

SIDE GALLERY

JOSÉ ZANINE CALDAS



Stool / Side Table

Brazil, 1970s
Pequi wood

Measurements

Diameter: 39 cm | Height: 40 cm
Diameter: 15,4 | Height: 15,7 in

Provenance

Private collection, Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro

Literature

Ruy Teixeira & Jayme Vargas, Desenho da Utopia,
Olhares, 2016, similar model

About

This sculptural object by José Zanine Caldas embodies the designer's radical and deeply personal approach to wood during the mature phase of his career in the 1970s. Conceived as both a stool and a side table, the piece transcends strict typological categories, functioning equally as furniture and as a carved architectural form.

Executed in pequi wood, a dense Brazilian hardwood prized for its expressive grain and durability, the piece preserves the raw presence of the material while transforming it through subtle intervention. Rather than concealing the natural character of the timber, Zanine emphasized its irregularities, tonal richness, and organic structure, allowing the wood itself to dictate the final form.

The compact cylindrical volume and restrained geometry reveal the designer's search for elemental forms rooted in nature and craftsmanship. At once primitive and sophisticated, the piece reflects Zanine's rejection of industrial standardization in favor of tactile authenticity and direct engagement with material.

Created during a period in which Zanine increasingly worked with reclaimed and solid tropical woods, this stool / side table exemplifies his ecological and philosophical approach to design. More than a utilitarian object, it stands as a meditation on material permanence, landscape, and the expressive power of Brazilian wood.

Biography

José Zanine Caldas (1918–2001) was a self-taught Brazilian architect and designer known for his innovative use of native woods and his integration of craftsmanship and environmental values. Starting as a model maker in the 1940s, he collaborated with leading modernist architects and founded Móveis Artísticos Z to produce industrial furniture using plywood. Later, he embraced a more rustic and ecological approach, creating expressive wooden houses and furniture using reclaimed materials. His work bridges industrial design and vernacular tradition, leaving a legacy of sustainability and regional identity. In 1991, he was named an honorary architect by the Institute of Architects of Brazil.