

# MODERNIST 20TH CENTURY



## Auction

07 December 2003  
noon ct

## Wright

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## ISAMU NOGUCHI

### Rudder stool, model IN-22

Herman Miller | USA, c. 1948 | enameled birch, steel, rubber  
17 h x 13 w x 20 d in (43 x 33 x 51 cm)

Isamu Noguchi sought to make sculpture useful in everyday life and his furniture designs are an important part of this idea. In November 1942, Noguchi returned to New York after six months in a Japanese-American relocation camp and moved into a studio at 33 MacDougal Alley in Greenwich Village. Much of Noguchi's work from this period was aligned with the Surrealists, and it was at the MacDougal Alley studio in 1944 that he carved the biomorphic sculptures of interlocking elements that established his reputation in the New York School. In 1946, Noguchi participated in the seminal exhibition "14 Americans" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The rudder stool and table evolved out of his explorations of form at this time. Herman Miller Furniture Company in Zeeland, Michigan under George Nelson's direction began production of the designs in 1948, and they had a mixed reception in the marketplace. Ultimately, the designs proved too avant-garde for the general public, and the production ceased after only three years.

**Provenance:** Henri Morgenroth, Santa Barbara

**Estimate:** \$20,000–30,000

**Result:** \$21,240

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