

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2004

Contact: Media Relations
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Stamp News Release No. 04-030
www.usps.com

SCULPTOR ISAMU NOGUCHI COMMEMORATED ON U.S. POSTAGE STAMPS

WASHINGTON — Isamu Noguchi, one of the twentieth-century's most influential sculptors, was honored today by the U.S. Postal Service with the issuance of a commemorative stamp pane at the Noguchi Museum, Long Island, NY.



“Noguchi’s creativity was endless,” said Donna Peak, Vice President of Finance and Controller for the U.S. Postal Service, who dedicated the stamp. “Yes, we could spend hours talking about one of his sculptures, gardens, furniture designs or stage sets because he changed the conversation about art and its place in society.”

Also participating in the ceremony were Helen Marshall, Borough President of Queens, NY; Frank Sinatra School of the Arts Chamber Singers; Jenny Dixon, Director of the Noguchi Museum and Trustee, Richard Lanier; Richard Schwartz, Chairman New York State Council on the Arts, and Catherine Cassidy, Marketing Manager, U.S. Postal Service Triboro District.

Designed by Derry Noyes of Washington, DC, the stamp pane of 20 stamps features five different works by Noguchi: Margaret La Farge Osborn, 1937: Black Sun, 1960-63; Mother and Child, 1944-47; Figure (detail), 1945; Akari 25N, circa 1968. The selvage features a photograph of Noguchi taken by Eliot Elision for publication in 1952. Below the photograph is text reading “sculptor 1904-1988” and the following quotation by Noguchi: “Everything is sculpture. Any material, any idea without hindrance born into space, I consider sculpture.”

Noguchi stamps are available at Long Island City Post Offices today and at Post Offices and philatelic centers nationwide tomorrow.

To see the Isamu Noguchi stamp pane and other images from the 2004 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Service website and view this news release at

www.usps.com/shop. Click on "Release Schedule" in the Collector's Corner.

Noted for merging Western and Eastern influences and expanding the definition of sculpture, Noguchi's creations ranged from portraiture and abstract sculpture to graceful meditation gardens, set designs and sprawling landscapes.

Noguchi was born in Los Angeles in 1904. His father, Yone Noguchi, was a Japanese poet and his mother, Leonie Gilmore, an American writer. Raised in Japan until 1918, Noguchi then attended high school in Indiana. After graduating in 1922, he attended a pre-med program at Columbia University in New York City, where he also enrolled at Leonardo da Vinci Art School. He quickly mastered traditional sculpture and soon exhibited his work at the National Academy of Design and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Throughout his career, Noguchi strived to expand the role of the sculptor. In addition to working with an extremely imaginative range of materials — including wood, stone, marble, steel, bamboo, paper and even water — he also created works on an ever-increasing scale, including gardens that were inspired by Japanese tradition, but clearly marked by Western influence.

Fascinated by the theater, Noguchi designed stage sets for renowned choreographer Martha Graham, a collaboration that began in 1935 and continued until the late 1960s. He also created sets and costumes for other choreographers, including George Balanchine, and designed the set for the Royal Shakespeare Company production of King Lear in 1955. Among Noguchi's most important works is the Noguchi Museum in New York City. Located in a converted industrial building, the Museum comprises a series of galleries and a tranquil outdoor sculpture garden, all specially designed by the artist for display of his life's work.

Noguchi received numerous honors throughout his career. In 1986 he represented the United States in the Biennale, a prestigious art exhibition in Venice, and in 1987 he was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Ronald Reagan. In 1988 he received the Award for Distinction in Sculpture from the Sculpture Center in New York and the Third Order of the Sacred Treasure in Japan. Isamu Noguchi died Dec. 30, 1988.

Current U.S. stamps and stationery, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free telephone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items also are available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop, and

www.postalartgallery.com offers beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office.

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An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to about 141 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume -- some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year -- and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.