

SIDE GALLERY

KATSUHIRA TOYOGUCHI



Floor Chair (Zaisu)

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, ca. 1960s
Bent plywood, Fabric upholstery

Measurements

50 cm x 57 cm x 46h cm
19,7 in x 22,4 in x 18,1h in

Provenance

Private collection, Japan

Literature

Tendo. Eight decades of masterful designs from leading Japanese furniture maker Tendo Mokko.
Published by Tendo Mokko. Japan, 2020.

Details

Manufacturer's Label

Biography

Katsuhira Toyoguchi (1905–1991) was a pioneering Japanese industrial designer and a key figure in the development of modern design in postwar Japan. Known for blending traditional Japanese craftsmanship with modernist principles, Toyoguchi helped shape the identity of contemporary Japanese furniture design in the mid-20th century. Toyoguchi began his career in the 1930s and later became deeply involved in promoting industrial design as a discipline in Japan. He was instrumental in establishing professional design organizations and contributed significantly to the foundation of the Japan Industrial Designers' Association (JIDA), advocating for the social and cultural value of good design.

Among his most celebrated works is the Spoke-Back Chair (1961), produced by Tendo Mokko. This chair is considered an icon of Japanese modernism. Its design reinterprets traditional wooden spindle-back chairs through a refined, minimalist lens. The sculptural backrest, composed of evenly spaced vertical spindles, combines visual lightness with structural clarity. The chair exemplifies Toyoguchi's philosophy of harmonizing ergonomic comfort, craftsmanship, and modern production techniques.

Another significant design is the Stacking Stool (1954), also produced by Tendo Mokko. This piece demonstrates Toyoguchi's forward-thinking approach to functionality and space efficiency. The stool's clean lines and stackable form reflect the practical needs of postwar Japan while maintaining aesthetic simplicity and elegance. Its use of molded plywood highlights his interest in innovative materials and manufacturing methods.

Throughout his career, Toyoguchi emphasized the integration of design into everyday life. His work is characterized by restrained forms, careful attention to proportion, and a deep respect for material integrity. Rather than pursuing ornamentation, he focused on clarity, balance, and usability—principles that aligned with both modernist ideals and traditional Japanese sensibilities.