

The Essence of Objects and Architecture

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Every substance in the universe has its own identity that defines what it is. The essence is the property that entity and object have by necessity, without which, it loses its nature. This research aims to explore the idea of the essence, what makes an object or space what it fundamentally is, through the means of identity, and the world view of Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988); the most important and critically acclaimed artist in the twentieth century for his experimentation in sculpture, gardens, furniture, lighting designs, set designs, ceramics, and architecture. Noguchi suggests that making is to view nature through nature's eyes, making it necessary that an individual become one with nature.¹ Human nature is the concept that indicates the fundamental dispositions or characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling, acting formed through the history of one's life. The maker's role is to try to give true expression to this reality of the universal meaning of nature and interpretation realized through intuition from one's essence. This thesis is examined through making furniture to understand the means of craft, and the materials and the awareness of the objects affecting the surrounding space creating a continuum to the universe. The research extends further, exploring experimentation in transforming one's identity with primitive abstract forms of architecture.

¹Altshuler, Bruce. Isamu Noguchi: Artist's Statements. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

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© Rhyhope Ranger/If you go down to the woods today;Jorneys through the new forest

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© FLHC 15 / Alamy Stock Photo

Source:<https://www.alamy.com/stock-image-acheulean-hand-axes-from-kent-the-types-shown-are-clockwise-from-top-168023979.html>(Accessed 1 June 2020)

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© Esacademic

Source:<https://esacademic.com/dic.nsf/eswiki/217349>(Accessed 1 June 2020)

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Photography

© The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS)

Source:<https://www.6sqft.com/noguchi-museum-to-expand-lic-campus-open-the-sculptors-studio-to-the-public-for-the-first-time/> (Accessed 1 June 2020)

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© Heritage Auctions

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Photography
© The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York / Artists Rights Society
Source: <https://gothamtogo.com/noguchi-museum-january-2019/>
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© Fahey / Klein Gallery
Source:<http://www.faheykleingallery.com/exhibitions/arnold-newman/selected-works?view=slider#50> (Accessed 1 June 2020)

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Photography

© Ottawamatters

Source:<https://www.ottawamatters.com/local-news/city-of-ottawa-launching-program-to-battle-emerald-ash-borer-after-successful-pilot-1597292>(Accessed 19 August 2020)

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Source: https://delftxdownloads.tudelft.nl/EIT001x-Healthy_Aging_in_6_Steps/Module_6/EIT001x_2016_64_Housing_and_health-slides.pdf
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Photograph

© George Nakanishi Woodworkers

Source:<https://nakashimawoodworkers.com/philosophy/>(Accessed 1 August 2020)

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Photograph

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Source:<https://nakashimawoodworkers.com/philosophy/>(Accessed 1 August 2020)

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© George Nakanishi Woodworkers

Source:<http://mondo-blogo.blogspot.com/2011/09/isamu-noguchis-studio.html>(Accessed 1 August 2020)

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© George Nakanishi Woodworkers

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© South Coast Plaza-International Destination

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Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2016/04/22/kengo-kuma-hans-christian-andersen-museum-odense-denmark/> (Accessed 1 August 2020)

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© Dezeen

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INTRODUCTION

The essence is the property that entity and object have by necessity, without which, it loses its identity. The essence is what makes an entity or object what it fundamentally is, and every substance in the universe has its own identity that defines what they are. The concept originates with philosopher Aristotle, who described the essence as “the what it was to be” or the literal meaning of “what it is” expressing the definition of the essence.²

The essence of humanity is to strive for freedom based on their necessity for human life as part of nature itself in this infinite, eternal, and ever-changing environment of the universe. Being human meant to survive unpredictable weather and dangerous situations at the beginning of human history. Humans looked for places to avoid heavy rain, from getting wet and a place where they could hide from predators so that they didn’t get attacked. Architecture has gradually developed and advanced with the use of tools. The first tool of humankind was ancient hand axes. (figure 0.2)



0.1 Rhyhope Ranger, Natural Shelter

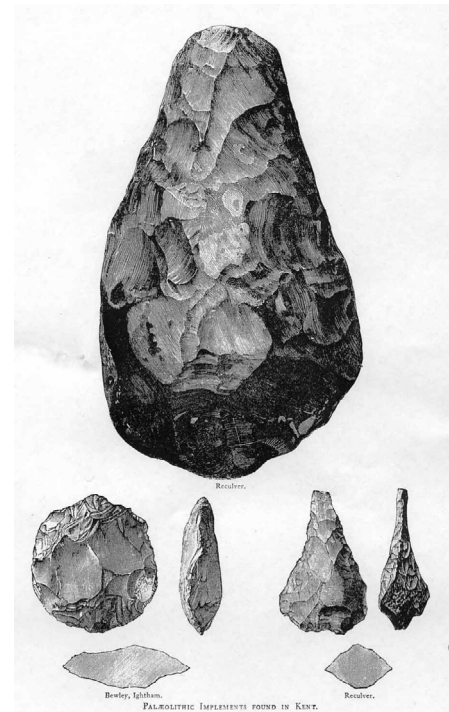
² Plato. "The Internet Classics Archive: Euthyphro by Plato." The Internet Classics Archive | Euthyphro by Plato. Accessed June 1, 2020. <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/euthyphro.html>.

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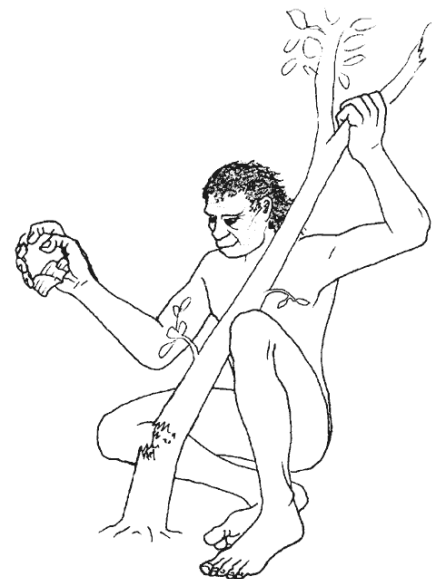
A stone tool was used to cut things like wood to make space for living within. (figure 0.3) Humans then left the caves and naturally made shelters, to make their own houses. But the essence of the architecture remained the same. The principal of architecture was still a space for living, to avoid rains and to hide from predators. In this historic period, the architecture of humans was the purest form of construction, but it already retained the ultimate completion of what is necessary. In modern times, architecture was considered a sophisticated type of discipline. Still, the architecture was just a collection of a primitive form of roof, wall and floor, made for humanity to strive for freedom based on their necessity for human life as part of nature. However, even though the architecture is considered the construction of need, the meaning of essence expands past all objects, reveal a more profound connotation of the intangible sense of primitive origin.

Works of Isamu Noguchi, a Japanese-American, one of the twentieth century's most famous and critically acclaimed artists, reveals this means of essence through his world view through a lifetime of artistic experimentation in sculptures, gardens, furniture, lighting designs, set designs, ceramics, and architecture.

Isamu Noguchi(1904-1988)was born in 1904 to an American mother and a Japanese poet father. Isamu Noguchi divided his childhood and adolescence between two countries in which he never felt he belonged.² Throughout his life, Isamu Noguchi struggled to understand his identity. Isamu Noguchi overcame his struggle, to find himself through creating art.



0.2 Kent, Acheulean Handaxes



0.3 Unkown, Making with Hands



0.4 Kaz Inouye, Isamu Noguchi in his 10th Street studio, 1996.

“I speak French fairly fluently, and so do I speak Japanese, but I don’t write a sentence in either language. I just know the idea, so to speak. And I think that’s how I look at things too... I know it by looking rather than through any knowledge.”³

The essence is in our intuition. Isamu Noguchi is a artist who clearly understood what the essence is in the universe and knew how to read them through the intuition.

When Noguchi does his works, materials are accepted for what they are, and there is no attempt to destroy the material reality of the content or create an illusion with the material. He allow the elements to express themselves, revealing what it wants to be through using his hands and tools. (figure 0.4) He states that “If sculpture is the rock, it is also the space between the rock and a man, and the communication and contemplation between.”⁴ Isamu Noguchi’s work broadens to its surroundings. He explains that the intangible characteristics of the essence in objects creates a continuum of the space and propagates to form eternal architecture.

The thesis is examined through furniture making by interpreting Isamu Noguchi’s world view in craft and material. It expands further to the surrounding spaces and how the objects create a continuum of the areas. The following chapter speaks about how understanding the essence of the universe could be transformed into forms of architecture and how this primitive architecture could affect the surroundings and the world around us spiritually.

1 : CRAFT & MATERIAL

Manifold

“I should like natural material to be treated like a newly-discovered medium. Both concepts and execution could then be re-examined. Sculpture may be made of anything, and will be valued for its intrinsic qualities. However, it seems to me that the natural mediums of wood and stone, alive before man was, have a greater capacity, as with the reality of our being.”³

Isamu Noguchi explains the importance of listening to what the material wants to be. There is an inherent character to any material that lends itself to a particular form and a specific application.⁴ Architecture and design project a phenomenological presence and has integral relationships with space, form, light, shadow, colour, and reflection, each relating to the structure. Structural material in architecture and in design objects are the medium of communication for a user. Every material has its connatural properties, and these can be revealed by a designer’s thoughtful engagement in the making process. It is while making with material that one discovers the spirit of your chosen content and the properties peculiar to it. Your hand thinks and follows the thoughts of the material.

³ Threlfall, Tim. *Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor’s Practice : a Continuity with Life* Lewes: Seagull, 1993.

⁴ Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi: Artist’s Statements*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

Listening to the spirit in the material is to touch the surfaces, sensing their materiality and texture. The hands are our primary source for communicating with the language of material. Touch brings in the form of intimacy between the subject and the object. It creates the bridge between the dimension that we live in and another dimension that we do not see.⁵ The tool is an extension and specialization of the hand. The tool, in the hand, provides extra capacities for possibilities of creating. The craftsmen embody the tool through the hand to translate the language to the mind. Understanding and revealing the aesthetics of material comes from allowing the hands to perceive what is around us and expressing the essence of the mental journey.⁶ This idea of thinking hands is associated with the theory that we are projecting identity, and we create the gestalt, which is the conception of an integrated identity.⁷ Gestalt tells us that we are one being, the same inside and outside.

