ISAMU NOGUCHI TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES AT
VENICE BIENNALE

Isamu Noguchi, whose innovative sculpture is recognised and acclaimed throughout the world, has been selected to represent the United States with an exhibition of his sculptures in the American Pavilion at the 42nd Venice Biennale, from 29 June until 28 September 1986, in Venice, Italy. More than 50 countries participate in the premier international exposition of contemporary art.
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'Isamu Noguchi: What is Sculpture?' is the first major European exhibition of the American sculptor's work. It is organised by PS1, the Institute for Art and Urban Resources Inc, New York City, and curated by Henry Geldzahler, the Lila Acheson Wallace distinguished guest curator at PS1 and 1986 commissioner of the American Pavilion.

The exhibition is presented by the United States Information Agency (USIA), and funded by the USIA, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Committee for the 1986 American Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and Philip Morris Companies Inc. Philip Morris has the distinction of being the first corporate sponsor of the American Pavilion since the USIA has been involved in the Venice Biennale.

"As an official presentation of the United States Government," said Alanna Heiss, president and executive director of PS1, "this exhibition is the most ambitious ever undertaken at a Biennale by the U.S. It communicates America's high standards in the arts, one of our greatest natural resources."

"The USIA is particularly pleased to present the works of Isamu Noguchi, one of America's greatest artists," said Charles Wick, director of the USIA. "The exhibition marks an auspicious beginning for private sector participation in international arts festivals. The generosity of Philip Morris Companies Inc and the Committee for the 1986 American Pavilion at the Venice Biennale will be the model for future projects."

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The sculptures on display are a presentation of Mr Noguchi's evolving body of work. While some pieces are early sculptures, others were recently realised and are on exhibition for the first time.

A focal point of the exhibition is a monumental spiral slide of Carrara marble that rests on a bed of wood chips. This is installed in the Pavilion's central plaza, which Mr Noguchi renovated especially to create a complete environment for display of the sculpture.

Speaking of his work Mr Noguchi has said, "Sculpture was more than the creation of objects of art. The experience of sculpture was wider and involved the total environment."

Another recently completed work is a tetrahelix sculpture of steel that contrasts with the Akari installation. Mr Noguchi collaborated with architect Arata Isozaki to design the perfect environment for the Akari installation, which reflects 30 years of the artist's work in mulberry paper light sculptures. This installation occupies two of the Pavilion's galleries.

"The exhibition is an outstanding presentation of the diverse talents of Isamu Noguchi," said Aleardo G Buzzi, president of Philip Morris EEC Region. "It is indeed a privilege for Philip Morris to be able to participate in this exciting and historic exhibition."

A selection of bronze models that represents Mr Noguchi's involvement with public sculpture, an installation of granite stones, and a sculpture of Swedish granite complete the exhibition.

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"Isamu Noguchi, at the age of 81," stated Mr Geldzahler, "continues testing the notion of sculpture, pushing its limits. His American Pavilion at the 1986 Venice Biennale succeeds in redefining the limits of sculpture in fresh formal terms. And while the stones, light sculptures and tetrahelix contribute to a coherent philosophy, the mystery still lingers."

The exhibition is a cultural presentation of the United States of America and is presented in collaboration with the Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation, Venice.

PS1, The Institute for Art and Urban Resources Inc, is a non-profit centre for contemporary art committed to the presentation of a broad range of artistic activities in various media through exhibitions, performances, film and video screenings, and related activities.

Since 1958, Philip Morris Companies Inc, and its subsidiaries and affiliates around the world, have contributed to innumerable cultural organisations, programmes and activities. The company's support of the arts ranges from contributions to museums, theatre companies, libraries and historical societies, to the acquisition of art for display in Philip Morris facilities throughout the world, to the sponsorship of travelling exhibitions and support of performing arts events in music and dance.