

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***JAPAN SOCIETY GALLERY PRESENTS MARIKO MORI'S FIRST
MAJOR MUSEUM SHOW IN U.S. IN MORE THAN A DECADE******A Week-Long Outdoor Video Projection Opens Major Solo Exhibition***

New York, NY— On Friday October 11, Japan Society Gallery unveils an ambitious solo exhibition of works produced by the internationally acclaimed artist Mariko Mori over the course of the last decade, including an important light installation never before exhibited in the U.S. and a new video work.

On view through January 12, 2014, ***Rebirth: Recent Work by Mariko Mori*** paints a picture of an artist who has chosen to explore different themes, aesthetics, and technology since her last museum show in New York over ten years ago, when she was described by *The New York Times* as a “jaundiced but intensely engaged Warholian eye on the floating world of consumer culture.”

In collaboration with curator Miwako Tezuka, director of Japan Society Gallery, Mariko Mori has designed the upcoming exhibition to invite us to a journey through immersive environments, which reflects prehistoric view on the birth of the life force; the present-day rupture of humankind from nature; and the potential for the reemergence of creative energy. Initially conceived for the space at the Society, *Rebirth* first opened at the Royal Academy of Art in London last year, and now it travels to Japan Society Gallery in its full configuration as the curator and the artist have originally envisioned. Japan Society is the only North American stop of this transformative exhibition.

“Rebirth reflects Mori’s shift away from a preoccupation with Japanese pop culture and consumerism toward the creation of contemplative and participatory spaces, and a vision of art and technology as essential parts of the broader ecology,” says Tezuka.

Nearly 35 installations, sculptures, photographs, drawings, and videos are featured, many informed by Mori’s extensive explorations of ancient cultures, including the Jōmon (14,000–300 BCE) of Japan and the Celts in Europe. “Our life was inherited from our very remote ancestors and given to us now and we will transfer it to future generations.... The chain of life reaching back through history, and our ancestors’ reverence for the natural world, remind us how interwoven we are with our environment,” says Mori.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Japan Society is collaborating with Christine Vendredi-Auzanneau, Director, Espace Louis Vuitton Tokyo, on a special week-long outdoor screening of Mariko Mori’s new video work produced for her solo presentation this fall at Espace. The video screening, which will take place during the opening week of *Rebirth* (October 7–13, 2013) and will be projected onto the façade of Japan Society’s East 47th Street headquarters from sundown to 9:00pm, will create a link between her dual roots in Tokyo and New York.

Upon entering Japan Society the visitor will encounter two works suspended above the Japanese pond and bamboo garden in the landmarked lobby: *Ring* (2012), a beautiful, seemingly iridescent halo; and *Birds I* (2013), an enigmatic, pearlescent, swirl-shaped sculpture. *Ring* at the Society gives a good idea of a larger version of *Ring* that will be installed permanently above a waterfall in Resende, Brazil in the future.

As one of many related programs during the exhibition period, Mariko Mori will perform her ritualistic piece at Japan Society called *Oneness* that offers a moment of quietude through gentle choreography. Mori turns into a shaman of sorts and guides us into a meditative state of mind and invites us to create a symbolic connection with all attendants.

The Gallery

Rebirth takes the visitor from Japan's remote past into the future, beginning with a prehistoric *kaen-doki* flame-shaped vase from the middle-Jōmon period (3,500–2,500 BCE), on loan from a private collection, and ending its journey in the last room of an installation evoking the birth of a star.

In the first gallery, near this reddish brown clay vase from the prehistoric time hangs a clear acrylic mask cast from an actual clay Jōmon mask as if it were a protective spirit arising from the ancient past. In a space behind, nine glowing totemic forms are arranged in a circle on a mound of white pebbles—a kind of high-tech Stonehenge. Entitled *Transcircle 1.1* (2004), this installation has been designed with LED lights to synchronize its changing colors with the position of the planets in the course of a year, pastel hues pulsating at different speeds in reflection of the time it takes for different planets to orbit the sun.