Noguchi was known as an artist who was especially sensitive to materials and imbued materials with symbolic significance. His association of material with a fundamental relationship to the surroundings and the world, is revealed throughout his remarks. The phenomenology of making became, for Noguchi, an engagement with metaphysics and a means of situating himself within the cosmos.⁸ (figure 1.1) The experience of communicating with the material in the phenomenology of sensual and emotional empathy connects in his workspace. The workshop is where you fully emerge yourself in the body, self, and mind; an existential experience that engages in the perspective of self-image, discerning the world by making objects. (figure 1.2)



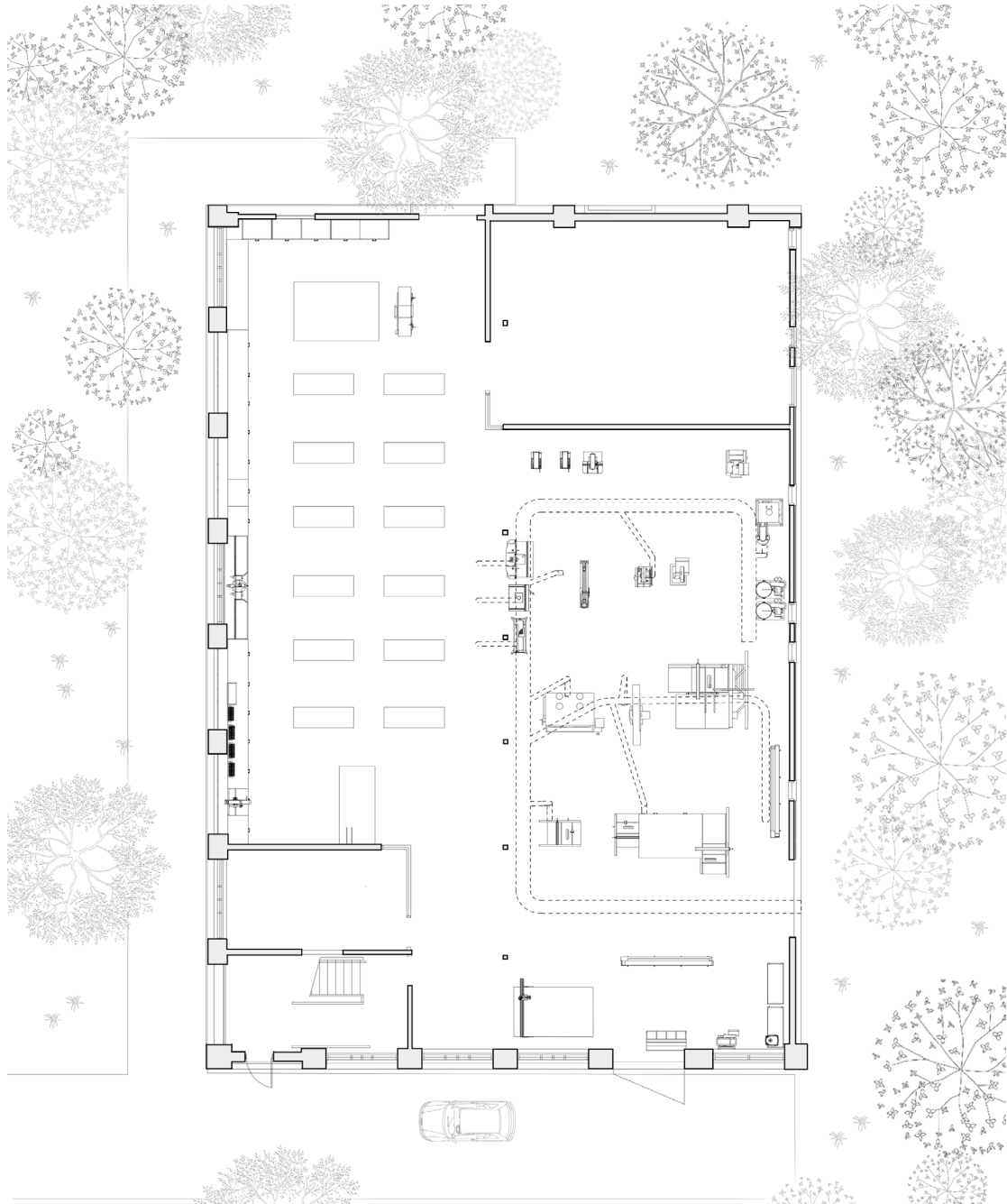
1.1 Berenice Aboott, Isamu Noguchi, 1997

⁵ Sennett, Richard. *The Craftsman* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

⁶ Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The thinking hand: existential and embodied wisdom in architecture*. Chichester, U. K. : Wiley 2009

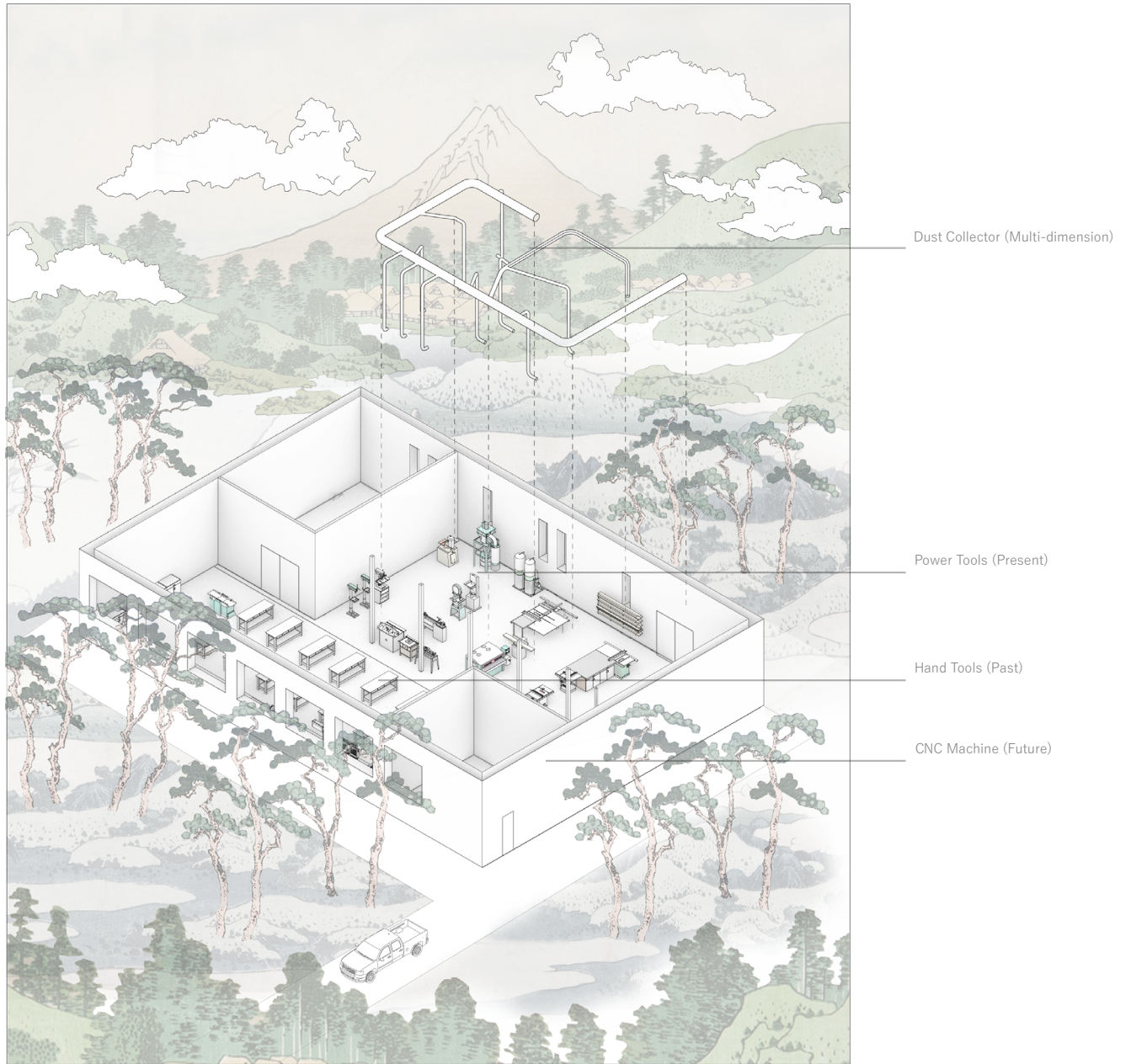
⁷ Koffka, Kurt. *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*. London, Routledge & Paul [1955, 1935, n.d.

⁸ Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi: Artist's Statements*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

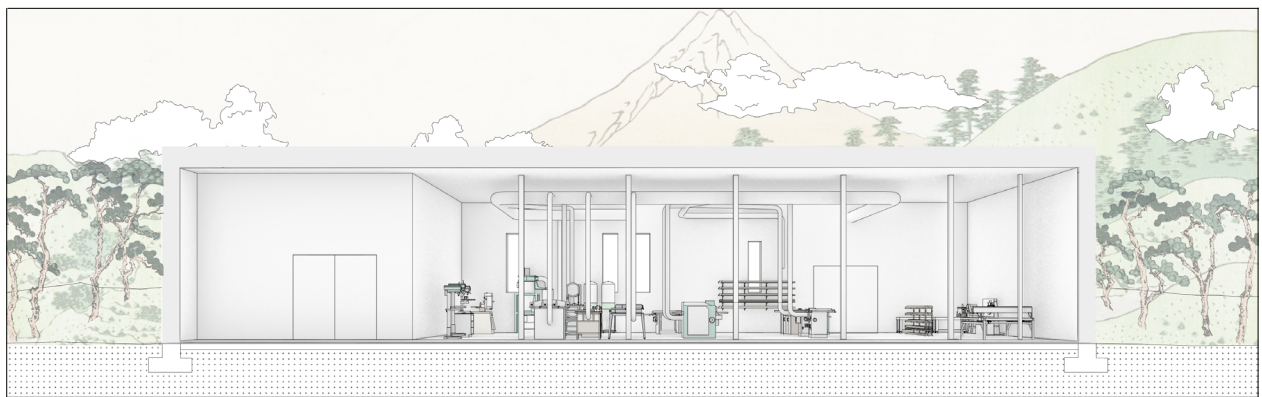


1.2 Workshop: Relationship between outside and inside world of workshop - Plan drawing

CRAFT AND MATERIAL



1.3 Workshop: Intertwined time space of past present and future- Axonometric drawing



1.4 Workshop - Section drawing

In the Workshop, you can find various kinds of tools. The tools include workbenches with hand tools; handplanes, handsaw, chisels, hammers, and power tools; jointer, surface planner, drill press, wood router, table saw, sander and a computer numerical control called a CNC. A woodshop is a place where tradition, present, and future is together in one place. The tradition of handcrafting, the current technology of power tools, and future technology of CNC co-exist in one place, and interaction with the body creates the illusion of being in multiple time dimensions. The numerous time dimensions are intertwined with our sensual experience and our existence. (figure 1.3)

It is the ability to perceive sensations that gives our brains a wealth of information about the environment around us, such as texture, temperature, pain, and pressure. When touch is immersed in the act of motions, you interact in the realm of spirituality⁹—the machinery, sounds of chiseling and hammering echoes in the woodshop. Sounds in the woodshop are the music of craftsman in the poetic expression. It is essential to listen to the material when using tools to make furniture. If the wood does not make the right sound, one knows that the material is loathing, and it is resisting the stress, and it is not to be forced. If one listens to the sounds of a material, it will lead your way to be an aesthetic object. The smell of the wood fills the entire space. The scent is created when your hands interact with the material using the tools. The material and how it is treated communicates through smell.

The woodshop is a manifold of space where the past, present, and future co-exist in the interwoven dimension of sensual phenomenology and body, mind, and spirit.

⁹ Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The thinking hand: existential and embodied wisdom in architecture*. Chichester, U. K. : Wiley 2009

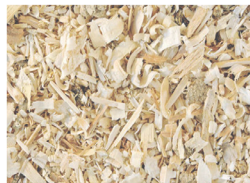
CRAFT AND MATERIAL



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1.5 Unknown, Traces of wood: Dust of wood grasps the memory of how the objects came to be a particular forms from undefined raw wood.

