

SIDE GALLERY

TENDO MOKKO



Stacking Trays

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1970s
Bent plywood

Measurements (each)

55 × 38 × 18h cm
21,7 × 15 × 7,1h in

Literature

Hiesinger, Kathryn B., and Mio Wakita-Elis. Japanese Design Since 1945: A Complete Sourcebook. Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1990.
Tendo Mokko Co., Ltd. Furniture Catalogue. Yamagata, Japan, c. 1970.

Notes

These sculptural trays exemplify the technical refinement that characterized Tendo Mokko's production during the postwar decades. Executed in bent plywood, each piece is formed from a continuous curved surface whose flowing geometry highlights the expressive possibilities of laminated wood. The integrated hand openings and stackable construction demonstrate the Japanese emphasis on functionality, efficiency, and elegant simplicity.

About Tendo Mokko

In northwest Japan, in Yamagata Prefecture, a group of carpenters and joiners created a cooperative that primarily produced wooden objects, ammunition and supply crates for the army. Incorporated in 1942, the cooperative worked with the Sendai Institute of Industrial Arts and used the new molded plywood technology to make decoy aircraft. After the war, Tendo opened an office in Tokyo (1947). It produced furniture for the occupying troops, then turned, in the early 1950s, to furniture for the domestic market. One of his first commissions came from the architect Kenzo Tange, who designed plywood seats for the Ehime Prefecture, built in 1953. Plywood was then a new material for designers, and Tendo was one of the first manufacturers to use it for its furniture, notably for the Butterfly stool, created in 1956 by Sori Yanagi. Tendo's policy of paying royalties for design projects attracted many other designers, so much so that, in the sixties, Tendo could boast among its ranks the leading furniture designers Isamu Kenmochi, Daisaku Choh, Riki Watanabe, whose creations are still produced. In addition, Tendo encouraged young designers by funding an annual competition from 1960 to 1967 and by manufacturing some of the winning designs itself, such as Reiko Tanabe's plywood chair. In 1964, Tendo received the Mainichi Prize for Industrial Design for its pivotal role in furniture manufacturing.