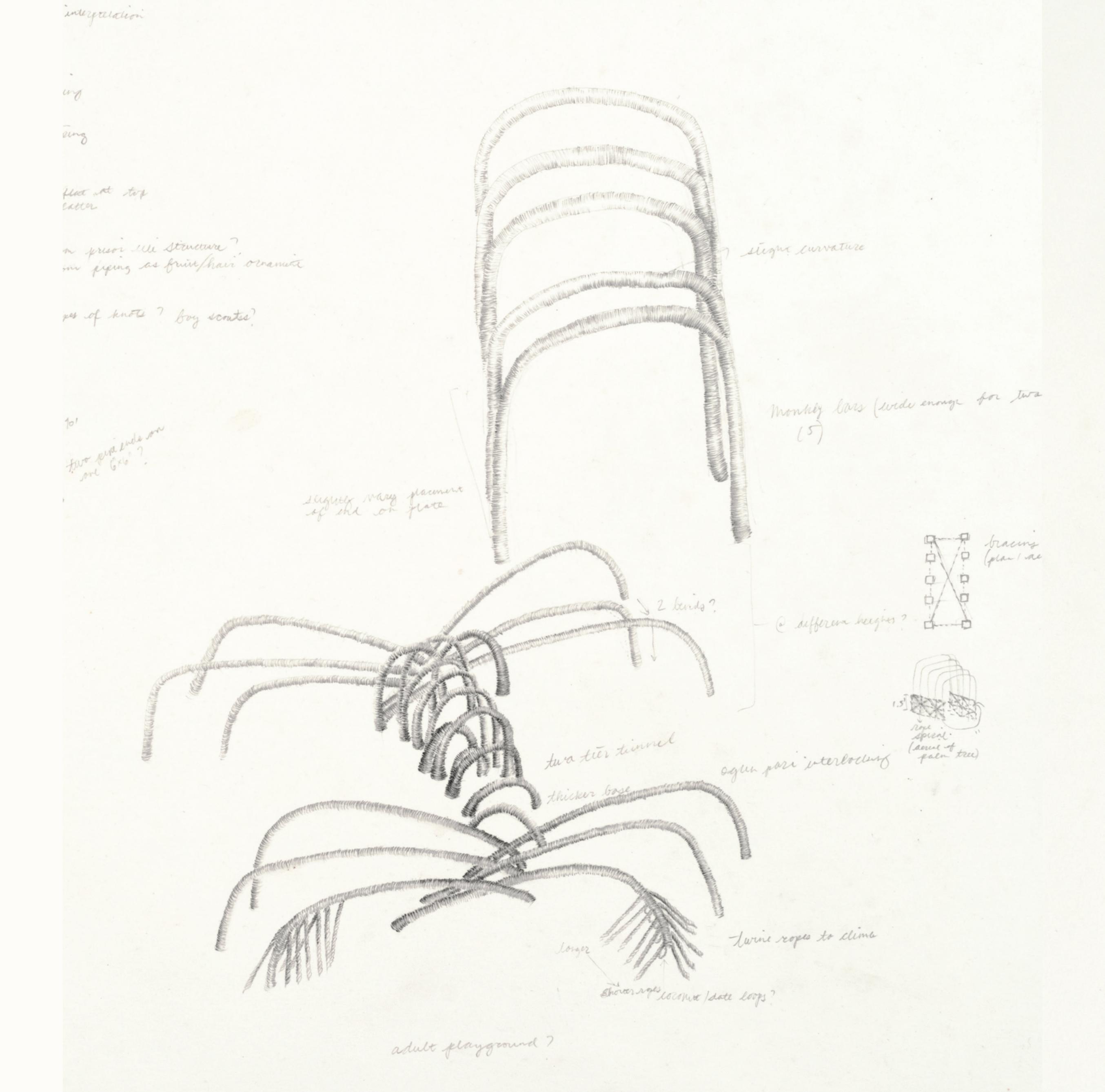
Temitayo Ogunbiyi

You will wonder if we would have been friends

As part of its 40th anniversary programming, The Noguchi Museum is pleased to present the work of Temitayo Ogunbiyi, in her first museum exhibition in the United States.

