Mariko Mori and the Globalization of Japanese “Cute” Culture: 
Art and Pop Culture in the 1990s

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Abstract

This essay offers a cultural-historical exploration of the significance of the Japanese artist Mariko Mori (b. 1967) and her emergence as an international art star in the 1990s. After her New York gallery debut show in 1995, in which she exhibited what would later become known as her Made in Japan series—billboard-sized color photographs of herself striking poses in various “cute,” video-game avatar-like futuristic costumes—Mori quickly rose to stardom and became the poster child for a globalizing Japan at the end of the twentieth century. I argue that her Made in Japan series was created (in Japan) and received (in the Western-dominated art world) at a very specific moment in history, when contemporary Japanese art and popular culture had just begun to rise to international attention as emblematic and constitutive of Japan’s soft power. While most of the major writings on the series were published in the late 1990s, problematically the Western part of this criticism reveals a nascent and quite uneven understanding of the contemporary Japanese cultural references that Mori was making and using. I will examine this reception, and offer a counter-interpretation, analyzing the relationship between Mori’s Made in Japan photographs and Japanese pop culture, particularly by discussing the Japanese mass cultural aesthetic of kawaii (“cute”) in Mori’s art and persona. In so doing, I proffer an analogy between Mori and popular Japanimation characters,

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especially Sailor Moon. To further argue for a correlation between contemporary Japanese art and pop culture trends, I will explain how the rise of Takashi Murakami (b. 1962) following Mori’s heyday in the 1990s, embodies the shift of Japan’s global image from “cute” to the “cool” dreamland of commodity culture.

**Keywords:**
Mariko Mori; Takashi Murakami; soft power; art and pop culture; Japanese cute (*kawaii*); Japanese cool; Sailor Moon
“We have finally found the cutest diva in the world,” exclaimed an art critic in response to the Japanese artist Mariko Mori’s New York gallery debut show in 1995. At the American Fine Arts Gallery in March that year, the 28-year-old artist exhibited what would later become known as her Made in Japan series—spectacular billboard-sized color photographs of herself posing in decadent urban Tokyo, dressed in “cute,” video-game avatar-like futuristic costumes. With these photographs, Mori quickly rose to international stardom and became the poster child for a globalizing Japan in the end of the twentieth century. By the close of the 1990s, her work had appeared in major art magazines and exhibitions including Artforum and the Venice Biennale, and in 1998 the art journal Parkett had produced and sold 26cm-high “Mori dolls” (entitled Star Doll) along with its special issue on Mori. The Made in Japan photographs received much media exposure and continue to be her best-known work to date.

However, like the works of other art stars whose fame often precludes serious consideration of their artworks, Mori’s Made in Japan series has received relatively little art-historical analysis. While most of the major writings on the series were published in the late 1990s, problematically the Western part of this criticism reveals a nascent and quite uneven understanding of the contemporary Japanese cultural references that Mori was making and using. This in turn has been influential in how Mori’s work continues to be interpreted and circulated.

A historical examination of Mori’s work and transnational reception is pressing.

This essay offers a cultural-historical exploration of the significance of Mori’s work and her emergence as a Japanese art star in the 1990s. I argue that the Made in Japan series was created (in Japan) and received (in the Western-dominated art world) at a very specific and telling moment in history, when contemporary Japanese art and popular culture had just begun to rise to international attention as emblematic and constitutive of Japan’s soft power. We will see that Western knowledge of contemporary Japanese pop culture—and of

Mori’s use of it—was limited at the time. I examine this reception, and also offer a counter-interpretation.

I will analyze the relationship between Mori’s Made in Japan photographs and Japanese pop culture, particularly through a discussion of the Japanese mass cultural aesthetic of kawaii (“cute”) in Mori’s art and persona. In so doing, I proffer an analogy between Mori and popular Japanimation characters, especially Sailor Moon. Created by the female manga artist Naoko Takeuchi in 1992, Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon depicts five “ordinary” teenage schoolgirls (Sailor Moon and her four girlfriends) who learn that they have magical powers allowing them to transform into superheroines to save the world. Mori’s photographs were both problematic and appealing because “by Western standards Mori was not doing enough to place a distance between herself and her various roles,” as Norman Bryson remarked in a 1998 critique.² To further argue for a correlation between contemporary Japanese art and pop culture trends, I will explain how the recent rise of Takashi Murakami (b. 1962) in the 2000s, after Mori’s heyday in the 1990s, embodies the shift of Japan’s global image from “cute” to the “cool” dreamland of commodity culture. Exploring these points of postmodern dynamics of art and pop culture at the turn of the twenty-first century, I hope this analysis will contribute to the scholarship on contemporary art and its market system, as well as to discourses on Mori, the Japanese culture industry and soft power.

I. The Birth of the “Cutest Diva” Reconsidered: Mori, Japanimation, and Kawaii

Mariko Mori is an artist with an extraordinary commercial background, which assists in understanding of her work. Before studying art theory and practice at the Chelsea College of Art and Design in London (1989–1992) and at the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art in

New York (1992–1993), she worked as a fashion model in Tokyo and studied fashion design at the Bunka Fashion College (1986–1988). In fact, she designed all of the garments used in the Made in Japan photographs as well as modeling in them, and some of the costumes were on display at the American Fine Arts Gallery show, exhibited in front of the photographs and enclosed in clear plastic time capsules.\(^3\)

Though she has never spoken about the source of inspiration for her Made in Japan series fashion designs, her references are evidently Japanese pop culture and particularly Japanimation—a roundabout term for Japanese manga (comics), anime (animations), and video games. In Play with Me (1994), for example, Mori presents herself as an electronics store’s window girl in the style of Sailor Moon, sporting the animation character’s trademark hairstyle, characterized by the two high pigtails that fall long around the waist. Mori’s outfit also mimics Sailor Moon’s with a similar pleated miniskirt and knee-high boots, though Mori replaces the superheroine’s colorful vivacity with a tackiness evoked by the combination of a shiny black bodysuit and a plastic suit of silver armor. In Love Hotel (1994) and Tea Ceremony III (1994), in which Mori poses as a prostituting schoolgirl and a tea-serving “office lady” respectively in cartoonish cyborg costumes, with a silver robotic headpiece that resembles the spiky hairdo of Astro Boy, the famous boy-robot protagonist of the “classic” Japanese manga and anime series of the 1950s. While Mori has never specifically mentioned Astro Boy in relation to her costume design, she has praised the legendary creator of Astro Boy, Osamu Tezuka, as the moral teacher of her generation.\(^4\) Comparing her art-making practice to manga, she also said, “I’m interested in [manga] because they reflect people’s desire, but I also enjoy looking at them. It’s the same with my work—I don’t make it only because I

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It is interesting that Mori is here likening her artwork to *manga* and emphasizing a ‘fun’ aspect of her work and her art-making process. In light of her deep interest in *manga*, it seems that Mori has deliberately employed a pastiche of Japanese pop culture imageries in her artwork.

