto with Saburo," Noguchi wrote, "I cannot help but feel that we are observing not the tail end of a tradition but the precepts for a survivable future."

As the world shrinks and the pressures of cultural homogenization grow, how do we remain site specific peoples, rooted in the natural and material cultures of our places on the earth? Can humanity, community, and creativity continue to function if all of us go global, disconnect from nature, and become rootless? At any given moment, in any specific place, is there an ideal mix of indigenous and foreign, traditional and modern content? What is the nature of wholeness in a broken world? The purpose of bringing these works together is not to demonstrate, or even to suggest, that Noguchi and Hasegawa solved these riddles but rather to bring to life a rich conversation on a subject that is, if anything, even more relevant today than it was then.

1 Isamu Noguchi, "1949," unpublished manuscript. The Noguchi Museum Archive.

IMAGES, FROM TOP Saburo Hasegawa, *Numbers One to Ten*, 1950. Lithograph.

Hasegawa Family Collection. Isamu Noguchi, *My Mu*, 1950. Seto stoneware. The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York.









# Katsura Imperial Villa PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISAMU NOGUCHI

Noguchi took hundreds of photographs documenting his visits with Hasegawa to many of the most significant sites of old Japan, including Katsura Imperial Villa, which had become an incredibly important reference point in crosscultural discussions of international architecture. Writing about their first visit to Katsura, immersed in its "ballet of nothingness," Hasegawa recalled Noguchi's enthusiasm: "He trotted around like a hunting dog with a camera."





The first, roughly occupying Area 9 of the main gallery, is disaggregation: the literal and figurative fragmentation of reality being a new harrowing reality of the atomic age. Matter, we learned, is particulate, mostly empty space, abstract at the molecular level, and can be atomized at the push of a button. The loss of certitude-which evaporated with the solidity of matter-is reflected in works in which Hasegawa and Noguchi represent the world in component parts: language without syntax; landscape reduced to shapes; music as scattered notes; fragmentary bodies; and objects whose forms have lost contact with function. The Noguchi vessels in this section, for example, include an empty war helmet, a walking void, and a teapot that won't hold water. Hasegawa's The Harmonious suggests a score, but one that is visually cacophonous and axiomatically unplayable.

In the second half of the installation, reality somewhat recoheres. Abstraction reunites in fits and starts with representation. Disorganized collections of shapes form recognizable landscapes and figures. Order is not exactly restored, but the trend is towards coming together rather than spinning apart. Hasegawa's *Non-Figure* painting, for example, teems with captivating botanical logics, as do works such as *Study for a Waterfall*, *Bird Song*, *Endless Coupling*, and *Pregnant Bird* in which Noguchi draws patterns from nature.

The flow from the first part of the installation into the second is not meant to be progressive, teleological, or indicative of harmonious resolutions—as Hasegawa's gut-wrenching, primitive final work *Pure Suffering* and Noguchi's *Mortality*, a kind of giant garden wind chime made of bones, attest. But both artists believed that art could play an important role in repairing the world. So, though nothing in the first section is entirely abstract, and nothing in the second is entirely representational, it is hard to resist the desire to want to dramatize the extent to which both of them were able to pull order from chaos.

A broad selection of archival materials relating to Noguchi and Hasegawa's relationship is on view in Area 13.



Isamu Noguchi Akari 15A, 1952 Paper, bamboo, metal



Saburo Hasegawa Untitled, 1954 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection



Haniwa
Japan, Kofun
period, 250-552
Earthenware
Collection of
Isamu Noguchi



Isamu Noguchi Tsukubai, 1962 Granite, water



Isamu Noguchi Garden Elements, 1958 Mannari granite Private collection



Saburo Hasegawa Untitled (Wood Rubbing), c. 1952 Wood rubbing, ink on paper Tia and Mark Watts Collection



AREA 11 — SECOND FLOOR



But I alone am dim and weak.
Others are sharp and clever,
But I alone am dull and stupid.
Oh, I drift like the waves of the sea,
Without direction, like the restless wind.
Everyone else is busy,
But I alone am aimless and depressed.
I am different.

(Trans. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English)



Isamu Noguchi Akari E, 1954 Paper, bamboo, metal



Isamu Noguchi The Footstep, 1958 Mannari granite, pine



Saburo Hasegawa Rhapsody: Fishing Village, 1952 Four-panel folding screen, ink on paper The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo On view: May 1- June 9





Saburo Hasegawa Civilization, 1951 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection



Saburo Hasegawa The Butterfly Dream from Chuang Tzu, 1956 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection

Once upon a time, I, Chuang Tzu, dreamed I was a butterfly flying happily here and there, enjoying life without knowing who I was. Suddenly I woke up and I was indeed Chuang Tzu. Did Chuang Tzu dream he was a butterfly, or did the butterfly dream he was Chuang Tzu? There must be some distinction between Chuang Tzu and the butterfly. This is a case of transformation. (Trans. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English)



Saburo Hasegawa Symphonic Poem—Fine Day, 1951 Four-panel folding screen, ink on paper Miyazaki Prefectural Art Museum On view: June 12-July 14

Saburo Hasegawa The Butterfly Dream-from Chuang Tzu, 1956 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection







Isamu Noguchi Calligraphics, 1957 Iron, wood, rope, metal



Tokvo







Isamu Noguchi Bell Image, 1956-57 Iron



Saburo Hasegawa Untitled, 1951 Ink on paper scrolls Koichi Kawasaki Collection,

Japan



Isamu Noguchi Fence, 1952 Terracotta Sogetsu Foundation, Tokyo



Isamu Noguchi Sesshu, 1958 Anodized aluminum Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; gift of an Anonymous donor, 1962.259



Saburo Hasegawa Time, 1952 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection



Isamu Noguchi Space Elements, 1958 Greek marble



Saburo Hasegawa Profundity (Yugen), 1952 Ink on paper Collection of Matthew Reichman



Saburo Hasegawa Environment, 1953 Woodcut on paper The National Museum of Art, Osaka On view: May 1 to June 9



Saburo Hasegawa Katsura (Imperial Villa), 1951 Woodcut on paper The National Museum of Art, Osaka On view: June 12 to July 14



Saburo Hasegawa Self-Portrait, 1951 Ink on paper The National Museum of Art, Osaka



Saburo Hasegawa Mountain and Water, Forming a Landscape, 1954 Lithograph Hasegawa Family Collection



Saburo Hasegawa Numbers One to Ten, 1955 Lithograph Hasegawa Family Collection



Saburo Hasegawa I-Ro-Ha (The Japanese Syllabary), 1954 Lithograph Tia and Mark Watts Collection



Saburo Hasegawa Flower, 1954 Ink on paper Lucid Art Foundation, Inverness, CA



Isamu Noguchi Yoshiko-san, 1952 Iron, rope The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York; gift of Tsutomu Hiroi



Isamu Noguchi Tetsubin, 1956 Iron Private collection



Isamu Noguchi Noh Musicians, 1958 Aluminum, paint



Isamu Noguchi Shodo Flowing, 1959 (cast 1969) Bronze



Akari 13A, c. 1952 Paper, bamboo, metal



Saburo Hasegawa Untitled, 1954 Lithograph Tia and Mark Watts Collection



Isamu Noguchi A World I Did Not Make, 1952 Terracotta Sogetsu Foundation, Tokyo



Isamu Noguchi Face Dish, 1952 Shigaraki stoneware













Attributed to Saburo Hasegawa Untitled (series of four photographic collages [A. I-IV]), c. 1952 Photographic prints Tia and Mark Watts Collection











Attributed to Saburo Hasegawa Untitled (series of five photographic collages [C. I-V]), c. 1955 Photographic prints Tia and Mark Watts Collection





Attributed to Saburo Hasegawa Untitled (series of two photographic prints |[H. 1-2]), c. 1953 Photographic prints Tia and Mark Watts Collection



Isamu Noguchi The Curtain of Dream, 1952 Shigaraki stoneware, lga glaze



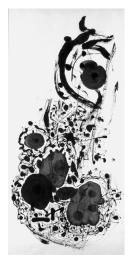
Saburo Hasegawa Non-Figure, 1953 Ink on paper Collection of the Oakland Museum of California, Gift of the Women's Board of the Oakland Museum Association



Isamu Noguchi Variation on a Millstone #2, 1962 Granite



Isamu Noguchi Study for a Waterfall, 1961 Granite



Saburo Hasegawa Untitled, 1954 Ink on paper Saburo Hasegawa Memorial Gallery, Konan Gakuen, Ashiya



Saburo Hasegawa From Lao-tzu, 1953 Ink on paper Collection of Matthew Reichman

Their food is plain and good, their clothes fine but simple, their homes secure; They are happy in their ways. Though they live within sight of their neighbors,

And crowing cocks and barking dogs are heard across the way,

Yet they leave each other in peace while they grow old and die.

(Trans. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English)



Lessons of Musokokushi, 1962 Five bronze elements

Saburo Hasegawa From Lao-tzu, 1954 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection





Saburo Hasegawa Great Chorus, 1952 Ink on paper Japan Society, New York

Isamu Noguchi

Building, 1951 Plaster

Model for Garden

for Reader's Digest



Saburo Hasegawa Eco Sum Via Verita, c. 1955 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection



Isamu Noguchi Mortality, 1959 Balsawood



Isamu Noguchi Large Square Vase, 1952 Karatsu stoneware



Saburo Hasegawa Pure Suffering, 1956 Ink on burlap Private collection



Album of Four Poem Drawings, 1954 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection



Saburo Hasegawa



Isamu Noguchi Woman, 1952 Bizen stoneware



Isamu Noguchi Orpheus, 1958 Aluminum



Isamu Noguchi Akari 1A, 1962 Paper, bamboo, metal



Isamu Noguchi Celebration, 1952 Japan Society, New York; gift of Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller, 1971, JS32.03



Isamu Noguchi Man, 1952 Bizen stoneware

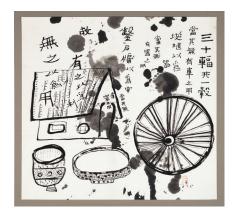


Isamu Noguchi The Seeker Sought, 1969 Basalt



Isamu Noguchi Large Walking Box, 1952





Saburo Hasegawa From Lao-tzu, 1954 Ink on paper Hasegawa Family Collection

Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub; It is the center hole that makes it useful. Shape clay into a vessel; It is the space within that makes it useful. Cut doors and windows for a room; It is the holes that make it useful. Therefore profit comes from what is there; Usefulness from what is not there. (Trans. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English)



