

SIDE GALLERY

ISAMU NOGUCHI



Akari Light Sculpture, Model L1
Manufactured by Ozeki & Co., Ltd.
Japan, 1976
Washi paper, silk thread

Measurements
29 × 29 × 109h cm
11,4 × 11,4 × 43h in

Provenance
Private collection, Japan

Details
Stamped “Sun and Moon” ideogram to shade.
Original packaging.

Literature
Noguchi, I. (1977). New Akari Light Sculpture. The Noguchi Museum Archives, MS_AKA_008_020.
Noguchi, I. (1977). Akari. Craft and Design Museum, Gifu.
Rychlak, J., Mori, M., Murayama, Y., & Matsumoto, K. (Eds.). (2013). Design: Isamu Noguchi and Isamu Kenmochi. Tokyo: Seigensha, p. 101.

About

The Akari light sculptures are among Isamu Noguchi’s most celebrated works, merging sculpture, craft, and light into a single poetic object. Model L1 belongs to the mature phase of the series, in which Noguchi refined the balance between structural geometry and the ethereal glow of handmade washi paper.

Produced by Ozeki & Co. in Gifu, the historical center of Japanese paper lantern making, this work represents a synthesis of ancient craft and modernist abstraction. The stamped “Sun and Moon” mark confirms its authenticity and connection to Noguchi’s original vision.

Biography

Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) was one of the most influential multidisciplinary artists of the twentieth century, working across sculpture, furniture, lighting, landscape, and architectural design. Born in Los Angeles to a Japanese poet and an American writer, and raised between the United States and Japan, his bicultural background deeply informed his practice. Noguchi consistently sought to dissolve boundaries between art and function, East and West, and sculpture and design, developing a unified visual language for modern living.

After studying in New York, Noguchi trained in Paris with Constantin Brancusi in 1927, an experience that shaped his approach to abstraction, material, and essential form. From the 1930s onward, he expanded sculpture into public space through monuments, playgrounds, stage sets, and collaborations with choreographer Martha Graham, emphasizing physical and spatial experience.

Following World War II, Noguchi increasingly focused on design as a social and artistic tool. His Akari Light Sculptures, begun in 1951 in collaboration with traditional lantern makers in Gifu, combined Japanese craft with modernist abstraction and became enduring icons of twentieth-century design. Works such as the Noguchi Table further blurred the line between sculpture and furniture.