

SIDE GALLERY

ILMARI TAPIOVAARA



Floor lamp model "Pikku-Pikku"

Manufactured by Hienoteräs
Finland, 1960s

White painted metal, brass, leather covered shaft

Measurements

104 cm height
41 in height

Biography

Ilmari Tapiovaara was a designer, interior architect, and teacher, becoming a leading figure of the post-World War II design drive. Distinguished for his furnishings and interior design, Tapiovaara's work explored the possibilities of multiplicity – creating different versions of an object from a single piece. His internship at Le Corbusier's studio and his close relationship with nature made him an explorer of new design, oriented for the first time towards the general public. Ilmari Tapiovaara was born in Hämeenlinna (Finland) in 1914 and shared a home with his 12 siblings. From a young age, Tapiovaara was in close contact with nature, as his family was involved in forestry-related occupations; his father was a forest ranger and his grandfather a cabinetmaker.

The family spent the summers in the Finnish countryside, and this remained an important value consistently present in the designer's work. As Tapiovaara once said, "Nature is the best and closest manual for the industrial designer." In the mid-1930s, Ilmari Tapiovaara enrolled at the Helsinki School of Applied Arts where he was introduced to the Functionalism of design, the Modern Movement and the Bauhaus ideology through Alvar Aalto's furniture design work. At the time, these movements were groundbreaking, as most Finnish manufacturers were rooted in traditional models. Ilmari went on to complete an internship at Le Corbusier's studio, rounding out his training and giving him a grasp of how Finnish furniture was increasingly being exported abroad. In the years that followed, Ilmari Tapiovaara contributed to Finland's war effort through his work as an industrial designer. The battlefield was far away and unmoving, and the country needed improved infrastructure and furniture.