The material leaves traces. The traces of wood is sawdust, left behind in the process. Sawdust is considered to be a waste product of woodworking such as sawing, milling, planing, routing, drilling, sanding, and chiseling. However, sawdust is more valuable than just a waste product of working operations. It grasps memory of how the object came to be a particular form from the undefined wood. Using the different tools produce different size and shapes of particles of the wood. (figure 1.5)

The wood is collected from the forest then kiln dried to be an ideal condition to be used for furniture making. When you start making furniture using tools, the particles of wood are produced. These particles of wood are collected in the dust bag by the dust collector. The wood dust collected could be used as organic fertilizer, and it reincarnates as another tree, but a significant portion of the wood is reborn as aesthetically pleasing furniture which would be used for many years.

The dynamic system is explored in the notion of a loop structure within and around the workshop. The trace of the wood is the furniture, the mark of the furniture is sawdust, the evidence of the sawdust is the forest, and the trail of the forest is the wood.

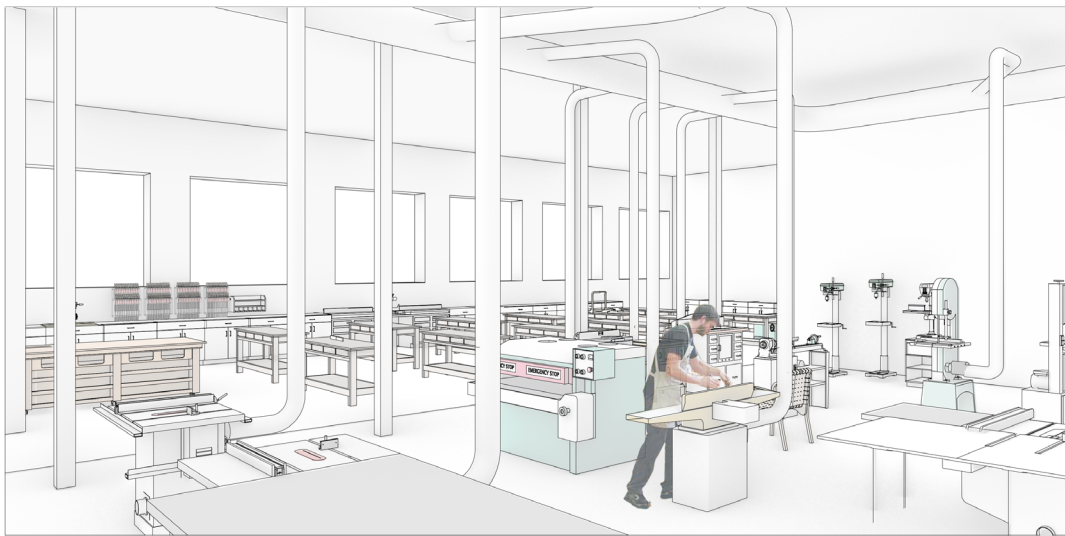
Noguchi describes that the deeper meaning of sculpture had to be sought in the working of the material.¹⁰ Through this, its enduring quality might be revealed. The evidence of geologic time was its link to our world's creation. To seek such objects of time, takes patience, and understanding of its meaning.¹¹ The discerning of the material is understanding its time of the past and the making of the future. The body becomes part of the continuum in the cosmos when one engages with the material through making.

10 Altshuler, Bruce. Isamu Noguchi: Artist's Statements. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.1993.

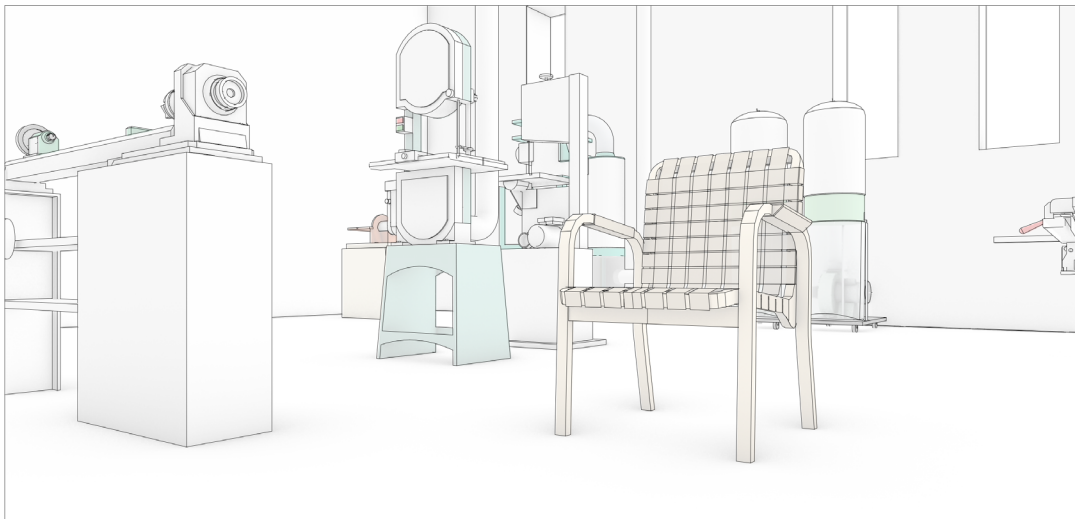
11 Threlfall, Tim. Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life Lewes: Seagull, 1993.



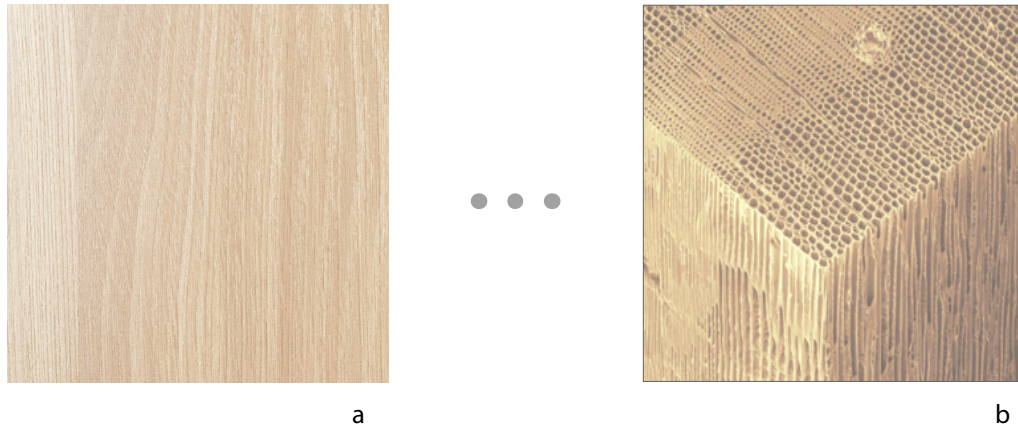
1.6 Workshop: Feeling with hands - Drawing



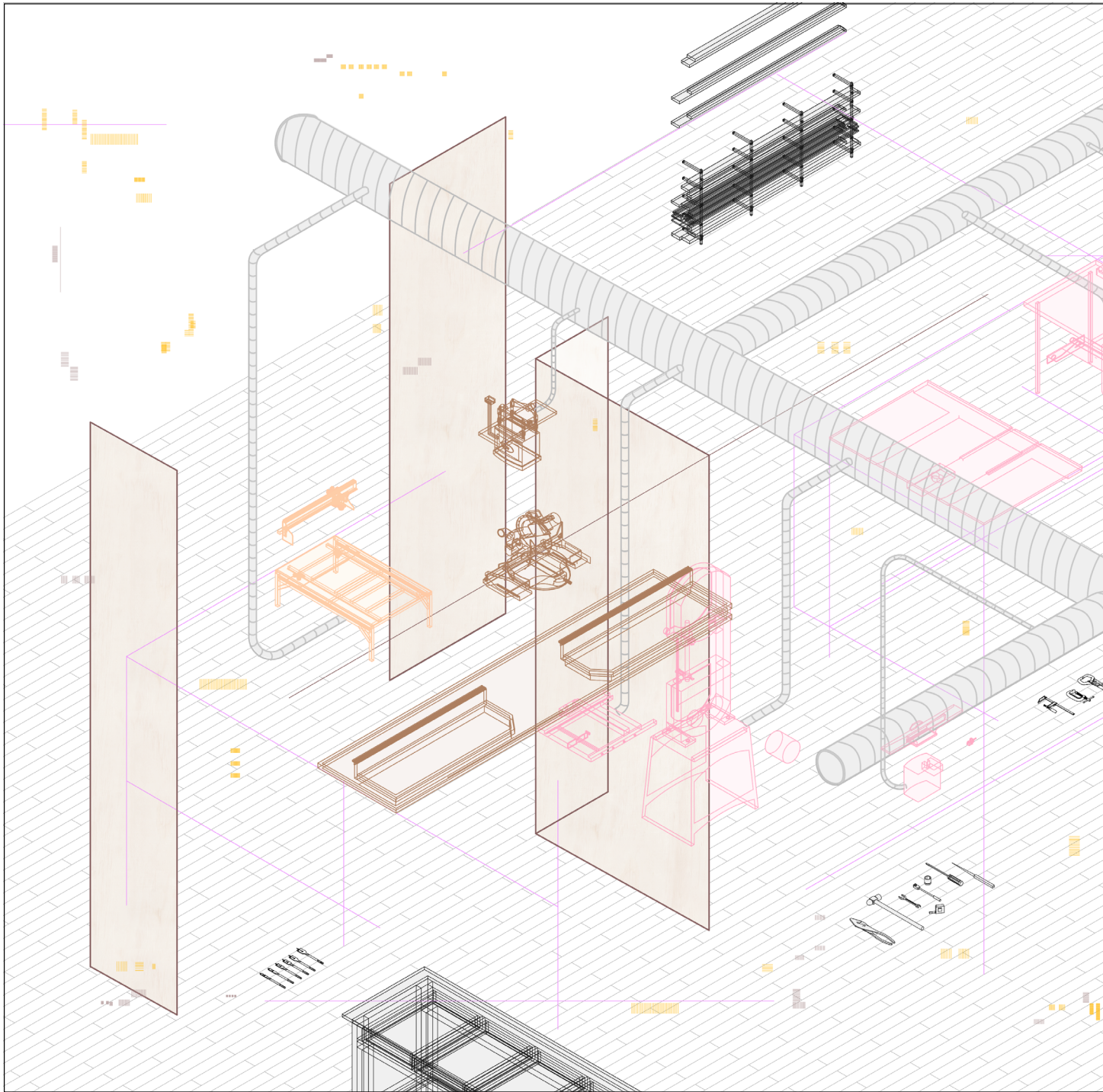
1.7 Workshop: Understanding the material properties through making - Drawing