Isamu Noguchi Mrs. White, 1952 Shigaraki stoneware

Isamu Noguchi

1957

Iron

Endless Coupling,



Isamu Noguchi Bird Song, 1952 (cast 1985) Bronze



Isamu Noguchi Young Mountain, 1970 Aji granite



Saburo Hasegawa Nature, 1952 Wood rubbing, ink on paper San Francisco Zen Center



Printing block for 'Nature,' 1952 Section of tree trunk Tia and Mark Watts Collection

Saburo Hasegawa



Isamu Noguchi Akari 16A, 1952 Paper, bamboo, metal



Saburo Hasegawa Mu, 1955 Ink on paper The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto On view: June 12 to July 14



Saburo Hasegawa Nature, 1952 Two-panel folding screen, ink on paper The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto On view: May 1 to June 9



Isamu Noguchi Akari BB1-30DD, 1962 Paper, bamboo, metal



Isamu Noguchi Cloud, 1959 Aluminum



Isamu Noguchi Studies for a doncho (theater curtain), c. 1953

Mulberry paper on plywood Kawashima Textile Museum

Isamu Noguchi

Greek marble

Pregnant Bird, 1958

Noguchi was commissioned by Jimbei Kawashima IV, the president and owner of the Kawashima Textile Co. in 1954 to design a doncho (theater curtain) for Toyoko Hall in Junzo Sakakura's Tokyu Kaikan in Shibuya, Tokyo. Working in Kawashima's home, Noguchi made six studies in paper collage, one of which, "Yukyo (eternal vastness)," was chosen. Used for more than thirty years, the curtain was destroyed in 1985 when the hall was demolished.

Two of the six studies are being shown at a time.







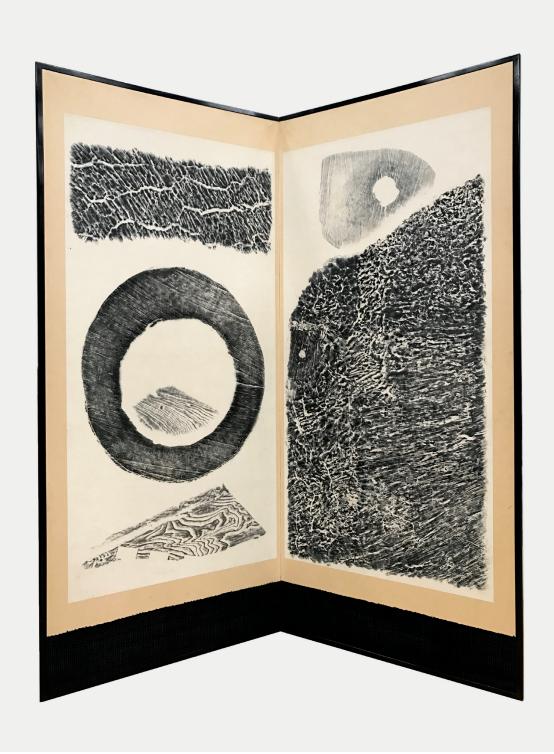




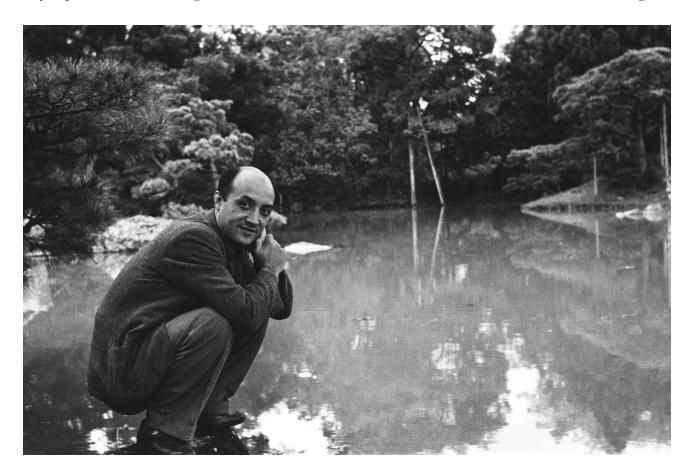
Saburo Hasegawa Distance, 1952 Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Gift of Nobuko and Joe Brotherton in appreciation of James Cahill



Isamu Noguchi
Sesshu, 1958
Anodized aluminum
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT;
gift of an Anonymous donor, 1962.259



Saburo Hasegawa
Nature, 1952
Two-panel folding screen, ink on paper
The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto
On view: May 1 to June 9



It was a valuable experience for me to make a trip to the Kansai<sup>2</sup> region with Mr. Isamu Noguchi and spend time together before and afterwards. I find it too precious, even distasteful, to hastily summarize our trip and friendship. Yet, in light of my forgetfulness, I would like to note a few things here as reminders.

Originally published as "Isamu Noguchi tono hibi," *Sansai* (August 1950). Mr. Noguchi holds Okakura Tenshin, with whose writing he is very familiar, in high regard.

During his brief stay in Japan nineteen years ago, he worked at the

studio of ceramicist Mr. Uno for a few months and worked in Nara with Dr. Warner.

Having avidly read Dr. Daisetz T. Suzuki's *Zen and Japa-nese Culture*, he returned a copy of an English translation to me while hospitalized prior to our trip to Kansai.

He also started a book by Bruno Taut before our departure. He finished reading it in the train westward.

Of course, he read all the English texts that his father,

Yone Noguchi, published, many of them on Japanese art.

By any measure, he is no amateur when it comes to Japanese art.