Early commentators on the *Made in Japan* series—from Kathleen Magnan’s “The Cyber Chic of Mariko Mori” (1996) and Michael Cohen’s “Plastic Dreams in the Reality Bubble” (1997) to Norman Bryson’s “Cute Futures” (1998)—tended to focus on the postmodern and pop aesthetics of the photographs in general while pointing to a certain “cuteness” in them that they noticed without articulating (or without being able to articulate) what makes them look so “Japanese” and “cute.” For example, the *Frieze* critic Christian Haye (1995), who called Mori “the cutest diva in the world” in the above quotation, does not explain why and how. Other critics would passingly mention “Hello Kitty” in describing Mori’s costumes, but as discussed above, the outfits bore more resemblances to Astro Boy and Sailor Moon than the ubiquitous round-faced white cat character. (It should be remembered that unlike Astro Boy or Sailor Moon, Hello Kitty is not a *mangalanime* character, but a “logo” of sorts that was designed for the purpose of “decorating” other consumer objects). The *Flash Art* critic Michael Cohen wrote, “The cute ‘Hello Kitty’-like outlines which define Mori’s cyborgs stand in for a simplified subject who’s rejected adolescent trauma and adult free-will.” Writing for *Parkett’s* special issue on Mori in 1998, Norman Bryson remarked, “In Mori all the cyborgs are as sweet and harmless as Hello Kitty” while also pointing out “Mori was not doing enough to place a distance between herself and her various roles.” In brief, it is clear that these art critics in the 1990s were familiar with Hello Kitty, but not

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7 Bryson, “Cute Futures,” pp. 77, 79.
with Sailor Moon or Astro Boy; they were able to only vaguely sense the “cute” Japanese style known as *kawaii*, based on which all of those characters had been produced. The style and expression of *kawaii* would become more familiar in Western visual cultures later in the 2000s, as will be examined later. My assertion of these references is key to re-interpreting a more powerful aspect of Mori’s work about mass culture and the representation of women in Japan.

What is important to note here is that Mori’s *Made in Japan* photographs debuted in the United States slightly earlier than the *Sailor Moon* animation series, but both appeared in 1995. *Sailor Moon* premiered on American television in September 1995, six months after Mori’s exhibition at the American Fine Arts Gallery. This is probably why the above-quoted art critics commenting on Mori were unable to associate her style with *Sailor Moon*. “Japanese animation is starting to sweep through the world, becoming the nation’s first big pop culture export,” the *New York Times* proclaimed on September 17, 1995, the week that Japan’s latest hit *Sailor Moon* made its American television debut after its success in over twenty countries in Asia and Europe including Spain, France, Italy, and Hong Kong. It had become a billion-dollar merchandising franchise, with products that included not just clothing and accessories, but also videogames and stage musicals. As the report’s title indicates, Japan was emerging as a new “superpower of superheroes,” and was about to make a breakthrough in American mass culture, notorious for its long-term hegemony and provincialism.

Japan had taken notice of the growing international popularity of *anime* and *manga*, and gradually changed the focus of its exports from hardware technology to popular culture in the early 1990s. While Japanese exports in the 1980s focused on automobiles and electronics, in the 1990s Japanimation

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emerged as a major export. Tracing this shift to the Japanese sci-fi animation *Akira’s* 1989 blockbuster hit in the United States, Koichi Iwabuchi has described the economic shift as a turn from Japanese “techno-nationalism” to “soft nationalism” and argued that Japanimation became an essential element in “the discursive construction of Japanese national identity.”

Iwabuchi’s argument is related to the American political scientist Joseph Nye’s concept of “soft power” in his examination of the U.S. government’s propagandist use of American cultural goods such as jazz music and Disney animations during the Cold War.

Unlike military force and other traditional forms of power, soft power arises from the appeal of a country’s culture, foreign policies and values in international politics. Once Japanese pop culture goods found an international audience, Japan began to employ them in branding the nation both inside and outside the country. It was during Japan’s early period of soft power construction that Mariko Mori launched her artistic career in London and New York.

A distinctive quality shared by popular Japanimation protagonists—from Astro Boy of the 1950s to Sailor Moon of the 1990s—is their cuteness, not just in the style of their depiction, but also their personalities. It is this ‘cute futurism’ in Japanese fictions that Mori’s *Made in Japan* series also exhibits, especially in the combination of her Japanimation-style “cyborg” performances and the photographic depiction of postmodern Japan in the background. In the 1990s, the *Made in Japan* photographs provided the viewers with unprecedented, close and panoramic views into the contemporary high-tech life in Japan—a subway train where small television monitors hang on the walls (*Subway*, 1994), a crowded electronics store that is open late (*Play with Me*, 1994), the huge artificial ocean in Miyazaki Prefecture’s Seagaia Ocean Dome, since closed, but at the time the

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world’s largest indoor water park (*Empty Dream*, 1995), and the Renzo Piano-designed Kansai International Airport in Osaka that had recently opened in 1994 (*Last Departure*, 1996).

As Frederik Schodt argued in his popular book *Inside the Robot Kingdom: Japan, Mechatronics, and the Coming Robotopia* (1988), the Japanese have long exhibited an enthusiastic, almost devotional attitude towards technology and its integration into society. Comparing the prevalent image of robots and cyborgs in Japanese and American popular culture, Schodt explains that in the West, robots are perceived as dark and dangerous monsters bent on the destruction of humanity, reflecting a modern interpretation of the Frankenstein narrative. In contrast, the robots that began to appear in Japanese *manga* and *anime* in the early 1950s, such as *Astro Boy* and *Doraemon*, are cute, benign, and friendly. Robots and cyborgs began to appear in Japanese. In 1951, the *manga* artist Osamu Tezuka created what would become the prototype of later Japanese cute robots, *Astro Boy*. The narrative, set in a twentieth-century future, evolves around an atomic fission-powered robot-boy built by a mad scientist. Astro Boy is later adopted by a good scientist who takes care of many robots at his home, and there he learns how to act like a human and even goes to school like a regular boy, while also developing powers to save the earth and humanity from evil robots. In this combination of the Pinocchio and Frankenstein narratives, Astro Boy is neither a naughty, lying boy, nor a harmful monster, but an obedient, childlike robot who saves the world.

