

SIDE GALLERY

UBUNJI KIDOKORO



Two seats sofa

Made by Ubunji Kidokoro
Japan, 1933
Bamboo, Brass

Measurements

120 × 77 × 76h cm
47,2 × 30,3 × 29,9h in

Provenance

Private collection, Japan

Literature

Japan Living Design, Exploring 20th-Century Modernism. Published by Japan Interior Designers Association. 40th Anniversary Commemorative Project. Tokyo, 2004. Pages 72, 73, 76 and 77.
Domus, n°269, April 1952, similar model p. 41 in an article about an exhibition curated by Kenzo Tange, Takashiyama, Tokyo

Details

"I wanted to somehow use the familiarity with bamboo as a more meaningful and useful material in modern furniture" (Kogei News, January 1938 issue).

All components are made from bamboo.
The frame is made by joining together eight thin pieces of bamboo.

Biography

Ubunji Kidokoro (c. 1910–1945) was a Japanese cabinetmaker and furniture designer whose work in the 1930s explored the relationship between traditional craftsmanship and international modernism. Associated with Mitsukoshi, one of Japan's leading department stores, he developed innovative furniture that combined modern structural principles with indigenous materials and woodworking techniques.

His most celebrated design, a cantilevered bamboo armchair created around 1937, combines bent plywood and vertical bamboo strips secured with brass studs. Its lightweight, flexible structure reflects an inventive use of materials, translating modernist ideas into a distinctly Japanese design language. Often discussed in relation to Alvar Aalto's experiments with bentwood, Kidokoro's work demonstrates an independent approach rooted in local craftsmanship and material expression.

Although his career was cut short by the Second World War, his surviving designs remain significant examples of prewar Japanese modernism. Through their structural ingenuity, tactile materials and refined construction, they reveal an early dialogue between traditional craft and modern furniture design.