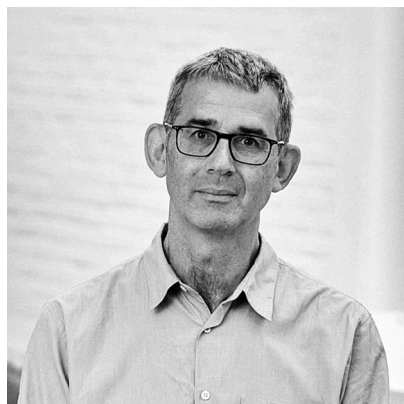


## **The Noguchi Museum Celebrates 10th Anniversary of the Isamu Noguchi Award**

2023 Award will honor Edmund de Waal, Theaster Gates, and Hanya Yanagihara;  
 to be presented at the Museum's Annual Benefit on September 12, 2023



Edmund de Waal. Photo: Tom Jamieson



Theaster Gates. Photo: Rankin Photography



Hanya Yanagihara. Photo: Jenny Westerhoff

**New York (June 6, 2023) – The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum**—the first museum in the United States to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work—is pleased to celebrate the **10th anniversary** of its annual **Isamu Noguchi Award**. Established in 2014 to honor the tenets Isamu Noguchi exemplified in his life's work, the Award will recognize **Edmund de Waal, Theaster Gates, and Hanya Yanagihara**. The Award will be presented at the Museum's annual benefit gala on **Tuesday, September 12, 2023**, at The Noguchi Museum in **Long Island City**.

The Isamu Noguchi Award perpetuates Noguchi's legacy by acknowledging highly accomplished individuals who share Noguchi's spirit of innovation, unbounded imagination, and uncompromising commitment to creativity. Presented annually, the Isamu Noguchi Award illuminates how Noguchi's ideals endure in contemporary culture as exemplified through the work of the honorees.

The quintessential sculptor in an expanded field, **Isamu Noguchi** (1904–1988) was a future-focused idealist whose timeless work blended the ancient and the modern; formalism and conceptualism; art, architecture and design. His multidisciplinary approach and ability to bridge many of the supposedly irreconcilable contradictions at the heart of contemporary life—such as the one between traditional cultures and technological innovation—remain an inspiration for a wide range of creative people. Using everything he learned designing playgrounds, dance sets and gardens, he remade sculpture into a discipline for understanding our place in the universe and a technique for integrating the best habits and effects of craft into daily life.

The Award celebrates individuals from around the world, across various disciplines, whose works demonstrate the highest level of artistic integrity marked by fearless experimentation and a preoccupation with cross-cultural dialogue and exchange. Honoring individuals whose work exhibits qualities of artistic excellence that are shared with Noguchi, the Award also recognizes work that carries significant social consciousness and function.



Edmund de Waal. Photo: Tom Jamieson

## HONOREES

**Edmund de Waal** is an English artist and writer recognized widely for his large-scale installations of porcelain vessels. Much of his work is about the contingency of memory: bringing particular histories of loss and exile into renewed life. Both his artistic and writing practice have broken new ground through their critical engagement with the history and potential of ceramics, as well as with architecture, music, dance, and poetry. De Waal uses his early training in Japanese ceramics to incorporate themes of diaspora, memorial, and materiality with his interventions and artwork. He shares Noguchi's faith in "the space around an object, or in non-material things," creating architectural interventions and installations that respond to particular environments. Also an acclaimed writer, de Waal is best known for his family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance*, published in 2010.

"I'm truly honored to be receiving the Isamu Noguchi Award.

Noguchi has been a constant presence in my life since I first went to Japan over forty years ago," says Edmund de Waal. "I was a pilgrim to the many places in which he worked and since then feel that I have traveled in his footsteps. His relationship with the materials of clay and stone and his sense of place have informed and delighted me. Noguchi's encounters with traditional skills were respectful: he took them seriously enough to change and renew them with vigor. I am a potter, I work with the oldest craft in the world and I try to renew my art in a similar way."

**Theaster Gates** is an American, Chicago-based contemporary artist and social innovator focusing on space theory, land development, sculpture and performance. Gates has been a pioneer in the field of social practice, combining strategies of urban planning, object making, and performance. His work exemplifies Noguchi's belief that the purpose of art is to make us more human. In establishing the Rebuild Foundation—a community-based non-profit for art, cultural development, and neighborhood transformation—he has created a platform to promote other artists and foster community revitalization.

"The Isamu Noguchi award is one of the highest honors I could receive," says Theaster Gates. "The complexity and purity of Noguchi's practice, and the ambition of his public works, has always been true north for me. The philosophies, traditions and ways of working that underpin



Theaster Gates. Photo: Lyndon French

Noguchi’s practice continue to act as pillars and anchors of truth for me. I am humbled to receive this recognition and to be recognized amongst my colleagues Hanya Yanagihara and Edmund de Waal.”



Hanya Yanagihara. Photo: Jenny Westerhoff

**Hanya Yanagihara** is an American, New York-based novelist, editor, and writer. The author of three novels, Yanagihara’s work tackles topics that are complicated at times, dealing with reckonings that make us human. Her writing is suffused with rich descriptions that showcase her curiosity for culture. In her current role as the longstanding editor in chief of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, Yanagihara has produced prolific issues rooted in global perspectives of art history, fashion, design, craft, and travel. Echoing Noguchi—who believed in the power of the written word and continuously returned to his travels and particular places in time for inspiration and guidance—Yanagihara’s work reflects a kaleidoscopic perspective.

