

JOAQUIM TENREIRO

MASTERWORKS

PARIS | 19 OCTOBER – 22 DECEMBER



Carpenters Workshop Gallery presents Joaquim Tenreiro: *Masterworks*, one of the most expansive exhibitions to date of the work of renowned Brazilian artist Joaquim Tenreiro, curated by Maria Cecilia Loschiavo Dos Santos.

Tenreiro's practice traversed art, sculpture, design and architecture, and this exhibition comprises a collection of his most notable pieces created over the full span of his career, demonstrating the clear evolution of a master craftsman.

At the heart of Joaquim Tenreiro's art lies his profound understanding of the inherent properties of wood. As early as the 1940s, he was among the first to utilise Brazil's abundant varieties of hardwood, and his intuitive knowledge of a material previously unseen in the creative world served as the cornerstone of his radical new designs.

As evidenced in this exhibition, Tenreiro's use of hardwoods allowed him to craft artworks that not only liberated the beauty of wood but also enhanced its functionality. He updated ubiquitous objects of Brazilian heritage into beguiling, geometric forms. Linear, light designs became hallmarks of Tenreiro's art, relieved of the weight of history and looking towards a new modern era.

Joaquim Tenreiro: *Masterworks* continues Carpenters Workshop Gallery's explorative programming of historic collectible design, expanding the gallery's offering to complement its contemporary focus.

As seen in previous exhibitions, such as the Zanine Caldas *Denuncia* retrospective in Paris earlier this year, Carpenters Workshop Gallery have built an extensive collection of historic Brazilian design centred on key artists such as Zanine Caldas, Joaquim Tenreiro, and Carlo Hauner & Martin Eisler. The collection mirrors the gallery's priorities, with a focus on masterpiece level artworks with exceptional provenance.

Carpenters Workshop Gallery will host a second exhibition focussing on the masterpieces of Joaquim Tenreiro at Ladbrooke Hall, London, in 2024, revealing further aspects of this prolific creator.



