

SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



Lustro Ware Polished Aluminum Object

Manufactured by Lustr Ware, Japan
Japan, circa mid-20th century
Polished aluminum

Measurements

20 cm diameter × 6h cm
7,9 in diameter × 2,4h in

Provenance

Private collection

Details

Extremely rare vintage piece designed by Riki Watanabe. This multifunctional object can serve as an ashtray, tray, or catch-all, showcasing minimalist and functional aesthetics typical of mid-century Japanese design. Marked as a period original. Its polished aluminum surface gives it a striking reflective quality.

About

Riki Watanabe was a key figure in postwar Japanese design, celebrated for transforming everyday objects into refined, functional works. This Lustr Ware piece exemplifies his philosophy of purposeful design, combining clarity of form, subtle elegance, and practical versatility. Its multifunctional nature and luminous material highlight Watanabe's ability to merge utility with collectible artistry.

Biography

Riki Watanabe (1911–2013) was one of Japan's pioneering modern designers, known for bridging traditional craftsmanship with the emerging ideals of postwar modernism. Trained in woodworking and architecture, he established his studio in the late 1940s and became instrumental in shaping Japan's design identity through furniture, interior projects, and industrial design.

Watanabe's work embodies a restrained elegance — combining natural materials, rational forms, and a profound respect for everyday use. Through collaborations with manufacturers such as Tendo Mokko and with leading architects of his generation, he helped define the humanist approach that came to characterize Japanese modern design.