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ARTnews

Mariko Mori

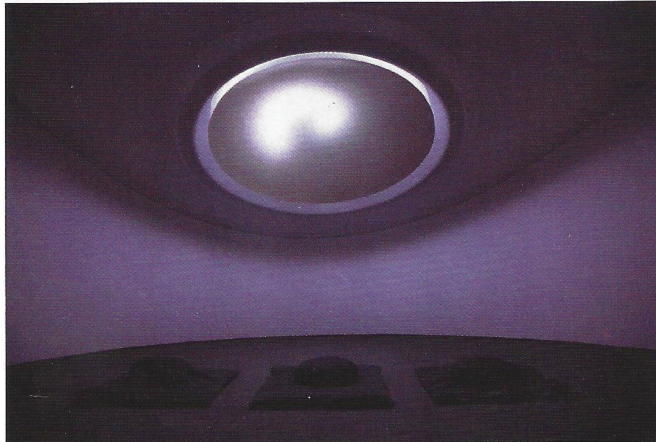
Japan Society

Through January 12

Mariko Mori's current exhibition is a mix of old and new, the "terrestrial and the celestial," as she has said, including a superb flameware vase from Japan's ancient Jōmon period. Far different from the earlier works that gained her an international following, Mori's newest project—spanning almost a decade—is based on Buddhist and Shinto beliefs about life, death, and continuity. Neolithic henge monuments and archetypal forms are reimagined through state-of-the-art technology and industrial materials, with a nod to Hiroshi Sugimoto, Richard Long, and James Turrell.

Mori revives ancient forms, but her smooth, glowing, pastel-colored ritual stelae—each representing a planet—in *Transcircle 1.1* (2004) are made from Corian and lit by LEDs. Their tonal fluctuations are all based on digitized information about the trajectories of planetary illumination. A series of lovely, very subtle drawings was notably handmade, with tiny, almost invisible bubble-like circles flecked with scintillating metallic glints.

The most immersive installation is *White Hole* (2008–10), the pitch-black room illuminated by a round screen depicting a sector of sky traversed by lighted, spiraling shapes simulating the death and birth of a star. The most ambitious project, *Sun Pillar* (2011), is present only through photo documentation and a video. It is the first sited of six outdoor, ecologically themed, global installations. Erected on an outcropping of rock on Japan's Miyako Island, the sun will pass through its tip during the winter solstice, casting a shadow on the not-yet-placed floating *Moon stone*, the other half of the project, "Primal-Rhythm." While somewhat New Age techno, the show's beguiling sincerity and exquisite production is a gentle way to contemplate being, nothingness, and renewal. —Lilly Wei



Mariko Mori, *White Hole*, 2008–10, acrylic and LED lights, 136½" x 103½". Japan Society.