CHAISE LONGUE

1947

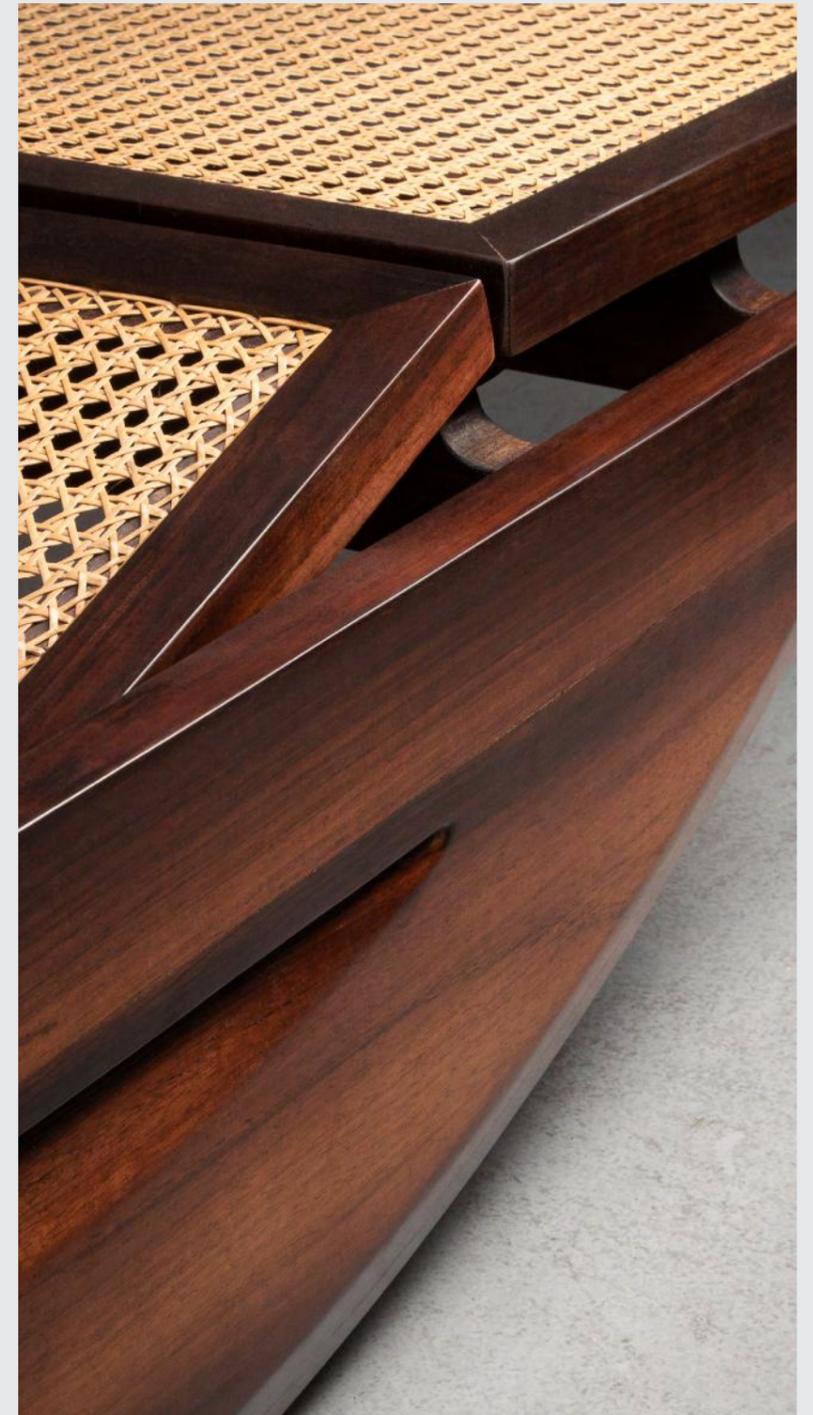
Imbuia Wood, Cane

62 x 182 x 67 cm

24 3/8 x 71 5/8 x 26 3/8 in

This chaise longue is an early design by Brazilian mid-century artist Joaquim Tenreiro. Luxurious, locally sourced, Brazilian hardwoods are combined with cane in a sleek and simple design. The curves of the make a specific reference to the hammocks that are an essential part of home furnishings throughout South America, and its use of cane allows air to circulate through the piece in the hot Brazilian climate.





JOAQUIM TENREIRO

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WHITE TRIANGULAR TABLE

1960

Imbuia Wood, Transparent and Colored Glass

76 x 180 x 180 cm

29 7/8 x 70 7/8 x 70 7/8 in



This table was designed by Tenreiro in the 1960s and produced by Tenreiro Móveis e Decorações for the Bloch Editores building. Tenreiro and Sergio Rodrigues were chosen to furnish the interiors of the headquarters designed by Oscar Niemeyer. At the time, rectangular tables were most commonly found on the market, whereas a triangular table dismantled the hierarchical and colonial approach of eating, offering a more dynamic environment. This illustrates Tenreiro's approach to furniture, reinventing functional items with creative elements that deviate from a classical approach.

The combination of natural and industrial materials demonstrates the playfulness of Latin American design; the exotic Brazilian wood and its organic shapes are in dialogue with the painted glass top.

Tenreiro's use of lines is subtle, clever, bringing versatility and lightness to his designs. The partly transparent triangular table top, a recurrent feature in his table designs, participates in creating this light feeling.



JOAQUIM TENREIRO

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PAIR OF EASY CHAIRS

1950s

Cavúnia Wood, Straw

79 x 52.5 x 58 cm

31 1/8 x 20 5/8 x 22 7/8 in

The '*Low Bedroom Chair*' is a perfect example of Tenreiro's innovation, mastery, and eye for detail. Produced for Tenreiro Móveis e Decorações in the 1950's, this rare model is made of local Brazilian wood and features an elegant frame with a woven cane seat and backrest. The chair unites the lightness of the design and the robustness of the Cavúnia wood.



JOAQUIM TENREIRO

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SET OF 6 ESTORIL CHAIRS

Circa 1960

Imbuia Wood, Cane

116.5 x 50.5 x 53.5 cm

45 7/8 x 19 7/8 x 21 in

The *Estoril Chair* was designed circa 1960, at which time Tenreiro began to integrate straw in his furniture, mainly as cane for the seat or the backrest. This practice was a continuation of Brazilian tradition: straw has been used in Brazilian furniture for ventilation purposes and visual lightness for centuries. It can also be interpreted as related to German-Austrian designer Michael Thonet's use of caning, as well as of Bauhaus artists such as Marcel Breuer. Despite the modernity of its lines, the high backrest continues a formal tradition of typical Brazilian dining chairs.