Next, a geometric configuration of flat pebbles made of ceramic is installed on the floor. Entitled *Flatstone* (2006), its configuration echoes the shape of ancient Jōmon pit-houses or shrines, with an entrance in the front and hearth in the center. An acrylic cast of a Jōmon vase rests in the center, in its material incongruity suggesting a time when cooking itself was a magical ritual act.

Japan Society Gallery is laid out so that one small gallery links larger rooms to the north and south. One of the most spectacular installations in *Rebirth* will be found in this rectangular gallery, called the Bamboo Room. *Miracle* (2001) aligns eight Cibachome prints framed in round diachronic glass in a row on a wall. The digital images in the prints are Mori's visualization of *ālaya* consciousness, the fundamental consciousness of all sentient beings as believed in Buddhism while the frames reflect different spectra of color out into the gallery space.

Exhibition highlights also include a series of intimate and unstudied drawings made with light-toned metallic pastels, selected from daily sketches the artist makes looking out to the ocean, when in Okinawa in south-most Japan; *Tama 1* (2011), a pearlescent sculpture that takes the form of an orb resting on a circular base; and black and white photographs documenting several major Jōmon stone installations along with photographic documentations of Mori's own stone circle in homage to the Jōmon culture on Kudaka Island located southeast of Okinawa in 2004.

Rebirth: Recent Work by Mariko Mori culminates with *White Hole* (2008–2011). Here the gallery visitor follows a narrow and curving corridor into a dark, cocoon-like space with a low ceiling installed with a circular convex LED

light projection. A faint sign of light in the center of this screen gradually grows in size and intensity, spiraling from the center outward. The light's spiral trajectory has been calculated by Mori in collaboration with the astrophysicist Shin Mineshige at Kyoto University based on a hypothesis of an energy generating white hole as an antithesis to a black hole. Mori calls the installation, which evokes the birth of a star as it is released from the gravitational pull of a black hole, as "a conceptual wormhole."

Finally, the visitor may glean the scope of Mori's ambition from a video documenting a truly astounding pillar of light, *Sun Pillar* (2011), she has stationed on a stone outcropping in Seven Light Bay, Miyako Island, in Okinawa Prefecture. Mori intends to add a second element to this earthwork-in-progress: a giant color-changing "moon stone" that will float in the water near the pillar. This outdoor sculptural project *Primal Rhythm* is the first of six site-specific art installations that Mori will create in as many pristine ecological settings on all six habitable continents. For this series, begun in 2010, the artist has created Faou Foundation that is currently working in partnership with local residents, scientific researchers and technicians in Okinawa and Brazil.

About Mariko Mori

Mariko Mori is an internationally acclaimed artist, whose work has been acquired by museums and private collectors worldwide.

In 2011, a major survey of her work, entitled *Oneness*, became the world's most visited contemporary art exhibition in its venue at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in Rio de Janeiro (538,328 visitors), after having been seen at the Groninger Museum, the Netherlands; ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Denmark; and the Pinchuk Arts Center, Kiev, Ukraine.

Mori's solo exhibitions have been organized in institutions around the world, including the Royal Academy of Arts, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Prada Foundation, Milan; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Serpentine Gallery, London; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Mori's work was featured in the Royal Academy's group exhibition *Apocalypse: Beauty and Horror in Contemporary Art* in 2000.

Mori has received numerous international awards, including the prestigious *Menzioni d'Onore* (Honorary Mentions) at the 47th Venice Biennale in 1997 (for the work *Nirvana*) and the 8th Annual Award as a Promising Artist and Scholar in the Field of Contemporary Japanese Art in 2001 from the Japan Cultural Arts Foundation. Mariko Mori currently lives and works in New York, London, and Tokyo.

Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by a 144 page fully illustrated catalogue published by Japan Society and distributed by Yale University Press. Brett Littman, Executive Director, The Drawing Center, New York, will shed new light on Mariko Mori's drawings. Iida Takayo, Chief Curator, Aomori Museum of Art, Japan, with his deep knowledge of Mori's entire career thus far, will provide detailed scholarly analysis of the creative development of the artist. Iida was instrumental in the realization of Mori's *Dream Temple* (1997–99) which marked the turning point in her career, merging art and technology in large scale installations. He most recently participated in a conversation program with Mariko Mori at Espace Louis Vuitton in Tokyo, focusing on the topic of harmonious coexistence of man and nature, and how her art practice relates to that vision. Also included in the

catalogue is an introductory text on Jōmon pottery by Simon Kaner, Assistant Director of the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Culture, UK.

