

SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



Bench

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1960
Pine Wood

Measurements

177,2 cm x 45,1 cm x 41,3h cm
69,8 in x 17,6 in x 16,3h in

Provenance

Private collection, Japan

Literature

Japanese Wooden Chairs, published by Shotenkenchi-ku-Sha Co, Tokyo 1995. Pages 82 & 83
Riki Watanabe. Innovating in Modern Living. Published by The National Museum of Modern Art. Tokyo, 2006. Pages 34, 35 & 50.

Design Japonais 1950-1995, Centre Georges Pompidou exhibition catalog, pg. 75

Details

Produced by Tendo Mokko using advanced molded wood techniques developed in postwar Japan.

About

This minimalist pine bench embodies the refined craftsmanship and forward-thinking design philosophy that defined Tendo Mokko's work during Japan's postwar design renaissance. Created around 1960, the piece reveals the company's mastery of molded wood technology—achieving structural strength and visual lightness through precise joinery and elegantly contoured forms.

With its clean horizontal lines and warm natural finish, the bench captures the quiet harmony between function and beauty central to modern Japanese design. Whether placed in public interiors or domestic spaces, its simplicity evokes the spirit of traditional carpentry reinterpreted for modern life.

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.