

# SIDE GALLERY

TADAOMI MINZUNOE



## Set of 2 Chairs Model "Book"

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko  
Japan, 1960s  
Beech and teak-veneered plywood

## Measurements (each)

55 × 55 × 72h cm  
21,7 × 21,7 × 28,3h in

Seat height: 42 cm (16,5 in)

## Provenance

Kunio Maekawa residence, Japan  
Private Collection, Japan

## Literature

Tadaomi Mizunoe, Furniture Design, Kajima Institute  
Publishing, Tokyo, various editions.  
Sato, T. (2005). Tendo Mokko and the Formation of Japanese  
Modern Furniture. Tokyo: Tankosha  
Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950,  
Japan Foundation, Tokyo.

## Biography

**Tadaomi Mizunoe** (1916–2009) was one of the pioneering figures of modern Japanese furniture design and played a crucial role in defining the visual language of postwar interiors in Japan. Born in Tokyo, he studied at the Tokyo School of Fine Arts (Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō), one of the country's most prestigious institutions for art and design education. His academic training exposed him to both traditional Japanese craftsmanship and the principles of Western modernism, a dual influence that would characterize his entire career.

Following his graduation, Mizunoe became involved with the growing movement to establish a distinctly modern Japanese design identity. During the years immediately after the Second World War, Japan was undergoing a profound cultural and industrial transformation, and designers sought to create furniture suited to contemporary lifestyles while preserving the values of simplicity, functionality, and respect for materials that had long defined Japanese aesthetics.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Mizunoe collaborated closely with leading manufacturers, particularly Tendo Mokko, which had emerged as one of the country's foremost producers of modern furniture. His work reflected an exceptional understanding of proportion and ergonomics, often incorporating advanced bentwood and plywood techniques while maintaining a remarkable sense of visual lightness. Like many of his contemporaries, he was influenced by Scandinavian design, yet his furniture retained a distinctly Japanese sensitivity characterized by restraint, clarity, and craftsmanship.

Among his most celebrated works is the Book Chair, designed in 1954 and manufactured by Tendo Mokko. Recognized today as one of the icons of postwar Japanese design, the chair combines a sculptural silhouette with an ingenious and economical construction. Its compact dimensions, refined lines, and carefully resolved details embody the ideals that defined Mizunoe's approach to furniture. The model is represented in important institutional collections, including the M+ Museum in Hong Kong. Another notable design is the Tokyo Chair, created during the 1950s, which further demonstrates his interest in creating furniture adapted to modern urban living. Throughout his career, Mizunoe designed a wide variety of chairs, tables, and storage pieces that emphasized comfort and simplicity without sacrificing elegance. His work frequently explored the relationship between architecture and furniture, treating individual objects as integral components of interior space rather than isolated elements.