

The Noguchi Museum Presents ** folding cosmos*, an Installation by Miwako Kurashima

October 16–November 17, 2024

With tea meetings every Thursday at 1 pm and 1:30 pm

At The Noguchi Museum; Free with admission



Isamu Noguchi's Akari PL2 (1965) installed in Miwako Kurashima's ** folding cosmos*, Mies van der Rohe Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain, 2017. Photo ©Anna Mas. Courtesy of Miwako Kurashima

New York (September 2024) – The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum in Long Island City, Queens, New York, will host Japanese designer and interior architect Miwako Kurashima's traveling installation ** folding cosmos* from October 16–November 17, 2024.

noguchi.org/folding-cosmos

Organized by Kurashima and Noguchi Museum Curator Kate Wiener, ** folding cosmos* explores the interplay between the intimate and infinite, offering a quiet space for gathering and contemplation. The installation features works by Kurashima and Isamu Noguchi, as well as contemporary Japanese artists Aï Kitahara, Kineta Kunimatsu, and Ayumi Tanaka.

Kurashima took inspiration for ** folding cosmos* from the story of the “One-Mat Room,” a small study space created by the nineteenth-century Japanese explorer Takeshirō Matsuura (1818–1888). Constructed from wood collected by far-flung friends at important sites throughout Japan, the room became a kind of map of Matsuura's social network and locations that held meaning for the explorer and those he knew—a collapse of accumulated knowledge and experience into a single charged space.

** folding cosmos* is Kurashima's contemporary interpretation of the One-Mat Room, and explores how small spaces can allow us to comprehend the vastness of the universe. Visitors are invited to



Isamu Noguchi on Delegates Patio at his Garden for UNESCO (1956–58), UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France, c. 1958. Photo: R. Bouwens. The Noguchi Museum Archives, 12957. © INFGM / ARS



Miwako Kurashima, *folding cosmos, Mies van der Rohe Pavilion, Barcelona, Spain, 2017. Tea bowl: Koichi Uchida. Photo © Anna Mas. Courtesy of Miwako Kurashima

gather on a modular seating arrangement, which was inspired in part by the seating components of Isamu Noguchi’s design for the UNESCO Garden (1956–58) in Paris. Kurashima also draws a connection between this space and the “folding universes” of Noguchi’s collapsible Akari light sculptures, a lifelong source of inspiration for her. The installation includes additional artworks by Kitahara, Kunimatsu, and Tanaka that each uniquely engage with the concept of a folding or collapsed universe. In these works, nature, light, and time seem to expand and contract, each implying an endless continuum. For example, peering into Tanaka’s diorama *The Forest after the Rain: Sun* (2023–24), one is confronted with a vast abstracted landscape within. Meanwhile, Kunamatsu’s portal-like wooden sculpture *WORMHOLE* (2024) implies a connection through time and space, and a journey into the unknown. The thought-provoking paradox of a “folding cosmos,” or infinity contained, is also echoed in Kitahara’s nature-defying site-specific installation *Evaporation III* (2024), which is composed of small ceramic drops arrayed across a wall as if to suggest streaks of rain flowing upward, fighting the force of gravity, and hardening into jewel-like solids, rather than disappearing into vapor.

This installation at The Noguchi Museum of *folding cosmos marks the final iteration of Kurashima’s project, which the artist developed in 2011 and has since been adapting for specific worldwide locations, including Alvar Aalto’s Maison Louis Carré (Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, France); Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye (Poissy, France) and Villa Le Lac (Corseaux, Switzerland); and the Fundació Mies van der Rohe (Barcelona, Spain).

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

On Thursdays at 1pm and 1:30 pm during the run of the show, Kurashima invites a small group of five Museum visitors to join her in the installation to share tea and conversation. These meetings are free with a ticket to the Museum, and can be reserved at the Museum’s front desk on the day of the program.

In a special online program on October 17, at 7 pm ET, Dr. Henry Smith, Professor Emeritus, Columbia University, will present a Zoom lecture on Matsuura’s One-Mat Room. Registration will be available at noguchi.org/events.

LOCATION

The Noguchi Museum
9-01 33rd Road (at Vernon Boulevard)
Long Island City, NY 11106
Tel: 718.204.7088
noguchi.org/events

SUPPORT

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ABOUT MIWAKO KURASHIMA

Born in Hokkaido, Japan, Miwako Kurashima is a designer and interior architect. After studying industrial design in Japan, she completed her training in furniture design in Oxfordshire, and in interior design in New York. As a designer and director of **folding cosmos* (2011–24), she has exhibited the project at thirteen venues across eight countries, including Alvar Aalto’s Maison Louis Carré (Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, France); Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye (Poissy, France) and Villa Le Lac (Corseaux, Switzerland); and the Fundació Mies van der Rohe (Barcelona, Spain). In 2023, she co-organized the exhibition *Isamu Noguchi TOOLS* at the Takenaka Carpentry Tools Museum in Kobe, Japan. Miwako Kurashima currently lives in Japan, and works around the world.

foldingcosmos.org

ABOUT THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM

Founded in 1985 by category-defying Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum (now known as The Noguchi Museum) in Queens, New York, was the first museum in the United States to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Itself widely viewed as among the artist’s greatest achievements and holding the world’s largest collection of his works, the Museum features open air and indoor galleries in a repurposed industrial building and a serene outdoor sculpture garden. Since its founding, it has served as an international hub for Noguchi research and appreciation. In addition to managing the artist’s archives and catalogue raisonné, the Museum exhibits a comprehensive selection of Noguchi’s material culture, from sculpture, models, and drawings, to personal possessions. Provocative installations drawn from the permanent collection, together with diverse special exhibitions and collaborations with practitioners across disciplines, offer a multifaceted view of Noguchi’s art and illuminate the sculptor’s enduring influence. noguchi.org | [@noguchimuseum](https://www.instagram.com/noguchimuseum)

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