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Miwa Neishi & Toshiko Takaezu

Toki-No-Wa; Harmony of Time

January 16 – March 7, 2026

Opening Reception: Friday, January 16, 6 – 8pm

Uffner & Liu is pleased to present *Toki-No-Wa ; Harmony of Time*, a two-person exhibition bringing together new sculptures by contemporary Japanese ceramicist Miwa Neishi (b. 1990, Tokyo, Japan) alongside historical works by Toshiko Takaezu (b. 1922, Pepeekeo, Hawaii - d. 2011, Honolulu, Hawaii), fo

Uffner & Liu is pleased to present *Toki-No-Wa ; Harmony of Time*, an exhibition bringing together new sculptures by contemporary Japanese ceramicist Miwa Neishi (b. 1990, Tokyo, Japan) in conversation with historical works by Toshiko Takaezu (b. 1922, Pepeekeo, Hawaii - d. 2011, Honolulu, Hawaii), foregrounding an intergenerational dialogue rooted in material devotion, ritualized making, and the expansive possibilities of ceramic form.

Born in Hawai'i to Japanese immigrant parents in 1922, Takaezu emerged as one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century American art, playing a pivotal role in redefining sculpture through her boundless exploration in clay. After studying at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, she developed her iconic closed forms—globular, columnar, and vessel-like sculptures that resist functional categorization and assert ceramics as a sculptural and spiritual practice. Her works carry a quiet gravity: surfaces marked by gestural glazing, drips, and earthy palettes drawn from nature. Throughout Takaezu's lifetime, her work was exhibited widely in the United States and Japan, including a solo exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2004) and a retrospective at the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, Japan (1995). Recent exhibitions include the 2022 edition of the Venice Biennale, *The Milk of Dreams* curated by Cecilia Alemani and *Shaping Abstraction*, a large-scale installation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 2024.

Neishi's connection to Takaezu is both personal and pedagogical. While studying at Kent State, Neishi was taught by ceramicist Kirk Mangus and Eva Kwong, who had themselves studied under Takaezu in Cleveland, Ohio. "I have a strong memory of hearing about her story in his classes," Neishi recalls. "This was where I first encountered Toshiko's works. Back in that time there were not many Japanese female ceramic artists active as professionals. I felt very lucky to be able to learn from the depth of her artworks." Neishi also works part time at The Noguchi Museum in New York, where Takaezu's first touring retrospective in twenty years *Worlds Within* opened in March 2024. Neishi's engagement with Takaezu's legacy through both study and proximity forms an invisible but resonant thread throughout the exhibition.

Opposite Takaezu's historical works, Neishi presents a new body of ceramic vessels rooted in memories of repeatedly writing Japanese and Chinese

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characters—a disciplined, meditative process of repetition, rhythm, and cultural memory. Organic apertures and arches create porous, architectural bodies that resemble the elegant pictograms of ancient Japanese written characters. This calligraphic foundation informs both her approach to form and her use of glaze as an expressive material. New York City, where culture is ever evolving, places Neishi in constant negotiation. Her work grows from this search for balance—between home and the foreign, tradition and change.

Neishi’s glazes—composed of iron, minerals, and glass—produce deep blues, mossy greens, and earthen oranges, hues drawn from ancient ceramic traditions that Takaezu also used. “Engaging with these colors and materials connects me to earth and craftspeople of the past,” Neishi notes, “opening my practice to a dialogue between past and present.” Neishi situates her practice within Japanese folk craft traditions associated with the Mingei movement, which emphasized humility of materials, repetition, and the beauty of everyday objects shaped by the hand. At the same time, both Neishi’s work and Takaezu’s career are informed by postwar avant-garde ceramic movements such as Sodeisha, which challenged the functional boundaries of pottery and asserted ceramics as an autonomous sculptural practice. Together, these influences—one grounded in tradition, the other in radical redefinition—inform how both artists understand clay as a site of continuity, experimentation, and freedom.

Miwa Neishi (b. 1990, Tokyo, Japan) received an MFA from Kent State University, Kent OH (2016) and a BFA from Niigata University, Niigata, Japan (2013). She has had recent solo and two-person exhibitions at CIBONE, Brooklyn, NY (2024); Sculpture Space NYC, New York, NY (2020); and Troppus Project, Kent, OH (2018). Neishi’s work has been included in group shows at Latitude Gallery, New York, NY (2025); Contemporary Craft, Pittsburgh, PA (2024); Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, NY (2024); Loft 121, New York, NY (2023); Allison Bradley Projects, New York, NY (2022); and Chambers Gallery, New York, NY (2022). Neishi lives and works in Queens, NY.

During her five-decade-long career, American artist **Toshiko Takaezu** (b. 1922, Pepeekeo, Hawaii - d. 2011, Honolulu, Hawaii) experimented with abstraction across various media including painting, ceramics, fiber, and bronze. She is most recognized for her signature closed forms, inspired by Abstract Expressionism and the traditions of East Asia, including ink painting and the Japanese tea ceremony. She fused these aesthetic influences in her experimental approach to gestural application of glazes, treating the vessel as a canvas in the round. Takaezu’s work has been exhibited widely in the United States and Japan, including a solo exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2004) and a retrospective at the National Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, Japan (1995). Takaezu was the recipient of a McInerney Foundation Grant (1952), Tiffany Foundation Grant (1964), National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1980), among others. Recent exhibitions include the 2022 edition of the Venice Biennale, *The Milk of Dreams* curated by Cecilia Alemani and *Shaping Abstraction*, a large-scale installation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 2024. In March 2024, The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum hosted the first touring retrospective of Takaezu’s work in twenty years. *Toshiko*

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Takaezu: Worlds Within has traveled to venues including the Cranbrook Art Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (March 2–May 18, 2025), the Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison (September 8–December 23, 2025), and the Honolulu Museum of Art (February 13–July 26, 2026). Takaezu passed away in Honolulu on March 9, 2011.

Image: (Left) Miwa Neishi, *Wind*, 2025, ceramic, 17 x 20 x 5 in (43.2 x 50.8 x 12.7 cm). (Right) Toshiko Takaezu, *Untitled*, ca. 1980s-90s, glazed stoneware, 23 x 13 x 13 in (58.4 x 33 x 33 cm)

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