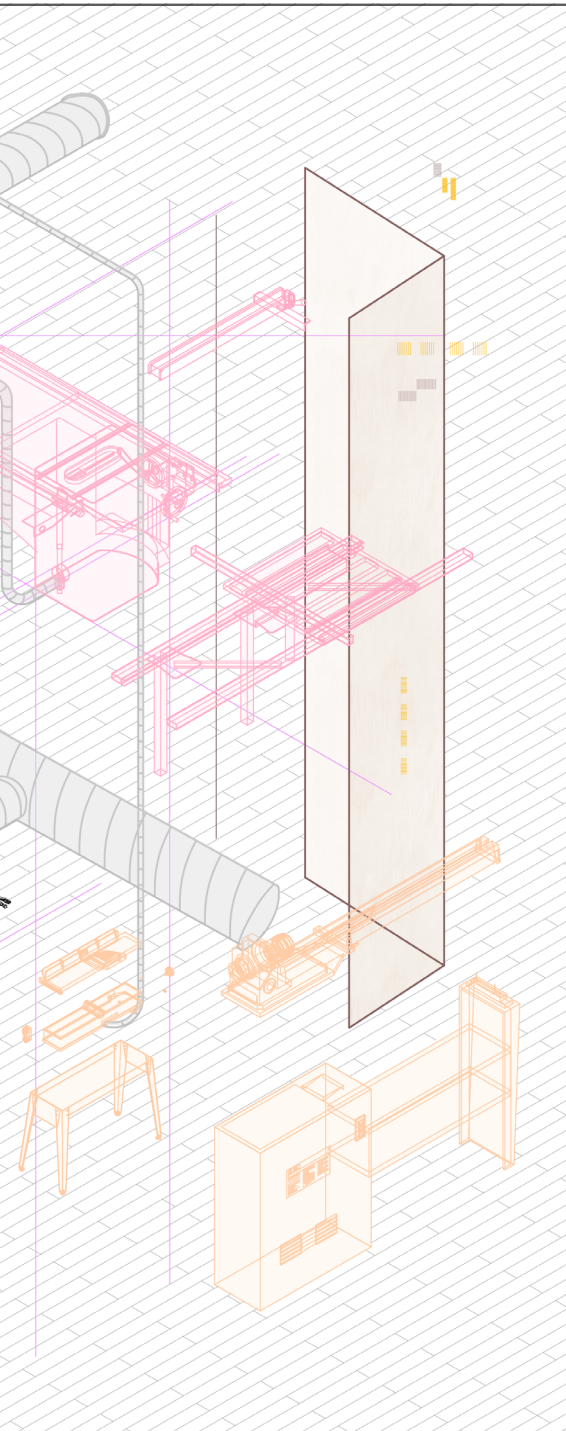
1.8 Workshop: Completed object through making and objects interacts with physical world - Drawing



1.9 Material property of wood grain: The microscopic cellular structure of wood defining the characteristics of grain patterns.



1.10 Manifold of Workshop: Deconstructed space of woodshop and dynamic system is expressed through the dust collecting system, which connects all the tools through the manifold of pipes.



11 Noguchi, Isamu. *A Sculptor's World*
1st U.S. ed. New York: Harper & Row,
1968.

The drawing represents the deconstructed space of the woodshop. The tool is the extension of the hands, and it provides expanded capacities for the possibilities of producing images to reality. The language of the craftsman is translated to the mind by embodying the tools through the hands. Humans create objects to give physical embodiment to the unseen essences of universal existence, feeding man's urge to embody the spiritual nature of their inner universe with the materials of his outer world.¹¹

When using the tools, you enter into the multiple time dimension, interwoven with sensual experience and existence. The workshop is the manifold of spaces in body, mind, and spirit. The various lines on the drawing in different directions show the movement of the body.

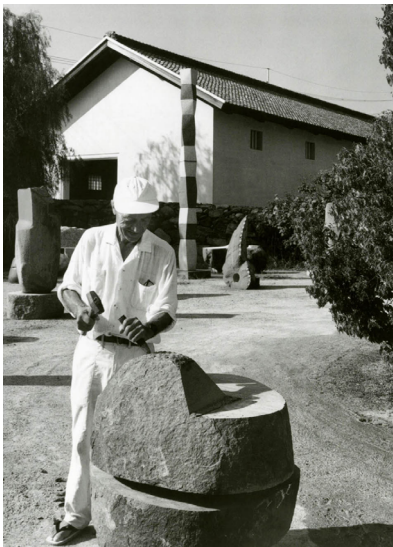
The dynamic system is expressed through the dust collecting system, which connects all the tools through the manifold of pipes. The system displays the loop structures within and connected to the outside world. Different types and sizes of dust are spread around the spaces leaving the traces behind of the working process.

This deconstructed drawing reveals the compound space of the woodshop like the grains of wood. If you look at the drawing from afar, the system is hidden, but when you look closely to them, the drawing displays an organized system that you also see in the cellular structure of the wood. (figure 1.10)

In this drawing, wood as the material had become the ultimate medium for the expression of the concrete reality. It is a medium through which a maker seeks to realize and communicate the complexity and interrelationship of our conscious and unconscious being, as individuals in the cosmic sense.

2 : CONTINUUM

Endless form & Spaces



2.1 Unknown, Isamu Noguchi working at his studio in Mure, 1980

12 Threlfall, Tim. *Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life* Lewes: Seagull, 1993.

13 Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi: Artist's Statements*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

14 Torres, Ana Maria. *Isamu Noguchi : a Study of Space* New York: Monacelli Press, 2000.

15 Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi: Artist's Statements*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

“What Noguchi realized as a result of his journey around the world was that a continuity of sculpture with life did not mean an adherence to a stylistic paradigm, rather that each individual should gain a conscious insight into the nature of the universal within themselves, and accordingly express it in sculptural form that asserted a continuity with life.”¹²

Noguchi went on to carve his chosen material into more organic abstractions as a response to the severe journey of geometry.¹³ Noguchi identifies his work in a more direct way of expressing men's relationship to the earth and his environment. He describes that the essence of his work is the perception of space as the continuum of our existence.¹⁴ Noguchi suggests that making is to view nature through nature's eyes, requiring the artist to become a one with nature, a part of the earth through an attempt to realize one's aspirations through abstraction.¹⁵ The scale of an object reflects its humanism, and at the same time, has qualities of refinement or a primitive form created through the exacting craftsmanship that is brought to each piece as a response to the innate nature of essence in human and material meaning. (figure 2.1)

CONTINUUM

Pokopoko table is a curved table which is made with wood designed in a variety of organic shapes, Using the empty, unused spaces of a classic tea table, the table incorporates an essential green element into the table by alternating flat, raised and carved surfaces expressing organic abstraction. (figure 2.2)

The function of the flat surface on the table is to allow objects to be placed on the table. This use of the table is often neither essential nor appropriately used. Instead, The table has the potential of creating nature in space. The unused area is raised in the Pokopoko table allow plants to take their natural place on the surface, and suggest other ways of organizing a tea table. As Noguchi described, the Pokopoko table expresses the relationship of the earth and the human environment through naturally implemented plants on the table through sinuous abstraction, which resembles the nature scene.

Pokopoko table is inspired by and invokes the magnificent mountainscapes, similar to the way Isamu Noguchi makes his masterpieces through nature's eyes. The tips of the mountains are cut to make way for plants, following the gentle organic form of the abstraction with vegetation. (figure 2.6)

The fundamental conception of this furniture's role is to give meaning to space while it is being used. PokoPoko Table is conceived as a spatial whole rather than as an object. The furniture is connected to the environmental atmosphere it creates.

PokoPoko table gives a feeling of being one with nature through its form, scale, texture, material, and symbolism. It establishes the presence of a continuum of spaces through the surface of the table and extends further to the surrounding environment. (figure 2.7 , 2.8) The continuum of space is the result of the emotion connected to the scope of the cosmos in the past, present, and future through the essence of making objects.



2.2 PokoPoko Table: The relationship of the earth and the human environment through naturally implemented plants on the table through sinuous abstraction, which resembles the nature scene - Top View

CONTINUUM



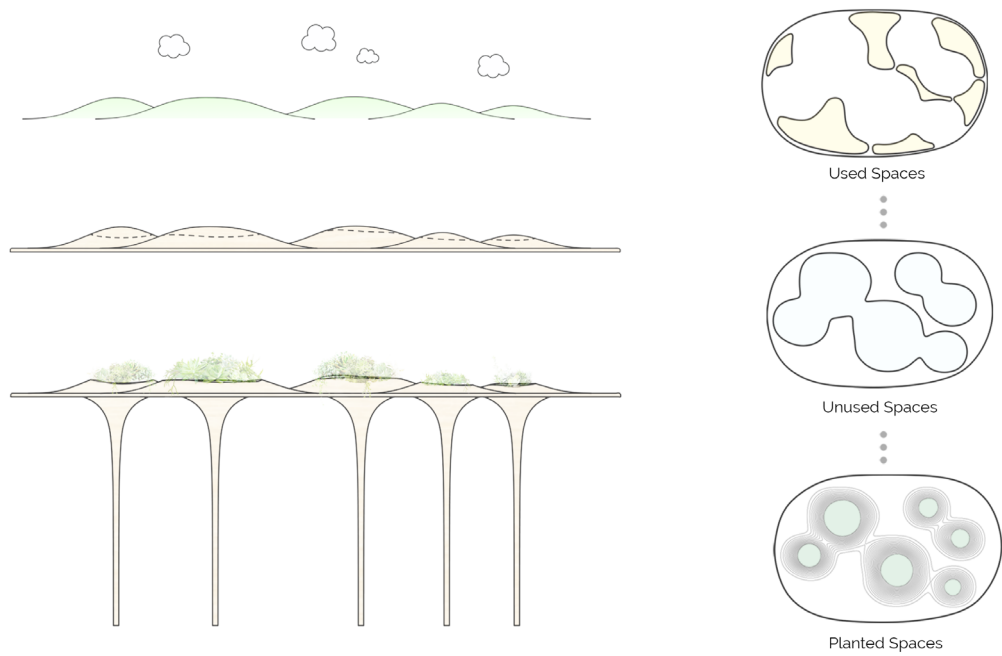
2.3 PokoPoko Table gives a feeling of being one with nature through its form, scale, texture, material, and symbolism
- Side View



2.4 PokoPoko Table establishes the presence of a continuum of spaces through the surface of the table, extends further to the surrounding environment.



2.5 PokoPoko Table - Continuum of spaces in living environment: PokoPoko Table creates connection to the environmental as a spatial whole and atmosphere it creates.



2.6 PokoPoko Table Pokopoko table is inspired by and invokes the magnificent mountainscapes- Concept Drawing

CONTINUUM



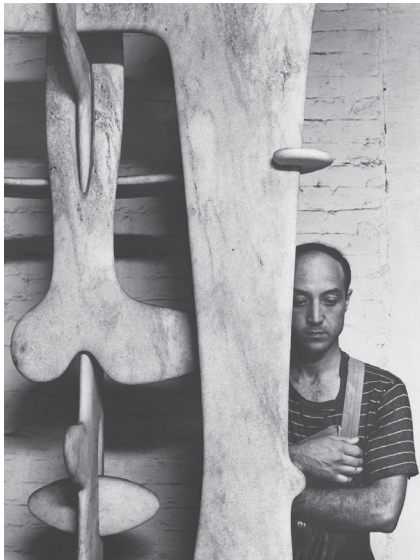
2.7 PokoPoko Table - Primitive Forms 1



2.8 PokoPoko Table - Primitive Forms 2

3 : IDENTITY

Nowness



3.1 Newman, Isamu Noguchi, 1947

16 Duus, Masayo. *The Life of Isamu Noguchi : Journey Without Borders* Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004.

17 Ashton, Dore. *Noguchi East and West* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

18 Tiger, Caroline. *Isamu Noguchi*, New York: Chelsea House, c2007.

19 Threlfall, Tim. *Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life Lewes*: Seagull, 1993.

20 Threlfall, Tim. *Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life Lewes*: Seagull, 1993.

Isamu Noguchi struggled through his childhood with the confusion of his identity born between an American mother and a Japanese poet father.¹⁶ Two different countries made him feel he never belonged anywhere. But through creating his artwork, Noguchi realized that he genuinely belonged everywhere.¹⁷ The truth of his identity was revealed when he understood that both countries belonged to his essence.