A central aesthetic in Japanimation—and also more broadly in contemporary Japanese consumer culture—is *kawaii* (“cute”). *Kawaii* is a

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12 The character started in 1951 as a minor character in Tezuka’s *Atom Taishi* (“Ambassador Atom”), but in 1952 he was given his own comics series *Tetsuwan Atom* (“Mighty Atom”), the English title of which is *Astro Boy*.
modern Japanese expression that emerged in the late 1960s among schoolgirls and by 1992 became “the most widely used, widely loved, habitual word in modern living Japanese.”

Although translated into English as “cute” and “childlike,” kawaii refers to a much more complicated aesthetic and sentiment. The so-called kawaii cult or syndrome developed into a phenomenon among Japanese youth in the ‘70s and ‘80s celebrating “sweet, adorable, innocent, pure, simple, genuine, gentle, vulnerable, weak, and inexperienced social behavior and physical appearances,” in the words of anthropologist Sharon Kinsella. All of these adjectives are characteristics of “kawaii”—a new expression used to describe things that are round, small, soft, pastel and emotive. Extremely popular in ‘80s Japan, for example, were girly or tomboyish clothes with frills and ribbons, baby foods and sweet desserts like ice cream, cakes, and milk drinks.

Far more complicated than the English word “cute” can express, the Japanese kawaii aesthetic and sentiment may be better understood with reference to specific examples. Consider Seiko Matsuda (b. 1962), who was a living icon of kawaii. She began her long musical career as an idoru kashu (“idol singer”) of the new musical genre of J-pop in the ‘80s. The term “J-pop” was created by the media to distinguish the unique Japanese idol pop music from foreign, especially American or British, pop music. “Matsuda was flat-chested and bow-legged,” describes Sharon Kinsella. “On TV she wore children’s clothes, took faltering steps and blushed, cried, and giggled for the camera…. She published several books for her fans, filled with large wobbly handwriting, small words and ‘heart-warming’ poems.”

The J-pop princess thus performed a fragile, sentimental and pitiful young girl reminiscent of shojo manga (“girls comics”) heroines. Viewed in retrospect, Matsuda personifies the sentimental feminine Japanese kawaii in the 1980s, before it became fully commodified and evolved into “a

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more humorous, kitsch, androgynous style which lingered on into the early 1990s.\footnote{Kinsella, “Cuties in Japan,” p. 220.}

The latter phase of the *kawaii* movement is epitomized by the fashion trend for cartoonish character accessories, which would become conspicuous in the Western mainstream culture only in the 2000s, when Hollywood celebrities like Mariah Carey and Cameron Diaz were spotted sporting Hello Kitty jewelry. Hello Kitty, now an international icon of “Japanese Cute” and the leader of “Pink Globalization,” as Christine Yano, the preeminent scholar of Japanese culture describes it, emerged during the early years of the *kawaii* and *shojo* (“girls”) culture boom in Japanese market.\footnote{Christine R. Yano, “Wink on Pink: Interpreting Japanese Cute as It Grabs the Global Headlines,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 3 (August 2009): 681-688.} Created in 1974 by the then developing stationery company Sanrio in response to a cute handwriting craze among schoolgirls, Hello Kitty became the prototype for character merchandising in Japan, which is now a huge transnational industry and represents the full commodification of the initially romantic, subcultural *kawaii* sentiment.

Mori’s work as an artist, which engages in complex ways with the *kawaii* and *shojo* aesthetics in mass culture, is clearly rooted in postindustrial Japanese culture and society, and expresses her understanding of Japanese consumer culture and industry. Growing up in Tokyo in the 70s and 80s, she belongs to the so-called *shinjinrui* (“new human race”) generation, a neologism in the late 1980s referring to young adults who were then the direct beneficiaries of postwar Japan’s rapid economic and industrial development, and who grew up as the wealthiest generation in Japan’s history. By virtue of having actually worked as a teenage model at the time, she directly witnessed and participated in the growth and expansion of the Japanese cultural industry during the peak years of the *kawaii* phenomenon. Already as a student in London and New York between 1989 and 1993 (prior to beginning the *Made in Japan* series in 1994),
Mori created satirical artwork that addressed the consumerist culture ironically, using her own image and beauty.

For example, *Market Value* (1991) is a full-length photograph of Mori herself advertised as an object for consumption: the artist appears dressed in a revealing tight outfit, and her measurements—Height 5’7, Bust 32, Waist 23 ½, Hips 34 ½, Shoes 5/24 ½, Hair Black, Eyes Brown—are listed in the corner of the photograph in both English and French. Mori’s early installation work, *Snow White* (1993), consists of a glass coffin containing cosmetics products arranged in the colors beige, pink, red, and black, and a black-and-white photograph of the artist in an ornate white frame hanging on the wall. She thus staged her own funeral, or a funeral of a former model, by juxtaposing the trappings of beauty with reminders of mortality. Also notable is *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (1991), an installation consisting of a hanger with four identical clear plastic coats, each of which bears a print of iconic autographs of famous artists like Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys, and Pablo Picasso as if they were the coats’ brand logos. This work is suggestive of Mori’s hybridization of art, fashion, and politics. She plays with the issues of celebrity and branding, as they had become significant components affecting both the art and fashion markets. But she also links “the emperor” with commercialism and the icons of modern Western art, addressing the “new” Japan under Emperor Akihito who had recently ascended to the throne following the death of Emperor Hirohito, who had reigned for over sixty years from 1926 to 1989. As Guggenheim Museum curator of Asian art, Alexandra Munroe explains, Hirohito’s death in 1989 meant, in cultural terms, the end of the prolonged “postwar” era for the Japanese and symbolized the real beginning of Japan’s global turn.¹⁹