“It’s a profound honor to receive this Award, particularly as I’ve long been inspired by Noguchi’s work as both an artist and a politically engaged citizen,” says Hanya Yanagihara. “I’ve always admired how his dedication to craft intersected with his sense of cultural and personal responsibility, in a way that had real consequences for him. As an East Coast-based Japanese American resident, he was exempted from Executive Order 9066, which placed over 120,000 Japanese Americans—most of them American citizens—in prison camps. But in 1942, he voluntarily committed himself to one of those camps, Poston, with idealistic hopes of creating a more humane environment.”

To learn more about The Noguchi Museum and the 2023 Isamu Noguchi Award and Benefit, please visit [noguchi.org/award](https://noguchi.org/award), and follow the Museum [@noguchimuseum](https://www.instagram.com/noguchimuseum) on Instagram.



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## ABOUT THE ISAMU NOGUCHI AWARD

Established in 2014, The Isamu Noguchi Award perpetuates Noguchi's legacy by acknowledging highly accomplished individuals who share his spirit of innovation, unbounded imagination, and uncompromising commitment to creativity. Presented annually, the Isamu Noguchi Award illuminates how Noguchi's ideals permeate throughout the work of the honorees.

The two inaugural recipients were architect **Lord Norman Foster** and artist **Hiroshi Sugimoto**. Following this, in 2015, the Museum honored industrial designer **Jasper Morrison** and architect **Yoshio Taniguchi**; in 2016, architect **Tadao Ando** and sculptor **Elyn Zimmerman**; in 2017, architect **John Pawson** and artist **Hiroshi Senju**; in 2018, industrial designer **Naoto Fukasawa** and landscape designer **Edwina von Gal**; in 2019, fashion designer **Rei Kawakubo**; in 2020, architect **Sir David Adjaye OBE** and artist **Cai Guo-Qiang**; in 2021, artist **Shio Kusaka** and architect **Toshiko Mori**; and in 2022, artist **Daniel Brush** and sculptor **Thaddeus Mosley**.

## ABOUT THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM

Founded in 1985 by category-defying artist Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum (now known as The Noguchi Museum), was the first museum in the United States to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Located in Long Island City, Queens, the Museum itself is widely viewed as among the artist's greatest achievements. Holding the world's largest collection of Noguchi's works, it features open air and indoor galleries in a repurposed 1920s industrial building and an outdoor sculpture garden. Accompanying the permanent installations placed by Noguchi, the Museum presents temporary exhibitions exploring themes in Noguchi's work, his milieu and collaborators, and his enduring influence today among contemporary practitioners across disciplines. It exhibits a comprehensive selection of Noguchi's material culture, from sculpture, models, and drawings to his personal possessions, and manages the artist's archives and catalogue raisonné. Through its rich collection, exhibitions, and programming, the Museum facilitates scholarship and learning for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

**noguchi.org | @noguchimuseum**

## ABOUT EDMUND DE WAAL

Edmund de Waal (b. 1964, Nottingham) is an internationally acclaimed artist and writer, best known for his large-scale installations of porcelain vessels, often created in response to collections and archives or the history of a particular place. His interventions have been made

for diverse spaces and museums worldwide, including Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire; the Musée Nissim de Camondo, Paris; The British Museum, London; The Frick Collection, New York; Ateneo Veneto, Venice; Schindler House, Los Angeles; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna and V&A Museum, London. De Waal is also renowned for his bestselling family memoir, *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010), and *The White Road* (2015). His most recent book, *Letters to Camondo*, a series of haunting letters written during lockdown, was published in April 2021. He was awarded the Windham-Campbell Prize for non-fiction by Yale University in 2015. In 2021 he was awarded a CBE for his services to art. He lives and works in London.

#### ABOUT THEASTER GATES

Theaster Gates (b. 1973) is an artist and social innovator who lives and works in Chicago. Over the past decade, Gates has translated the intricacies of Blackness through space theory and land development, sculpture, and performance. Through the expansiveness of his approach as a thinker, maker, and builder, he extends the role of the artist as an agent of change. His performance practice and visual work find roots in Black knowledge, objects, history, and archives.

Gates has exhibited and performed at The New Museum, New York, (2022); The Aichi Triennial, Tokoname (2022); The Serpentine Pavilion, London (2022); The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK (2021); Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2013 and 2021); Tate Liverpool, UK (2020); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2020); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2019); Palais de Tokyo Paris, France (2019); Sprengel Museum Hannover, Germany (2018); Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2018); National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (2017); Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada (2016); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2016); Punta della Dogana, Venice, Italy (2013); and dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany (2012).

In 2010, Gates created the Rebuild Foundation, a nonprofit platform for art, cultural development, and neighborhood transformation that supports artists and strengthens communities through free arts programming and innovative cultural amenities in the Grand Crossing neighborhood of the South Side of Chicago. Gates is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees including the Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts (2022); an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Institute of British Architects (2021); the World Economic Forum Crystal Award (2020); J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development (2018); Nasher Sculpture Prize (2018); Sprengel Museum Kurt Schwitters Prize (2017); and Artes Mundi 6 Prize (2015).

In April 2018, Gates was appointed as the inaugural Distinguished Visiting Artist and Director of Artist Initiatives at the Lunder Institute for American Art, Colby College, Waterville, Maine. He was the Visiting Artist in Residence at the American Academy in Rome (2020); and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2021. Gates is a professor at the University of Chicago in the Department of Visual Arts and serves as the Special Advisor to the President for Arts Initiatives.

#### ABOUT HANYA YANAGIHARA

Hanya Yanagihara (b. Los Angeles) is the author of three novels: *The People in the Trees* (2013), *A Little Life* (2015), and *To Paradise* (2022). Her work has been published in more than thirty languages, and has been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, the National Book Award, the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, and the Andrew Carnegie Medal, among others, and has won the Kirkus Award. Yanagihara lives in New York, where she is the editor in chief of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*.

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