

SIDE GALLERY

ISAMU NOGUCHI



Akari Light Sculpture Model "BB2-V1"

Manufactured by Ozeki & Co., Ltd.

Japan, 1970s

Washi paper, bamboo, iron

Measurements

28,5 × 28,5 × 69,5h cm

11,2 × 11,2 × 27,4h in

Provenance

Private collection , Japan

Literature

Isamu Noguchi, *New Akari Light Sculpture*, Ozeki & Co., Gifu, 1977.

Catalog of Latest Akari, Ozeki & Co., Gifu, 1988.

Bonnie Rychlak, Dakin Hart, Mutsuko Mori, Masayo

Murayama and Kengo Matsumoto, *Design: Isamu*

Noguchi and Isamu Kenmochi, *The Isamu Noguchi*

Foundation and Garden Museum, New York, 2022.

Dore Ashton, *Noguchi East and West*, University of

California Press, Berkeley, 1992.

About

The BB2-V1 belongs to Isamu Noguchi's celebrated Akari series, a body of work that transformed traditional Japanese lantern-making into one of the most influential lighting designs of the twentieth century. Distinguished by its use of a bamboo support column, the model is among the most architecturally expressive examples of the BB series, embodying Noguchi's desire to unite sculpture, light, and craftsmanship.

Unlike many Akari models that employ an internal framework of bamboo ribbing, the V1 shade is conceived as a geometric truncated pyramid that slips directly over the supporting structure. This construction creates a remarkably pure volume, allowing the illuminated form to appear suspended in space. The seams of the handmade washi paper remain subtly visible, while the natural folds and texture of the material contribute to the poetic quality that defines the Akari collection.

Biography

Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) was one of the most important and intellectually ambitious artists of the twentieth century, whose work moved fluidly between sculpture, architecture, landscape, furniture, and industrial design. Born in Los Angeles to the Japanese poet Yone Noguchi and the American writer Leonie Gilmour, he grew up between the United States and Japan, an experience that profoundly shaped his artistic vision. Noguchi never accepted the division between East and West, art and utility, or sculpture and design; instead, he sought to create a unified visual language capable of shaping how people live, move, and experience space.

Noguchi's early artistic formation took place in New York, where he studied at Columbia University before training as a sculptor. In 1927 he traveled to Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship to apprentice with Constantin Brancusi, an experience that proved decisive for his understanding of form and abstraction. Throughout his life he expanded sculpture beyond conventional limits, creating furniture, stage sets, landscapes, and environments that redefined the role of design in daily life.

His Akari Light Sculptures, begun in 1951, remain among his most influential creations and continue to embody his lifelong pursuit of harmony between tradition, technology, material, and human experience.