Noguchi's works and sculptural aims have some of its roots in the Japanese part of his dual background, particularly in the teachings of Zen Buddhism.¹⁸ In his sculpture, one becomes increasingly aware that he is deeply conscious of the role that this background plays in his motivations as a sculptor. Noguchi's objects have a quality of 'nowness' or use the Zen term, Satori.¹⁹ Satori means to see into one's true nature. In Noguchi's sculpture, as Zen Buddhism teaches, a consciousness of work in which duality does not exist is shown in his work. The concept of Satori, obtained through understanding the pure spirit of intuition, frees humans from the delusions of the outer world while seeking to unify the external with the inner.²⁰

IDENTITY

The Zen extends to the conception of Wabi and Sabi, which in western term, denotes the subjective and the objective and expresses beauty that is imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete ²¹. The aesthetics established as a consequence of Zen philosophy are the most critical aspects that infuse Noguchi's work of masterpieces. He realized that his sculptures cannot be illusionistic to achieve this expressive intention. Noguchi's work is not categorized as conceptual work because it does not contain a sense of narrative. However, it communicates a great sense of continuity through the spatial perception of surrounding and past, present, and future of his works.²² "If sculpture is the rock, it is also the space between the rock and a man, and the communication and contemplation between."²³

The Zen concept in the tea ceremony leads the participant to the consciousness of nothingness. The tea ceremony represents purity, tranquility, respect, and harmony.²⁴

The Fuwafuwa Series is a collection of furniture that displays the Zen approach satori and Wabi-Sabi made with translucent corrugated plastic paired with light-toned oak wood, which expresses nothingness and communicates a great sense of continuity from the past to the present.

The corrugated plastic is a material that is commonly used for commercial signs, political promotions, and for making containers or packaging. This material has generally been used functionally but rarely recognized as an aesthetic material. The corrugation already provides a durable structure and has a characteristic of lightness.



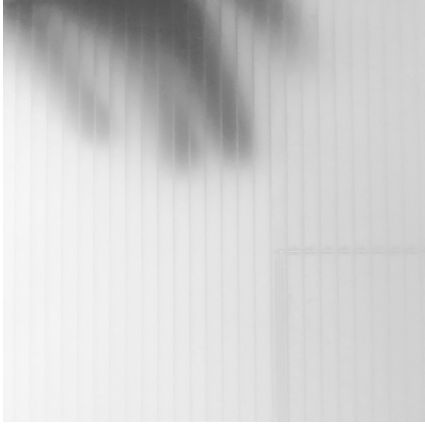
3.2 Fuwafuwa Series 1 - The Zen of purity, tranquility, respect, and harmony

21 Koren, Leonard. *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers* Berkeley, Calif: Stone Bridge Press, 1994.

22 Torres, Ana Maria. *Isamu Noguchi : a Study of Space* New York: Monacelli Press, 2000.

23 Threlfall, Tim. *Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life* Lewes: Seagull, 1993.

24 Lawrence, Robyn Griggs., and Robyn Griggs. Lawrence. *Simply Imperfect : Revisiting the Wabi-Sabi House* Gabriola Island, B.C: New Society Publishers, 2011.



3.3 Translucent Corrugated Plastic - corrugation provides a durable structure and has characteristics of lightness.



3.4 Fuwafuwa Series 2 - eyes are naturally drawn to the serenity in the material texture of oak wood.

Fuwafuwa series has the potential to become an object that reminds humans of their own profound nature and sensibility of Zen. The essence of the purpose is found in its material. The translucent feature of the material in the Fuwafuwa Series presents ambiguity and subtraction from our vision through optical diffusion. From this subtraction, the eyes are naturally drawn to the serenity of the material texture of the oak wood. When the furniture is used, it advises being in a state of calm attentiveness.

When the Fuwafuwa series is in a space, one discovers the objects exist at the human scale and realizes that it is real. Then nothingness shown in these objects has no visual dimension or significance because of the translucency of material used for the furniture. Scale and meaning appear instead and only when an opaque material or faint lines are visually introduced.

The Fuwafuwa series was completed through the elimination of the inessential article through formal reduction, revealing its identity through true material expression and production of art-making. It was inspired by non-western sources and a collaboration with chance and accident. The Fuwafuwa series displays results learning from Zen through Noguchi's world view and manifestations of the primitive essence of human nature to find peace and be self-aware of one's place, inconsequential within the universe.

IDENTITY



3.5 Fuwafuwa Series 3 - The Fuwafuwa series was completed through the elimination of the inessential article through formal reduction, truth to materials expression revealing its identity



IDENTITY



3.6 Fuwafuwa Series 4 -The foggy atmosphere of Fuwafuwa Series displays primitive essence of human nature of finding peace and being self-aware of one's place inconsequential within the universe.



3.7 Fuwafuwa Series 5

IDENTITY



3.8 Fuwafuwa Series 6

Isamu Noguchi strongly emphasizes his desire to view nature through nature's eyes throughout his career and did not consider man as a special kind.²⁵ He believed that there is an unthoughtful beauty found in this reversed attitude of thinking human is extraordinary existence in the earth.²⁶ He believed that an unlimited field of abstract sculptural expression would then be realized in which flowers and trees, rivers and mountains, birds, beasts, and humans would be given their due place by finding the two meanings in the single word of nature.²⁷ The inherited sense of nature includes a phenomenon of the physical world, the products of the earth and the objects' intrinsic features.

The balance of spirit with matter can only be understood when the maker has thoroughly immersed oneself in the study of the unity of nature and become a part of nature and the earth. This leads to viewing the inner surfaces and the life elements and acknowledging where it came. Noguchi's material means more to him than its use for the making of matter. Still, it acts as coordination and assistance to his theme of the universal meaning of essence revealed through making objects.

Natural materials that Noguchi uses become the preeminent representative of the essence and a symbol of humanity's relationship with the environment, both locally and universally. His approach to making was not merely the understanding of materials' physical properties, but instead an understanding of material identity. The material revealed spiritual connotation when it interacts with making and the completed objects are used.

25 Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

26 Torres, Ana Maria. *Isamu Noguchi : a Study of Space* New York: Monacelli Press, 2000.

27 Altshuler, Bruce. *Isamu Noguchi*. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

IDENTITY



3.9 Mokomoko Vase 1 -Flowers visually expresses respect, sympathy, and love; The expression and engagement are created at the sole moment when the flower is placed in the vase

28 Canada, N. (2020, July 09). Government of Canada. Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/fire-insects-disturbances/top-insects/13395>

Flowers visually express respect, sympathy, and love. They are a means of lending support and sharing the burden of grief, and the expression and engagement are expressed at the sole moment when the flower is placed in the vase. Amalgamating two slightly different lumbers, the larger houses the actual flowers within ash, while the smaller ones act as spacers made of cherry. Poetically, the ash wood houses the life that is no longer there, while the red wood represents mourning.

In North America, a significant amount of Ash species are damaged by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). These insects infest and can kill ash species, and as such, the damaged tree is considered unpleasant.²⁸ Mokokoko vases are made with these damaged trees; when people place flowers inside the vase, which is made with dead wood or damaged wood from EAB, it displays an abundance of this expressive meaning.

The essence of the material is in the story of where the material came from. When the Emerald Ash Borer damaged the massive amounts of Ashwood, the frustration was absolute with the trees' death. But the defeat of death alternated to the hope of life as a useful object. The presence of an object sits in the room. When one interacts by putting flowers in the vase, it reveals the true meaning of the continuum of space. It expands farther to the spiritual connection between objects, space, and humans through understanding the material's identity while maintaining the natural appearance of vases through select edges being curved.



3.10 Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)



3.11 Experience - Interaction



3.12 Mokokoko Vase 2



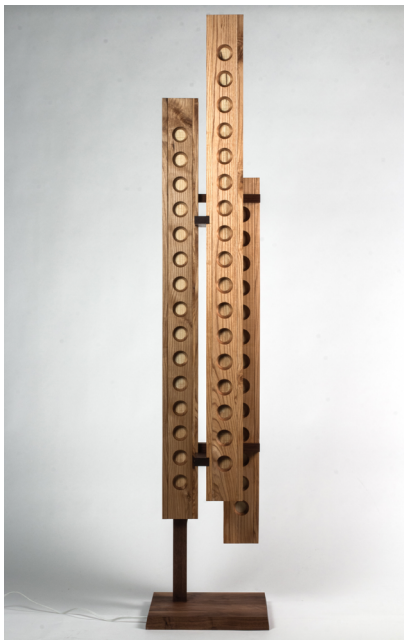
3.13 Mokomoko Vase 3 -When one interacts by putting flowers in the vase, it reveals the true meaning of the continuum of space.



3.14 Mokomoko Vase 4

Life is invariably associated with death. The essence of all the objects begins with life and ends with death. The role of the maker is to interpret the futile material to have meaning in space.

The design concept of O Floor Lamp is also inspired by the images of damaged ash and the death of trees. The carved-out holes and meandering tunnels made by the EAB, may be considered ugly and unpleasant in people's cognitive minds. But these characteristics are recreated as three different heights of the tube in the design of the floor lamp, which emits a warm light analogous to a calm state of mind.



3.15 O Floor Lamp 1

The O Floor lamp, like a sculpture, stands at a human scale. The dark color of the lamp's structural parts becomes hidden in the night time, which makes use of the contrast. Additionally, when lit, the three tubes appear as if they are floating in the air, representing reincarnated life from death.

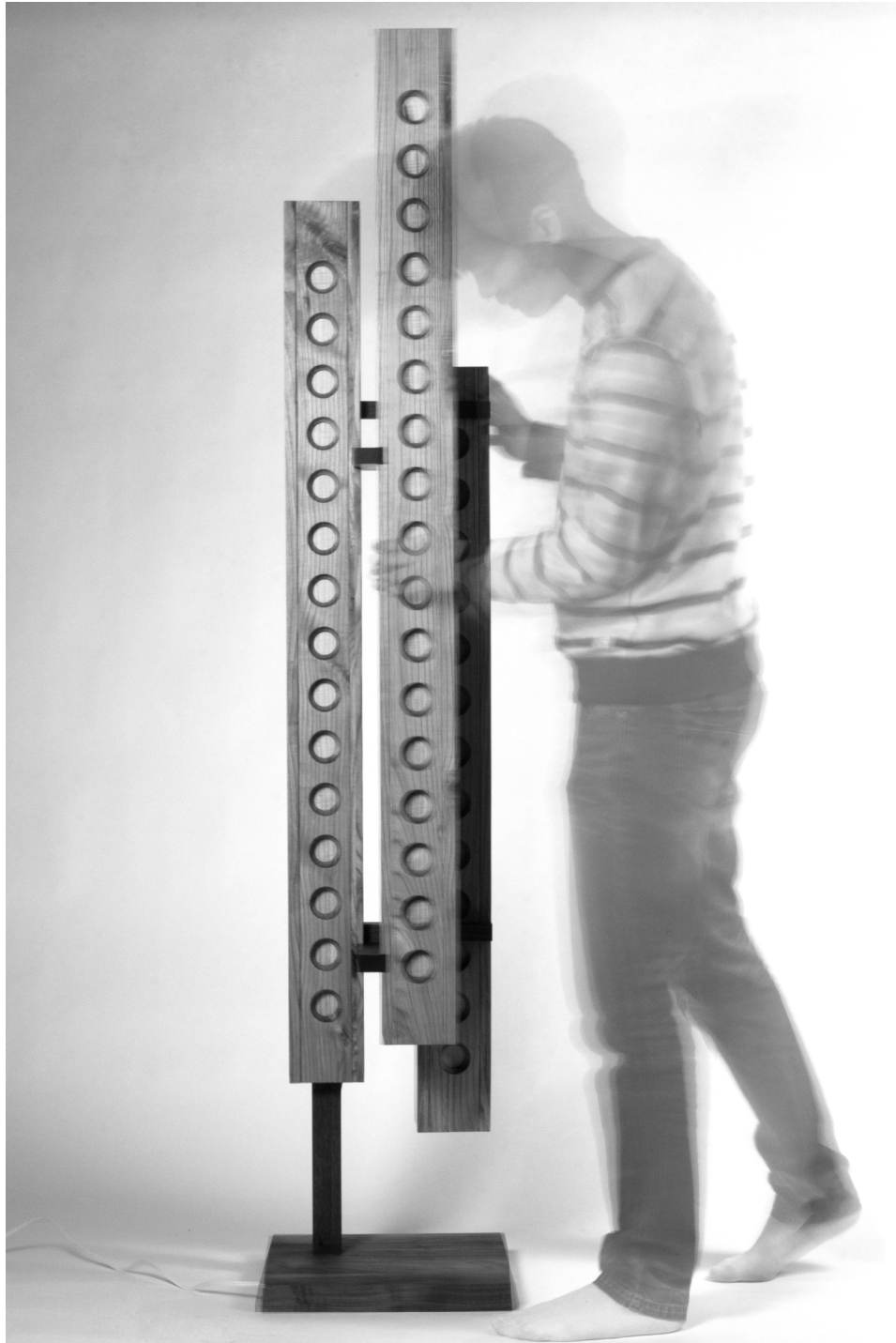
The design is not just a functional floor lamp, but also about a reminder of death and the history of salvaged wood from trees infested by the EAB, and transformed into functional furniture.

