



**Exhibitions Explore Noguchi's Designs for Public Space:  
*In Search of Contoured Playground and Models for Spaces***

**OPEN AUGUST 21, 2019**

**WHAT**

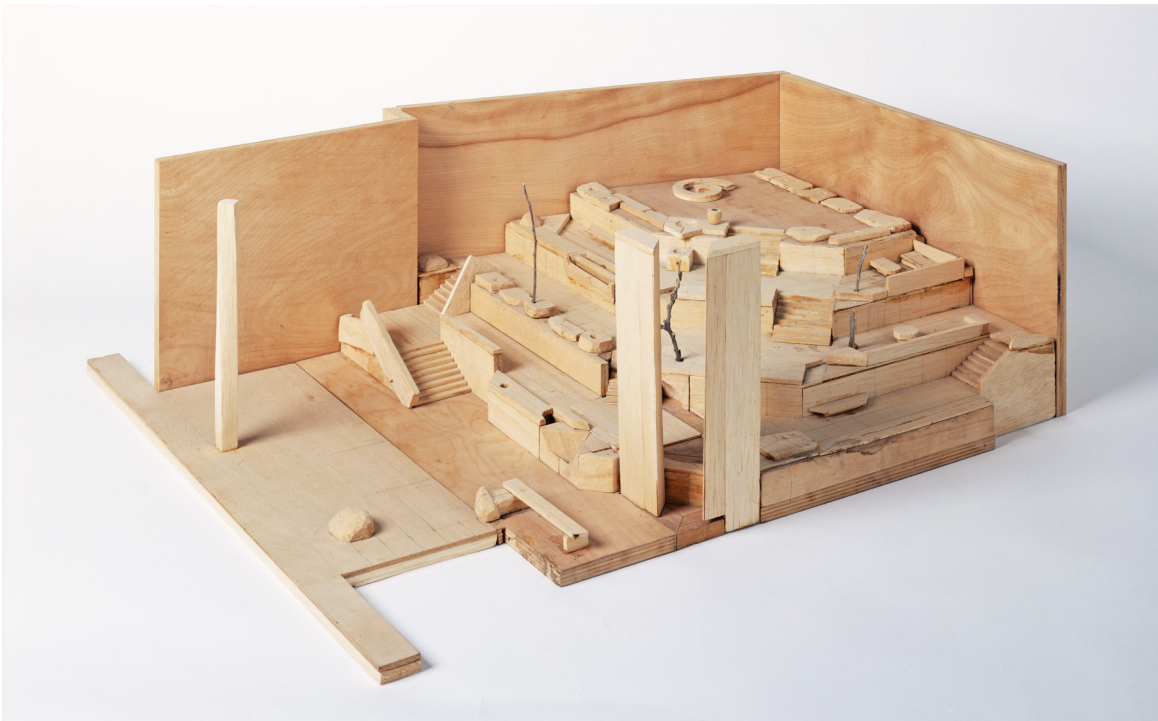
Opening August 21, 2019, The Noguchi Museum presents two focused exhibitions that explore Isamu Noguchi's designs for public spaces and his conviction that sculpture is about shaping our experience of space.

**EXHIBITIONS**

***In Search of Contoured Playground***

Noguchi first created the design for his *Contoured Playground* in 1941, utilizing "earth modulations" to construct a compact landscape in which children could play. Like many of Noguchi's playground designs, *Contoured Playground* was never built. However, Noguchi cast his 2-by-2-foot plaster model—shorn of the play equipment that appears in an archival photo and is being recreated for the current exhibition—in bronze and included this cast, along with many other models for spaces, in the Museum's permanent collection.

For this exhibition, developed in collaboration with architect Naomi Frangos, Visiting Associate Professor, Cornell University, the Museum will treat *Contoured Playground* as a piece of theoretical



Isamu Noguchi, *Model for Heaven (Tengoku)*, c. 1977–78.  
Wood. Photo by Kevin Noble. ©INFGM/ARS

architecture. The centerpiece of the installation will be a 10-foot-square enlargement of the model, featuring Noguchi's original proposals for equipment (known from just one archival photograph). The exhibition will also include a 1:1 scale silhouette of the topography of *Contoured Playground* from the perspective of someone standing in the middle of the actual playground (had it been built), the bronze cast of the original model, and a number of other schematic interpretations of the overall plan, providing visitors a multitude of ways to experience this unrealized space.

### ***Models for Spaces***

Over the course of his career, Noguchi made, commissioned, and collaborated on dozens of models for actual and theoretical spaces. *Models for Spaces* will feature five designs for projects that are either little known or for which the models have rarely been shown. These include *Model of Gardens for Connecticut General Life Insurance Company*, 1956–57, Bloomfield, Connecticut (project realized; model fabricated 1999–2000 by AT Architects); *Memorial to Buddha on the 2500th Anniversary of Buddha's Parinirvana*, 1957, New Delhi, India (project unrealized; model partially reconstructed 1978); *Sacred Rocks of Kukaniloko*, 1976, Oahu, Hawaii (project unrealized); *Model for Heaven (Tengoku)*, also known as *Interior Garden for Sogetsu Flower Arranging School*, c. 1977–78, Tokyo, Japan (project realized); and *Model for California Scenario*, Costa Mesa, c. 1980–82 (project realized; model fabricated by Fuller & Sadao, P.C.).

Each model, representing a specific project for a real space, will be installed to emphasize how Noguchi used it, with materials that explain how he wanted the actual space to function. As a whole, the exhibition will reflect Noguchi's belief in sculpture as the manipulation of our experience of space. In his words, "if sculpture is the rock, it is also the space between rocks and between the rock and a man, and the communication and contemplation between."

## **WHEN**

*In Search of Contoured Playground* and *Models for Spaces*  
are on view August 21, 2019 through February 2, 2020.

## **WHERE**

### **The Noguchi Museum**

9-01 33rd Road (at Vernon Boulevard)  
Long Island City, New York

## **NOGUCHI MUSEUM**

Founded in 1985 by Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), one of the leading sculptors and designers of the twentieth century, The Noguchi Museum was the first museum in America to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Widely viewed as among the artist's greatest achievements, the Museum comprises ten indoor galleries in a converted factory building, as well as an internationally acclaimed outdoor sculpture garden. Since its founding, it has served as an international hub for Noguchi research and appreciation. In addition to housing the artist's archives and the catalogue raisonné of his work, the Museum exhibits a comprehensive selection of sculpture, models for public projects and gardens, dance sets, and his Akari light sculptures. Provocative, frequently-changing installations drawn from the permanent collection, together with diverse special exhibitions related to Noguchi and the milieu in which he worked, offer a rich, contextualized view of Noguchi's art and illuminate his enduring influence as a category-defying, multicultural, cross-disciplinary innovator. [noguchi.org](http://noguchi.org) | [@noguchimuseum](https://www.instagram.com/noguchimuseum)

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