

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Museum of Contemporary Craft receives significant gift from influential artist Toshiko Takaezu, exhibits new holdings

Exhibition celebrates one of the largest collections of Takaezu's ceramic vessels in the Pacific Northwest

Toshiko Takaezu: Recent Gifts
February 5 – July 12, 2009

PORTLAND, OR—December 22, 2008—Museum of Contemporary Craft has received a remarkable gift of 17 works by internationally acclaimed ceramic artist Toshiko Takaezu. The largest gift to the Museum's collection to date, the ceramic vessels were selected by Takaezu in honor of the organization's renaming and move to the Pearl District, Portland's primary arts neighborhood, in 2007. The new acquisitions will all be on view for the first time beginning February 5, 2009. The exhibition will provide visitors the opportunity to experience one of the largest public collections of Takaezu's works in the Pacific Northwest.

"These pieces from Toshiko Takaezu enable the Museum to continue to document the developments of contemporary craft in our region," said Namita Gupta Wiggers, curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft. "This gift also allows us to tell the story of Toshiko's connection to Portland, as well as how our city and this institution became leaders in the American Craft Movement. Gifts like this make it possible for the Museum to serve a unique educational role in this community."

Takaezu's ties to this institution originate with her long-standing friendship with Ken Shores, former executive director of Contemporary Crafts Gallery (CCG, now Museum of Contemporary Craft). Shores first invited Takaezu to CCG in 1966 to jury an exhibition of Northwest craft, selections of which were later exhibited in New York. Takaezu subsequently participated in nine exhibitions at this institution between 1961 and 2008. Takaezu deepened her connection to Portland's ceramics community, conducting summer workshops for over 25 years at Lewis & Clark College after Shores became a faculty member in the late 1960s.

This February, Takaezu's gift will be exhibited with nearly a dozen pieces recently donated by Ken Shores, works in the collection donated by The Larsen Estate and Mary Anne Normandin, as well as works on loan from Tina Takaezu and local lenders.

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724 Northwest Davis Street | Portland, Oregon 97209 | 503.223.2654

Museum of Contemporary Craft

ABOUT TOSHIKO TAKAEZU

A leader in the post-World War II American Craft Movement, Takaazu is a recognized innovator who emerged into the male-dominated field of contemporary ceramics in the 1950s. Takaazu is best known for her simple, organic “closed” vessels, and spontaneous painterly glazes. Her forms range from a few inches to several feet tall. Through a combination of hand-built and thrown techniques, Takaazu is widely considered the first person to close – or nearly close – a ceramic vessel. Each work is individually glazed using a range of applications to build layers of color surrounding the form, combining technical mastery and spontaneous gesture that has influenced decades of ceramists worldwide.

Born in Pekeekeo, Hawaii in 1922, Toshiko Takaazu earned an MFA in ceramics from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1954, where she studied under Finnish ceramist Maija Grotell. She then traveled to Japan to study Buddhism, visit Shoji Hamada and learn traditional Japanese pottery techniques. This foundation, combining Eastern and Western approaches to ceramics, allowed Takaazu to move away from functional vessels and develop her distinctive style and technique. Takaazu taught 10 years at Cleveland Institute of Art and at Princeton University from 1967–1992, where she also received an honorary doctorate. Her work is part of the permanent collections at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, among many others. She is the recipient of the Gold Metal of the American Craft Council and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation grant. Toshiko Takaazu continues to live and make work in New Jersey.

Related Programs

Exhibition Tour

Curator Walkthrough

Wednesday, February 11, noon, tour convenes at front desk. Free.

Listen, look and ask questions in an intimate setting as Curator Namita Wiggers guides participants through all exhibitions on view: *Mandy Greer: Dare alla Luce*, *Darrel Morris: The Large Works* and *Toshiko Takaazu: Recent Gifts*. Wiggers will give her inside perspective on the artists, the installation of their work in the Museum and how these fiber art and ceramic exhibitions relate to one other.

Book Celebration

Unpacking the Collection: Selections from the Museum of Contemporary Craft

Tuesday, March 10, 7:30 PM. Free.

Powell's City of Books, 1005 W Burnside Street

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Join the Museum for a reading and celebration of *Unpacking the Collection: Selections from the Museum of Contemporary Craft* – the Museum’s first book documenting its collection. The book’s author, Namita Wiggers, designer Katherine Bovee and photographer Dan Kvitka will be present to discuss the creation of the catalogue. Several featured artists, all of whom have played major roles in the development of craft in the Northwest, will also be present to add insight to the new publication.

Panel Discussion

Craft in Context: Toshiko Takaezu

May 2009 (date TBA), 6:30 PM. The Lab. Free.

Gain a better understanding of the impact of Takaezu’s work and her philosophies about life and art through the lens of her peers, friends and students. Join artist and educator Ken Shores; Janet Buskirk, a family friend and student of Takaezu; and Pat Horsley, a staple of the Portland ceramics community; as they discuss ceramics in the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s, when Takaezu established her connection to this institution.

ABOUT MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Committed to the advancement of craft since 1937, Museum of Contemporary Craft is one of Oregon’s oldest cultural institutions. Centrally located in Portland’s Pearl District, the Museum is nationally acclaimed for its curatorial program and is a vibrant center for investigation and dialogue, expanding the definition of craft and the way audiences experience it. Visit the Museum online at www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org.

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These images are available as high resolution JPEG files at our online press center: www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org/presscenter



Toshiko Takaezu: Recent Gifts

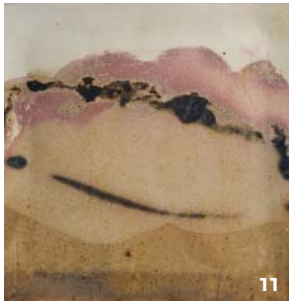
February 5–July 12, 2009

Foreground image (left to right): *Untitled*, c. 1990; stoneware; 21 × 10 inches diameter. *Untitled*, c. 1990; stoneware; 40 × 20 inches diameter. *Untitled*, c. 1980; stoneware; 26.5 × 16 inches diameter

All works gift of the artist. Photos by Dan Kvitka

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Toshiko Takaezu: Recent Gifts

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8. *Untitled*, c. 1980s; Porcelain; 26.5 × 8.5 inches diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of the artist, 2007.20.06

9. *Untitled*, c. 1990s; Stoneware; 20.5 × 10 inches diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of the artist, 2007.20.07

10. *Untitled*, date unknown; Stoneware; 31 × 14 inches diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of the artist, 2007.20.02

11. *Untitled (plate)*, c. late 1970s; Porcelain; 14 × 14 × .875 inches; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of Ken Shores, 2007.25.06

12. *Untitled*, c. 1980s; Stoneware; 9 × 9 inches diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of the artist, 2007.20.11

13. *Mini ¾ Moon*, c. 1980s; Stoneware; 8.5 × 10.5 inches diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of the artist, 2007.20.14

14. *Untitled*, c. 1980s; Stoneware; 8 × 9.5 inches diameter; Collection of Museum of Contemporary Craft, Gift of the artist, 2007.20.10

All photos by Dan Kvitka.

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