Over the past decade, Ogunbiyi has chosen a recurring titling convention for her artworks, beginning each with the phrase "You will...," typically used in her home of Lagos, Nigeria, as a declarative wish for good fortune for others. With You will wonder if we would have been friends, Ogunbiyi addresses Isamu Noguchi as a sort of muse, reflecting on her discovery of Noguchi's play concepts while conducting her own research into making affordable play structures out of common household objects or construction materials. Featuring three newly commissioned works, Ogunbiyi's installation within Noguchi's museum environment becomes part of an imagined conversation between the two artists on their shared motivations as creators. Their kinship is rooted not only in play but in the making of functional sculpture and meaningful spaces for social interaction, their consideration of humanity's relationship to nature, and their meditations on intergenerational connection and transcultural exchange.

Organized by Matthew Kirsch
Curator and Director of Research,
The Noguchi Museum



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Drawings from *You will find new framing in crafts of old*, 2017–25. Pencil, watercolor, and ink on herbarium and Lenox papers. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist. Photos: Kevin Noble. © Temitayo Ogunbiyi

Temitayo Ogunbiyi: You will wonder if we would have been friends is made possible through major support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Generous support has been received from the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from the Graham Foundation. The exhibition is also supported, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM JUN 18 - NOV 2, 2025



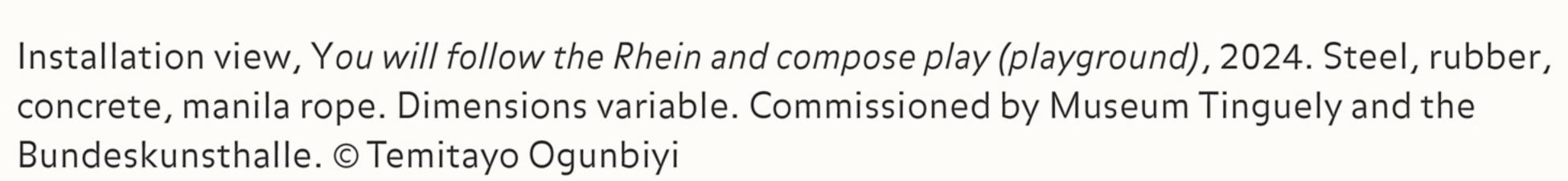
Temitayo Ogunbiyi

You will wonder if we would have been friends



About Temitayo Ogunbiyi

Born in Rochester, New York, in 1984, Temitayo Ogunbiyi grew up in the outskirts of Philadelphia. Her work explores influences ranging from Yoruba hairstyling and Victorian hairwork to botanical forms and transnational travel. Now living in Lagos, Nigeria, Ogunbiyi developed an interest in playground design through her experience raising her children in this city of over 20 million people, where she struggled to find public playgrounds. This, coupled with her own experiences growing up as a first-generation immigrant in the United States, born to Jamaican and Nigerian parents, influences her creation of public play sculptures. These sculptures aim to present play and exercise as a right for all children and adults. Past playground projects include You will find Lagos in London Living (2023) at South London Gallery in London, England; You will forge paths beyond your grandmother's imaginings (2023) at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany; You will follow the Rhein and compose play (2023) at the Museum Tinguely in Basel, Switzerland; You will play in nuance and grow community (2022) at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Netherlands; Giocherai nel quotidiano, correndo (You will play in the everyday, running) and Suonerai nel quotidiano, accelerando (You will play in the everyday, accelerating) (2020) at the Museo Madre in Naples, Italy; and You will find playgrounds among palm trees (2018) at Freedom Park playground in Lagos, Nigeria. Upcoming projects include solo exhibitions at The Arts Club of Chicago (September 2025) and the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio (2026).



