

An Homage to Four Friends: Buckminster Fuller, Isamu Noguchi, George Nakashima, and Harry Bertoia

On view with NYCxDESIGN from May 15-20th, 2022 at [Studio Zung](#)

The one-of-a-kind piece is a harmonious symphony between four great minds of the 20th century. Conceived by Thomas Zung, president of Buckminster Fuller, Sadao and Zung Architects, each element is an artwork in its own right, the four pieces come together in an homage that honors friendship, craftsmanship, and timelessness of influence.



The seed for [“Homage to Four Friends”](#) was planted in a letter Zung sent to Val Bertoia and Mira Nakashima in 2010, describing his vision of an Homage to Three Friends: Buckminster Fuller, Harry Bertoia, and George Nakashima.

“Like the cosmos, slow movement, the expanding Universe, an Homage to Three Friends. Synergy, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts” - Thomas Zung.

Realized by Buckminster Fuller, the Noguchi Foundation, Val Bertoia, Celia Bertoia and Mira Nakashima, “Homage to Four Friends” sets foot in New York at Studio Zung, an architecture and interior design studio with an intimate connection through Tommy Zung, son of Thomas Zung and godson of Buckminster Fuller.

HOMAGE is comprised of an Isamu Noguchi Akari lamp, a Val Bertoia sounding sculpture, a Buckminster Fuller Geodesic Tensegrity Sphere, and a Mira Nakashima Claro Walnut Burl on a pentagonal Bertoia Oak base crafted by Nakashima Studios. It includes two newly designed nestled bases by Nakashima Studios, signed and dated to the underside of tabletop ‘Mira Nakashima May 10 2021’. Incised signature to one rod ‘R. Buckminster Fuller’. Printed signature to shade ‘I. Noguchi’ with a red circle and half-moon. The item is sold with a certificate issued by Val Bertoia. A second Nakashima Table crafted with a Maple Burl top and Walnut pentagonal coopered base dated May 10, 2022 will also be offered during the exhibition.

Mira Nakashima on 'HOMAGE'

"In 2010, after Thomas sent a letter to Val and me describing his vision of an Homage to Three Friends:

Celia Bertoia and Bill had come, bearing wood harvested from an oak tree that grew near the Bertoia Studio and had asked us to make something from it to benefit the Bertoia Foundation. My Design/Woodworking Assistant, Vaishu Ilankamban, had recently taken a course in cooping, so I thought she could put her newfound skills to use by making a resonating base to support the Fuller and Bertoia pieces mounted on a special piece of Nakashima wood. She also put her engineering skills to use, and figured out how to construct an angled pentagonal base to support a piece of beautiful Claro Walnut Burl from California. When it was finished, we set the Bertoia and Fuller piece atop the sounding table, and watched them dance together!

Realizing that Isamu Noguchi had also been part of that vibrant group of 20th-century designers and thinkers, we thought we should also include an Akari to light up the piece and dance together, making it an homage to Four Friends, rather than the original Three!

Because of the COVID-19 shutdown, we have been unable to host any live events to celebrate the completion of this wonderfully collaborative project, but have received a very kind offer through Thomas Zung to feature it at a Wright Auction in June. We hope that the proceeds from this once-in-a-lifetime piece will help support the Foundations of all Four Friends for the future!"

