

SIDE GALLERY

JOSÉ ZANINE CALDAS



Bookshelf

From the “Móveis Denúncia” Series
Designed by José Zanine Caldas
Brazil, 1970s
Solid Brazilian hardwood

Measurements

202 × 29,5 × 200h cm
79,5 × 11,6 × 78,7h in

Details

Hand-carved from solid Brazilian hardwood.

Edition

Unique piece

Provenance

Private Collection, Brazil

Literature

Soraia Cals, José Zanine Caldas, Olhares, São Paulo.
Maria Cecília Loschiavo dos Santos, Móvel Moderno no
Brasil, Studio Nobel, São Paulo.

About

Created during the 1970s, these shelves belong to José Zanine Caldas’ celebrated “Móveis Denúncia” series, a body of work that marked a radical transformation in his approach to furniture. Moving away from the industrial production methods he had explored earlier in his career, Zanine began working directly with massive sections of Brazilian hardwood, often reclaimed from trees felled through deforestation.

The shelves are hand-carved from solid Brazilian hardwood, preserving the weight, irregularity, and expressive character of the original timber. Rather than concealing the natural qualities of the material, Zanine allowed its grain, texture, imperfections, and monumental scale to determine the final form. The resulting structure exists between furniture and sculpture, embodying the direct and highly physical relationship with wood that characterized his mature production. The term “Móveis Denúncia”, literally “Protest Furniture”, expressed Zanine’s growing environmental concerns and his opposition to the destruction of Brazil’s forests. By transforming discarded trunks and massive sections of timber into functional objects, he sought to reveal both the extraordinary material richness of Brazilian forests and the consequences of their exploitation.

Reportedly created as a gift, this example has an especially individual character within Zanine’s artisanal production. Its monumental proportions and unique execution make it a significant expression of the ecological, sculptural, and handcrafted principles that defined his work during the 1970s.

Biography

José Zanine Caldas (1918–2001) was a self-taught Brazilian architect and designer known for his innovative use of native woods and his integration of craftsmanship and environmental values. Starting as a model maker in the 1940s, he collaborated with leading modernist architects and founded Móveis Artísticos Z to produce industrial furniture using plywood. Later, he embraced a more rustic and ecological approach, creating expressive wooden houses and furniture using reclaimed materials. His work bridges industrial design and vernacular tradition, leaving a legacy of sustainability and regional identity. In 1991, he was named an honorary architect by the Institute of Architects of Brazil.