In fact, it was in the late 1980s that contemporary Japanese art and culture began to gain attention in the West. This emergence was made publicly

remarkable by the international art magazine *Flash Art*, which published a special issue on contemporary Japan in April 1992. In this issue, the above-mentioned curator Munroe firmly declared, “The Asian Century is imminent and Japan is leading it. Japan’s economy, now the world’s second most powerful, may one day soon eclipse that of the U.S.” At the time, Mori was a student and did not yet warrant comment, but the U.S. editor of the Milan-based *Flash Art International* at the time, Jeffrey Deitch, would step forward as Mori’s first major sponsor in a few short years. When Deitch Projects was founded in February 1996, Mori was one of the first artists to sign with the gallery, and had her second New York solo show there in April 1996. For this show, Mori extended further the concept and style of the works she had exhibited at the American Fine Arts Gallery in 1995, to complete the series, now known as *Made in Japan* after the title of the show at Deitch.21

If Mori produced the first part of the series (dated 1994)—including *Play with Me, Tea Ceremony, Love Hotel, Subway*, and *Red Light*—by photographing her street performances in a documentary fashion, the four later photographs shown at Deitch Projects (dated 1995–96)—*Empty Dream, Beginning of the End, Miko no Inori*, and *Last Departure*—were produced using more advanced technologies to seamlessly represent postmodern Japanese culture and society. For example, *Empty Dream* is a panoramic photograph digitally manipulated so that Mori, dressed as a blue mermaid, appears three times in the manmade beach of Seagaia Ocean Dome. *Miko no Inori* (“Shaman’s Prayer”) is a video work, in which Mori appears as an empty-eyed, alien-looking “shaman” girl chanting over a mirror ball. With a title simulating Mori’s stardom in the art world, *Birth of a Star* (1995) is a huge 3-D photograph accompanying sound, now in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, where Mori had a solo show in 1998. In the life-sized photograph, the artist appears as a cyborg version

21 The *Made in Japan* exhibition premiered at Tokyo’s Shiseido Gallery in September 1995 before showing at Deitch Projects in April 1996.
of a cutesy J-pop idol star, with plastic legs and empty eyes. (It was this image of Mori as a pop star that was used in the design of the aforementioned 26cm-high “Mori dolls,” produced by Parkett in collaboration with Mori in 1998).

With the Japanese context and international reception in mind, I am particularly interested in Mori’s representation in these works of issues of Japanese women and technology.

II. Mori’s Reception in the West: Eroticism, Feminism, and Postmodernism

Debuting in New York the same year, Mariko Mori and Sailor Moon share some resemblances that reveal something of the time and trends. Both represent a peculiar kind of kawaii associated with the ironic Japanese shojo culture of the late 1980s and early 1990s in their risky hybridization of romance, girliness, sexualization, and seduction. As discussed earlier, kawaii is a complicated aesthetic, especially given the variety and flexibility of its characteristics. In particular, however, Japan’s kawaii fashion “gradually evolved from the serious, infantile, pink, romanticism of the early 1980s to a more humorous, kitsch, androgynous style which lingered on into the early 1990s.”22 Here it is important to understand the gradual commercialization and commodification of the initially romantic and subcultural sentiment of kawaii, as this would help us better understand the cultural and aesthetic background in which Mori’s work highlighting the Japanese female figure, exemplified by her own body and the characters she represented and re-interpreted, was produced and received. This will do simply by looking at the ‘evolution’ (of sorts) of female figure in shojo manga (“girls’ comics”).

The rise of kawaii in the late 60s and early 70s was led by Japanese schoolgirls engrossed in shojo manga magazines, a genre marketed to a young female audience. As many historians of manga and anime have argued, the shojo genre was significantly developed during the 1970s as a result of the

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unprecedented influx of young female *manga* artists and writers who understood their audience better than male producers and artists who had previously dominated the industry. The female artists of the ‘70s are credited with establishing the ‘conventions’ of the *shojo manga* style, namely the intricate portrayal of sentimental characters, the inclusion of huge sparkly eyes, and the background spaces filled with blooming flowers and bubbles. However, the “innocent” and infantile girls in *shojo manga* have since undergone sexy makeovers. As Kanako Shiokawa explains, in the late ‘70s, *shonen manga* (“boys’ comics”), marketed to a male audience, began to borrow from *shojo manga* and combine the cute, large-eyes with a sexy, voluptuous body for the girlfriends of leading action heroes. The combination of “cute” and “sexy” would then become the idealized female figure in both *shojo* and *shonen* genres.

Such a sexualization and objectification of young female figure is a common, prominent feature of *maho shojo* (“magical girls”) genre, into which *Sailor Moon* falls. Started by male writers of *shonen manga* (“boys’ comics”) in the late 1960s for a young female audience, from the beginning, *maho shojo* has involved tropes of action, adventure, and science fiction. A characteristic feature of *majo shojo* series is the heroine’s transformation, “a common device that changes the female protagonist from a mediocre girl to a cute warrior.”

The climax of each episode of *Sailor Moon*, for example, is her transformation sequence, during which her body floats in air, spinning in slow motion as she is

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undressed and then clad in a more mature-looking “warrior” outfit.\textsuperscript{27} It takes a full forty-five seconds for the fourteen-year-old heroine to transform into a superheroine. This is probably why the series, though created by a female artist for girls, has attracted many male fans as well. A survey of about three hundred American fans of \textit{Sailor Moon} in May 1998 revealed that their age ranged from 9 to 36 and that one-third were male.\textsuperscript{28}

For this reason, \textit{Sailor Moon} has been criticized by feminist critics like Mary Grigsby, who particularly pointed out how the schoolgirl protagonists—Sailor Moon and her four “Sailor Soldiers”—all look the same except for different hair color and slightly different hairstyle.\textsuperscript{29} With a hybrid Japanese-Western look, they are interchangeable each with the large, sparkly eyes of a Western doll, tiny waists and long legs of a \textit{Sports Illustrated} cover model. \textit{Sailor Moon} animation and the merchandise franchise can be seen in part to be encouraging pedophilic and pornographic desires, especially when Japan’s \textit{anime} culture is associated with \textit{otaku} adult males. \textit{Otaku} is a term that originated in the early 1980s, referring to male fans of \textit{manga}, \textit{anime}, and video games, which may often contain violent and misogynistic content. This was evidenced, for example, in the circulation of pirate videos in which the Sailor Moon characters are depicted as being raped or having sex with one another.\textsuperscript{30} According to Kumiko Saito’s history of \textit{maho shojo}, the emergence of \textit{otaku} in the 1980s significantly coincided with the development of VCR technology (that

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enabled personal viewing and recording) and with a change in the anime industry’s marketing focus from the actual animation series toward “visual commodities that allegedly have their inherent values in being owned by individual consumers.”

