

SIDE GALLERY

JOSÉ ZANINE CALDAS



Armchair model "Bergère"

Manufactured by Moveis Artísticos Z
Brazil, 1950s
Wood and fabric upholstery

Measurements

78 × 95 × 110h cm
30,7 × 37,4 × 43,3h in

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

Designed by José Zanine Caldas during the 1950s, this bergère armchair reflects the designer's early exploration of modern furniture through traditional woodworking techniques and generous upholstered forms. The chair combines a substantial wooden structure with a deeply upholstered seat and back, creating a design centered on comfort while maintaining a clearly articulated construction.

The chair's proportions are notably generous, with a high back and deep seat characteristic of the bergère typology. Rather than reproducing the ornamental language historically associated with this form, Zanine reduces the chair to its essential structural and functional components. The exposed wooden framework provides a strong architectural outline, while the upholstered elements soften the composition and emphasize its domestic character.

The piece survives in its original condition, retaining its period upholstery and wooden finish. This preservation provides valuable evidence of its original construction and material character.

Dating from the 1950s, the armchair belongs to an important period in Zanine's development as a furniture designer, when he was investigating ways of combining modern forms with accessible construction methods and the expressive possibilities of wood. These concerns would remain fundamental throughout his career, eventually developing into the increasingly sculptural approach to solid timber for which his later work became particularly renowned.

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.