Sponsorship

Rebirth: Recent Work by Mariko Mori is generously supported by Chris A. Wachenheim, the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, the W.L.S. Spencer Foundation, Harold and Ruth Newman, The Japan Foundation, Barrisol and Barrisol USA, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, Shiraishi Masami, Lucio and Joan Noto, Thierry and Yasko Porté, Jack and Susy Wadsworth, Charlotte Feng Ford, Mika Seki, SHISEIDO CO., LTD, and an anonymous donor. Media sponsorship is provided by WNYC. Transportation assistance is provided by Japan Airlines. Exhibitions at Japan Society are made possible in part by the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Endowment Fund, Director's Circle members and Friends of the Gallery. Japan Society thanks Lucio A. Noto for his generosity in making Mariko Mori's performance of *Oneness* possible.

Related Programs

All events at Japan Society unless otherwise noted.

Exhibition Curator & Artist Talk: *Rebirth Explored*

Friday, October 11, 6:30 pm

Dr. Miwako Tezuka dialogues with artist Mariko Mori on the evolution of Mori's artistic career, the themes contained in *Rebirth: Recent Work by Mariko Mori*, and her ambitious future projects. Followed by a reception with cash bar. FREE Admission. For reservation, please email rebirthlecture@japansociety.org.

Ancient Japanese Studies Book Club

October 26 & 27, 2:00-4:00 pm

Sip sake and enjoy light Japanese snacks while gaining insights into *Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)*, the oldest extant chronicle in Japan, and *Man'yōshū (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves)*, the oldest existing collection of Japanese poetry. Led by David Lurie, Associate Professor of Japanese History and Literature, Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures, Columbia University. Tickets: \$75/\$70 Japan Society members, students and seniors (includes exhibition admission). Email bookclub@japansociety.org for pre-meeting information.

Workshop: *Ritual Clay: Creative Ceramics Workshop*

Saturday, November 9, 12:30 pm

****OFFSITE EVENT: New York Togeï Kyoshitsu, 5 West 30th Street, 3rd floor**

Prehistoric cultures such as Jōmon culture in Japan, which produced exuberant pottery, are one of the inspirational sources for *Rebirth*. Togeï Kyoshitsu pottery studio hosts a hands-on introduction to basic Japanese pottery techniques. Using the coil method, participants create a small Jōmon-style vessel. Afterwards participants enjoy a highlights tour and discussion of *Rebirth*. All materials included. Limited class size. Tickets: \$75/\$70 Japan Society members, students and seniors (includes exhibition admission).

Dance Party: *Cosmic Odyssey: A Space Pop Party in White*

Saturday, November 9, 8:00 pm–12:00 am

With a playful wink and nod to the celestial inspiration apparent in *Rebirth*, Japan Society hosts a cosmic affair with a '60's flair. Dances of Vice, NYC's premier promoter of highly stylized parties, will help punch your warp-speed ticket to another world drenched in Mori's signature white with the help of the supernova style of the Momojiri Girls, music by DJ Devon E. Levins, and an open sake bar from 8:00–9:00 pm. Come dressed to impress in your best space-worthy attire. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$18 at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased at www.dancesofvice.com.

Mariko Mori Performance: *Oneness*

Wednesday, November 13, 7:00 pm

Rebirth aims to revive the link that universally binds our consciousness regardless of language, custom, or location. This concept of oneness is reenergized through Mariko Mori's performance, an occasion to share and cherish the presence of all of us in time and space. Running time: approximately 20-30 minutes, followed by a special reception with the artist. Space is limited. Tickets: \$125/100 Japan Society members, students and seniors.