Importantly, it was such male fantasies and desires prevalent in Japanese mass culture that Mori wished to critique in her Made in Japan series. The artist has explained that the “cyborg” roles she performs in the photographs are metaphors of young Japanese women trapped in a high-tech but still traditionally sexist society: “The women are cyborgs—there is the ‘School Girl,’ the ‘Office Lady,’ and the ‘Prostitute.’ I call them cyborgs to speak metaphorically of the woman’s role in Japan—it’s a kind of social comment.” Apparently, the sailor-collared schoolgirl uniform (se-ra-fuku or “sailor suits”), which Mori wears in the photograph titled Love Hotel, and which many Japanimation female characters wear Sailor Moon superheroines, is a familiar trope in pornography and sex culture in Japan, a country where there was a boom in teenage prostitution in the 1980s. A cultural history of the fetishism of Japanese school uniforms has also shown that sailor suits have been a popular outfit for women in erotic manga and novels since the 1950s. Based on her critical intention, Mori thus started the Made in Japan series with street performances (though she would increasingly rely on staged performances and digital technologies as the series developed): Dressed in the cartoonish costumes designed in the style of popular Japanimation characters, she entered public spaces, performing as a fantasy cyborg in the context of real-life situations, as if asking “Would you still fantasize me if I were real?”

Social experiments of sorts, Mori’s street performances in Japan could be interpreted as enacting the idea that there was no clear or firm borderline

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32 Blair, “We’ve Got Twenty-Five Years.”
between fantasy and reality in contemporary Japanese life. The photograph, *Subway* (1994), shows that when Mori got on the Tokyo subway train in her shiny, spectacular sci-fi costume, she created some awkward but not-so-funny scenes wherein the people inside the train definitely noticed, but tried to avoid her, while the people standing outside the train on the platform did not shy away from staring in curiosity. The *Play with Me* photograph (1994) shows that Mori, dressed in the cyborg version of Sailor Moon in front of a busy Tokyo electronics store open late at night, did not receive much attention; the passersby probably thought she was just another pretty window girl or salesperson badly costumed—a familiar scene in Japanese night markets. Furthermore, in 1997 Japan would generate the world’s first computer-generated pop singer or “cyber idol,” Kyoko Date, produced by the company HoriPro; this can be seen as a commercial realization of Mori’s concept for her *Birth of a Star* 3-D photograph of 1995, in which she played a cyborg version of a J-pop singer.

Ironically, perhaps, Mori’s image in her performances appeared too close to the images of women that she was critiquing and playing with. When her performance photographs were first shown in New York and consequently in other Western media and exhibitions, the initial commentators—mostly male—would either confess a “love at first sight” (as Robert Mahoney put it in his *ArtNet Magazine* review of Mori’s show at Deitch 34) or accuse the artist of trying to provoke Oriental eroticism in the audience. Reviewing the same show, the *Art in America* critic Richard Vine expressed a concern that “There will be those who accuse Mori of being too much of a tease, a high-tech geisha for the 21st century. Undeniably, she has gone to school on Japanese soft-core-porno comic books.” 35 Whether fascinated or concerned, Western critics and media paid much attention to the fledging artist from Japan. However, there were fewer

writings on Mori by Japanese art critics in the 1990s, which is interesting considering her international fame. This was probably because Mori was at the time based in New York and her target audience was the Western art world, while Japan’s art circle was still conservative enough to concentrate on promoting more “serious” work by Japanese artists based in Japan. For example, the preeminent Japanese curator and critic Fumio Nanjo made a similar observation as Vine when he surmised that the major factor of Mori’s success was “a kind of exoticism that meets Western expectations of the Japanese.”

Having a low opinion of Mori’s commercialism, Nanjo did not like that Mori received the prestigious Menzioni d’Onore at the 1997 Venice Biennale for her seven-minute 3-D video installation, *Nirvana*, exhibited at the Biennale’s Nordic Pavilion. In the same 1997 Biennale’s Japanese Pavilion, Nanjo had curated Rei Naito, a female, Tokyo-based artist known for her serene, minimalist installations associated with Zen philosophy.

Mori knew what she was doing. As we saw above in her earlier works such as *Market Value* (1991) and *Snow White* (1993), in her ambitious *Made in Japan* series as well, she employed play, satire, irony, and her own physical beauty as her tools. It is also evident that she knew who her target audience was; she was appropriating, playing with, and critiquing contemporary Japanese popular culture, for the Western-dominated international art world. For example, when asked to clarify about her critical stance, Mori would use what she implied as a Japanese version of feminism. In her interview with the *Interview* magazine in 1999, she said, “I know that people in the West think Eastern women are

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submissive, but I don’t see it that way.”\textsuperscript{38} She noted her interest in “femininity that’s soft and accepting.” Based on this statement and using others, the art historian Jonathan Wallis has explored and defended Mori’s stated feminism. In his 2008 article “The Paradox of Mariko Mori’s Women in Post-Bubble Japan,” a rare art-historical analysis of Mori’s work, Wallis argues that Mori’s response in \textit{Interview} reflects a Japanese, rather than Western, perspective toward gender. According to him, Mori “accepts socially assigned roles for women and men” and “approaches empowerment in art through acceptance and passivity” rather than revolt or aggression associated with feminists in the West.\textsuperscript{39} Such an evaluation is useful, but tends to simplify the complexity of Mori’s aesthetics, politics, and ambition as a postmodern Japanese artist based in New York. Considering her embrace of critique and play in her art, as well as her commercial background as a fashion model and designer, she was performing in much more nuanced and strategic ways, both in and out of her artwork.

Due to her use of mass-cultural images of Japanese women, Mori has been often compared to the American artist Cindy Sherman and other postmodern artists who perform characters and narratives drawn from popular culture. The \textit{New York Times} art critic Roberta Smith (1995) described Mori’s work as “combining aspects of Cindy Sherman and Jeff Wall,”\textsuperscript{40} while the aforementioned \textit{Art in America} review by Richard Vine (1996) suggested Mori’s practice should be understood as “perhaps as an updated Cindy Sherman, without the deadly earnestness.”\textsuperscript{41} The Nordic Pavilion’s catalog at the 1997 Venice Biennale stated it is “something of an Oriental answer to artists such as


\textsuperscript{39} Wallis, “The Paradox of Mariko Mori’s Women in Post-Bubble Japan,” pp. 5-6.

