

TOSHIKO TAKAEZU

Worlds Within

SOUND GUIDE



Toshiko Takaezu was deeply invested in the interiority of her works and often used sound as a tool for activating these unseen spaces. In the 1960s Takaezu began inserting small bits of clay into her closed ceramic forms so they would rattle when handled, becoming, in a way, distinctive musical instruments. They contain hidden soundscapes revealed only through touch. Takaezu described the practice of adding rattles to her closed forms as “sending messages.” In the 1980s she extended this interest in sound by creating a series of cast bronze bells. This sound guide, developed by Kanaka Maoli sound artist, composer, and co-curator Leilehua Lanzilotti, invites you to listen and explore Takaezu’s multisensory landscapes.

that which we cannot see: the hidden soundscapes of Toshiko Takaezu

In many places in Hawai‘i, using only your sight when you are facing *mauka*, or towards the mountains, you are aware of a lush rainforest, the vibrant green of the trees, and the bright blue of the sky. Adding touch, you can feel the damp ground underfoot, the texture of the earth. However, adding sound, you suddenly are placed in the gentle rhythm of the tide. You can smell and taste the ocean in the salty air. Therefore, only by using all your senses can you truly understand the 360-degree landscape.

Sound gives us context. Sound can stabilize our balance and let us keep a center of gravity. Sound not only helps us perceive what is in front of us, it also gives us a mental map for that which we cannot see.

The use of sound as a hidden element in Takaezu’s sculptures creates a sense of wonder that she felt for her home, Hawai‘i. “There is great strength in this area that you can’t talk about or explain . . . It’s an overpowering feeling that you get. And you feel very small because it’s so great and so beautiful.” Her glazes evoke the feeling of being surrounded by color on the beach, looking up at the mountains—adding touch and sound, you are transported to the physicality of that world.

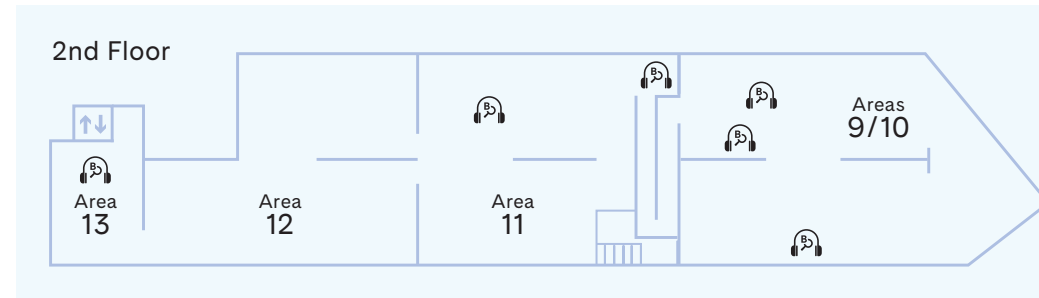
—Leilehua Lanzilotti

to sound—

The interior soundscapes of select works in this exhibition have been recorded. Listen to the *closed form etudes*, demonstrations of Takaezu’s closed forms and the physicality required to sound them, on the Museum’s mobile guide in the Bloomberg Connects app. A film of all of the *closed form etudes* is also on view in Area 13.

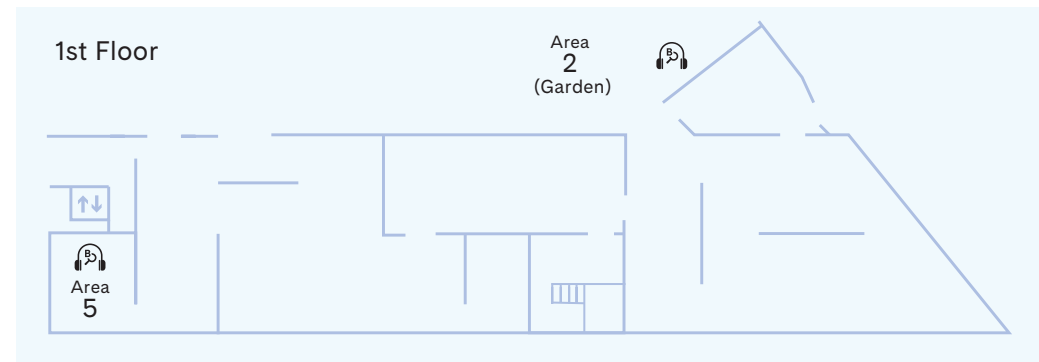


Watch and listen in the Bloomberg Connects app




to touch—

To explore the full haptic wonder of Takaezu’s closed forms through touch and sound, join Museum Educators for a guided touch experience daily at 3 pm in Area 13. To participate, sign up at the front desk. Capacity is limited.



to see—

To see the works whose sounds have been recorded, follow this guide or look at the labels for each installation and find works labeled with .

to you—

Head downstairs to Area 5 to see Lanzilotti’s installation *the sky in our hands, our hands in the sky*, filmed on the island of Hawai‘i at the base of Kilauea, on the slopes of Mauna Loa, and at the top of Mauna Kea. The video features the sounds of Takaezu’s closed forms.

TOSHIKO TAKAEZU:
WORLDS WITHIN
The Noguchi Museum
March 20–July 28, 2024

COVER Still from
closed form etudes,
2023. Single-channel
video, 15 minutes.
Directed by
Leilehua Lanzilotti
Music by
Leilehua Lanzilotti
Cinematography by
Gahlord Dewald

RIGHT Toshiko Takaezu
listening to a closed
form, 1965. Photo:
Joe Lippincott.
Courtesy The Miami
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McClatchy

Works by Toshiko
Takaezu © Family of
Toshiko Takaezu

