

SIDE GALLERY

UBUNJI KIDOKORO



Armchair

Commissioned by Mitsukoshi Ltd.
Manufactured by Chikukousha
Japan, 1973 (designed in 1937)
Bamboo

Measurements

75 × 60 × 72h cm
30 × 23,7 × 28,5h in

Provenance

Private collection, Tokyo

Literature

Japan Living Design: Exploring 20th-Century Modernism,
Japan Interior Designers Association, 40th Anniversary Project,
Tokyo, 2004, pp. 72–73, 76–77
Domus, no. 269, April 1952, p. 41 (similar model shown in an
exhibition curated by Kenzo Tange, Takashimaya, Tokyo)

About

Designed in 1937 for Mitsukoshi, this armchair reflects Ubunji Kidokoro's pioneering effort to merge Japanese materials with modernist form. The seat, cantilevered between two U-shaped supports, gently flexes under weight, eliminating the need for rear legs. Influenced by Alvar Aalto's early 1930s designs, it exemplifies the dialogue between Scandinavian and Japanese modernism. Kidokoro's use of bamboo offered a warm, organic response to the Bauhaus aesthetic, inspiring later works by Charlotte Perriand, who exhibited and reinterpreted the chair in Tokyo and Kyoto. The piece stands as a testament to cross-cultural innovation in 20th-century design.

Biography

Ubunji Kidokoro (1902-1990) was a Japanese designer and architect recognized for his refined contribution to the emergence of modern design in Japan during the mid-20th century. Trained in both traditional carpentry and architectural design, he developed a practice rooted in precision, balance, and respect for material integrity.

Kidokoro's work reflects a deep dialogue between tradition and modernity, combining the structural clarity of modernist principles with the tactile warmth and subtle irregularity of Japanese craftsmanship. His furniture and interiors—often composed of wood and metal—embody a restrained elegance and a sense of quiet functionality that anticipated the enduring aesthetics of postwar Japanese design.

Through his designs, Kidokoro contributed to shaping a new visual language for modern living in Japan, one that honored heritage while embracing the possibilities of industrial production and contemporary form.