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ROCKING CHAIR

1947

Wood, Leather

74 x 83 x 70 cm

29 1/8 x 32 5/8 x 27 1/2 in

Crafted in 1947, the *Rocking Chair* is now seen as emblematic of the work of Brazilian artist Joaquim Tenreiro. Its elegant lines and graceful silhouette draw inspiration from traditional Brazilian rocking chairs, but in contrast to the solid longevity of those heritage items this piece prioritises lightness and ergonomic comfort.



JOAQUIM TENREIRO

CADEIRA DE TRÊS PÉS | THREE-LEGGED CHAIR

1947

Imbuia, Peroba, Pau-Marfim, Roxinho and Mogno Wood

75 x 58 x 70 cm

29 1/2 x 22 7/8 x 27 1/2 in



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Of all Joaquim Tenreiro's sculptural designs, the *Cadeira de Três Pés* (Three-Legged Chair) is the most acclaimed. Designed circa 1947, he developed various delineations of this model, using between two to five different inlaid wooden strips. This chair presents five different Brazilian woods inlaid together, undoubtedly the most technically difficult of all the variations. Here Tenreiro's use of colour becomes a central concept in his design.



JOAQUIM TENREIRO

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PAIR OF ARMCHAIRS

Circa 1950

Peroba Wood, Leather

74.5 x 82.5 x 64 cm

29 1/8 x 32 5/8 x 27 1/2 in

This bespoke pair of armchairs by Brazilian designer Joaquim Tenreiro is a testament to his ability to blend form and function seamlessly. They were initially commissioned for a client enamoured with Tenreiro's *Rocking Chair*, but whose back issues prevented them from using the rocking motion. Built according to his specifications, these chairs represent Tenreiro's personalised approach to design. Crafted with the same precision and attention to detail as his *Rocking Chair*, he has reimagined its form to provide optimal comfort and support, harmoniously combining aesthetics with ergonomics.



SET OF 9 U CHAIRS

1960

Imbuia Wood, Upholstery (Fabric: Loro Piana St
Remy Bianco Assoluto)

73 x 55 x 54 cm

28 3/4 x 21 5/8 x 21 1/4 in

The now classic *U Chair* was originally designed in the late 1950s, for the residence of Nanzita Ladeira Salgado, an artist from Cataguese. The design is very modern, refined and light. The stripped-back backrest shows a departure from typical dining furniture of the time, as chairs usually displayed high backrests with coloured fabrics. Tenreiro reduced its form to the bare essentials, turning away from ornament. Comfort is added by the padded seat and by the delicate curve of the back.





TRESPES COLLECTION | PAIR
1950

Imbuia Wood, Metal
68.5 x 53.5 x 29 cm
27 x 21 x 11 3/8 in

These stools are rare and iconic Tenreiro pieces. The thin and elongated iron structures support wooden seats with alternating stripes of imbuia and ivory wood. Their surface is smooth, and the marquetry is perfectly executed. The work on the curves is characteristic of Tenreiro's approach. They are subtle, cleverly placed, and bring comfort and versatility.





THREE-SEATER SOFA

1950

Pequi Wood, Cane

66 x 178 x 61 cm

26 x 70 1/8 x 24 in

Joaquim Tenreiro advocated the idea that Brazilian furniture should have "a lightness which has nothing to do with weight itself, but with graciousness, and the functionality of spaces." The design of this sofa is characteristic of Tenreiro's quest for lightness and functionality, stripping back any unnecessary element and revealing the natural beauty of Brazilian Pequi wood. The lines and forms of Tenreiro's designs are always balanced, and his manipulation of solids and voids creates rhythm. Tropical wood and caning were especially popularised in Brazilian furniture and high end interiors, as both are adapted to the hot and humid climate.





CURVA LOUNGE SET

1960

Wood, Upholstery

69 x 234 x 80 cm

27 1/8 x 92 1/8 x 31 1/2 in

The *Curva Armchair* was designed in the 1960s for Tenreiro Móveis e Decorações . Its width and inviting form provide great comfort. From every angle the seat offers a graceful profile, with soft balanced curves and overflowing armrests. Joaquim Tenreiro designed different variations of the *Curva* for his private clients, such as models with high backrests, tubular feet, or an extended number of seats along the sofa.



