

# Arts & Entertainment

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**Art** By Edward J. Sozanski

**Community roots.** A mature tree like the one that Keiko Miyamori found uprooted at 11th Street and Girard Avenue in North Philadelphia can be a perfect metaphor for community. The roots anchor and nourish, the trunk supports, and the leafy crown shelters.

Miyamori, a Japanese artist who has lived in Philadelphia since 1998, considers trees to be reservoirs of natural and psychic energy.

In a poetic installation at the Project Room, she uses the massive stump of a hardwood tree that once stood at the site of Cambridge Plaza, a low-income housing project, to pose this Zenlike question:

Where did the energy come from, and where will it go?

It's the viewer's task to develop the answer by imagining backward and forward — what life at Cambridge Plaza was like when the tree was young, how it changed as the tree grew and what the future holds for residents of the new houses built on the site.

Miyamori's installation centers on the one-ton, five-foot-wide stump that she salvaged from the demolition site. The stump is set on its side, near a pile of rubble — mostly brick shards, glass and gravel — that she combed out of the roots.

Next to the stump, Miyamori has hung a crude swing made from a log and ropes attached to the ceiling. Swinging is intended to help transport viewers to the state of "seeing everything" in the past, present and

future.

The installation includes one other fanciful element, a large plastic prism hung in front of a west-facing window. In the afternoons, sunlight shining through it projects flashes of rainbow light on the root mass.

Miyamori's installation includes a 14-minute video that



**Keiko Miyamori's installation** at the city's Project Room has a mound of bits of brick, glass and gravel, which were combed from the roots of a stump that lies on its side nearby.

provides a documentary context for the sculpture. More important, it expands her vision of how a tree, even one shorn of most of its extensive root network, can serve as an enduring symbol of community vitality.

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