

Hawaii-born ceramicist Toshiko Takaezu, who died in 2011, saw no difference between 'making pots, cooking and growing vegetables'. And so she gently swept away modernist claims for art's autonomy; for her there was no separation of art and life. It's a curious outlook, especially for an artist who transformed humble clay vessels into Abstract Expressionism-in-the-round, helping, in the process, to elevate craft to the beatified realm of art. In this first solo exhibition of her work in New York since her death, a dozen or so of Takaezu's vessels float in consonance, each suggesting remarkable variety, achieved through Zen-like acts of perfection via repetition.

Takaezu called her stout, rounded vessels 'moons', small heavenly bodies shaped from earth. While this show is a minute representation of the artist's prolific output, spanning the range of scales at which she worked, both in moon pots and her more oblong, missilelike 'closed forms' (all Untitled). Some moon pots are no more than 15 cm in diameter, and others resemble torso-size asteroids – otherworldly, fire-hardened chunks. Some works are hand-formed, others reveal in their ribbed surfaces the centrifugal force of the potter's wheel. A small spout sprouts from the top of many pots, a diminutive clay nipple that permits the gas generated during firing to escape. Takaezu exalted her work through glazing. One particularly fine example drips with the strawberry milk of a pale mauve glaze, cascading down to meet a rippling horizon-line of charcoal. Through peripatetic experience, the pot's surface becomes a colour-field painting in miniature.

Liberated from the picture plane, Takaezu's compositions evoke the infinite contemplation of scholar stones, those rock formations that Chinese literati enjoyed for the sheer pleasure of aesthetic contemplation, and exported to other countries. Another of the works is covered in a creamy glaze, with hints of rust seeping through to the surface. Takaezu dashes a sweeping black calligraphic line that curves around the pot's spherical surface like a serpent, the outline of a mountain ridge, or Franz Kline-esque gesture.

Many of the moon pots contain a small 'rattle'. It's a paper-covered clay bead that, after burning during the firing process, clinks and pings, serving as a gentle reminder of the shape of space. The interiority of form becomes just as significant as the skin of a thing; an unseen universe, somewhere between East and West.