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OCTAGONAL COFFEE TABLE

1948

Imbuia Wood, Travertin

31 x 120 x 120 cm

12 1/4 x 47 1/4 x 47 1/4 in

This coffee table is inspired by traditional Brazilian octagonal tables, but is modernised through the design of its feet. The table combines Brazilian wood and a stone top, and was designed in two variations: a marble top or a travertine top – the latter is the version presented.

The veins and shades of the stone have patterns comparable to those of rosewood, creating a cohesive visual impact, underlined by the symmetrical composition and modern lines. The minimalist design of the table and the absence of ornament brings the materials to the foreground, making a sleek and refined piece.



SOFA

1960

Imbuia Wood, Marble, Upholstery

75 x 462 x 127 cm

29 1/2 x 181 7/8 x 50 in

This large double-sided sofa by mid-century artist Joaquim Tenreiro combines Brazilian hardwood and luxurious marble in a sleek and simple design. The double seating space is reminiscent of neo-classical European furniture, with its long horizontal lines.

Tenreiro would design bespoke interiors for the upper classes of Brazilian society, with unique pieces intended for each space. This sofa would have been included in a modern and spacious interior, luxuriously furnished by Tenreiro.





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CREDENZA WITH SHELVES

1950

Imbuia Wood

190 x 350 x 48 cm

74 3/4 x 137 3/4 x 18 7/8 in

Joaquim Tenreiro would design bespoke interiors for the upper classes of Brazilian society, with unique pieces intended for each space. This buffet with shelf is a one-of-a-kind and very rare piece, most certainly custom-made for a luxurious and modern interior. Demonstrating Tenreiro's mastery of traditional woodworking techniques, the artist achieved a light yet large design that offers ample storage space.



