

SIDE GALLERY

KUNIO MAEKAWA



Armchair

Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1974
Molded plywood, Ultrasuede upholstery

Measurements

85 × 76,5 × 80h cm
33,5 × 30,1 × 31,5h in

Seat height: 38 cm (15 in)

Provenance

Private Collection, Tokyo, Japan

Literature

Isozaki, Arata. *Kenchiku no Ka: Kunio Maekawa*. Kajima Institute Publishing, Tokyo, 1983.
Stewart, David B. *The Making of a Modern Japanese Architecture*. Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1987.
Maekawa Associates. *Kunio Maekawa: Collected Works*. Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, Tokyo.
Tendo Mokko Co., Ltd. Archives, Yamagata.

Biography

Kunio Maekawa (1905–1986) was one of the founding figures of modern architecture in Japan and among the architects most responsible for introducing the ideas of European modernism to the country. Born in Niigata, he graduated from the Department of Architecture at Tokyo Imperial University in 1928 before moving to Paris, where he joined the atelier of Le Corbusier. Working alongside Pierre Jeanneret, Maekawa participated in several important projects and absorbed the principles of functionalism, structural clarity, and the integration of architecture and design that would define his career.

Upon returning to Japan in 1930, Maekawa worked briefly with Antonin Raymond before establishing his own office in 1935. Throughout the following decades, he became one of the principal protagonists of postwar Japanese architecture and a mentor to many younger architects, including Kenzo Tange. His work sought to reconcile the ideals of international modernism with Japanese traditions of space, materiality, and craftsmanship.

Among his most celebrated buildings are the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (1961), the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (1975), the Saitama Kaikan (1966), the Kanagawa Prefectural Library and Music Hall (1954), and the Tokyo Marine Building (1974), widely regarded as one of the culminating achievements of his career. These projects demonstrate his ability to combine monumental forms with a profound sensitivity to human scale and the urban environment.

Like many architects of his generation, Maekawa conceived architecture as a total work of art and frequently designed furniture and interiors specifically for his buildings. Rather than treating furnishings as independent objects, he regarded them as extensions of architectural space. Working closely with manufacturers such as Tendo Mokko, he produced a number of highly refined custom pieces distinguished by their sculptural forms, restrained elegance, and exceptional craftsmanship. Many of these designs remained unique commissions and were never commercially produced, making surviving examples particularly rare.