O Floor lamp brightens space where there is no significant visual dimension or in dark. The soft texture of the grain comes into sight, and it creates an abundant spatial continuum.



3.16 O Floor Lamp 2 - O Floor Lamp is inspired by the images of damaged ash and the death of trees; The three tubes lighten up as if they are floating in the air, representing reincarnated life from death.

IDENTITY



3.17 O Floor Lamp



3.18 O Floor Lamp

4 : ORIGIN

Essence of Architecture

Isamu Noguchi considered his work a concrete reality in the physical world. The objects he creates inhabits the space and affects the emotional and cognitive human experience when one encounters his works.²⁹ Noguchi describes his role as a sculptor is to try to give true expression to this reality of universal meaning and interpretation achieved.³⁰

As an artist, he attempted to create a new view of nature to reach the primitive state. There are different meanings of nature in the universe.³¹ The nature of trees and grass is one aspect, and there is human nature. Human nature is the most complex concept that indicates the fundamental dispositions and characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

29 Threlfall, Tim. Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life Lewes: Seagull, 1993.

30 Threlfall, Tim. Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life Lewes: Seagull, 1993.

31 Altshuler, Bruce. Isamu Noguchi. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.1993.

32 Torres, Ana Maria. Isamu Noguchi : a Study of Space New York: Monacelli Press, 2000.

As Isamu Noguchi's study moved towards the meaning of nature, he was fascinated by the world of children.³² Children possess the unbounded pure nature of humans. The simple things have the power to attract people. The charm that can be found in the world of children and animals lies in its simplicity. Noguchi expended much of his energy in the development of primitive objects inspired by

the imagination of children because he understood that children view the world differently than adults. Their awareness of its possibilities are attuned to their full potential to achieve the purest primitive expression. Noguchi's work displays the perception of the space and the continuum of our existence in abstraction through the vision detecting volume, line, point, giving shape, distance, proportion through our experience of movement, light, and time which are the qualities of space.³³ Space is otherwise inconceivable without the essence of spaces.

" It is the space, or rather the particular place, its totality as a meaningful environment that occupies me... Any given space is a balance of elements: the air, the sky, the earth, people, the illusion, which together form our awareness of space, the space always dominant, the enduring background of silence. "³⁴

Noguchi describes his work as a continuum of the universe which connects every element of our existence in a space. Noguchi's sculpture is simply the realization of the idea of primitive form. His works are objects with a vibrant balance of subjective matter and organic three-dimensional form.³⁵ His pursuit of nothingness is made tangible by primitive formation. The clay study of abstract forms follows Noguchi's idea of making the view of the universe to grasp a primitive nature. The abstract forms are made as if they were made by children, bearing an organic simplicity. Individual objects are recognized through faint lines from the contrast between light and shadows on the natural forms. When objects are put together as a garden of sculptures, a human interacts with objects, and through the experience of movement, it reveals a continuum of the spaces.

33 Altshuler, Bruce. Isamu Noguchi. New York : Abbeville Press, 1994.

34 Threlfall, Tim. Isamu Noguchi : Aspects of a Sculptor's Practice : a Continuity with Life Lewes: Seagull, 1993.

35 Greene, Alison de Lima. Isamu Noguchi : a sculpture for sculpture : the Lillie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden. Houston, Tex. : Museum Of Fine Arts, Houston, c2006.



4.1 Primitive Forms 1 - Children possess an unbounded pure human nature. The simple thing has the power to attract people. The charm that can be found in the world of children and animals lies in its simplicity.

ORIGIN



4.2 Primitive Forms 2



4.3 Primitive Forms 3

ORIGIN



4.4 Primitive Forms 4



4.5 Primitive Forms 5

ORIGIN



4.6 Garden of Abstract Objects 1 - A Continuum of human existence in abstraction through the vision detecting volume, line, point, giving shape, distance, proportion through the experience of movement, light, and time which defines the qualities of space.



4.7 Garden of Abstract Objects 2

ORIGIN



4.8 Garden of Abstract Objects 3



ORIGIN



4.9 Garden of Abstract Objects 4



4.10 Garden of Abstract Objects 5

ORIGIN



4.11 Fairytale Village 1 - Fairytale village is from the pure imaginative village in a continuum of the universe which connects the element of our existence in space. The village is the realization of primitive form connected to the surrounding nature.



4.12 Fairytale Village 2

ORIGIN



4.13 Fairytale Village 3



4.14 Fairytale Village 4

ORIGIN



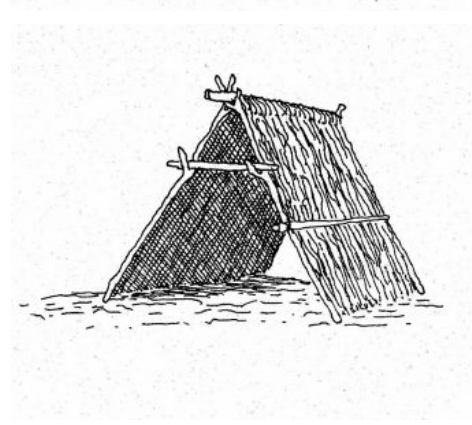
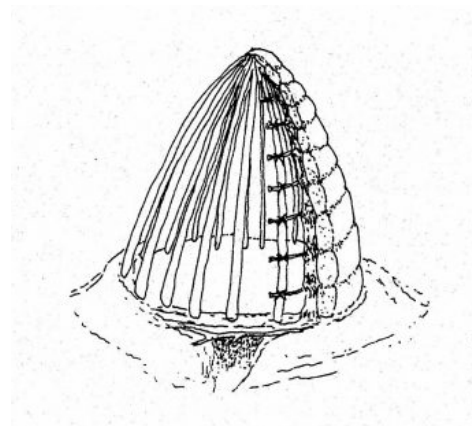
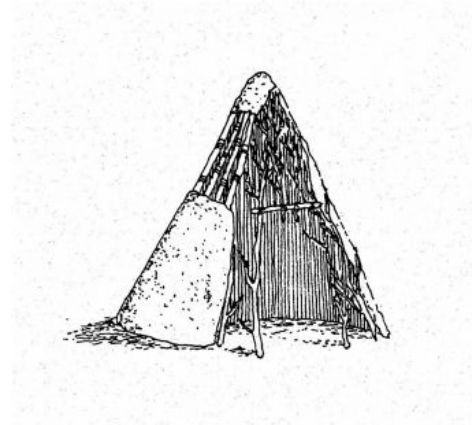
4.15 Fairytale Village 5



4.16 Fairytale Village 6

The origin of architecture was born to avoid the adverse events that could cause danger to humans. The original architecture displays the purest appearance as if part of nature was raised up from the ground, and architecture becomes the land, and the land becomes architecture, a merged form of mother nature and human-made. The architecture must be understood with the form of its basic necessity and the meaning of space, with no reason to become overly complicated. The essence of architecture is in the idea of freedom, the intrinsic nature of living and the relationship between space, material, and interaction between humans.

Children intuitively grasp this idea of the essence when they draw houses. The houses they draw are straightforward and tell everything about the nature of what the architecture wants to be.³⁶ The study models of community building resemble children's primitive way of making architecture with a simple, mysterious, and evocative appeal. The primitive form of construction creates a resonance to the surrounding forest as if the shape is elevated from the ground. Perceiving the body in relationship to space through primitive form creates a continuum with the surrounding environment. The primitive form is elevated as the nature of space with a sense of spirit that seeks openness. This primitive community-building intuitively responds to the surrounding spaces connecting nature and human and consequently reveals their spirituality, the essence of being architecture. However, the essence in architecture is not merely to create purity in the construction of primal sense but also to be at one with the spiritual nuances of that perceived space. The study expresses this through the subtle interplay of form and space of ordinary reality.



4.17 Primitive Houses

36 Farokhi, Masoumeh, and Masoud Hashemi. "The Analysis of Children's Drawings: Social, Emotional, Physical, and Psychological Aspects." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 30 (2011): 2219-224.



4.18 Primitive Community Building - Forms: The original architecture displays the purest appearance as if the part of nature is raised up from the ground, and architecture becomes the land, and the land becomes architecture merged form of mother nature and human-made at some point.

ORIGIN



4.19 Primitive Community Building 1 - The form of architecture resembles children's primitive way of making houses: simple, mysterious, and evocative.



Alternative appearance.

ORIGIN



4.20 primitive Community Building 2- The essence of architecture is in the idea of freedom and the intrinsic nature of living and the relationship between space, material, and interaction between humans.



4.21 Primitive Community Building 3

ORIGIN



4.22 Primitive Community Building 4



4.23 Primitive Community Building 5

CONCLUSION: JOURNEY

Thoughts & Process



5.1 George Nakashima - Holding Chair



5.2 George Nakashima - Conoid Bench

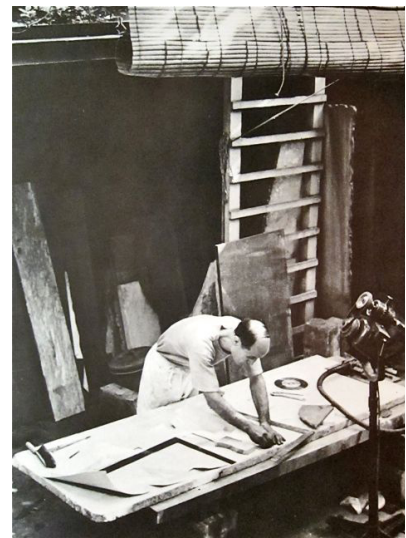
This research is about searching for my own identity, which resonates with Isamu Noguchi's life, work, and struggle to find an identity. I grew up in Korea, Japan, and Canada, consistently moving and living in different countries adapting to blend into their culture, style, language, and people. I shared a similar struggle and concern that Isamu Noguchi had in his lifetime as an individual seeking who he is. This identity of oneself reflects on the life of artist, designer, and architect's way of thinking, and it transforms them into who and what they are. We, as a maker, grow from searching for our identity. It is our life's task in a continuum, and there is no end to this journey.