LARGE CREDENZA

1950

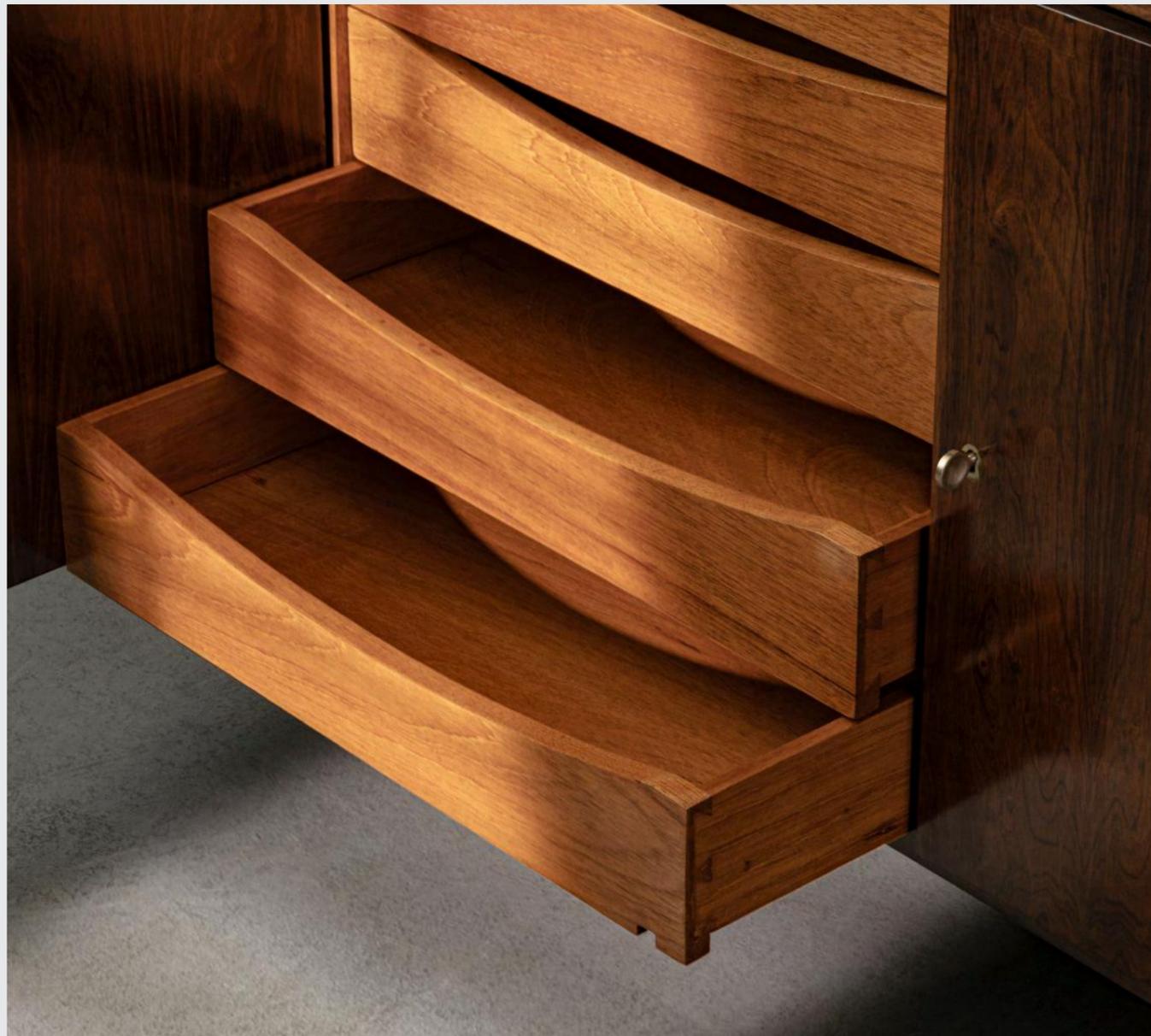
Imbuia Wood

75 x 400 x 48 cm

29 1/2 x 157 1/2 x 18 7/8 in

This Large credenza buffet, by Brazilian modernist Joaquim Tenreiro, is a unique and rare item. The artist's use of imbuia wood, a hardwood native to Brazil, means that even at four meters long its design remains light and sleek. Six doors are seamlessly integrated along the face of the buffet, and the painted industrial glass top along one side contrasts against the traditional wood.





COFFEE TABLE

1950

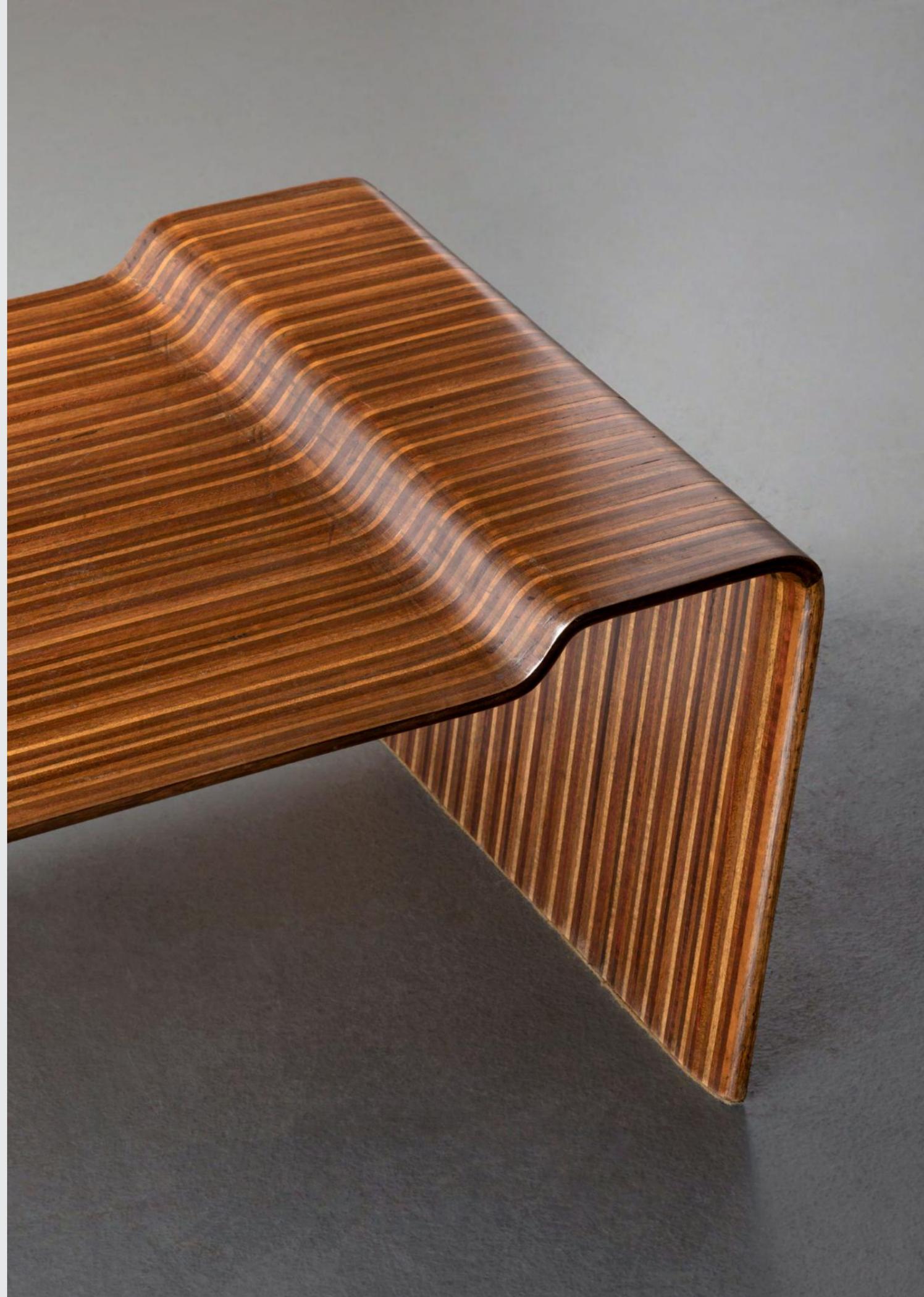
Imbuia, Peroba, Pau-Marfim, Roxinho
and Mogno Wood