During our trip, a general-interest magazine asked Mr. Noguchi to contribute an article, and he ordered me to ghostwrite it. Despite his busy schedule, he took time to type talking points for me. I drafted a text under his name in Japanese and showed him my clumsy English translation of it. In it, I wrote, "I [Noguchi] earnestly hope that Japan should not repeat the foolishly extreme Westernization that the country undertook in the Meiji period [1868–1914]." He changed this part as follows: "I earnestly hope that Japan should take another look at itself and rediscover itself." He then told me, "Because the situation now may be worse than the Meiji period."

Indeed, we had fervently argued this point at an inn in Nara. I argued, "Today, as always, some Japanese people think about Japan, taking another look at it and rediscovering it. So, Japan is alright." To this, he countered, "If so, those people must now immediately speak up, with an

ever louder voice. Otherwise, something terrible will happen. It may be meddlesome of me, but just as Fenollosa and Okakura did, I want to speak up myself." My response was, "Please do."

He has a profound passion for old Japan. He firmly believes that taking another look at it and rediscovering it is the way to save Japan and make Japan contribute to the art and culture of the whole world.

He is far purer than I am. I have become keenly aware of this fact while traveling with him, and visiting him and being visited by him.

It occurred to me that I should show him a reproduction of Sesshu's *Long Landscape Scroll (Sansui chokan)*,<sup>3</sup> but I didn't show it to him then, since I thought it better for him to see it in a calmer environment.<sup>4</sup> When he visited me at my humble home, I swept the room, spread a piece of felt on the floor, and laid open the reproduction of Sesshu's scroll. His excitement at seeing it was beyond description.

On the same day, I also showed him the picture postcard of a clay figure from Japan's stone age (published by the Tokyo National Museum), which I treasured and always kept near my desk. He was so touched by it that he kept on drawing it on Japanese paper with ink and brush. Even though he was very exhausted by nighttime, he begged me, "Show me the Sesshu again," and intently gazed at it. Feeling so worn out, he would mumble, "Let's go to bed, already." Yet, he would return to look at it, again, saying, "Just a few more seconds..." As though sighing, he uttered words of appreciation about the composition, about the brushwork, about the Japanese's master's distinct deployment of the *dian tai fa* technique, bout the painter's humanity revealed in his work.

He always sees the back of a work. He cannot stop seeing it without seeing it through. He loves calligraphy. But if the calligrapher is not a fine person, he would not like his brush. That is why he loves the calligraphy of past Zen monks. He once admired some calligraphy written by Dr. Nishida Kitaro<sup>6</sup> on the frame at the temple Myoshinji, which was the residence of Professor Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, who studies Zen philosophy.

He often talks about the great Dadaist Marcel Duchamp. He also loves to talk about Brancusi, his sculpture teacher, as well as Mondrian, Klee, and Miro. I myself love to tell him about Rikyu, Basho, Ryokan, and Ogawa Usen. He is happy to hear about them. Recently, he started saying, "Dadaist Duchamp is just like Ryokan."

He told me that he would definitely find a reproduction of Sesshu's *Long Landscape Scroll*, a photograph of the stone age clay figure, and Ogawa Usen's book, *How to Draw Haiga*,<sup>7</sup> and buy them to bring home. Often remembering Buson's haiga painting in ink that he saw in Kyoto, he would praise it.

During the trip, he would often discuss the true meaning of "leisure 閑," "poverty 貧," and "nothingness 無," specifically as a critique of the materialist civilization that pervades today's world. Having learned about Ryokan bit by bit from me and seen the reproduction of the lay monk's calligraphy, he began to show a strong interest in "foolishness 愚." Of course, as a rebellion against contemporary culture.

He is familiar with Laozi and Zhuanzi. He once proudly told me, "A friend of mine has just published the best English translation of Laozi."

He has a magnificent Leica camera with a wide lens and a telephoto lens. With this camera, he avidly photographed important historic architecture, ranging from the Katsura Detached Palace to the temple Ryoanji, from the Taian, a teahouse believed to be designed by Rikyu at the temple Myokian in Yamazaki, to a garden designed by Katagiri Sekishu at the temple Jikoji in Yamato Koizumi. He aspires to capture the unity of a building and a garden—which is to say, the beauty of truly synthesized formalism. He would hang this camera from his shoulder, carrying under his arm a calico *furoshiki* bundle containing paper and ink, brush and ink stone. In addition, at the temple Yakushiji in Nara, he spent half a day to learn the technique of *takuhon* rubbing.

Photography, drawing, *takuhon*. These three mediums allow him to record what he loves.

He also spends every available moment on practicing writing *hirakana* syllabary. Or, poring over a book on haiku by Freis.<sup>8</sup>

I have long been troubled by the similarities and dissimilarities between modern art, especially abstract art, and tea ceremony, haiku, and calligraphy. However, the moment I met Mr. Noguchi, my concern evaporated. I am now seeing an open road before me, although I still have no concrete idea as to how to go forward on this road.

He often utters an original idea, out of the blue.

When the fires destroyed the Golden Hall of the temple Horyuji in Nara, I was devastated to see its horrific aftermath. Yet, he consoled me by saying, "That's still beautiful," and continuing, "In fact, until I saw its burnt ruinous state, I myself hadn't perhaps known Horyuji was such beautiful architecture."