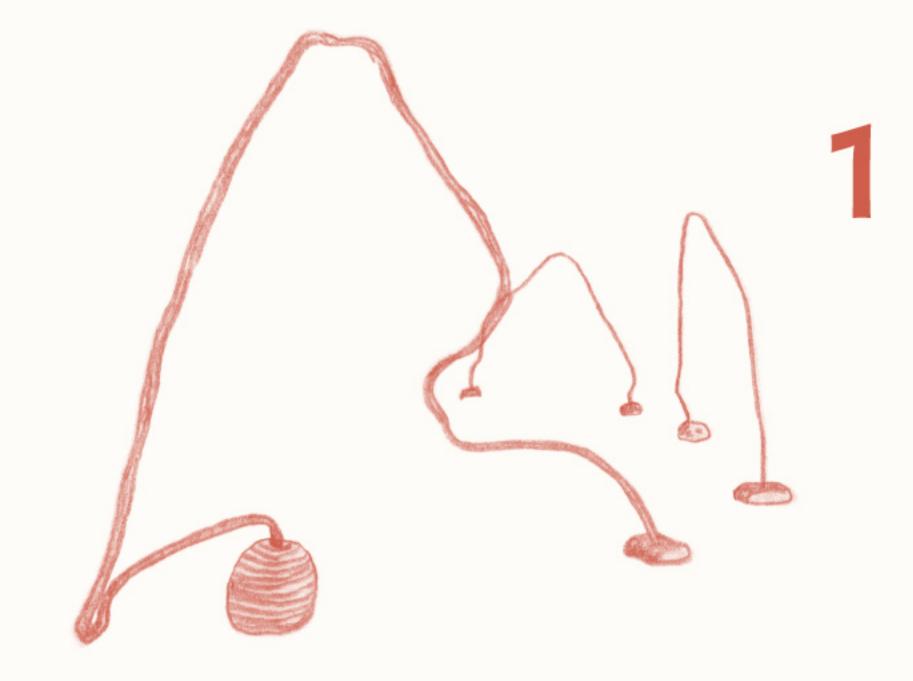


You will catalyze wishes of strangers, detail, 2025. Copper alloy. Dimensions variable. © Temitayo Ogunbiyi

Area

In Area 1, Ogunbiyi's cluster of copper alloy sculptures, You will revisit paths to friendship (2025), is arranged among Noguchi's installation of basalts and granites. Each of Ogunbiyi's sculptures takes the form of a functional musical instrument. When Ogunbiyi learned that Noguchi sometimes walked from his Upper East Side apartment to his Long Island City studio, she began thinking about other hypothetical pathways between New York locations that Noguchi might have taken. Reenacting these routes through her own walks or by plotting them on GPS applications, Ogunbiyi used these courses as the basis for the individual linear silhouettes in this cluster. Ogunbiyi's method follows earlier sculptures that similarly considered and visualized historical and contemporary migration routes made by migrant, local, and indigenous communities in the cities where the artist has exhibited her work. The bases of the sculptures reference different Noguchi forms: Akari, Aji granite stones, and other objects he lived with or collected. Ogunbiyi's sculptural instruments acknowledge music as a transmitter of cultural identity, reaching across long distances.

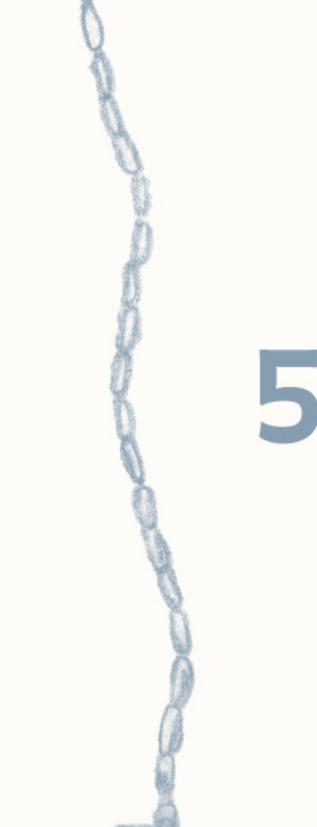
The musical sculptures will be activated by Museum educators during daily public tours and in performances that have been conceived in collaboration with Ogunbiyi.



Γemitayo Ogunbiyi You will revisit paths to friendship, Copper alloy Commissioned for The Noguchi Museum

Ogunbiyi fabricated You will catalyze wishes of strangers (2025), a grouping of copper alloy grinding stones, for Area 2. The grinding stone is a utilitarian staple still used in West Africa for grinding and preparing grains, vegetables, and plant matter. These stones are cast from originals sourced from Ogunbiyi's friends in Nigeria, where they are shared as family heirlooms. A recurring form in Ogunbiyi's work, the grinding stone pays homage to the accumulated and mostly unacknowledged time and labor of women in the home, and for

Rocks in Placement (1982–83), in which Noguchi collected stones used to test stone-carving assistants at his studio in Mure, Japan, and then composed them into a spatial sculpture that is, in essence, an appreciation of their collective work. Ogunbiyi has typically inscribed messages on her grinding stones that are specific to their community setting. Before fabricating this group, she worked with the Museum's Education Department to invite members of the Queens community and the Museum's staff to respond to the following prompt: What is your practice? What do you practice? What would you practice if you could practice anything?