35 x 120 x 59 cm

13 3/4 x 47 1/4 x 23 1/4 in

This rare coffee table features five different woods, showcasing both Tenreiro's mastery of craft and modern vision of design. The intricate marquetry is displayed across the entire surface of the table. Its shape consists of a single slab, curved to create the feet and a slight recess on the table top. Both dynamic and elegant, the table combines Brazilian tradition and modernism.

The quality of marquetry displayed on the table top is remarkable, composed of species of wood that are unobtainable today.



ABSTRATA DINING TABLE

1960

Iron, Colored Glass

74 x 233 x 109 cm

29 1/8 x 91 3/4 x 42 7/8 in

The *Abstrata* table shows the essence of Joaquim Tenreiro's style with the asymmetrical shape of its top and base giving it a sense of controlled imbalance. Its materials, especially iron, accentuate the modernity of the piece.

It was originally designed by Tenreiro for an apartment in Rio de Janeiro in 1958, and he later made a few more versions, each with a unique geometry. Carpenters Workshop Gallery offer two versions, one in white and one in blue. The houses Tenreiro furnished were often designed by the great names of modernist architecture, such as Oscar Niemeyer, Lucio Costa, or Sérgio Bernardes, which put him in direct dialogue with the future-facing architects and their visions.

PROVENANCE

Bloch Editores Office, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



SAM DINING TABLE

1960

Imbuia Wood, Glass

77 x 123.5 cm

30 1/4 x 48 5/8 in

In a similar manner to Tenreiro's triangular tables, the round table is a formal innovation imbued in the designer's reflections on new ways of sitting and eating. The typical transparent table top centre lightens the boldness of the feet and of the green painted glass. The balance of natural and industrial materials is both playful and modern.

Its original valuation stamps have been preserved, visible on the reverse of the table top. They are testament to the history of the work and also to the history of Brazil.