\textsuperscript{40} Smith, “Art in Review: Mariko Mori.”

\textsuperscript{41} Vine, “Mariko Mori at Deitch Projects and Other Venues,” p. 107.
Cindy Sherman or Matthew Barney. As such, Mori’s work has been analyzed in the West as a Japanese derivative of American postmodern art.

However, I would argue that more is revealed in the context of Japanese *anime* rather than Western art-world postmodernism concerning Mori’s role-playing and costumed performances. Notably, the masquerade figures prominently in many popular *anime* series, particularly in the *maho shojo* (“magical girls”) genre represented by such classics as *Cutey Honey* (1973–74, 1992–93) and *Sailor Moon* (1991–97). What distinguishes Japanese superheroines from their Western equivalents is their ability to transform themselves and assume multiple secret identities, whereas Western superheroes or superheroines typically have only a single secret identity. Having examined the overtly titillating transformation in *Sailor Moon*, let us now look at *Cutey Honey*, whose ability to assume multiple personas is a central component of the storyline development. In this animation series, the schoolgirl protagonist Honey Kisaragi has at least six different identities: “warrior of love” Cutey Honey, motorcycle biker Hurricane Honey, rock singer Misty Honey, flight attendant Idol Honey, camerawoman Flash Honey, and fashion model Fancy Honey. In each episode, the heroine transforms into new personae fully naked. When she shouts “Honey Flash!” touching the red heart-shaped jewel of her magical necklace, her body floats into the air and spins in slow motion as her clothes are ripped off. Her breasts and hips are revealed, and the camera zooms in for a close-up before she is clothed. The explicit eroticism in these *anime* series


43 In the original *manga* series by Go Nagai, however, the protagonist has only one other secret identity.

provides us with a better understanding of Mori’s use of eroticism in her artwork: Japanimation is her inspiration and culture, as well as the object of her satire.

A close look at Mori’s designs reveals that the artist is both using and satirizing eroticism. In *Play with Me*, for example, though her clothing style and hairstyle both seemingly mimic Sailor Moon’s, unlike the fantasy girl heroine, Mori’s body is fully clothed with her costume, which she designed. The shiny black bodysuit covers her arms, thighs, even her neck, while the plastic suit of armor obstructs her body silhouette completely, giving it a bulkier volume. The result seems to suggest that Mori is undoing the original Sailor Moon’s attractiveness in *Play with Me*. In other photographs of the series, Mori exposes little of her skin. In *Birth of a Star*, what appears at first to be her bare legs turns out to be nude-colored leggings, with unexpected, haphazard line drawings around the knee areas. Though there is a smile to her mouth, her eyes appear empty, lacking any coloration of the iris, highlighting the dark pupil in the center.

Mori’s practice of costuming is also closely related to the Japanese subcultural activity of *cosplay* (“costume play”), a hyperreal custom in which the participants dress up as fictional characters from *manga*, *anime*, and video games. Like many serious cosplayers, Mori made her own costumes, but unlike cosplayers, who usually dress as specific characters (like Halloween participants), Mori had created nuanced costumes that are pastiches of Japanese pop culture signifiers, through which her deliberation and critical engagement with mass cultural images of Japanese women and other “Made in Japan” consumer products are demonstrated. Considering the date of her *Made in Japan* series, it can be argued that Mori may have introduced *cosplay* to the Western art world before it gained global awareness and popularity beyond Japan. Only after the 2000s have *cosplay* festivals and Japanese comics conventions become commonplace in such cosmopolitan cities as New York, London, and Paris. *Cosplayers: The Movie*, released in 2009 by Martell Brothers Studios, notes that
“There are over 90,000 registered members of cosplay.com.” The same year, the *New York Times* reported that thousands of teenagers showed up for the 2009 New York Anime Festival (hosted annually since 2007), “dressed in the style of their favorite Japanese animated cartoon characters.”

III. From Mori to Murakami: Japan’s Transformation from Cute to Cool

It can be seen that in the *Made in Japan* series, Mori created her own manga/anime series in which she transformed from one *kawaii* cyborg after another. She creatively appropriated and explored Japanese subculture long before it became a cosmopolitan trend. She gained visibility in the West years before Takashi Murakami by deploying the visual language of manga, anime, and the *kawaii* aesthetic.

How and why was Mori’s “Japanese art star” status so quickly replaced by that of Murakami? (And why are there so few female Asian art stars in the Western art world?) I argue that the reception of Japanese artists in the West has been influenced by the national image of Japan. Below I trace the evolution of a global Japanese image from “cute” to “cool,” which happened quickly. Murakami’s image and work captured the epitome of the latter phase of Cool Japan, before Mori’s *shojo-kawaii* work and image had enough time to be aptly evaluated by foreign critics. As discussed earlier, Japan’s *kawaii* (“cute”) culture and its romantic and feminine fashion of the 70s and 80s had become ironic, kitsch, humorous, and unisex when it arrived in North America in the early

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45 This movie was released for free viewing on YouTube and Crunchyroll. “Cosplayers: The Movie (Video Documentary About Anime Fandom),” YouTube video, 43:44, posted by Carey Martell, September 23, 2010.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvD1wzIOJtA&feature=youtube_gdata_player


2000s, and it was only in the 2000s that Japanese pop culture and “Japanese soft power” received much attention in the constructive discourses of the Western art world.

The aforementioned Flash Art’s special issue on contemporary Japan was probably the first English-language art magazine to address the Japanese kawaii commodity culture in depth, but the emphasis fell heavily on male artists such as Yasumasa Morimura, Takashi Murakami, and Taro Chiezo. Specifically, the influential Japanese art critic Noi Sawaragi applauded Murakami and Chiezo as emerging avant-garde artists making “self-critical” art, that is, concept-based installation works employing “cute” mundane objects for the purpose of critique.47 In Murakami’s earliest key work, Randoseru Project (1991), the artist recreated the Japanese children’s uniform backpacks randoseru (the design of which is the same as military backpacks) from exotic animal skins, thus transforming them into luxury goods that would be also hung on a commercial gallery wall. In a similar move, Chiezo’s seminal Post Human Piece at Street of Tokyo (1991) consists of toy truck engines covered with frilly kawaii-style dresses for girls. As such, both artists juxtaposed Japanese militarism with contemporary otaku and kawaii sentiments. As a result, their takes on the kawaii fashion is much more masculine than Mori’s.

