

SIDE GALLERY

KAZUhide TAKAHAMA



Pair of armchairs model "Naeko"

Manufactured by Gavina
Italy, 1958
Cherry wood structure, Upholstered fabric

Measurements (each)

86 × 77 × 73h cm
33,9 × 30,3 × 28,7h in

Provenance

Private collection, Italy

Details

Manufacturer's label

Literature

Accademia delle Belle Arti di Brera. (1998). Dino Gavina: Ultrarazionale Ultramobile. Milan: Editrice Compositori, p. 163.

Fondazione Scientifica Querini Stampalia. (1992). Dino Gavina: collezioni emblematiche del moderno dal 1950 al 1992. Milan: Jaca Book, p. 39.

Vercelloni, V. (1987). La avventura del design: Gavina. Milan: Jaca Book, p. 49.

About

The Naeko armchairs form part of one of the most important early collaborations between Japanese architect Kazuhide Takahama and the Italian manufacturer Gavina. Designed in 1958 during Takahama's stay in Italy for the Japanese Pavilion at the XI Triennale di Milano, these chairs mark the beginning of a lifelong creative partnership with Dino Gavina that would profoundly influence postwar European design.

Like the Naeko sofa, the armchairs were named after Naeko, who later became Takahama's wife, lending the project an intimate and personal dimension. Their low, horizontally oriented structure reflects Takahama's architectural sensibility, combining Japanese spatial restraint with the rationalist clarity of Italian modernism. The finely crafted cherrywood frame establishes a calm structural rhythm, while the original upholstery softens the geometry and enhances the human scale of the piece.

Produced during Gavina's first and most experimental period, the Naeko armchairs exemplify the company's ambition to redefine furniture as a form of architectural and cultural expression. Today they are recognized as seminal works in the history of international modern design, embodying a rare synthesis of Japanese sensitivity and European avant-garde thinking.

Biography

Kazuhide Takahama (1930–2010) was a key figure in postwar design and an important cultural bridge between Japanese and Italian modernism. Trained as an architect in Japan, he approached furniture as an architectural system, emphasizing structure, proportion, and spatial clarity over decoration.

His career took a decisive turn in 1957, when he worked on the Japanese Pavilion for the XI Triennale di Milano and met Italian entrepreneur Dino Gavina. Through this collaboration, Takahama became deeply involved in Italian radical design, creating seminal works such as the Naeko sofa (1958), characterized by low profiles, restrained geometry, and material refinement.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, he produced influential designs for Gavina and later Simon, combining European rationalism with Japanese spatial concepts such as modularity, interval (ma), and human scale. Today, Takahama is recognized as a major figure in international modern design, celebrated for his refined synthesis of Eastern and Western traditions and his enduring, architecturally driven furniture designs.