

SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



Bench

Created for the offices of Sony
Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1950s
Pine Wood

Measurements

177,2 x 45,1 x 41,3h cm
69,8 x 17,6 x 16,3h in

Provenance

Private collection, Japan

Literature

Japanese Wooden Chairs, published by Shotenkenchi-ku-Sha Co, Tokyo 1995. Pages 82 & 83
Riki Watanabe. Innovating in Modern Living. Published by The National Museum of Modern Art. Tokyo, 2006. Pages 34, 35 & 50.
Design Japonais 1950-1995, Centre Georges Pompidou exhibition catalog, pg. 75

Exhibitions

Exhibited in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
Details

Produced by Tendo Mokko using advanced molded wood techniques developed in postwar Japan.

About

This minimalist pine bench embodies the refined craftsmanship and forward-thinking design philosophy that defined Tendo Mokko's work during Japan's postwar design renaissance. Created around 1960, the piece reveals the company's mastery of molded wood technology—achieving structural strength and visual lightness through precise joinery and elegantly contoured forms.

With its clean horizontal lines and warm natural finish, the bench captures the quiet harmony between function and beauty central to modern Japanese design. Whether placed in public interiors or domestic spaces, its simplicity evokes the spirit of traditional carpentry reinterpreted for modern life.

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.