When I told him about Rikyu's four ideals of tea ceremony—"harmony 和, respect 敬, purity 清, and simplicity 寂"—he immediately responded in agreement, "That's a magnificent ideal." When we talked about the burnt Horyuji, I explained to him the two meanings of sabi 寂 (= "simplicity"): One relates to sabishii (= "lonely") and the other, sabi (= "metallic rust"), with the latter implying the loving sentiment for a rusty, thus aged and bruised, state of things. Upon hearing this, he smiled in complete satisfaction, sharing his detailed observation on the relationship between humans who change nature and nature that changes artifice.

"You who praise the beauty of the burned Horyuji are more Japanese than I am in light of your love for sabi." To this comment, he responded with a sign of embarrassment and silence. He then retorted, "It is Arp who has the Japanese mind."

Not just Arp. He talks with love and respect about such giants of modern art as Klee, Brancusi, Mondrian, and Duchamp. Listening to him, I begin to feel that the truly spiritual and subjective expression of art that once existed in the East and in Japan is today becoming something of the West, while the East and Japan are forgetting and losing it.

I feel that he is daily answering my questions concerning modern art and *Nihonga* (Japanese-style painting) in Japan today.

Ultimately, the issue boils down to the depth and height of spirituality and the strength of execution. It is only through urgent reflection and awakening; there exists no other way to come to a solution. He makes me understand this basic fact again and again.

He is too busy now. Still, I hope that one day his schedule will ease up and he will write me a letter, perhaps from his studio in New York, about his deep and keen observations on what he saw in Japan—about Sesshu, about Rikyu, about Basho, about Ryokan, about Usen . . . I long for the day when the artist I dearly love will candidly and seriously tell us how contemporary Japanese art should awake and make a new step.

(Translated by Reiko Tomii)

- 2 Kansai is a western region around Osaka that encompasses Kyoto and Nara.
- 3 A fifteenth-century masterpiece of ink painting.
- 4 Hasegawa refers to Noguchi's time in the hospital.
- 5 A Chinese ink technique using dots.
- 6 A prominent thinker who established the Kyoto School of philosophy.
- 7 A simple abridged painting that accompanies and interacts with a haiku poem.
- 8 Hasegawa's identification of the author is unclear.

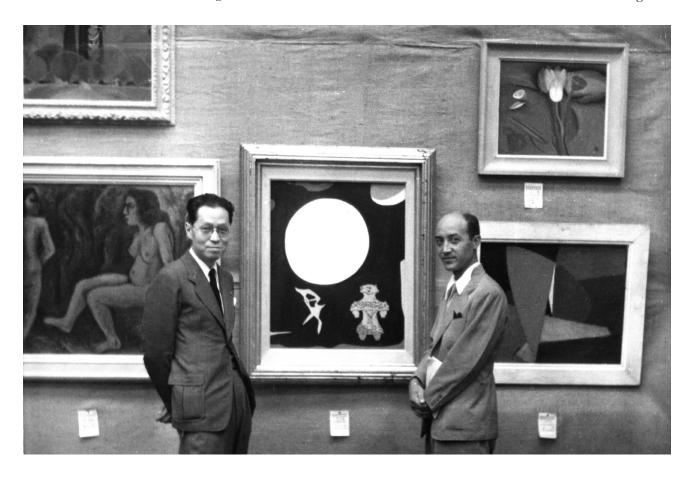
PAGE 12 Isamu Noguchi, probably at Katsura Imperial Villa, c. 1950. Unknown photographer.

PAGE 15 Hasegawa and Noguchi with Hasegawa's painting Music of Moonlight (Dogu) at the Fourth Art Group Exhibition (Bijutsu Dantai Rengo Ten), Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 1950. Unknown photographer.

PAGE 16 Hasegawa (left) and Michio Noguchi (3rd from left) with unidentified woman and man at Hekiunso Nomura Villa, Kyoto, Japan. Photograph by Isamu Noguchi.

PAGE 19 Hasegawa (second from right) and Noguchi (far right) at a *nodate* tea ceremony in Nara, 1950.

Images from The Noguchi Museum Archive.



Hasegawa Saburo was my friend who I met in the spring of 1950 when he became my guide and interpreter under the sponsorship of the Mainichi Newspaper. This was when I arrived in Japan after the war and was invited to speak and travel around Japan. It was fortunate and to our mutual advantage which at that time was to find "Yugen," (and) the spirit of things (past). The Orient had always represented that valuable frontier for me and Hasegawa when I met him was already turning away from his previous interest in European culture and art toward a rediscovery of his own country. He had just exhibited a canvas with the Modern Bijitsu Ten with a small Jomon figure in the corner.

That initial trip took us to Ise, Nara, and Kyoto, which is routine, excepting that ours must have been exceptional. A teacher, in the process of learning himself and in remembering his own origins is indeed exceptional. I myself must also have served as a catalyst in having all this pour forth, away finally from the misery of war, and the burned city. For a teacher a student is necessary.

Our friendship continued and we often took trips to Kyoto where we would stay with his friend Hirayama Ryutaro. Zen was our particular interest, and with him ceremonial tea. I remember how enthusiastic he was when after innumerable cups in many places we came to the house

of Mushakoji and was served with plain warm water. This he said was the ultimate, beyond affectations and show, more like the true purpose of tea—"of the poor man wanting nothing in his hut". Hasegawa would tell me of Ryokan san with special

Unpublished manuscript, c. 1976, The Noguchi Museum Archive.

Noguchi's handwritten corrections are indicated by parentheses.

pleasure. For myself coming from the opulent West, this was my primary instruction(:) The enjoyment of Haiku and the understanding of Nature.

