

SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



Digital Flip Clock

Manufactured by Caslon
Japan, 1970s

Plastic housing, mechanical components

Measurements

20 × 10 × 8h cm
7,9 × 3,9 × 3,1h in

Provenance

Private collection

Details

The Caslon 602 is a vintage digital flip clock featuring a mechanically operated split-flap display in a 12-hour format. Its rotating numbered cards combine mechanical precision with nostalgic charm, emblematic of mid- to late-century Japanese electronics. AC-powered (typically 100V in Japan), this model represents the era's retro-futuristic design sensibility.

About

The Caslon 602 exemplifies Japan's pioneering approach to consumer electronics in the 1970s, when mechanical ingenuity met bold, functional design. Its flip mechanism, a hallmark of the period, transforms timekeeping into a kinetic, visual experience. The clock's clean, often monochrome or vivid color palette, reflects the playful yet precise aesthetic that characterized Japanese electronic design of the era. Today, it is appreciated both as a functional object and a collectible piece of design history.

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.