

Nendo's New Furniture Finds Beauty In Splintered Wood

THE JAPANESE STUDIO--WHOSE NAME MEANS "UNMOLDED CLAY"--
REVERSES TRADITIONAL LOGIC OF WOODWORKING TO MAKE SPLINTERS
THE FOCUS OF A NEW COLLECTION.



In woodworking, a splintered or broken piece of timber is generally deemed defective. But for Nendo, those “defects” provide a form of inspiration. The Japanese design studio’s newest collection, called *Splinter*, is made from pieces of wood that are purposefully split down the grain, creating subdivisions that are curved to form armrests, hooks, and frames.

Splinter was commissioned by Conde House, one of the many furniture manufacturers based in Asahikawa, a city on the northern tip of Japan. Asahikawa is known for its freezing temperatures, sake, and skiing (not a bad combo), but it’s also a center for Japanese woodworkers. The town has a furniture center that’s nearly a mile and a half long on one side, and dozens of large and small manufacturing houses like Conde.

Campbell-Dollaghan, Kelsey. “Nendo’s New Furniture Finds Beauty in Splintered Wood.” *Co. Design*, December 12, 2012.

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“We splintered each piece of wood as though peeling it away,” Nendo explains. “Chairs’ backrests divide to become armrests, and the top of the coat stand peels away to provide coat hooks.” The prototypical silhouette of a Wegner chair becomes subtly radical when its main support splits in half and snakes away in two different directions. “We approached the wood gently, going with the grain so that the wood would retain its original pliancy,” the studio adds.



Nendo is known for its poeticism, introducing transparent wood, and silicon bowls that shiver in the wind. Founder Oki Sato has a flair for finding beauty in materials that are typically thought of as “waste.” For example, his Cabbage Chair is made from the thin pleated paper you’d typically throw away after making a garment. *Splinter* follows the same logic, subverting a wasted piece of material by bending it into something utterly functional.



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