In 1952 I established a household in Kita-Kamakura, thanks to the kindness of Rosanjin Kitaoji. Hasegawa had moved to nearby Chigasaki and we often saw each other, resuming our everlasting conversation. At one point we spent a week doing Zazen every evening at Enkakuji.



My life, however, was badly split between Japan and America. My reality, today's reality, was after all in the West, however I might aspire to the ideals of the East. In life as in art I lived in a no man's land between the two. Hasegawa san on the other hand when he shortly got to America arrived with no such doubts. He only became more obviously Japanese, a representative of old Japan, that is. He regularly wore Kimono. No evidence remained of his Western painterly past. There was just sumi, paper, tales of "Koan", of Basho and of course Ryokan san.

Soon he was immersed in the interest and good will of many artists. Among them was Franz Klein [sic], photographs of whose work I had taken to Japan and which Hasegawa had introduced in the magazine "Bokubi". It seemed as though he had finally found his true audience and fellowship.

I remember one occasion when I introduced him at the "Club". <sup>11</sup> Thereupon he got up on a table and announced he would give a discourse on the Rose Sutra. He held a rose in his hand and remained in absolute silence. After perhaps an hour I was asked to aro(u)se him, to the great annoyance of the large audience.

The fact is I saw less of Hasegawa san in America. He went off to San Francisco and then returned to Japan. When I next saw him he explained that it had become impossible for him to stay. A total gap in sympathy had developed. All he was asked to do was to report on the artistic activities of the West. They were definitely not interested in any thoughts of his on Zen. The result was that he moved his family off to San Francisco where he joined the faculty of Alan Watts Institute. I had no occasion to go there, nor did I see him before I heard of his untimely death.

If I am asked about his influence on America, I should say it was very substantial, and that it is still alive in the developing regard for the lessness of material things. In the world of art, he was a valuable link in the transformation of values taking place between Japan and America.

<sup>9</sup> Yugen is a term from Japanese aesthetics meaning dim, deep, or mysterious or, in some contexts, referring to a profound sense of the beauty of the universe and the sadness of human suffering.

<sup>10</sup> The prehistoric Jomon period in Japan is traditionally dated from 14,000 to 300 BCE.

<sup>11</sup> The Eighth Street Club in New York, a venue popular among artists where Hasegawa gave at least four lectures on Zen in 1954.

This chronology focuses on the relationship between Isamu Noguchi (born Los Angeles, November 17, 1904) and Saburo Hasegawa (born Yamaguchi, Japan, September 6, 1906) and the little-known events of Hasegawa's years in the United States.

#### 1948

FEBRUARY Hasegawa mentions Noguchi in an article about developments in avant-garde art in the United States that appears in *Mizue* (Watercolor).

#### 1950

MAY On Noguchi's return to Japan for the first time in almost twenty years, he is welcomed by many artists and architects. At a lecture given under the auspices of the newspaper *Mainichi Shimbun* he is introduced to Hasegawa.

JUNE Under the sponsorship of *Mainichi Shimbun*, Noguchi and Hasegawa travel to lse, Nara, and Kyoto to visit temples and gardens.

SUMMER Hasegawa and Noguchi visit Chigasaki with family and friends to see Noguchi's childhood home.

AUGUST 18-30 Noguchi's first solo exhibition in Japan is held at the Mitsukoshi department store. It includes a painting by Hasegawa in a framing device designed by Noguchi.

AUGUST 24 Hasegawa sends a letter to Noguchi along with a handwritten transcript he entitles "Fragments," which includes a biography of the Zen monk Ryokan (1758–1831) annotated with translations of meaningful words.

AUGUST 30 In a letter, Hasegawa congratulates Noguchi on his Mitsukoshi exhibition, thanks Noguchi for giving him the courage to make art, tells of starting a canvas that will be "calligraphy in color," and asks Noguchi to let him know when Noguchi will depart from Tokyo.

SEPTEMBER In a letter to Noguchi in New York, Hasegawa asks about new work and confides, "I am all alone here—as you noticed it—I like Sesshu, Rikyu, Basho, and Ryokan far too much. But I will continue to walk my way." He adds, "Please do not forget to tell M. Marcel Duchamp that there is a fellow who respects him in Japan. Keep the Sesshu scroll and *kakemono* always with you with good care, please."

DECEMBER The Museum of Modern Art, New York, exhibits childhood drawings by Hiroshi Nishida, the son of Shinichi Nishida (a friend of Noguchi and Hasegawa), alongside Fernand Léger's *Le Cirque*. Letters indicate Noguchi and Hasegawa worked together to arrange the exhibition.

#### 1951

Hasegawa's essay "Katsura-rikyu wo chusho suru" (Making Katsura Imperial Villa abstract), discussing his visit to the site with Noguchi, appears in *Geijutsu shincho* (Art currents). Hasegawa begins a correspondence with Franz Kline.

NOVEMBER Noguchi is invited by architect Kenzo Tange and the mayor of Hiroshima to participate in the design of a monument commemorating victims of the atom bomb in the city's Peace Park. Their plan is rejected in February 1952.

# 1952

JUNE Hasegawa's *Rhapsody: Fishing Village* (page 5) is included in the exhibition *Contemporary Art of Japan* at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco. The exhibition later travels to St. Louis, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Santa Barbara, CA.

DECEMBER Hasegawa reviews Noguchi's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura, in *Bokubi* (Beauty of ink) magazine. The exhibition brochure includes statements by Hasegawa, Noguchi, and ceramicist and chef Kitaoji Rosanjin.

