

SIDE GALLERY

KAZUhide TAKAHAMA



Pair of Naeko Armchairs

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.

Biography

Kazuhide Takahama (1930–2010) was a pivotal figure in postwar international design and one of the most important cultural mediators between Japanese and Italian modernism. Trained as an architect in Japan, Takahama belonged to a generation that sought to redefine modernity as a flexible and evolving system capable of integrating multiple cultural traditions. His work is distinguished by a refined balance between structural rigor, material sensitivity, and emotional restraint, resulting in designs of lasting clarity and elegance.

Takahama studied architecture at the University of Tokyo, where he was exposed to both modernist theory and traditional Japanese spatial principles. His early career unfolded during Japan's postwar reconstruction, a period in which architecture and design played a crucial role in reshaping cultural identity. In 1957, his participation in the Japanese Pavilion at the XI Triennale di Milano marked a decisive turning point, bringing him into contact with the European avant-garde and leading to a long-standing collaboration with Italian entrepreneur Dino Gavina.

Through Gavina, Takahama entered the Italian design milieu, approaching furniture not merely as functional objects but as architectural systems governed by proportion, volume, and spatial relationships. Early works such as the Naeko sofa (1958) reveal this approach through their low, horizontal compositions and contemplative presence. During the 1960s and 1970s, Takahama became a central figure in Italian high design, producing iconic seating systems including Saori, Suzanne, and Tulu for Simon. His work rejected decorative excess in favor of precision, tactile quality, and material coherence.

Deeply modernist yet culturally hybrid, Takahama's designs incorporate Japanese concepts such as ma (interval), modularity, and a sensitivity to the human body in space. Today, his work is recognized for its intellectual depth, timeless character, and rare synthesis of Eastern and Western design traditions, and remains highly sought after by collectors and museums worldwide.