Lecture: *Contemporary Cosmology*

Friday, November 15, 6:30 pm

Rebirth encourages us to look at the larger cosmic world. Theoretical astrophysicist and MacArthur fellow, Professor David N. Spergel, Charles A. Young Professor of Astronomy on the Class of 1897 Foundation, Professor of Astrophysical Sciences and Chair, Department of Astrophysical Sciences, Princeton University, discusses issues in contemporary cosmology including imaging massive planets with the Subaru telescope and plans to image Earth-like planets with space-based telescopes. Followed by a reception. Tickets \$12/\$8 Japan Society members, students and seniors (includes exhibition entry until 6:00pm).

Chanoyu: The Art of Tea Ceremony

Sunday, November 24, 10:00 am

Mariko Mori's work is informed and inspired by aspects of Japanese traditional culture including *chadō*, or the way of tea, a practice she studies with devotion. This introduction to the time-honored and profound practice of *chanoyu* (tea ceremony) is led by a tea master from the New York branch of Urasenke, which has nurtured the rich cultural tradition of chanoyu since the early seventeenth century. Participants take part in an interactive tea ceremony demonstration and discussion of the philosophy behind the way of tea. No experience necessary. Limited class size. Tickets: \$75/\$70 Japan Society members, students and seniors (includes exhibition admission).

Shōdo: An Introduction to Japanese Calligraphy

Sunday, December 8, 10:00 am

Participants get hands-on instruction in the basics of *shōdo* (traditional Japanese calligraphy) led by master teacher Masako Inkyo. No experience necessary. All materials included. Limited space. Tickets: \$75/\$70 Japan Society members, students and seniors (includes exhibition admission).

Book Club: *The Future is Now: Japanese and American Science Fiction*

Monday, December 9, 6:30 pm

Science and artistic expression merge together to create a thought-provoking environment in *Rebirth*. This discussion looks at selected Japanese science fiction novels focused on themes found in the exhibition, led by anthropologist CiCi James, co-founder of Singularity & Co., New York City's only science fiction bookstore. Limited space. Tickets: \$40/\$35 Japan Society members, students and seniors (includes two gallery passes for exhibition admission). Email bookclub@japansociety.org for pre-meeting information.

Family Program: *Cosmic Fun Art Cart*

Saturday, January 4, 2:00 pm

Children skim the magic of stars and cosmological beginning posed by *Rebirth*. Following an interactive, family-friendly tour of the exhibition, artist Petra Pankow leads a hands-on workshop to make an aerial display of stars and planets and a bound, moon journal. Recommended for children 8–12 years old. Tickets: \$12/\$5 Japan Society members, students and seniors; children ages 2 or under free.

About Japan Society Gallery

Japan Society Gallery is among the premier institutions in the U.S. for the exhibition of Japanese art. Extending in scope from prehistory to the present, the Gallery's exhibitions since 1971 have covered topics as diverse as classical Buddhist sculpture and calligraphy, contemporary photography and ceramics, samurai swords, export porcelain, and masterpieces of painting from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. Each exhibition, with its related catalogue and public programs, is a unique cultural event that illuminates familiar and unfamiliar fields of art.

Founded in 1907, Japan Society is a world-class, multidisciplinary hub for global leaders, artists, scholars, educators, and English and Japanese-speaking audiences. At the Society, more than 100 events each year feature sophisticated, topically relevant presentations of Japanese art and culture as well as open and critical dialogue on issues of vital importance to the U.S., Japan and East Asia. An American nonprofit, nonpolitical organization, the Society cultivates a constructive, resonant and dynamic relationship between the people of the U.S. and Japan.

Japan Society is located at 333 East 47th Street between First and Second Avenues (accessible by the 4/5/6 and 7 subway at Grand Central or the E and M subway at Lexington Avenue). The public may call 212-832-1155 or visit www.japansociety.org for more information.

Japan Society Gallery hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 11:00 am-6:00 pm; Friday, 11:00 am-9:00 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 am-5:00 pm; the Gallery is closed on Mondays and major holidays. Admission: \$12/\$10 students and seniors/FREE Japan Society members and children under 16. Admission is free to all on Friday nights, 6:00-9:00 pm; there will be no Free Fridays on November 22, December 6 or December 13. Docent tours are available free with admission Tuesdays-Sundays at 2:30 pm (English), and Fridays at 6:00 pm (Japanese) and 7 pm (English); no reservations are necessary.

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