#### 1953

JANUARY Hasegawa's first solo exhibition in the United States opens at the New Gallery, New York; the artist is unable to travel for the show, so Noguchi attends the reception and speaks in his stead.

MAY Hasegawa accepts an invitation from the American Abstract Artists to organize a selection of work by Japanese artists for the group's annual exhibition at the Riverside Museum, New York, the following year.

DECEMBER Hasegawa publishes "Modern Art Exposition in Japan" in *Arts & Architecture* magazine, singling out sculptures by Tsutomu Hiroi, Noguchi's friend and chief assistant in Japan.

Hasegawa's work is included in the exhibition *Chusou to Gensou: Hishajitsu kaiga wo dou rikai suruka* (Abstraction and fantasy: How to understand nonfigurative [nonrealistic] painting) at the Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

#### 1954

JANUARY Hasegawa travels to New York to install the work (including his own) of the Japan Abstract Art Club (Nihon Abusutorakuto Ato Kurabu) as part of the American Abstract Artists's annual exhibition at the Riverside Museum in March. This is the first exhibition of Asian abstract art in the United States.

In New York, Hasegawa stays with a junior-high-school friend and works in Kline's studio. He leads numerous tea ceremonies, including one where he meets Marcel Duchamp. Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III purchase one of Hasegawa's painted folding screens, and his essay "Five Calligraphic Drawings" appears in the magazine New World Writing alongside works by Louis Armstrong, Saul Bellow, and others.

FEBRUARY Hasegawa gives a lecture at New York's Eighth Street Club, where he is introduced by Kline. Noguchi introduces him at a later talk at the club.

MARCH Noguchi is commissioned by the Kawashima Textile Company to design a theater curtain (*doncho*) for Toyoko Hall in Tokyo (see page 9).

MARCH 16 Hasegawa participates in "Abstract Art around the World Today" at the Museum of Modern Art, a panel discussion including Kline, Josef Albers, Alfred H. Barr Jr., and others.

MARCH 21 Hasegawa's solo exhibition at Contemporaries Gallery in New York opens.

NOVEMBER Hasegawa presents a talk on Zen with the painter Matsumi "Mike" Kanemitsu at the Eighth Street Club. Soon thereafter he leaves New York for San Francisco, where he gives a talk on television station KRON-TV.

NOVEMBER 23, 1954-JANUARY 9, 1955
The exhibition *Isamu Noguchi: Terracottas* is on view at the Stable Gallery, New York.

# 1955

Hasegawa receives a solo exhibition in the gallery of Gump's department store in San Francisco; is included in the exhibition Dai-san-ki Nihon kokusai bijutsu-ten (Third Japan international art exhibition) at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; and curates and exhibits in Nichi-Bei Chusho bijutsu-ten (Abstract art exhibition: Japan and U.S.) at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. In addition, his work is displayed alongside that of Al Copley and Michel Seuphor in An Exhibition of Calligraphy as an Art Expression at Rose Fried Gallery, New York.

SEPTEMBER Hasegawa begins teaching at the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts) in Oakland.

#### 1956

Hasegawa's solo exhibition at the Oakland Art Museum features his calligraphy of poetic passages produced as site specific works.

APRIL 28-MAY 6 Hasegawa organizes a multifaceted exhibition at the Oakland Art Museum for the Bunka Sai festival featuring his own work, pieces by Noguchi and ceramicist J. B. Blunk, *haniwa* on loan from Tokyo University of the Arts and works in *sumi* by the Zen monks Ryokan, Hakuin, and Sengai. Coinciding with the Bunka Sai festival, another Hasegawa solo show at KPFA Gallery in Berkeley, California, is the radio station's inaugural exhibition.

SEPTEMBER Hasegawa is joined by his wife, Kiyoko, and three children in the San Francisco Bay Area.

DECEMBER Hasegawa undergoes an operation for a cancerous lump in his mouth.

# 1957

JANUARY 29 Alan Watts, writing from the American Academy of Asian Studies in San Francisco, updates Noguchi on Hasegawa's treatments, including a stint at Hoxsey Clinic in Dallas (financed by one of Hasegawa's students); he also details plans for an exhibition at the Willard Gallery in New York.

FEBRUARY Hasegawa's work is featured in the exhibition *Contemporary Art in Japan and Sabro Hasegawa* at the San Francisco Museum of Art and in a solo exhibition at the Oakland Art Museum.

MARCH 11 Hasegawa dies in San Francisco.

APRIL 23-MAY 6 Hasegawa memorial exhibition held at the Willard Gallery, New York.

Hasegawa's essay "Abstract Art in Japan Today" appears in the book *The World of Abstract Art*. Illustrations in the book include Noguchi's *Strange Bird* (1945), Hasegawa's *Space (Oriental Abstraction)*  (1955), and work by Shinichi Nishida, Kenzo Okada, and others.

"Sabro Hasegawa: Artist of the Controlled Accident," a series of essays compiled in memory of the artist by the Oakland Art Museum, is planned but goes unpublished.

OCTOBER 28-DECEMBER 1 Hasegawa's Non-Figure (1953) is included in the exhibition Art in Asia and the West at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Noguchi's Tiger (1952), in Kasama stoneware, is included as well and is later acquired by the museum.

#### 1958

JUNE 26-AUGUST 7 Hasegawa's work is included in two major exhibitions: *Modern Abstract Japanese Calligraphy*, which opens at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and travels to the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and *Contemporary Painters of Japanese Origin in America*, opening at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, and traveling to the Des Moines Art Center.

NOVEMBER In New York, with the assistance of the architect Shoji Sadao, Noguchi begins a series of sculptures formed by cutting, scoring, and bending single sheets of aluminum, including one titled *Sesshu* (page 10), for an upcoming exhibition at the Stable Gallery, New York. The gallery declines to exhibit the sculptures, which are later shown in the exhibition *Weightlessness* at the Cordier-Warren Gallery, New York, in May 1961.

# 1959

Hasegawa receives a posthumous exhibition at the Rose Rabow Gallery, San Francisco.

# Programs & Events



#### PUBLIC PROGRAMS

MAY 3, 6:30 PM & MAY 12, 3:30 PM Center of Attention

Join a conversation on Isamu Noguchi's Sesshu (1958). Free with admission.

MAY 11, 3 PM

Noguchi Talks: Marc Keane and Matthew Kirsch on Japanese Gardens

Marc Keane, landscape architect and garden scholar, and Matthew Kirsch, Curator of Research at The Noguchi Museum, present a discussion on the Japanese garden as both inspiration and point of departure for Isamu Noguchi in the last few decades of his career. Free with admission; RSVP to publicprograms@noguchi.org.

MAY 18, 1 PM

#### Curator's Tour

Senior Curator Dakin Hart leads a tour of the exhibition. Free with admission.

MAY 19, 1-5 PM

Hands-On at Noguchi: Hand-building with Clay

Art-making workshop for adults led by teaching artist Luned Palmer. \$20 members/\$30 non-members. Advanced registration required: noguchi.org/programs.

JUNE 2, 4 PM; JUNE 7, 6:30 PM

& JUNE 15, 3:30 PM

#### Center of Attention

Join a conversation on Saburo Hasegawa's *The Harmonious* (1953). Free with admission.

JUNE 9, 1 PM

#### Curator's Tour

Co-curator Mark Dean Johnson, Dakin Hart, and Matthew Kirsch lead a tour of the exhibition. Free with admission.

JUNE 13, 6:30 PM

# Changing and Unchanging Sound

Musical performance featuring the premiere of a newly commissioned work by Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti, works by Kaija Saariaho and Juri Seo, and improvisations based on paintings by Saburo Hasegawa. Lanzilotti is joined by Johanna Lundy on French horn, and the Argus Quartet. Free; RSVP to publicprograms@noguchi.org.

JUNE 16, 1-5 PM

Hands-On at Noguchi: Block-print Stamping Art-making workshop for adults led by artist Marie Lorenz. \$20 members/\$30 nonmembers. Advanced registration required.

JULY 14, 1 PM

# Curator's Tour

Dakin Hart, Senior Curator, and Matthew Kirsch, Curator of Research, lead a tour of the exhibition. Free with admission.

#### **OFFSITE**

JUNE 8, 4 PM

Japan Boom, 1954, New York The Japan Society

333 East 47th Street, New York, NY In 1954, Japan had an enormous

cultural impact on New York City through artists Ruth Asawa, Saburo Hasegawa, Isamu Noguchi, Kenzo Okada, ceramicist/calligrapher Kitaoji Rosanjin and architect Junzo Yoshimura. Specialists explore the sensational Japan Boom that occured before the global 1960s. \$15. Tickets available through japansociety.org.

# FAMILY PROGRAMS

JUNE 2, 11 AM-2 PM

Open Studio: Photograms

JULY 7, 11 AM-2 PM

Open Studio: Brush and Ink with Taisan Tanaka

Families with children ages 2 to 11 are invited to explore the galleries, then make art in the studio. These Open Studio sessions are free as part of Community Day (first Sundays June–September).

Changing and Unchanging Things:

Noguchi and Hasegawa in Postwar Japan is organized by The Noguchi Museum and co-curated by Dakin Hart and Mark Dean Johnson, with Matthew Kirsch.

#### **VENUES**

Yokohama Museum of Art January 12-March 24, 2019

The Noguchi Museum May 1–July 14, 2019

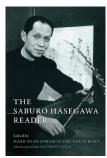
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#### CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by two publications from University of California Press: the exhibition catalogue and *The Saburo Hasegawa Reader*, a free anthology available for download at ucpress.edu.

FRONT COVER Screen diptych (now lost) by Saburo Hasegawa, installed with Isamu Noguchi's ceramic wall sculpture *Skin and Bones* (1950) and Akari light sculpture at Noguchi's studio in Kita Kamakura, Japan, c. 1952. The Noguchi Museum Archive. INSIDE FRONT COVER Travel photograph (detail) by Saburo Hasegawa from a visit to Yugang Grottoes at Datong, Shanxi province, China, 1938. Courtesy of Bert Winther-Tamaki. INSIDE BACK COVER Travel photograph (detail) by Isamu Noguchi from a visit to a temple, possibly in Kyoto, c. 1950s. The Noguchi Museum Archive. BACK COVER Saburo Hasegawa (left) with Isamu Noguchi and Yoshiko Yamaguchi at the Urasenke Konnichi-an estate, Kyoto, c. 1952. Photograph by Michio Noguchi. The Noguchi Museum Archive. Unless otherwise noted, images © The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, NY / Artists Rights Society (ARS).

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This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of scholar Koichi Kawasaki, on whose work the legacy of Saburo Hasegawa rests assured.