

# SIDE GALLERY

SORI YANAGI



## Armchair

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko  
Japan, 1978  
Laminated and carved teak

## Measurements

52 × 46 × 69h cm  
20,5 × 18,1 × 27,2h in

## Provenance

Private collection, Japan

## Details

Manufacturer's stamped

## Literature

Yanagi, S. (1983). Design: Sori Yanagi. Tokyo: Yobisha, fig. 97.

## About

This rare armchair, designed by Sori Yanagi and produced by Tendo Mokko in 1978, exemplifies the maturity of his design philosophy and his mastery of laminated wood construction. By this stage in his career, Yanagi had fully articulated a design language rooted in simplicity, ergonomic clarity, and respect for material behavior.

The chair is sculpted from laminated teak, carefully carved to create a continuous, flowing form that balances structural strength with visual softness. The compact proportions and gently contoured surfaces offer both comfort and restraint, avoiding excess while maintaining a strong sculptural presence. The design reflects Yanagi's belief that furniture should feel inevitable—neither imposed nor expressive, but naturally resolved.

## Biography

**Sori Yanagi** (1915–2011) was a pioneering Japanese industrial designer, son of philosopher Yanagi Sōetsu, founder of the Mingei (folk craft) movement. He studied painting at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, but shifted toward design after working as an interpreter for Charlotte Perriand, whose collaboration with Le Corbusier influenced his thinking.

In 1952, he gained recognition by winning the Mainichi Industrial Design Competition, using the prize to establish his own design foundation. Working as an independent designer, Yanagi developed a highly personal approach, creating full-scale models in materials like clay to refine form through touch and ergonomics rather than drawings.

His work spans furniture, tableware, industrial products, and even infrastructure design. Iconic pieces such as the Butterfly Stool (1956) and Elephant Stool reflect his signature blend of organic form, functionality, and material sensitivity. Deeply influenced by the Mingei philosophy, he emphasized simplicity, usability, and the inherent beauty of everyday objects, often designing for mass production without sacrificing quality.

Yanagi later became director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum, reconnecting with his father's legacy. His enduring contribution lies in defining a distinctly Japanese modern design language, uniting traditional craftsmanship with industrial production and a human-centered philosophy.