SIDE GALLERY

REIKO TANABE



"Murai" Stool
Manufactured by Tendo Mokko
Japan, 1966
Rosewood

Measurements
46 x 46 x 36h cm
18 x 18 x 14,2h in

Details
Stamped with foil manufacturer's label to underside:
Tendo Mokko Co., Ltd. Made in Japan

Provenance
Private collection, Japan

Literature
Design Japonais 1950–1995, Centre Georges Pompidou exhibition catalogue, p. 74.

Biography

Reiko Tanabe (1934–2019) was a pioneering Japanese designer whose elegant and sculptural approach to form placed her among the most refined voices in postwar modern design. Trained in interior and industrial design in Japan, Tanabe emerged in the 1950s and 60s as one of the few women working professionally in furniture design, a field then largely dominated by men.
Her most iconic collaborations were with Tendo Mokko, a company known for its expertise in molded plywood. Among her best-known works is the Murai stool (1966), a piece that exemplifies her mastery of minimal structure and visual fluidity. The stool's faceted pentagonal form and seamless construction reflect a distinct balance between organic elegance and modernist rigor. Other notable designs include the Shell Chair (1961) and the LT-1 low table (ca. 1965), known for its precise proportions and expressive wood grain patterning.
Tanabe's work was featured in international exhibitions, most notably Design Japonais 1950–1995 at the Centre Georges Pompidou, and remains part of significant private and institutional collections. Her design language—modest yet exacting, quiet yet deeply intentional—embodies the essence of Japanese modernism. Through her innovative use of materials and her deeply intuitive sense of form, Reiko Tanabe left a lasting mark on the global history of design.

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