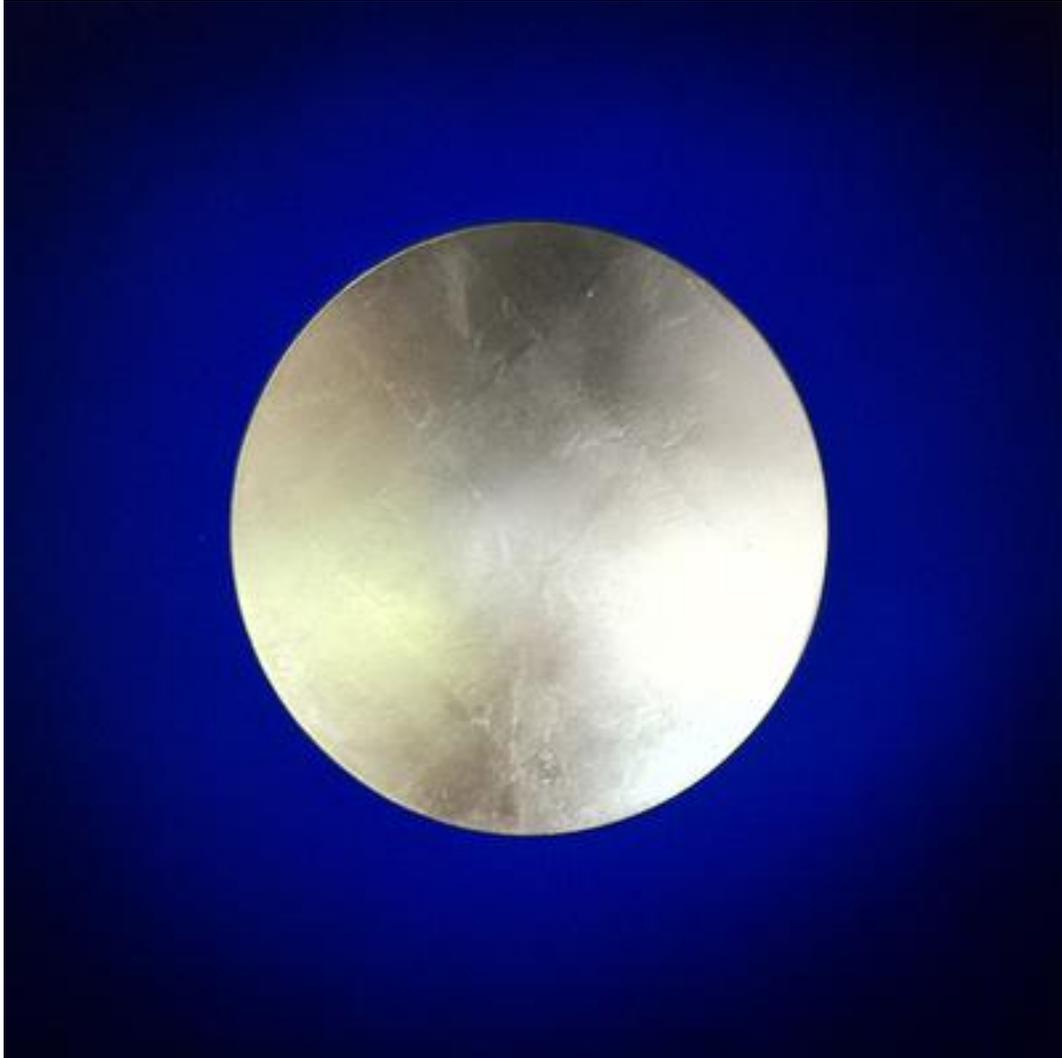


**Artist Lita Albuquerque presented
her celestial harmonies in numerous earthly locales**

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Auric Field

In her several decades of creating art in many modes and mediums, a consistent theme for Lita Albuquerque has been the oneness of humanity with the universe. Over the fall, Albuquerque was imparting her message of intergalactic harmony by mounting her latest performance “An Elongated Now,” in Laguna Beach on November 8. To create this elaborate piece, commissioned by Laguna Art Museum (LAM), the artist assembled 200 volunteers in this town’s bluff-top Heisler Park; she discussed with them their upcoming processional, and shared her inspirational poem that reads in part: “becoming light / becoming galaxy / one becoming many / many becoming one / we are the art.”

Then, in the late afternoon, she led the volunteers, all dressed in white, down a winding pathway to Main Beach. They walked silently to the water's edge, following the arc of the shoreline, as the low tide was gently lapping and the sun was falling toward the ocean. At twilight, the artist's daughter Jasmine, in a contrasting flowing red dress, ceremoniously moved down the line, tapping each participant on the shoulder, signaling each to switch on a small blue light and to begin turning slowly. As they rotated, they symbolized the now of each moment, and their harmony with the movement of the earth and the planets.

At nightfall, the volunteers retraced their steps, ending their journey at nearby LAM, in front of Albuquerque's "Particle Horizon," an installation created for the museum's "Art & Nature" series, curated by Grace Kook-Anderson. Central to this work is *Pigment Figure No. 1* (2012), a horizontal human figure coated in ultramarine blue. Surrounding the figure is a flowing cascade of lights, evoking the universe and its connectedness to humankind. This ethereal presentation, emitted from four projectors connected to computers, displays movements of the sun, moon and stars, or, as the artist says, "What is happening in the sky!" Completing this room-size installation, with its layer of pure white salt on the floor, are hushed voices relating the story of a woman who crash-landed on a distant planet, who is coming into consciousness, and who is, "vibrating at a higher octave."

Albuquerque's aesthetic endeavors this fall were almost as wide-ranging as the celestial subjects noted in her works. Nearby, in downtown Laguna, Peter Blake Gallery was exhibiting several Albuquerque works, referencing her Antarctica installation, "Stellar Axis." For this 2006 Land Art piece, the artist had an astronomer draw a map of the 99 brightest stars and constellations visible from the South Pole. Then she and her crew created a mirror of the sky on the snow of the Ross Ice Shelf, using 99 ultramarine blue fiberglass spheres to represent the astral elements above. The Blake exhibition, evoking a universe beyond our conscious perceptions, includes two South Pole fiberglass spheres, five circular paintings made of pure pigment, and two free-form sculptures of pure ultramarine blue powder pigment.

Concurrently, Kohn Gallery in Hollywood presented "Lita Albuquerque: Light Carries Information," with still shots and the short film *Stellar Axis: Antarctica*, all dramatically depicting the Land Art installation. As the artist explains in the show's wall text, "The image of the earth seen from space (during the 1969 moon landing) radically shifted my perception, permitting me to imagine holding the planet in the palm of my hand and seeing it surrounded in stars. "Lita Albuquerque: Stellar Axis," at Reno's Nevada Museum of Art, is a more comprehensive exhibition, including original objects and materials from this monumental project. As NMA holds "one of the largest polar art and archive collections," according to press materials, Albuquerque gifted this venue with "Stellar Axis" maps, journals, photographs, video, spheres and grant applications, thereby providing her world-famous Land Art project with an earthbound home.

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