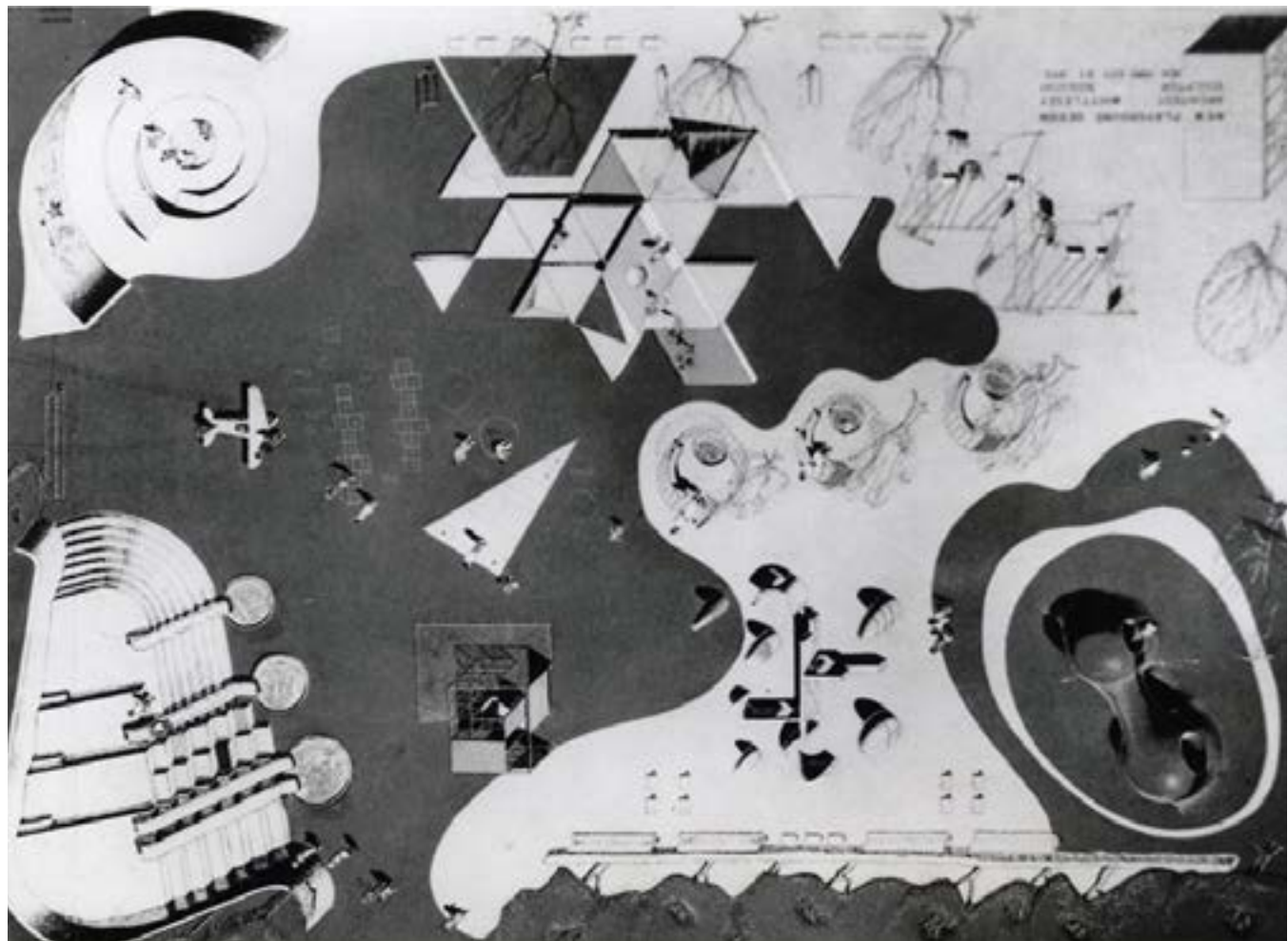
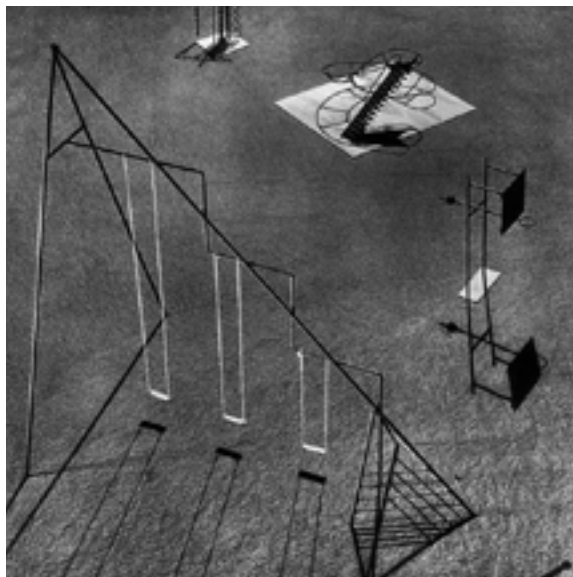


