

SIDE GALLERY

SABURO INUI



Side Table, model "Zataku"
Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1960
Keyaki veneer plywood

Measurements
60 x 36 x 45h cm
23,7 x 14,2 x 17,8h in

Provenance
Private collection, Tokyo

Literature
Design Japonais 1950-1995, exhibition catalogue,
Editions du Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1996, p. 76
Tendo in Japanese Modern, edited by Tendo Mokko,
Tokyo, 2020, p. 215

Details
The Zataku side table is a study in restraint and refinement, featuring a square surface supported by subtly splayed legs. Crafted from keyaki veneer, its grain captures and diffuses light, while the sculpted legs balance structural precision with organic fluidity.

Notes

Saburo Inui's design exemplifies the Japanese aesthetic of shibui—understated elegance through careful consideration of form, proportion, and material. Modern yet rooted in traditional woodworking, the table emphasizes human scale, tactile warmth, and the contemplative quality of crafted objects.

Biography

Saburō Inui (1911–1991) was a pioneering figure in postwar Japanese design, recognized for his refined approach to form, material, and function. Trained at the Industrial Arts Institute in Tokyo, Inui became one of the leading forces in the development of molded plywood furniture in Japan during the 1950s and 1960s.

Working closely with manufacturers such as Tendo Mokko, he explored the expressive and structural potential of wood, seeking a balance between traditional craftsmanship and modern industrial techniques. His designs reveal a quiet discipline—precise, functional, and human in scale—embodying the restrained elegance that came to define Japanese modernism.

Through his thoughtful use of natural materials and his attention to proportion, Inui helped establish a distinctly Japanese interpretation of modern design, one rooted in simplicity, honesty, and the everyday. His work continues to resonate as a model of timeless clarity and sensitivity to both maker and material.