

About Green Hill

Founded in 1974, Green Hill is one of only a few visual arts centers in the country that combines changing exhibitions of contemporary art with an interactive art gallery for families and an extensive community outreach program. The Center's mission focuses on visual artists and art closely linked to North Carolina and weaves together three areas of programming: Exhibitions, ArtQuest (the state's first interactive art gallery for children), and Community Outreach. At the heart of Green Hill's philosophy is a commitment to making contemporary art accessible to the state of North Carolina and beyond.

About the Exhibition

Green Hill Center for North Carolina Art is proud to present ***Toshiko Takaezu: The Art of Clay***, an exhibition of works by internationally acclaimed ceramic artist Toshiko Takaezu. Organized by the *Japanese-American Museum in Los Angeles* in 2006, Green Hill will present an expanded version of the exhibition. Small and large-scale clay works created throughout Takaezu's career will be on display as well as her lesser known weaving.

Green Hill has secured exclusivity for this exhibition and this will be the only showing of Toshiko Takaezu's work on the east coast during 2007. Toshiko Takaezu will be present during periods of the exhibition and will attend the private and public opening receptions.

The exhibition pays homage to Takaezu's accomplishments as a master ceramist who has redefined her craft and brought it into the wider art arena. It also honors the many years she instructed and inspired a generation of North Carolina potters at the *Penland School of Crafts* and the *University of North Carolina at Greensboro* during the 1960's and 70's. The *National Museum of Modern Art*, Kyoto, Japan recently hosted a retrospective of Takaezu's work. In addition, the *American Craft Museum* in New York City, the *Morris Gallery* at the *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts* in Philadelphia, the *Perimeter Gallery* in Chicago, and the *Frank Lloyd Gallery* in Santa Monica, in addition to other recognized visual arts institutions have hosted exhibitions of Takaezu's work.

For over fifty years, Toshiko Takaezu has remained dedicated to exploring the art of clay, as an artist and influential teacher. Born in 1922 in Hawaii to Japanese immigrants from Okinawa, Takaezu studied at the *University of Hawaii* before attending the prestigious *Cranbrook Academy of Art* in the early 1950s. In the mid-1950's, Takaezu traveled to Okinawa and Japan, the homeland of her parents. The purpose of her journey was to immerse herself in the culture of Japan as well as to study with some Japanese potters who were already well-known in the United States. Those included Shoji Hamada, Rosanjin Kitaoji and Toyo Kaneshige. During this period of stay in Japan, Zen and tea ceremony became central to her life and have, for many years, influenced her work. In the following decade, she became known for her "closed forms" which she achieved by the simple yet radical act of "closing the mouth of the vessel." Takaezu, along with Peter Voulkos and other ceramic artists of the 1950s and 1960s, was instrumental in exploring clay as a medium for art beyond its conventional utilitarian purpose.

Takaezu's vocabulary of closed forms provides her with a "canvas" for her exuberant and painterly glazes. Similar in shape and style, these forms demonstrate tremendous variation. Takaezu often refers to these works as "pots." Yet, when queried about her closed forms, Takaezu replied with wry aplomb, "You can't put anything in and you can't take anything out." The interior of these pots remains a mystery, which can be likened to the mysteries of artistic process.

This exhibition will be the centerpiece for Greensboro's first cultural tourism initiative to take place over a ten day period in June, 2007. Partnering with the *Greensboro Convention and Visitor Bureau* and Greensboro's *United Arts Council*, Green Hill will create attractive visitor packages that will encourage cultural tourists to attend the exhibition and take advantage of other cultural organizations, hotels, restaurants and area attractions.

Programs Related to the Exhibition

A Japanese Textile Class will be conducted by textile designer Elizabeth Sartore in order for students to have the opportunity to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the Japanese culture, especially textiles. The class involves the historical review and exploration of various textiles/patterns with a concentration on images from nature. The students will study ancient patterns such as Samurai designs and the relationship they share with the present. The students will make stamps and, using their own designs, print fabrics they can take home and use.

Lecture on the Life & Artistry of Toshiko Takaezu will be presented and will be open to the public, free of charge. The subject matter will include the development of Takaezu's artistic style and the many paths she has followed throughout her life.

The exhibition will be offered to the public at no charge; however, many of the works will be available for purchase.