

# PAN

AMSTERDAM

## ATKRIS STUDIO



Desk and Stool by Gio Ponti for Fontana Arte, Italy 1938

The name Gio Ponti needs little introduction to the design-loving public. This architect, designer and visionary stood at the cradle of modern Italian design. His countless projects are characterized by a refined beauty and in 1928 he was co-founder of the architecture and design magazine Domus. The world's longest-running architecture magazine that is still published today.

### Background

This desk and accompanying seat saw the day of light in 1938 and was produced by Fontana Arte. Gio Ponti founded this company specialized in glass processing and the creation of furniture accessories in 1932 together with Luigi Fontana. We know the exact date of this set because the glass plate of the desk at the back bears a stamp with the date of February 18, 1938; Together with the name L. Fontana.

### Design

The design of the desk, an inverted U-shape, as it were, was progressive and modern at the time. A certain tension has been created by, for example, letting the lines slope upwards on the sides. The simple design all of a sudden becomes dynamic because of this simple choice. If the inner lines had been maintained or were rather parallel to the outer

contours, it would have remained a static object. The pure beauty of this set is somewhat hidden in the simplicity of those lines. In addition, we should not leave the dazzling proportions unmentioned. Tapered legs flow into a horizontal section that is twice as thick. The same applies to the seat, which is a smaller translation of the desk. As simple as the design looks, a similar choice has been made for the finish. There is no excess choice or abundance of materials but a deep dark brown rosewood veneer with straight veins that has acquired a phenomenal patina over time. A refined detailing in the form of five brass six-pointed stars adorn the two objects. Three of which are placed on the desk and two on the seat. These are lightly engraved on the arms, creating a notion of shadow and depth. Perhaps this striking decoration was specifically requested at the time as a kind of personalization of the object. The glass plate that serves as the writing or working area is recessed into the top and has some dark marks. These are the result of the oxidation process and charmingly reveal its age.

### **Condition**

The condition of this set is excellent with diffusely some minor signs of use. The seat cushion has been reupholstered in the past in a woven, slightly mixed fabric. Finally, this set comes with an authenticity certificate from the Gio Ponti archive.