In comparison, female Japanese pop artists addressed the ‘90s kawaii culture from a distinctively “pink” and girly perspective. Mori’s Snow White (1993), examined earlier, juxtaposed the trappings of beauty (cosmetic products) with reminders of death (a glass coffin and a black-and-white photograph of the artist herself). The Pinku House (1991) by Minako Nishiyama (b. 1965) is a bedroom decorated with curtains and wallpapers full of pink hearts and frills. Both artists thus portrayed the overwhelming excessiveness of infantile cuteness in Japanese culture and society. Mori associated it with mortality (her own), while Nishiyama evoked its morbidity. These works are discussed in the

Japanese historian Yuko Hasegawa’s 2002 article “Post-Identity Kawaii: Commerce, Gender and Contemporary Japanese Art.” This is one of the two defining English-written, art-historical texts on kawaii. The other is Midori Matsui’s “Transformations of Cute Subculture in the Art of the Japanese Nineties” (2005), which remains the most comprehensive historical analysis of the subject to this date, but does not at all consider Mori’s contribution. Likewise, Ivan Vartanian’s heavily illustrated book Drop Dead Cute (2005) does not include Mori, but examines ten Japan-based female artists, mostly of Mori’s generation, whose work shows influences of Japanese popular culture, including kawaii, manga and anime. The omission of Mori in these writings probably has to do with her international identity: it is difficult for many Japanese artists and critics to consider Mori, who started her career and immediately gained stardom in London and New York a “Japanese artist.”

Gender plays an important role in both discourses on Japanese Pop Art and Cool Japan. The art movement categorized as Japanese Pop Art emerged in the early 1990s, with male artists and critics as leading figures. Its history can be traced to March 1992, when Noi Sawaragi (the aforementioned critic who championed Murakami’s art as a critique of the kawaii syndrome) and Kiyoshi Kusumi, editor of the Japanese art magazine Bijutsu Techo, together coined the term “Neo Pop” in the magazine’s special issue on that trend. In his manifesto-like essay “Lollipop: That Smallest Form of Life,” Sawaragi proposed that Japanese Neo Pop (represented by artists like Murakami, Kenji Yanobe, and Noboru Tsubaki), similar to American Neo Geo, has the power to deconstruct

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the social system of representation through appropriation of the visual language of popular culture.\textsuperscript{51}

It was out of the Japanese awareness of contemporary global art and global interest in contemporary Japanese culture that Murakami emerged as a star artist, theorist, and curator. He spent about a year between 1994 and 1995 in New York to participate in P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center’s International Studio Program. After returning to Tokyo, he began to establish his own art style, theory, and enterprise that was similar to Andy Warhol’s Factory, but one that was based on the Japanese phenomena of \textit{anime} and \textit{otaku}. It was as if he had learned in New York how to succeed as a Japanese artist in the global age, and he must have also sensed that Japanimation was rapidly forming global fandom. His “Hello, You Are Alive: Tokyo Pop Manifesto” (1999) affirms:

The art world in the West is searching for the next new theory. This search has reached as far as Asia, a less-Westernized cultural sphere in which Japan, and its capital Tokyo, are receiving the most attention.... Postwar Japan was given life and nurtured by America. We were shown that the true meaning of life is meaninglessness, and were taught to live without thought.... We were forced into a system that does not produce “adults.” The collapse of the bubble economy was the predetermined outcome of a poker game that only America could win. Father America is now beginning to withdraw, and its child, Japan, is beginning to develop on its own.\textsuperscript{52}


Murakami blames American domination of Japan for the infantilization of Japanese culture. Influenced by childlike styles of *anime* and *manga*, his “Superflat” aesthetic intended to reclaim the infantilization of Japan and to transform the toy-obsessed culture of Japan, particularly that of the male *otaku*, into a unique national asset. In fact, his early Pop works such as *Hiropon* (1997) and *My Lonesome Cowboy* (1998) demonstrate the influence of erotic *manga/anime* and the prevalence of pornographic images in *otaku* aesthetics. Life-size installations based on imageries of *manga/anime* figures, *Hiropon* depicts a naked, blue-haired girl lactating from breasts larger than her head, and *My Lonesome Cowboy* depicts a naked, blue-haired boy ejaculating.

The “Tokyo Pop Manifesto” was developed into “The Super Flat Manifesto” and released in 2000 in tandem with the *Superflat* group show by Japanese pop artists (including those managed by his company Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd.) that Murakami himself curated at the Parco Gallery in Tokyo and Nagoya. Defining Superflat as “a sensibility that has continued to contribute to the construction of Japanese culture as a worldview,” he further argued that the Superflat sensibility, although originally Japanese, would soon become a global sensibility. The problematic of Superflat (Tokyo Pop)’s nationalistic politics and male-centric gaze has yet to be carefully examined in Western art criticism—in spite of or because of the broad public celebration of the visual appeal. In 2001, the *Superflat* exhibition opened at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles to fervent public enthusiasm. Murakami decided to ride his wave of success and expand the *Superflat* show into a trilogy: the second exhibition *Coloriage* opened in 2002 at the Foundation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain in Paris, while the grand finale was in 2005 at the Japan Society in New York under the title of *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan’s Exploding Subculture*. The Japan Society published a gigantic catalog, which includes a historical anthology of Japanese

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anime and manga, focusing on action and science fiction genres, with detailed captions and color reproductions.

