



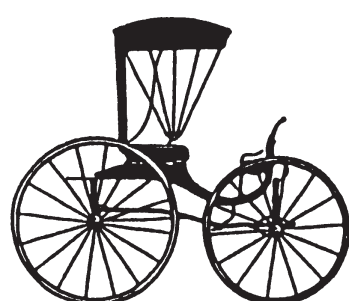
“THE LETTER”

The Haddon Heights Post Office was constructed in 1937-1938, funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression to provide jobs for everyone from the woman architect, the construction workers, the material manufacturers, the Postal Service employees, and an award-winning artist whose bas-relief sculpture graces an interior wall. The artist, Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), was selected based on the strength of his sculptural work for the Federal Trade Commission in New York. In Haddon Heights, the artist was inspired by the building's use to create the image of someone writing a letter. He was paid \$700 for his work, which was executed in artificial stone called Tymstone.

Noguchi was among America's most innovative sculptors of the 20th century. He believed that sculpture gave shape, meaning, and order to space. Noguchi strove for timelessness through the abstraction of things, places, and ideas. Inside the Post Office, he created the abstraction of a woman, executed in the artistic style known as “Depression Modern” or “Art Moderne.” Yet the sensuality of Noguchi's rounded, curvaceous forms in his sculpture led the postmaster to complain that the figure was “objectionable” and “an eyesore.”

Inslee Hopper of The Federal Treasury Relief Art Project, who had funded Noguchi's work, responded in a letter to the Haddon Heights Postmaster, stating in part, “The sculpture for the Haddon Heights Post Office is an outstanding example of Mr. Noguchi's work.... We believe that in time the patrons of the Post Office will grow to appreciate it. The sculpture is executed in a style which is possibly unfamiliar to many of the people who see it but we have found that frequently those who are slow to accept [a] work of art at first eventually become its staunchest supporters.” Today, Isamu Noguchi is considered one of the twentieth century's most important and critically acclaimed sculptors.

Haddon Heights
Historical Society



In memory of
Lynn Laitman



In 2004, five Isamu Naguchi stamps were created in honor of the 100th anniversary of Noguchi's birth. These stamps, each featuring his artwork, were issued as First Day covers at the Haddon Heights Post Office.