### **Manipulating Landscape - United Nations Playground, 1952**

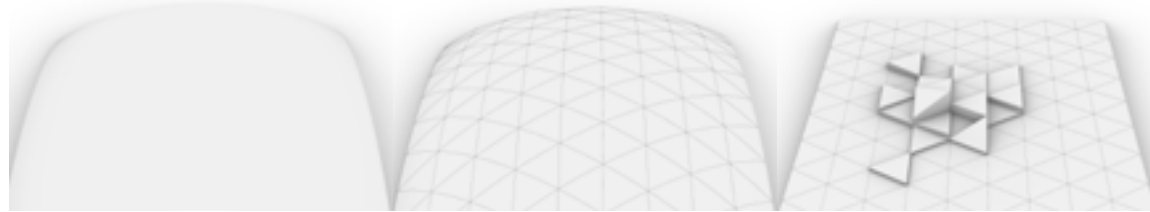
The United Nations Playground was a proposal for a playground located south of the United Nations Headquarters and is a culmination of ideas explored in his previous designs, including 'Contoured Playground' and 'Play Mountain,' for a 'new kind of playground that would contain no swing sets, sandboxes, or seesaws' but instead 'sweeping, tiered pyramid for undirected play where the imagination could run wild.' Despite the proposal being well received by the public, it was 'rejected by Robert Moses as it was redeemed too dangerous' and the site now houses the Robert Moses Playground instead.





The playground was unique to his previous attempts in that 'the ground itself provided shapes and areas for play, more specific to function this time than in Contoured Playground,' especially in how the natural landform is aggregated and manipulated to form 'ridges and steps that provided exercise from jumping and climbing.' These actions of carving are present in many of his previous works including 'Swimming Pool for Josef von Sternberg' and 'Riverside Playground' where Noguchi creates different edge conditions that form the boundary of a space by creating upright walls but then blends the void with the landscape with his addition of artificial landscape features that act as an equipment of its own.





The experience of interacting with the mounds in 'United Nations Playground' is unique as your actions are guided by the way the mounds are aggregated. Since there are three main mounds you interact with, the experience of being on top of a mound is oriented towards the two other mounds and how they frame one another. The first mound is aggregated through a modular triangular grid where the panels are lowered and raised to form climbing steps, initiating a zig zag motion as one navigates around. The second mound is cut into strips forming a grain that can be approached from the perpendicular where the ridges can be climbed on while the parallel can be used as a slide. The third mound consists of a depression that is carved into a spiral, inviting a circular, downwards motion and a tall wall that blocks views outside of the playground. Overall the playground 'expanded previous notions of build-in earth modulations and suggested new forms of equipment,' and succeeded in the objectives of the United Nations which was to create 'a playground that could foster imagination through beauty and good design.'

