

SIDE GALLERY

ARATA ISOZAKI



Chair model "Monroe"

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1973
Wood, Leather

Measurements

53 x 53 x 140h cm
21 x 21 x 55h in

Provenance

Private collection, Japan

Literature

Designed by Architects in the 1980s, Capella and Larrea, p. 88

About

The Monroe Chair is a sculptural seating piece designed by renowned Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, produced by Tendo Mokko. Characterized by its dramatically high backrest composed of slender vertical slats, the chair marries Japanese woodcraft tradition with expressive postmodern form. The undulating silhouette and precise joinery reflect Isozaki's architectural sensibility, bridging function and visual rhythm.

Originally designed in 1973, the Monroe Chair was manufactured for a decade, and has become one of the most iconic examples of Japanese postmodern furniture design. The chair's striking profile and use of solid ebonized beech give it both an elegant presence and structural clarity. The leather-upholstered seat ensures comfort while reinforcing its luxurious and formal appeal.

Biography

Arata Isozaki (b.1931 – d.2022) was one of the most influential Japanese architects of the 20th century, renowned for his visionary and cross-disciplinary approach that bridged architecture, design, and cultural theory. Born in Oita, Japan, he studied under Kenzo Tange before establishing his own practice in the 1960s. Isozaki's work is marked by a fluid engagement with diverse styles—from brutalism to postmodernism—while maintaining a deep sensitivity to history, place, and identity.

Throughout his prolific career, Isozaki designed major buildings around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, the Palau Sant Jordi in Barcelona, and the Team Disney Building in Florida. His architectural language combined conceptual rigor with formal experimentation and sculptural elegance.

In parallel, Isozaki created a series of conceptual furniture pieces and limited-edition designs that reflect his architectural thinking at a domestic scale. These works, such as the Monroe Chair, explore balance, proportion, and the body's relationship to space with a distinctly architectural sensibility.