pink, green and yellow. This
time, their colours are in sync
with the orbits of the planets in
our solar system. Imagine the
Avebury ring reined in acrylic
and hooked up to an inter-
planetary LED display.

All this is gently fascinating
and dreamily beautiful. Every-
thing you see here is done with
plastics and polymers, LED
lighting and Lucite, yet the
moods that are being searched
for are invariably ancient and
Buddhistic. Somewhere way
back in the Japanese past, the
new and the old seem
amazingly, to have settled their
differences and bonded. The
proportions Mori refers to in
Transcircular 1.1 may be primitive
and Stonehenge — the propor-
tions of monoliths and menhirs
— but the atmospheres she
creates are elegant and minimal,
as if your spirit is being expertly
massaged by an invisible geisha.

When Mori first appeared, in
the early 1990s, having trained
as a fashion designer, she would
dress up as a manga robot and
photograph herself riding up
escalators or dancing in the
hobbies of toy shops. The “video
vixen”, they called her. At the
time — the Cindy Sherman era
— lots of women artists were
dressing up as other people
and energetically sifting through
the gender identities muddled up
in their sock drawer. Yet where that
work felt like an investigation
of female depths, Mori’s version
seemed instead to celebrate
female superficiality. Presenting
herself as a cute manga robot,
encased in silver foil, she
became one robot among many.

In this display, too, it is inter-
connectedness that is continu-
ously being stressed, rather than
difference. The show’s finest
work is her newest: a dark spiral
tunnel down which you wander,
and from which you emerge,
blinking, into a haunting twilight
with an oval opening above it.
Through this oval, you look out
at an artificial sky across which
a wandering glow is nimbly
tracing another mysterious spiral
in the dark. Impeccably pre-
sent, precisely calculated,
faultlessly engineered, these are
totally banal creative effects of the
sort you get only from Japanese
artists. Yayoi Kusama has her
dots. Yoko Ono has her all-white
cheese pieces. Mariko Mori has
her plastic cosmos.

And if, on Friday, the cosmic
gloomologists turn out to be
right, and the end of the world
does indeed commence, I can
think of far worse places to
stand and face it than under
the oval opening of Mori’s
sweetly whispering artificial sky.
See you there.

At the Daniel Katz Gallery,
Algeron Newton would make
another good companion for the
big goodbye. His vision was so
calming and gentle. Benning
away quietly in the 1920s and
1930s, Newton was that rarest
of presences: an artist of sub-
stance whose career somehow
ended up getting shoved behind
the sofa.

Although he painted land-
scapes, too, it is his moody
views of quiet corners of north
London that are truly special.
In a Newton cityscape, nothing
much happens. There’s a canal.
A road. Some houses. Some
shadows. The ordinary world is
being inch-perfectly described
and enjoyed for its ordinarienss.
That’s what you think initially.
Then the Newtonian effect takes
hold. The shadows begin to feel
a tad lengthy. The ordinarienss
of the houses starts to feel
spooky. The evening light effects
stop feeling tranquil and start
feeling ominous. Something is
about to happen. On second
thoughts, perhaps the Algernon
Newton exhibition would not be a
good place to head on
Friday.