1ST FLOOR

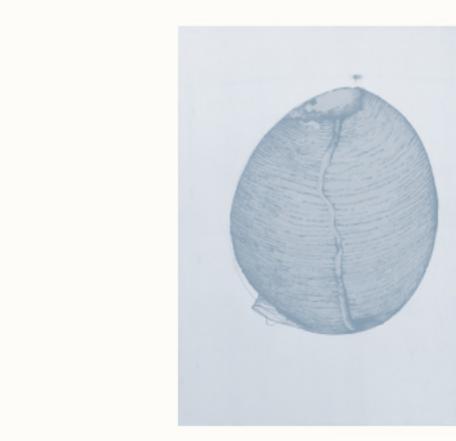
Temitayo Ogunbiyi You will find mothering at every turn (Sweet Mother), 2022-25 Swarovski crystals and copper alloy Courtesy of the artist

GARDEN

ENTRY



Temitayo Ogunbiyi You will learn that the physical color/colour is not the only indicator of readiness, 2019 Acrylic and Japanese ink on found fabric Courtesy of the artist



Temitayo Ogunbiyi You will look back and be content with the prominent path (note to self), 2020-21 Varnished Japanese ink and acrylic on found fabric Courtesy of the artist



the cabinet and end tables.

Area 5

Temitayo Ogunbiyi You will find new framing in crafts of old, 2017-25 Pencil, watercolor, and ink on herbarium and Lenox papers Courtesy of the artist

You will find mothering at every turn (Sweet Mother) (2022–25) anchors the

variably installed sculpture is customized for the architecture of Noguchi's

factory space, its sinuous line winding from the floor to the ceiling joists.

The sculpture's title nods to a universal nurturing figure, and Ogunbiyi's

consideration of "how many mothers' existences went into my existence,

contributing to the existence of future generations, and what it means

garden (itself an homage to his mentor Constantin Brancusi's *Endless*

Column, 1918–38). Vitrines and cabinets placed throughout the gallery

contain Ogunbiyi's works on paper from the past decade. The drawings

reference—and sometimes fuse—organic plant forms and hair-threading

styles from West Africa, and their display is modeled on herbaria, where

data is recorded on the taxonomy and geographic distribution of plants

hair-threading styles, and the act of drawing itself, have had in inspiring

Visitors are welcome to open drawers to explore the drawings found in

over long periods. Certain studies here illustrate the role that these

the "play lines" of Ogunbiyi's functional sculptures.

to come from a line of people." Its upward repetition of grinding stones,

used as units, parallels Noguchi's Helix of the Endless (1985) in the Museum's

installation in Area 5. Composed of Swarovski crystals and copper alloy

grinding stones similar to those in Ogunbiyi's garden installation, this

Area

Ogunbiyi, it represents origins and beginnings.

Her grinding stones are placed in dialogue with Noguchi's Practice



Temitayo Ogunbiyi You will catalyze wishes of strangers, 2025 Copper alloy Courtesy of the artist



Isamu Noguchi Slide Mantra (smallest study model), c. 1966 Plaster

Temitayo Ogunbiyi

with play, 2025

You will pave paths of life

toulipier wood, paint

The Noguchi Museum

Commissioned for

Stainless steel, manila rope,



Isamu Noguchi Play Equipment (study model), c. 1965–68 Plaster, probably on wire

Area 6

Area 6 features an interactive sculpture composed of three freestanding stainless steel bars, each wrapped in manila rope, the latest in a series in which Ogunbiyi explores play as a wellspring for communication, creativity, and risk-taking through bodily interaction and invented games. Ogunbiyi combines this sculpture, You will pave paths of life with play (2025), with a seating area, a common feature in the public spaces Noguchi designed, which he used to reiterate his promotion of sculpture as a tool of "leisure," establishing a basic setting for social engagement or private contemplation. Examples of Noguchi's concepts are positioned outside the gallery and include bronze study models related to the unrealized Adele Levy Memorial Playground in Riverside Park (1961–65), Noguchi's multiphase collaboration with architect Louis I. Kahn; and maquettes for Noguchi's Play Equipment designs.

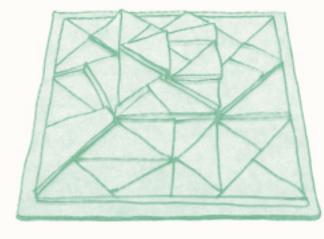


Isamu Noguchi Play Equipment (study model for Play Sculpture), c. 1965–68 Painted aluminum rod, pins 910

All works by Isamu Noguchi: Collection of The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum



Isamu Noguchi Riverside Playground (first model),1961 (cast c. 1970s) Bronze ρ11



Isamu Noguchi Riverside Park Play Mountains Study, c. 1961 (cast 1963) Bronze *ب* 12