The rise of Murakami in the West since 2000 coincides with Japan’s “Cool Japan” nation-branding campaign. As American journalist Douglas McGray has argued in “Japan’s Gross National Cool” (2002), the Japanese government, media, and industry collectively rested “in the purported expansiveness of its soft-power capital” to promote its “cool” youth pop culture in international politics and economics—a decision made due to its increasing popularity across the globe. The most official expression of the “Cool Japan” campaign can be found in the government’s use of popular Japanimation personae as cultural ambassadors. For example, in 2008, the robotic cat character Doraemon was announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the national “cartoon culture ambassador,” and Hello Kitty was Japan’s official ambassador of tourism to China and Hong Kong. In 2009, the Japanese government even launched kawaii taishi (“Cute Ambassadors”)—three female models who appeared in Japanese global events representing, respectively, “Lolita,” “Harajuku,” and a uniformed schoolgirl. What these examples exhibit is that through the “Cool Japan” nation-branding process, anime and manga became global signifiers of “cool.” During this process, even the previously “cute” culture icons (and residues) began to appear “cool,” as they were branded as such by the Japanese government. Examples of the coolification of Japanese kawaii street fashion can be found ubiquitously, but most obviously in the fashion and accessories industry. Inspired by the Hello Kitty fad and the proliferation of cute character


55 These examples are retrieved from Yano, “Wink on Pink,” p. 685.


accessories, Hollywood celebrities including Gwen Stefani and Paris Hilton, and even high fashion European designers such as Prada and Dolce & Gabbana, launched collections, evocative of Japanese street fashion.

For Murakami’s part, the artist and entrepreneur developed his cartoon avatar, Mr. DOB (conceived in 1993), into one of the world’s most expensive and coolest symbol of luxury fashion. His collaboration with the French fashion house Louis Vuitton in 2003, in which the artist’s trademark motifs like Mr. DOB and eyeballs were used to reinterpret LV’s brand logo, was met with wild acclaim both in the art and fashion markets. Like other typically quirky, cute Japanese characters, Mr. DOB has an enormous face, big ears, wide eyes and long eyelashes, but the idea that this character blurs the lines between high art, otaku subculture, and luxury fashion has a tremendous mass appeal. Murakami has explained Mr. DOB as “an inquiry into the ‘secret of market survival,’ or the ‘universality’ of characters like Mickey Mouse, Sonic the Hedgehog, Doraemon, Miffy, Hello Kitty, even the Hong Kong-made rip-offs.”

The art promoted by Murakami through the series of publications and exhibitions was deeply masculine and “cool,” as it originated from, and intertwined with, the young male otaku subculture. This concept and style would soon eclipse the more feminine kawaii side of Japanese pop culture aesthetics. The international fame of Murakami would eclipse Mariko Mori’s image as the ‘face’ of contemporary Japanese art. While Murakami’s installations of cartoonish characters came to be in great demand (for example exhibiting at New York’s Rockefeller Center in 2003 and at the 2007 Venice Biennale), Mori’s Made in Japan series lost its momentum and was not closely examined or aptly understood. Mori moved on to produce high-tech large-scale installations, such as Wave UFO (1999–2002), which mimics a spaceship, and Transcircle (2004), LED-emitting standing stones.

Conclusion

Although Mori was an early adopter of imagery from Japanese popular culture, including Japanimation, J-pop, kawaii, and cosplay, this has been under-explored in depth in art history, especially since her prominence soon faded. When the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (MoT) opened Mori’s solo exhibition in early 2002, people already called it a “retrospective” show, suggesting that she had reached the pinnacle of her career less than ten years after its launch. This means that. And one can interpret the artist’s meteoric rise as a cultural phenomenon, as I have demonstrated in this article. Examining the cultural-historical significance of Mori’s Made in Japan series and her emergence as an international art star in the 1990s, I have particularly highlighted and considered a Japanese pop cultural context, trying to analyze—and deepen our art-historical understanding of—Mori’s representation of Japanese gender and technology and their related issues. As suggested above, if there were enough time and interest during the 1990s to understand Mori’s use of kawaii and other Japanese pop culture aesthetics and feminist critique, Takashi Murakami’s otaku-based artwork may have possibly encountered a different kind of reception in the West than the excitement and enthusiasm that it received in the early 2000s. Many artists come and go out of favor with the market without receiving serious critical consideration due to the paucity of interest in commercialism within art criticism and scholarship, as well as the rapidity of changing trends in the culture industry. Some might assume little or no critical interest in the works of stars or celebrities, but as Mori’s case exemplifies, apparently lightweight, trendy and commercial artists and artworks can reveal much about fleeting (yet important) moments in history, which would otherwise soon be forgotten.

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Mariko Mori and the Globalization of Japanese “Cute” Culture: Art and Pop Culture in the 1990s

森萬里子與日本「可愛」文化的全球化：
一九九零年代的藝術與流行文化

李秀眞 *

摘要

本文將以歷史文化的角度探究日本藝術家森萬里子 (Mariko Mori, 1967-) 的重要性，以及森萬里子在 1990 年代如何以藝術明星的姿態在國際間嶄露頭角。1995 年森萬里子首次於紐約藝廊展出後，即迅速享有盛名並成為二十世紀末全球化日本的代表人物。當年她展出了《日本製造》(Made in Japan)系列，以廣告看版大小的彩色照片，顯示自己身穿各種可愛的、如電玩遊戲角色般的未來服裝。我認為森萬里子的《日本製造》系列作品是在日本創作，並且於歷史中一個非常特殊的時刻，接收於西方主導的藝術世界。在這個時刻，國際開始將當代日本藝術與流行文化視為日本軟實力的象徵和要素。大部分對於此系列作品的重要書寫皆出版於 1990 年代末，然而有問題的是，其中西方的著作顯露了對於森萬里子如何使用當代日本文化指涉的理解尚未成熟且欠缺均衡。我將在本文中檢視此西方藝術界的接收，並且提供一個逆向的詮釋，分析《日本製造》中的照片與日本流行文化的關係，特別討論森萬里子藝術與個人形象中所具備的「可愛」此日本大眾文化的美學。在這個過程中，我將提供森萬里子與日本流行的動畫人物的類比，特別是美少女戰士。為了進一步的論證日本當代藝術與流行文化潮流的相關性，我將解釋村上隆 (Takashi Murakami, 1962-) 如何在 1990 年代繼森萬里子的全盛期後崛起，代表了日本的全球化形象由商品文化的「可愛」夢境轉移到「酷」夢境。

* 李秀眞為伊利諾大學芝加哥分校藝術史博士，曾於芝加哥藝術學院擔任講師。目前為獨立學者並於韓國首爾工作，正致力於書寫東亞雌雄同體研究之著作。

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關鍵字：
森萬里子、村上隆、軟實力、藝術與流行文化、日本式的可愛（卡哇伊）、
日本式的酷、美少女戰士