

SIDE GALLERY

RIKI WATANABE



Stool model "Riki Stool Low"
Manufactured by Otsuka Kagu
Japan, 1999
Cardboard

Measurements
33 × 33 × 33h cm
13 × 13 × 13h in

Details

Model "Riki Stool Low". First designed in 1965 and reissued in 1999. Hexagonal form composed of alternating colored panels with geometric top surface. Signed "Riki" and marked "Otsuka" on one side.

Literature

Watanabe, Riki. *Riki Watanabe: A Life in Design*. Tokyo: Rikisho Publishing, 2007.

Penny Sparke and Anne Massey, *Japanese Design Since 1945: A Complete Sourcebook*. Thames & Hudson, London, 2013.

Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950. Japan Foundation, Tokyo, 1991.

About

The Riki Stool Low is one of the most playful and distinctive objects created by Riki Watanabe, a designer whose work helped define the identity of postwar Japanese modernism. Originally conceived in 1965, the stool demonstrates Watanabe's ability to combine rigorous geometry with a sense of joy and visual lightness.

Composed of six vertical planes arranged around a hexagonal structure, the stool transforms a simple everyday object into a sculptural composition. The alternating colored surfaces and radial pattern of the top create a dynamic interplay of form and color that reflects the optimism and experimentation characteristic of Japanese design during the 1960s.

Despite its compact dimensions, the piece serves multiple functions, operating equally as a stool, side table, or decorative object. This versatility was central to Watanabe's philosophy, which emphasized practical furniture adapted to modern living while maintaining a strong aesthetic identity.

The 1999 edition, manufactured by Otsuka Kagu, faithfully reproduces the proportions and geometric clarity of the original design. Today, the Riki Stool Low remains one of the most recognizable expressions of Riki Watanabe's approach, balancing simplicity, color, and functionality with remarkable elegance.

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.