Growing up in Japan as a child, Wabi-Sabi and Satori's idea grew secure in my innate identity. I began to learn how to make things with wood, just like George Nakanishi made furniture as an architect, when I started working as an apprentice at a local Canadian furniture maker and artist. This opportunity gave me a way to express my identity through small to medium scale objects as a designer, striving to reveal who I am and connect with the spirit of material and craft. I chose to expand my identity

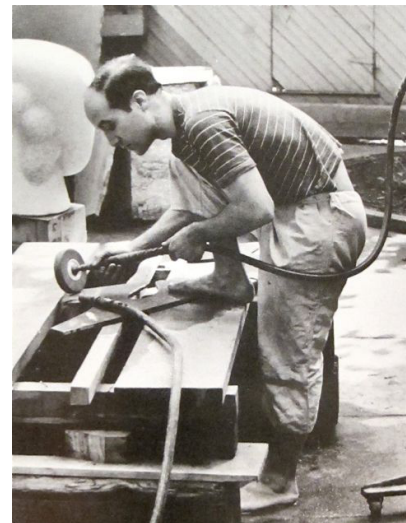
CONCLUSION: JOURNEY

through furniture making as a designer because I truly believe that furniture is a small interpretation of large scale architecture in terms of expression through structural aesthetic, a deep respect of the inherent beauty of the material and most importantly, furniture has functions just like architecture and it interacts with users in the space. It defines and affects the surrounding space. There is no boundary between furniture and the architecture of making. Furniture was a primary method of examination to express my identity because it could be realized faster due to its scale and purpose as functional objects. The furniture was made in various locations; Toronto, and in Sudbury, as well as Waterloo. I have moved around different workshops according to the situation, similar to how Noguchi worked between his studio in Long Island City, US, renovated from a gas station and junkyard, as well as workshop in Mure, Japan. Working in different workshops allowed me to meet different makers and thinkers. It gave me chances to see their method of working and making.

It was February 2020 when COVID-19 happened without any warning, and there were many restrictions and limitations. It was a strange time to live, people were not allowed to meet, and workshops were closed. The pandemic's influence changed the place that I was able to work, and I chose to work from home. The primitive forms were made with the clay at home and with materials that were easily accessible. The search for essence in architecture is examined by making primitive abstract forms showing the relationship between the hand of nature and the hand of the maker.



5.3 Eliot Elisfon, Isamu Noguchi working in his studio. 1946



5.4 André Kertész, Isamu Noguchi working on a slate sculpture. 1946



5.5 Unknown, Isamu Noguchi's California Scenario. 1982



5.6 Kengo Kuma, Hans Christian Andersen Museum in Odense. 2016



5.7 Edmund Sumner, Takasugi-an by Terunobu Fujimori. 2009

It was an experience of making through the eyes and minds of children, as Noguchi suggests, to see the world through nature's eyes. The Garden of Primitive form was made displaying the space of the surrealist atmosphere. The Primitive forms were extended as a fairytale village sharing the idea of the surreal with an abstract green landscape of forms for children like the precedents of Hans Christian Andersen Museum in Danish City of Odense by Kengo Kuma. The Garden of primitive forms and fairytale village also suggests a new importance of parks and green spaces for pandemic distancing and isolation with abstract objects by creating a continuum of flowing spaces. This naturally flowing space encourages people to have a safe distance and fully merge with the physical and spiritual world of origin.

Terunobu Fujimori's architecture shows the playful experimentation and sophisticated craftsmanship of primitive architecture. It reveals the essence of architecture in the idea of freedom and the intrinsic nature of living and the relationship between space, material, and interaction between the surrounding environment. Fujimori describes his intention as an architect is to visibly and harmoniously connect two worlds; the built world that humankind creates with the nature God created.³⁷ This primitive community-building intuitively responds to one with the surrounding landscape and is intrinsically connected to humans. Through this research, I've learned that every substance has an origin; the origin is from its essence. An origin is part of one's identity, it is to be discovered by oneself and it reflects on creating objects as a maker. Identity then transmits to the made objects, affects the surrounding environment, and brings continuum to the space and changes to the world.

37 Gillin, Jaime. 2009. "Terunobu Fujimori." Dwell. Accessed July 31. <https://www.dwell.com/article/terunobu-fujimori-e123c0fa>

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5.8 Local Workshop in Toronto: Story board Furniture: where I worked as an apprentice



5.9 Local Workshop in Toronto

PokoPoko Table



5.10 PokoPoko Table: Making Prototype Model



5.11 PokoPoko Table: Set up for working area

PokoPoko Table

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5.12 PokoPoko Table: Completed Prototype Models



5.13 PokoPoko Table: Traces of cherry wood from making prototype

PokoPoko Table



5.14 PokoPoko Table: Completed Prototype Models Standing



5.15 PokoPoko Table: Sculpting with router machine

PokoPoko Table

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5.16 PokoPoko Table: Plants ready to be placed on the prototype model



5.17 PokoPoko Table: Plants places on the prototype model

PokoPoko Table



5.18 PokoPoko Table: Completed PokoPoko Table 1:1 Scale



5.19 PokoPoko Table: making the legs as it's one piece

PokoPoko Table

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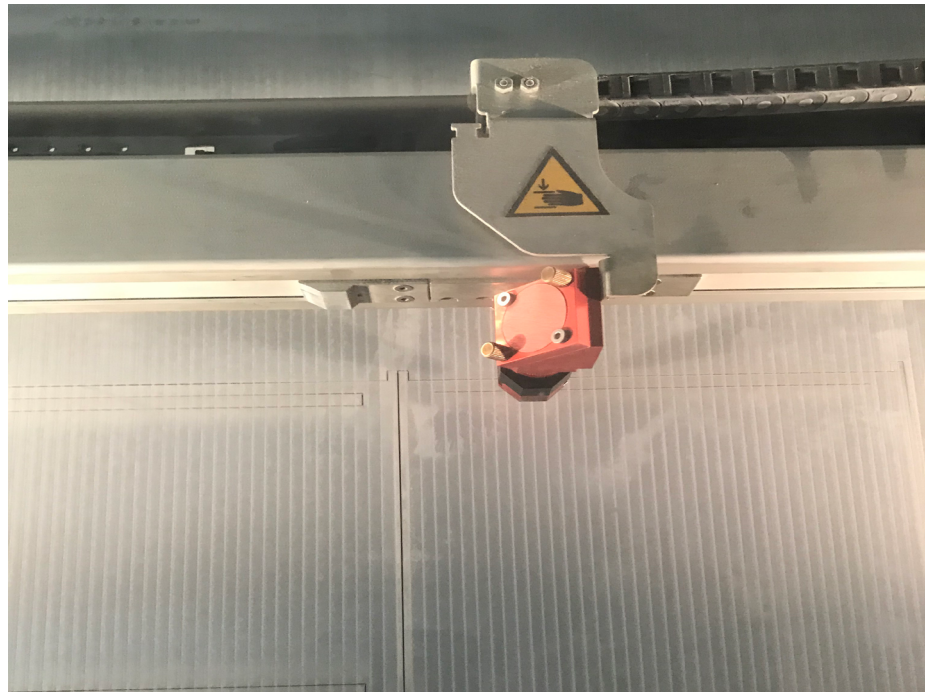


5.20 PokoPoko Table: Plants ready to be placed on the 1:1 Scale Table

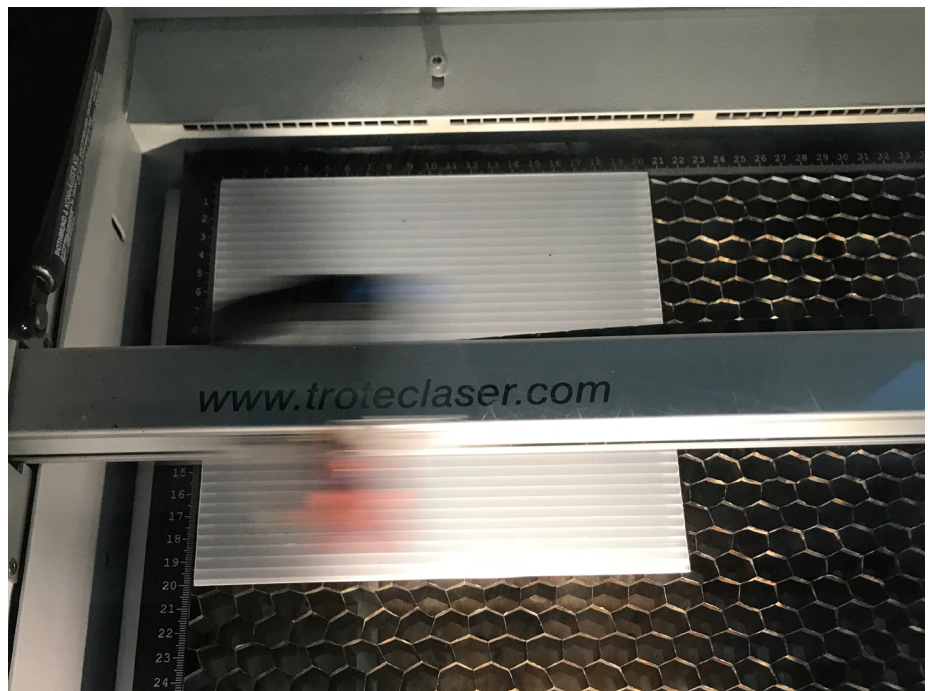


5.21 PokoPoko Table: Photoshoot at the photo lab-Waterloo School of Architecture

PokoPoko Table



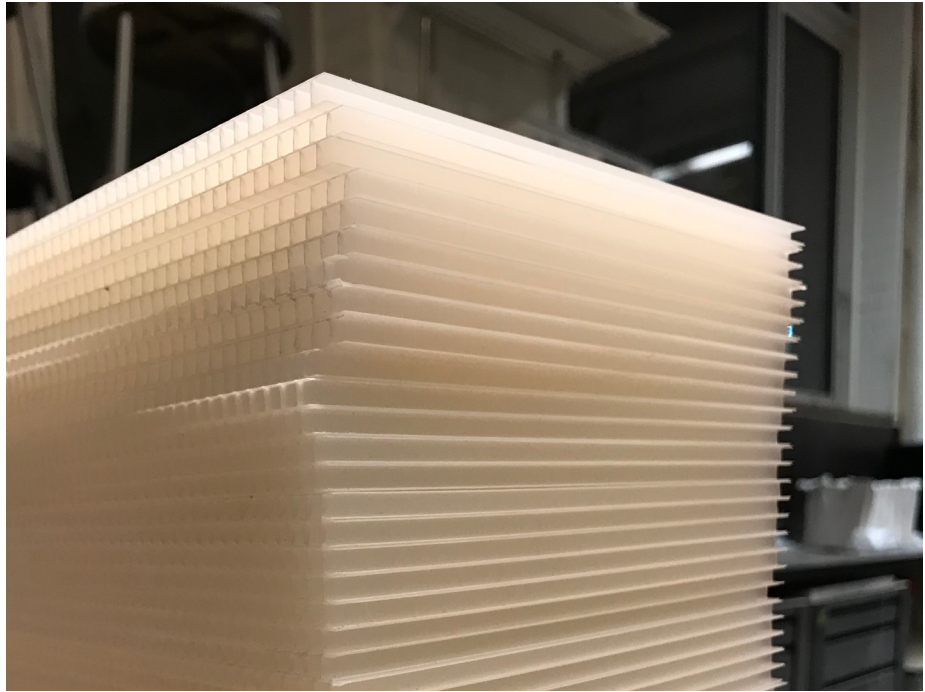
5.22 FuwaFuwa Series: Experimentation with Corrugated Plastic



