

SIDE GALLERY

ISAMU NOGUCHI



Akari Light Sculpture Model "BB1-30DD"

Manufactured by Ozeki & Co., Ltd.

Japan, designed 1956

Washi paper, bamboo, lacquered metal

Measurements

28 × 28 × 63h cm

11 × 11 × 24,8h in

Provenance

Private collection, Japan

Details

Pair available. Rare variation of the Akari series featuring the sought-after BB bamboo stem construction.

Washi paper shade stretched over a bamboo frame with lacquered metal base. Pull-chain switch. Stamped "Sun and Moon" ideogram to the shade.

Literature

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 Akari Light Sculptures represent one of Isamu Noguchi's most poetic and enduring bodies of work, embodying his belief that light itself could function as sculpture. Initiated in 1951 after a visit to Gifu, Japan—a city celebrated for its traditional lantern-making craft—the Akari series transformed vernacular paper lanterns into modern sculptural objects that merged centuries-old craftsmanship with contemporary abstraction.

Model BB1-30DL, produced in the late 1970s, reflects Noguchi's continued exploration of verticality and luminous form. Constructed from handmade washi paper over a delicate bamboo structure and anchored by an enameled cast iron base, the lamp achieves a subtle balance between weight and lightness. The warm glow diffused through the paper surface creates an atmosphere that extends beyond illumination, transforming surrounding space through softness and shadow.

Biography

The BB1-30DD is a rare variation within Isamu Noguchi's celebrated Akari series, distinguished by the elegant bamboo support column that defines the sought-after BB models. Designed in 1956, the lamp reflects Noguchi's continued exploration of the relationship between traditional Japanese craftsmanship and modern sculptural form.

Handcrafted in Gifu by Ozeki & Co., the lamp combines a washi paper shade made from mulberry bark stretched over a bamboo frame with a lacquered metal base. The slender bamboo stem creates a remarkable sense of visual lightness, allowing the illuminated form to appear delicately suspended above its base. A pull-chain switch completes the design while preserving its understated architectural character.

Noguchi conceived the Akari Light Sculptures not simply as lighting fixtures but as "sculptures of light." By transforming the harshness of electric light through handmade paper, he sought to recreate the warmth and softness of natural sunlight within the domestic interior. The BB1-30DD beautifully embodies this philosophy, uniting sculpture, craftsmanship, and functionality in one of the most poetic expressions of twentieth-century lighting design.