

DESIGNER /  
MANUFACTURER

TOSHIO TOKUNAGA

PRODUCT NAME

Black Persimmon Chair 02

SHOWN IN

100+ year old Black Persimmon  
wood + hand woven silk seat with  
gold pine needle relief - created  
using the process of "Kanna"

DIMENSIONS

42 5/8" h x 23 5/8" w x 20 1/4" d /  
19 5/8" sh  
(108 h x 60 w x 51d cm approx)

ITEM TYPE

Edition 02/02 - Signed



STORY

The “Black Persimmon Chairs” exemplifies Tokunaga's deft restraint, his delicate sense when to honor traditional forms and when to bend toward something unexpected and new. Designed with the Emperor and Empress of Japan in mind, only two pairs were ever made, one resting with a private collector, the other with Radnor.

As is always the case with a Tokunaga piece, the wood itself tells a story. Known for its hardness and luster, black persimmon is so rare that once upon a time only the Emperor's family was permitted to use it. If one is lucky to see a Black Persimmon piece, it is most likely that those were created in the 8th century. The material's rich hue is the product of time, the natural outcome of the wood's curing and graining as it ages, in this case over 100 years.

The seat cushion is covered with a gold and silk fabric decorated with a pine leaf pattern that offsets with the density and weight of the wood. This same upholstery fabric is what the Emperor and Empress use for their personal train. The Persimmon Chairs will not be made again--sourcing the wood is beyond hope--but they stand as a testament to Tokunaga's inimitable career.



KANNA

Kanna is both the name for a type of woodworking and the planing tool at its heart. Avoiding power tools and sanding of any kind, Kanna is a patient and an intuitive process guided by the hand's touch.

Tokunaga sees the tool as akin to a stethoscope that tells him the condition of the wood and how it will respond. His consciousness as a designer lives as much in his fingertips as in his mind. The process, which resembles sculpting, is a sustained act of attention that involves listening to the sound of the planer makes as it passes over the wood. No two wood blocks respond the same. The result is an immaculate finish that high-tech methods can't equal.