

TOSHIKO TAKAEZU



Toshiko Takaezu is an internationally acclaimed artist-craftswoman best known for her ceramics, but who also weaves and paints. She was born in Pepeekeo, HI, one of 11 children of a Japanese farmer who had come to Hawaii to find work in the sugar cane fields. Teaching pottery and elementary school classes enabled her to attend the University of Hawaii. She studied sculpture and ceramics, and soon realized the need to leave Hawaii and seek advanced instruction in ceramics. She enrolled at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, MI.

A great deal has been said about the Oriental influence in her work. In 1955-56, she traveled to Japan to find out more about her own culture and racial heritage, especially as it might apply to her ceramics.

She lived in a Zen Temple for three months, and visited many well-known Japanese potters.

For a number of years, Ms. Takaezu was head of the ceramics department at the Cleveland Institute of Art. She has taught at several universities and in 1966 came to Princeton University, where she taught in the Visual Art Department for 25 years. She retired in 1992, and Princeton honored her with the esteemed Behrman Award. She received an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Hawaii.

Toshiko's home and studio in Quakertown was often visited by groups of Princeton students and others learning the craft of raku and other pottery skills.

Ms. Takaezu was a trustee at Hunterdon Museum of Art in Clinton for many years. Through her service on the exhibition committee she influenced and promoted the work of many artists.

She also brought teachers of international stature to teach at the museum and organized the Friends of Hunterdon Art Center, which is still functioning as a strong support group of volunteers and financial help to the museum.

For two months in 1998, all three floors of the museum were turned over to an exhibition of ceramics selected from a vast collection of Toshiko's work.

Her work is included in public collections throughout the world, including the Smithsonian Institution and over 50 other prestigious museums.