

ARTFORUM

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Fault Vault

If Bill Viola and Gary Hill brought video out of the box and into the realm of installation, Ken Goldberg, a Berkeley professor of industrial engineering, has done the same for Net art. This month, at the second biennial of new-media art at Tokyo's Inter-Communication Center, Goldberg (along with Randall Packer, Wojciech Matusik, and Gregory Kuhn, all from Berkeley) unveils *Mori*, an immersive installation centered around seismic signals uploaded live from California's soon-to-rupture Hayward Fault and transmitted via the Internet.

Viewers enter a giant black box flanked by a shelf of sculpturally poised computers, whose presence confirms the data stream's "realness." So does the illuminated, see-through handrail (filled with Internet access cables) that viewers use to navigate the chamber's spiral interior. An odd, low-frequency symphony of sampled sounds (ranging from the violinlike screeching of train brakes to the percussive thuds of falling rocks) resonates from subwoofers in the floor. These aural interpretations of the Hayward Fault's actual rumblings complement the visual rendering, which, like the heartbeat on an EKG monitor, pulses across a computer screen looking up from a well at the center of the installation. The fragility of life is one theme sounded by this disturbing, meditative work, whose ambiguous title means "of death" in Latin and "sanctuary" in Japanese.

Can't make it to Tokyo? Then log on to www.memento.ieor.berkeley.edu and check out the site's eerie, pulsating graphics. *Mori* watchers need only worry when the rumbling stops: The installation's theatrics are programmed to halt the instant an earthquake hits.

—Reena Jana