

SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



Stool

Manufactured by Akita Mokko
Japan, 1967
Bent Plywood, Fabric

Measurements

45 cm diameter x 53,5 cm height
17,7 in diameter x 21,1 in height

Provenance

Private collection, Tokyo

Literature

Riki Watanabe. *Innovating in Modern Living*, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2006, pp. 40, 54.

Le Design japonais depuis 1945, Naomi Pollock, Éditions de la Martinière, 2020, p. 166.

About

Designed by Riki Watanabe for Akita Mokko, this 1967 stool exemplifies postwar Japanese modernism. Its bent plywood construction reflects a fusion of Western modernist techniques with Japanese craft traditions, emphasizing compact scale, balanced proportion, and portability. Akita Mokko's mastery of steam-bending enabled precise production, bridging handmade craftsmanship and industrial reproducibility. The stool embodies Japan's postwar design identity, merging international modernist influence with local materials and aesthetics.

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.