5.23 FuwaFuwa Series: Laser cutting to make desired shapes

FuwaFuwa Series

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5.24 FuwaFuwa Series: Completed corrugated structural parts



5.25 FuwaFuwa Series: Oak wood cut to specific sizes for the structure and top

FuwaFuwa Series



5.26 FuwaFuwa Series: Oak wood smoothed with machines



5.27 FuwaFuwa Series: Completed top and structure which holds the whole piece together

FuwaFuwa Series

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5.28 FuwaFuwa Series: Detail - Wood to corrugated Plastics



5.29 FuwaFuwa Series: Examining the process of how to put together

FuwaFuwa Series



5.30 FuwaFuwa Series: Completed furniture piece



5.31 FuwaFuwa Series: Photoshot at the photo lab-Waterloo School of Architecture

FuwaFuwa Series

CONCLUSION: JOURNEY

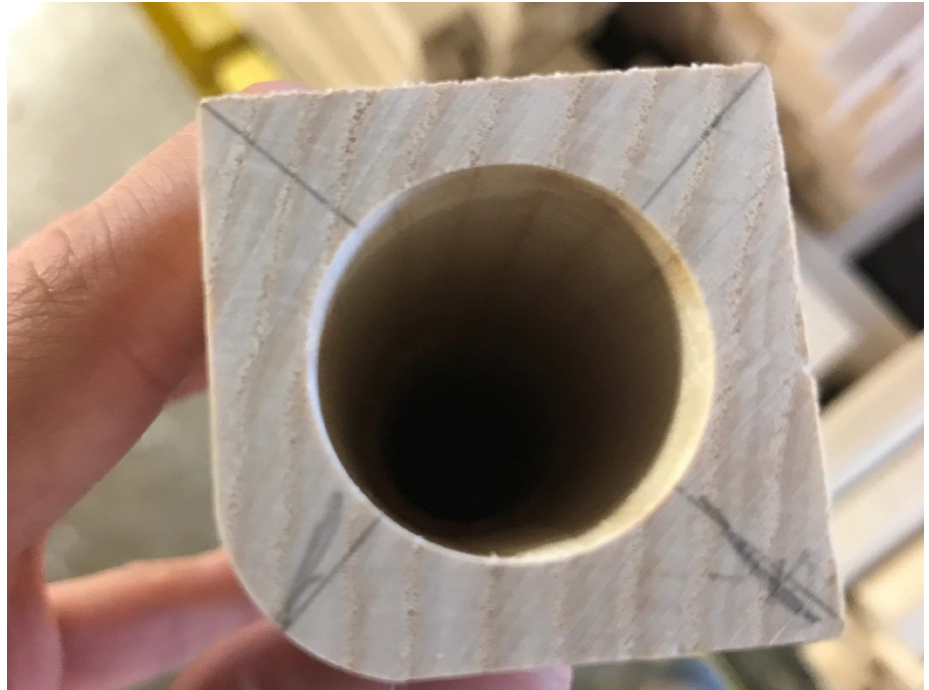


5.32 MokoMoko Vase: Wood ready to be cut



5.33 MokoMoko Vase: Glued together to make cluster

MokoMoko Vase



5.34 MokoMoko Vase: Hole for the flowers are made using drill press



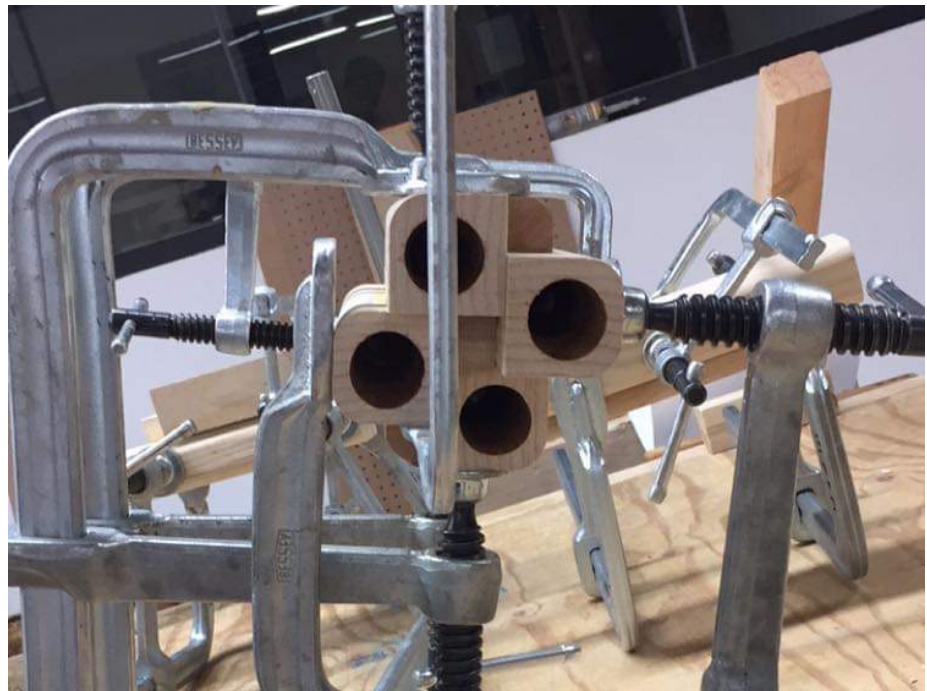
5.35 MokoMoko Vase: Resin is placed into the hole to make them hold water inside.

MokoMoko Vase

CONCLUSION: JOURNEY



5.36 MokoMoko Vase: Corners are rounded to represent natural forms



5.37 MokoMoko Vase: Final touch up for glue up

MokoMoko Vase



5.38 O Floor Lamp: Stacks of wood slabs



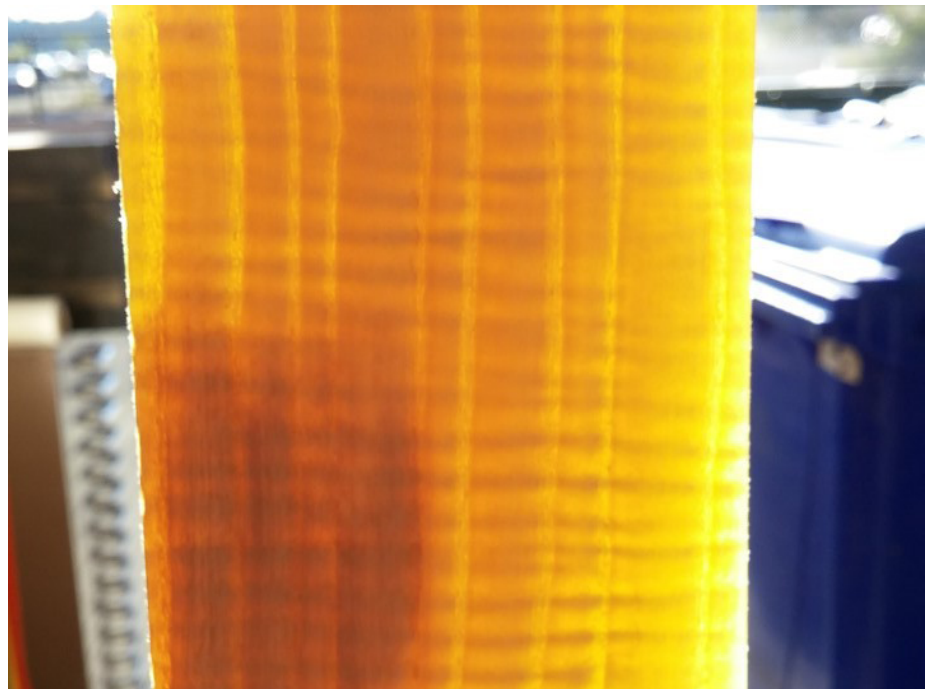
5.39 O Floor Lamp: wood slabs cut by a machine

O Floor Lamp

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5.40 O Floor Lamp: Veneer experiment without light



5.41 O Floor Lamp: Veneer experiment with light

O Floor Lamp



5.42 O Floor Lamp: Making the frame structure



5.43 O Floor Lamp: Jigs made specifically for the projects to make the holes

O Floor Lamp

CONCLUSION: JOURNEY



5.44 O Floor Lamp: First holes made with drill press



5.45 O Floor Lamp: Second holes made with router and jigs

O Floor Lamp



5.46 O Floor Lamp: Completed holes



5.47 O Floor Lamp: Lights coming inside the tubes

O Floor Lamp

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5.48 O Floor Lamp: Japanese wood joinery techniques

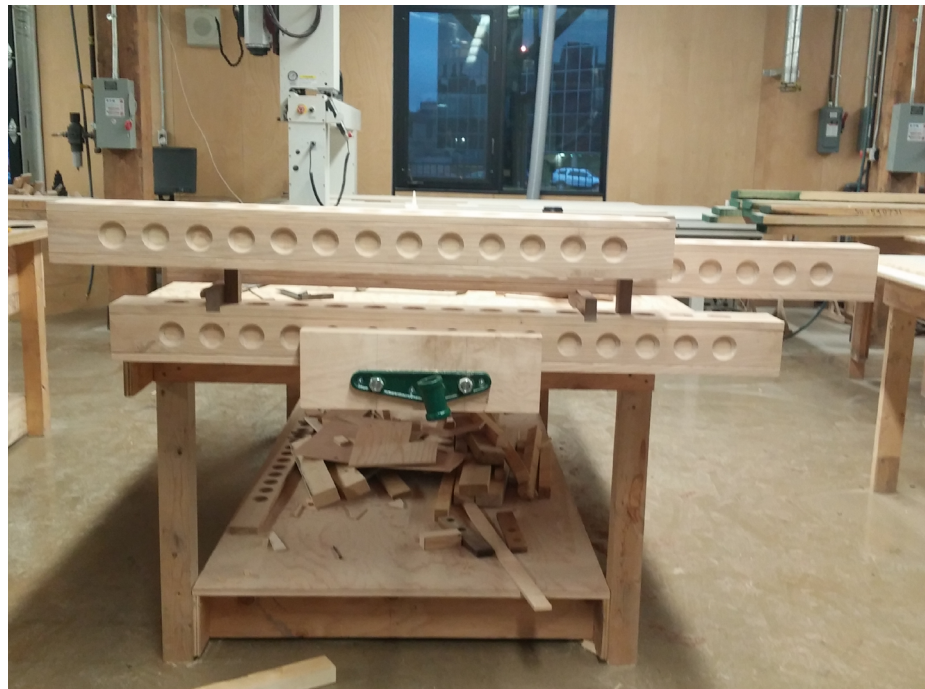


5.49 O Floor Lamp: Experiment with LED lights

O Floor Lamp



5.50 O Floor Lamp: Completed tubes



5.51 O Floor Lamp: Completed O Floor Lamp tops

O Floor Lamp

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