

WIDE RAINBOW LESSONS: Artist Toshiko Takaezu

ARTIST INTRO:

Toshiko Takaezu (b. 1922-2011) was an American ceramic artist born in Hawaii and of Japanese descent. She helped to revive the art of ceramics by removing the *function* from her clay forms and was associated with the *Abstract Expressionist* movement. Takaezu was also known as a painter, sculptor, and an influential educator. Her art practice was rooted on nature and her interest in Zen Buddhism. Takaezu's decades long career began in the 1950s and continues to inspire artists today. Her work is collected in many museums with recent retrospectives celebrating her life, legacy, and love of clay.

ARTWORK:



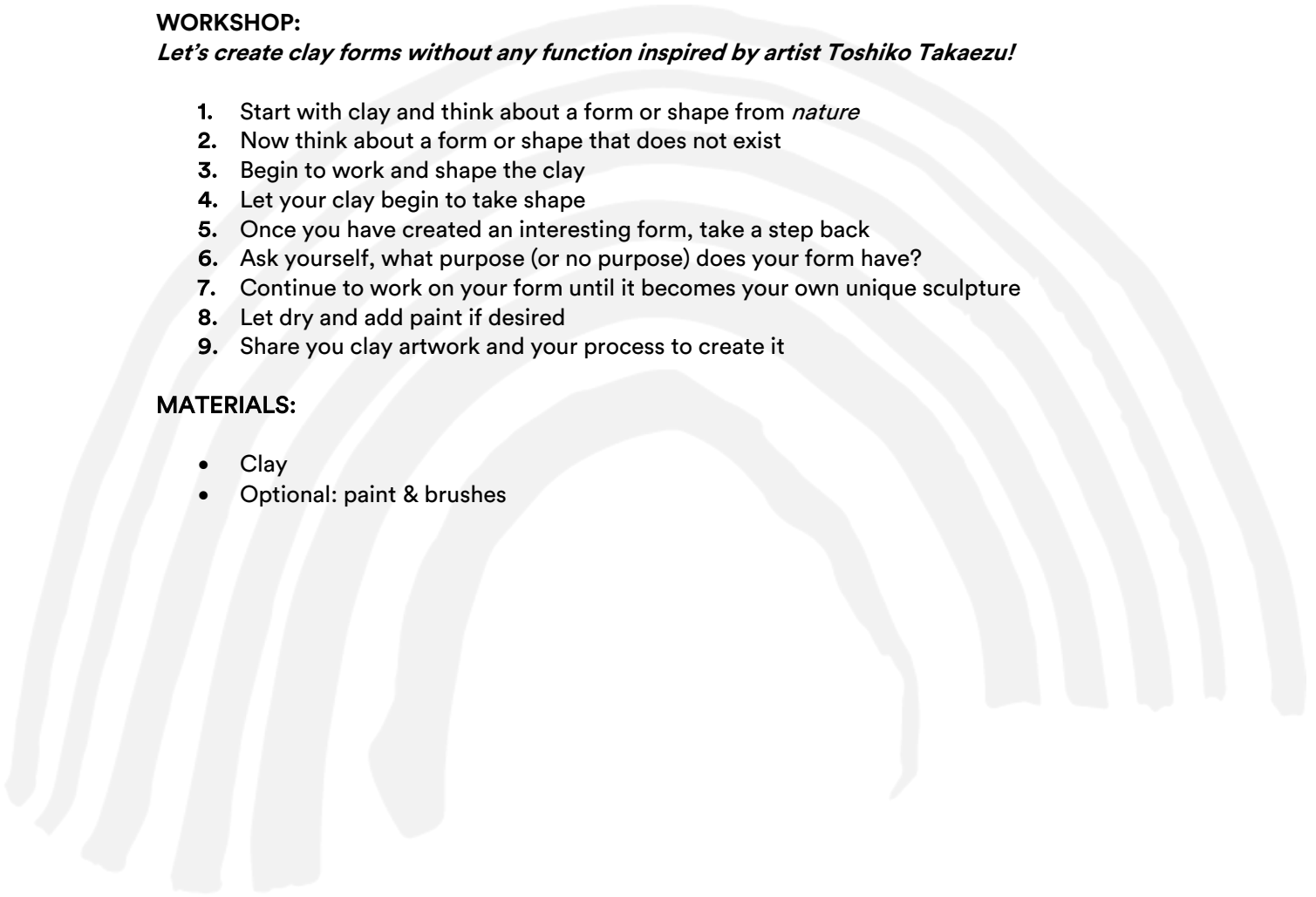
WORKSHOP:

Let's create clay forms without any function inspired by artist Toshiko Takaezu!

1. Start with clay and think about a form or shape from *nature*
2. Now think about a form or shape that does not exist
3. Begin to work and shape the clay
4. Let your clay begin to take shape
5. Once you have created an interesting form, take a step back
6. Ask yourself, what purpose (or no purpose) does your form have?
7. Continue to work on your form until it becomes your own unique sculpture
8. Let dry and add paint if desired
9. Share you clay artwork and your process to create it

MATERIALS:

- Clay
- Optional: paint & brushes





*Takaezu walking amongst the Star Series
Photo credit: Tom Grotta, 1998*

"In my life I see no difference between making pots, cooking and growing vegetables. They are all so related. However, there is a need for me to work in clay. It is so gratifying and I get so much joy from it, and it gives me many answers in my life."

-Toshiko Takaezu

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a patterned sweater, looking upwards and to the right. She is surrounded by several large, rounded ceramic sculptures. One sculpture in the foreground has a faint, dark outline of a deer or similar animal. The background shows more sculptures and some foliage.

FOLLOW UP:

What is a ceramic? What is sculpture? What is an artwork?

How is clay connected to nature?

How is art connected with nature?

What role does *function* have in art or an artwork?

Can an artwork have a *function* or purpose?

What is an art practice?

What is the function or purpose of art?

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