

**Noguchi Museum Presents  
*Koho Yamamoto: Under a Dark Moon***

Installation of ten paintings by living legend *sumi-e* master and beloved teacher for generations of students in New York City

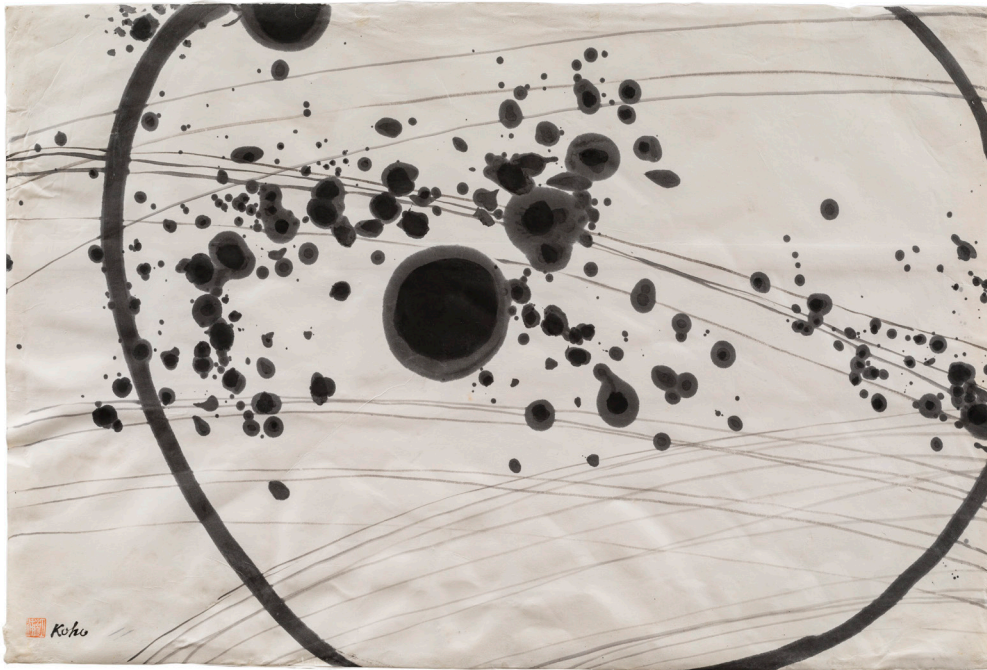
March 10 – May 23, 2021



Koho Yamamoto, Untitled, c. 1987. Ink on paper. 34 1/8 x 44 1/2 in. Courtesy of the artist.

New York, NY (February 25, 2021) – The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum announces *Koho Yamamoto: Under a Dark Moon*, a one-gallery installation of ten untitled works on paper by Masako “Koho” Yamamoto (b. 1922). Master painter and founder of an eponymous school in New York City where she educated generations of students in *sumi-e* (“black ink painting”) from 1974 to 2010, Yamamoto continues to work and teach privately as she approaches her ninety-ninth year. Because of her deep association with *sumi-e* and veneration as a teacher, her art has been almost totally unrecognized outside of that context. These dark abstract paintings, suggesting sublime interior landscapes, which she describes as coming “from nothingness”—from an empty mind—have not been exhibited before.

The exhibition’s organizer, Dakin Hart, Noguchi Museum Senior Curator, states, “Yamamoto’s impact as a teacher and cross-cultural ambassador has been immense and widespread. It was



Koho Yamamoto, Untitled, c. 1978. Ink on paper. 23 7/8 x 35 3/4 in. Courtesy of the artist.

her students, friends, and followers who brought her to The Noguchi Museum's attention and their devotion that made this exhibition happen. But her gifts as a teacher should not overshadow her formidable body of work. She is as driven to paint today at ninety-eight as she was when she first recognized in art a means to freedom and freedom of expression. Her work combines a mastery of the techniques and traditions of *sumi-e* with an atomic era sensibility, an archetypal twentieth century biography of displacement, the brash bravura of postwar abstraction, and a disdain for the conventions of restraint her own teaching represents."

[noguchi.org/exhibitions/koho-yamamoto](http://noguchi.org/exhibitions/koho-yamamoto)

#### LOCATION

The Noguchi Museum  
9-01 33rd Road (at Vernon Boulevard)  
Long Island City, NY 11106

Open Weds-Sun, 11 am- 6 pm,  
by advance reservation: [noguchi.org/visit](http://noguchi.org/visit)

#### ABOUT KOHO YAMAMOTO

Masako "Koho" Yamamoto (b. 1922) was born in Alviso, California, spent her early elementary school years in Japan, and returned permanently to live in the United States at age nine in 1931. During the Second World War, Yamamoto was forcibly incarcerated with her father and siblings in the prison camps established by the American government for residents of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast of the United States. At Tanforan Assembly

Center (San Bruno, California) and then in Topaz Relocation Center (Millard County, Utah) she studied with the celebrated Japanese American painter Chiura Obata (1885–1975). He gave her the name “Koho” (“red harbor”) derived from his own name (“thousand harbors”), in recognition of her skill. After her release in 1945 from Tule Lake Segregation Center (Newell, California), where the family was transferred in 1943, Yamamoto moved to New York City. She studied for seven years at the Art Students League of New York, and her work increasingly incorporated Abstract Expressionist influences. In 1955 she presented a show at “Gallery 84,” one of the original 10th Street Cooperative Art Galleries. In 1974 she founded the Koho School of Sumi-e at 64 MacDougal Street on the border between Soho and Greenwich Village, the only school of its kind in New York, where she instructed students for nearly four decades until its closure in 2010 (“Reflections on a Stilled Paintbrush,” Ann Farmer, *New York Times*, May 27, 2010). Yamamoto has taught at the Japanese American Society, the Nippon Museum and other institutions, and continues to teach privately. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group shows including at Japanese American Association of New York (2014). [koho-schoolofsumi-e.com](http://koho-schoolofsumi-e.com) | [facebook.com/kohoart](https://facebook.com/kohoart) | [@kohoyamamoto](https://twitter.com/kohoyamamoto)

#### SUPPORT

*Koho Yamamoto: Under a Dark Moon* is supported by friends of Koho and, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

#### ABOUT THE 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 acclaimed outdoor sculpture garden. Since its founding, it has served as an international hub for Noguchi research and appreciation. In addition to managing the artist’s archives and catalogue raisonné, the Museum exhibits a comprehensive selection of sculpture, models for public projects and gardens, dance sets, and his Akari light sculptures. Provocative 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://twitter.com/noguchimuseum)

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