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VISUAL ARTS

Square-root proposal wins Meijer Gardens sculpture competition



Keiko Miyamori's wood and resin "City Root" won this year's Meijer Gardens sculpture competition.



GAIL PHILBIN
ART BEAT

The proposal to create "City Root," a dramatic sculpture of wood and resin by Philadelphia artist Keiko Miyamori, has won Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park's second Purchase Award Sculpture Competition.

Chosen from a field of more than 200 entry proposals, the piece will feature a large, tangled tree root taken from a demolished urban area and encased in a 7-foot-square cube of clear, durable, outdoor-quality resin. The work's

complex and symbolic root system will contain pieces of urban detritus such as glass, brick and metal and "shows the power of nature," according to Miyamori's description of the piece as represented by a tabletop model submitted to the sculpture competition.

"She has come up with a fascinating way to address the issue of nature and the industrial world," said Joseph Becherer, director and curator of Meijer Gardens' sculpture program. "Many artists in our collection use industrial materials, but her approach is unique."

When "City Root" is installed sometime next summer, the work will take its place alongside sculptures by Henry Moore, Auguste Rodin and other art-world luminaries that fill the Meijer Sculpture Park. Miyamori will receive an honorarium of \$25,000, and a fund of as much as \$75,000 is available for the massive sculpture to be executed.

The following finalists each will

receive \$1,000 honoraria: Elona Van Gent, of Grand Rapids; Michael McGillis, Detroit; Carl Scholz, New York; and Karl Ciesluk, Ontario, Canada. Along with Miyamori's maquette (artist's model), the maquettes of their proposals are on display in the Gardens' Standard Federal Gallery.

Meijer Gardens held the first Purchase Award Sculpture Competition in 2000 and probably will continue to hold it every other year, according to Becherer: "The gist of this competition is that it gives us a chance to locate young, up-and-coming artists we might not otherwise know about."