SCULPTURE ONDULAÇÃO

Late 1960s

Lacquered Metal

91 x 35 x 35 cm

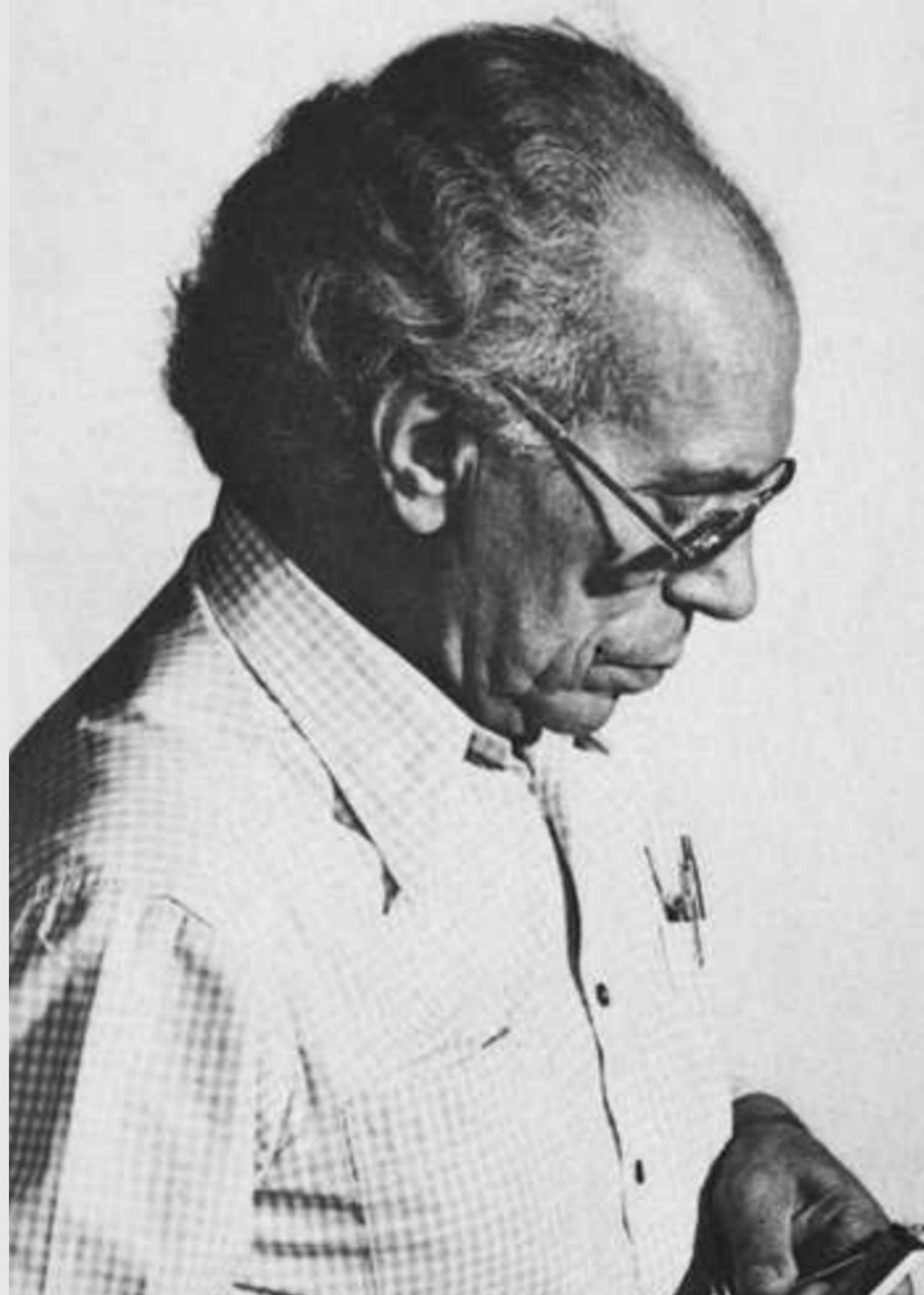
35 7/8 x 13 3/4 x 13 3/4 in

This sculpture exemplifies the mature work of Joaquim Tenreiro. In the late 1960s the designer stopped creating furniture and dedicated himself to painting and sculpting, artistic practices he had been pursuing throughout his life. The piece, whose title means "Undulation Sculpture", shows Tenreiro embracing a modern aesthetic. The sculpture is made of metal yet creates a feeling of lightness, due to its form that exudes rhythm and energy. Though distinct in its style from Tenreiro's furniture, the work also contains several motifs that appear in his designs. His interest in geometry is shown in the carefully controlled proportions of the undulating pattern. This mastery of forms creates a piece that is restrained and minimalist. Another hallmark of the designer's style is the interplay between nature and artistry, seen in the way Tenreiro takes an organic motif and controls it with a modern, geometric aesthetic. Through its material, motif, and proportions, the sculpture shows the designer exploring new artistic forms while staying connected to his individual style.



ABOUT JOAQUIM TENREIRO

Joaquim Tenreiro (1906-1992) is often referred to as the father of Brazilian modernism. The furniture designer was born in Portugal and moved to Rio de Janeiro in the late 1920s. In 1941, he received a commission to create furniture for a home designed by Oscar Niemeyer for the writer Francisco Inácio Peixoto. He designed modern furniture that fit the Brazilian style of life, often using native woods. He continued designing furniture until the late 1960s, when he then devoted himself to painting and sculpture.



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