

## The Noguchi Museum Presents Karen Siegel’s Choral Sound Installation *Lessons of Stone* with Performance by The Astoria Choir

Simultaneous Live Performances Transform Experience  
for Free First Friday Attendees

Friday, June 7, 2024, 6–8 pm



The Noguchi Museum’s indoor-outdoor gallery Area 1.  
Photo: Nicholas Knight. ©The Noguchi Museum/ARS

New York (May 2024) – Directed by Adam Eggleston, **The Astoria Choir** will premiere *Lessons of Stone* at **The Noguchi Museum** in Long Island City on Friday, June 7, 2024, 6–8 pm. As part of extended hours on Free First Fridays, free tickets will be released by the Museum on Friday, May 24, at 12pm ET: [tickets.noguchi.org/free-first-friday](https://tickets.noguchi.org/free-first-friday)

Composer **Karen Siegel** places sections of the choir in multiple galleries of the Museum, performing different movements of *Lessons of Stone* at the same time. The museumgoer will experience a unique wash of sound in each space, and can also hear them bleed together in the spaces in-between. Siegel designed the work as a self-guided experience, where the listener may hear the music in any order, lingering to prolong the audio-visual experience as desired.

*Lessons of Stone* is inspired by the life and work of sculptor, landscape artist, and designer Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988). Siegel created the libretto as well as the music, looking to Noguchi’s writings about his art and life experiences. One movement, “Fleeting,” encapsulates the elasticity of time as experienced by Noguchi when he formed his massive granite sculptures. The movement “Falling” reflects on Noguchi’s experience as a Japanese American during World War II—Noguchi

voluntarily entered a concentration camp in solidarity with his fellow Japanese Americans. The movement “Lasting” expresses why Noguchi so often chose stone as his medium. Another movement, “Floating,” is a wordless meditation on the quality of light in the eponymous Museum that Noguchi designed.

The Astoria Choir commissioned *Lessons of Stone* in 2020, in honor of the choir’s 10th Anniversary, during the isolation phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, Siegel was creating choral works for live-remote performance. Along with members of C4: the Choral Composer/Conductor Collective, of which she is a co-founder, Siegel had experimented with using the online software Jamulus to enable singers to perform together in real-time via livestream. Siegel went on to compose many live-remote choral works during the pandemic, using the latency of online platforms as part of the aesthetic for these works. At a time when it was unknown whether in-person performance would be possible in the near future, The Astoria Choir asked Siegel to create a work that could pivot to online performance if necessary.

Thus, *Lessons of Stone* was conceived as both a site-specific work that took into account the acoustics and permanently displayed sculptures of the Museum, and also as a live-remote work that embraced the latency inherent in online connections. The result is a work that entirely consists of musical phrases repeated asynchronously across the choir, an aleatoric flow of sound in which no meter can be discerned. While *Lessons of Stone* technically consists of twenty minutes of musical material in four movements, with repetition the work will be presented for the full two hours of the First Free Friday evening.

**The Astoria Choir** is a volunteer chorus based in Astoria, Queens, and founded in 2010 by Artistic Director Adam Eggleston. [astoriachoir.org](http://astoriachoir.org)

Composer **Karen Siegel** is known for her innovative choral works, commissioned and performed across the United States and internationally. Her work “Love Lines” was recently recorded by The Crossing and will be released by Navona Records in the fall. [karensiegel.com](http://karensiegel.com)

Members of the press may write to [press@noguchi.org](mailto:press@noguchi.org) for free reservations.

## **ABOUT THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM**

Founded in 1985 by category-defying Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum (now known as The Noguchi Museum) in Queens, New York, was the first museum in the United States to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Itself widely viewed as among the artist’s greatest achievements and holding the world’s largest collection of his works, the Museum features open air and indoor galleries in a repurposed industrial building and a serene 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 Noguchi’s material culture, from sculpture, models, and drawings, to his personal possessions. Provocative installations drawn from the permanent collection, together with diverse special exhibitions and collaborations with practitioners across disciplines, offer a multifaceted view of Noguchi’s art and illuminate his enduring influence. [noguchi.org](http://noguchi.org) | [@noguchimuseum](https://www.instagram.com/noguchimuseum)

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