

# SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



## Stool

Manufactured by Akita Mokko  
Japan, 1967  
Bentwood, rattan

## Measurements

Width: 45 cm | Height: 53,5 cm  
Width: 17,7 in | Height: 21,1 in

## Details

Stamped with the manufacturer's label

## Provenance

Private collection, Japan

## Literature

Riki Watanabe. Innovating in Modern Living, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2006, pp. 40, 54  
Le Design japonais depuis 1945, Naomi Pollock, Editions de la Martinière, 2020, p. 166

## Notes

This stool by Riki Watanabe, produced by Akita Mokko between the 1980s and early 1990s, exemplifies the designer's mature exploration of bentwood construction combined with natural woven materials. The piece features a sculptural bentwood frame whose gentle curvature provides both structural integrity and visual lightness, complemented by a rattan element that introduces texture and warmth.

Watanabe's approach to furniture design consistently sought clarity of form and an honest expression of materials. In this stool, the interplay between the smooth wooden structure and the tactile quality of rattan reflects his ability to merge modernist restraint with traditional craft techniques. Compact yet expressive, the design is well suited to flexible domestic use, functioning as seating or an auxiliary element within modern interiors.

The presence of the Akita Mokko publisher's label confirms the authenticity of the piece and situates it within a long-standing collaboration between the designer and the manufacturer, known for their expertise in bentwood furniture.

## Biography

Riki Watanabe (1911–2013) was a central figure in the development of modern Japanese design. Active from the prewar period through the late 20th century, he played a pivotal role in shaping Japan's postwar design identity, balancing international modernism with indigenous materials and techniques. A founding member of the Japan Industrial Designers' Association, Watanabe was deeply involved in design education and institutional development. His achievements were recognized with numerous awards, including the Milan Triennale Gold Medal, the Mainichi Design Award, and the Japanese Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon.