

# SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



## Flip Clock model "Caslon 601"

Manufactured by Copal  
Japan, 1970s  
Plastic, metal, electric flip mechanism

### Measurements

21 × 10 × 9h cm  
8,3 × 3,9 × 3,5h in

### Details

Manufacturer's label

### Literature

Riki Watanabe. *Innovating in Modern Living*,  
National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, 2006

## About

Designed by Riki Watanabe through Q Designers and manufactured by Copal, the Caslon 601 represents one of the most iconic expressions of Japanese electronic product design from the 1970s. Among the many flip clocks produced during the period, the Caslon series has become particularly celebrated for its understated aesthetics, technological ingenuity, and unmistakably modern presence.

Characterized by its compact horizontal form and mechanical flip display, the clock transforms the simple act of reading time into a visual experience. The rhythmic movement of the numbered panels introduces a tactile quality absent from later digital displays, giving the object a distinctive presence and sound that has become deeply associated with mid-century domestic environments.

The design reflects Riki Watanabe's belief that everyday objects should combine functionality with visual clarity. Avoiding decorative excess, the Caslon 601 relies on proportion, precision, and legibility. Its restrained geometry and clean interface reveal the influence of modernist principles while maintaining the warmth and accessibility that characterized postwar Japanese design.

Produced during a period when Japan emerged as a global leader in consumer electronics, the clock also documents a significant cultural shift in domestic technology. More than a utilitarian object, it stands as a symbol of optimism and innovation—an era when electronic devices began entering everyday life with a distinctly modern identity.

## Biography

**Riki Watanabe** (1911–2013) was one of Japan's pioneering modern designers, known for bridging traditional craftsmanship with the emerging ideals of postwar modernism. Trained in woodworking and architecture, he established his studio in the late 1940s and became instrumental in shaping Japan's design identity through furniture, interior projects, and industrial design.

Watanabe's work embodies a restrained elegance — combining natural materials, rational forms, and a profound respect for everyday use. Through collaborations with manufacturers such as Tendo Mokko and with leading architects of his generation, he helped define the humanist approach that came to characterize Japanese modern design.