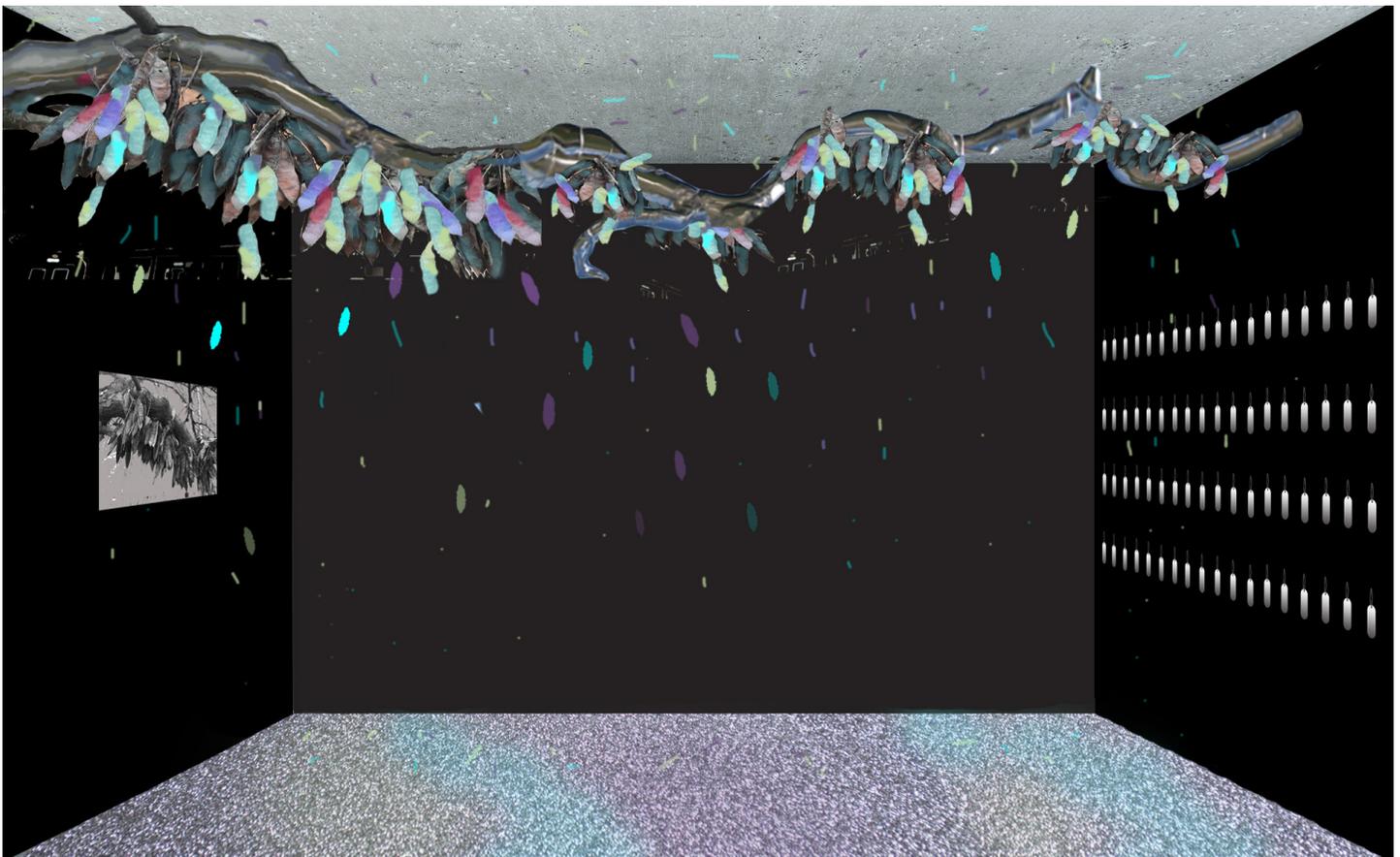


Teen Museum Studies presents

# Margaret Keller

## Botanica absentia



Margaret Keller, *Botanica absentia*, 2019. Artist's rendering. Courtesy the artist.

*Margaret Keller: Botanica absentia* creates a fictive memorial and archive dedicated to lost trees. Set in an imaginary future, after climate change has forced most living organisms toward either mutation or extinction, the installation serves as a commemoration to the extinct trees. The artist combines lasercut dichroic plexiglas and AlumiGraphics SILVER to create a replica limb from the 'now-extinct' redbud tree, *Cercis canadensis*. Multi-hued refractions transform the somber black walls of the space into a dystopian tribute to nature devastated by climate change. This installation emerges out of Keller's belief that at this precise moment, we are at the tipping point of a world gone wrong.

Teen Museum Studies participants selected *Botanica absentia* from twenty-two artist proposals, choosing Keller's proposal, in part, because of the students' serious concerns for the fate of the Earth in the wake of climate change. They worked directly with Keller to



### Audio Tour

Visit [camstl.org/audio](http://camstl.org/audio) on a mobile device to hear an interview with the artist and Teen Museum Studies.

organize and implement the exhibition as part of the six-week summer program. Teen Museum Studies gives twelve students, grades 9-12, a unique behind-the-scenes look at the museum profession, along with a stipend for completing the program. Through direct engagement with every CAM department, they learn all that goes into the making of an exhibition, and then organize their own.

**Margaret Keller**, (b. 1954, Kansas City, Missouri, lives and works in St. Louis) uses sculpture, installation, technology, and mixed media to address concerns with technology's impact on the survival of interdependent species as they adapt to the future. Utilizing diverse media, Keller investigates the relationship between nature, contemporary culture, and technology, along with their effects on our lives. Recent exhibitions include the Arkansas Art Center Museum, Little Rock (2017); Gallery 210, University of Missouri-St. Louis (2017); The William and Florence Schmidt Art Center Museum, Belleville, IL (2019); and the Gateway Arch National Park (2018). Keller received the 2019 Regional Arts Commission Fellowship Award for Artistic Excellence.

#### **Teen Museum Studies**

Each summer, CAM offers a select group of teens the opportunity to learn about museum careers and gain practical job skills through the innovative Teen Museum Studies program. Participants learn from CAM staff members in all departments—from curatorial to PR to development—and work together to curate and organize an exhibition from start to finish in CAM's Education Gallery. The exhibition features the work of a local artist selected by the students that opens with a public reception in the fall of the same year.

*Margaret Keller: Botanica absentia* is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by JaLiyah Battle, Celia Bergman, Kimmeran Cade, Dalonte Chatman, Felice Frye, Nicole Gorell, Lillian Hayward, Helen Jiang, Isaiah Jones, Laila Smith, Joshua Williams, and José Garza, Museum Educator, with Alyx Farris and Raegan Jackson, 2019 Summer Learning and Engagement interns.

Teen Museum Studies is generously supported by The Strive Fund, Wells Fargo Advisors, and Crawford Taylor Foundation.

#### **Related Program**

##### **Artist Talk: Margaret Keller**

Friday, September 6, 7:15 pm

#### **Artist's Suggested Reading List**

Margaret Keller provided the following resources for learning more about endangered tree species.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (established in 1964) Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List) is used by a broad constituency that includes individuals, researchers, government and non-governmental organizations, businesses, and agencies involved in wildlife and natural resources. <https://iucnredlist.org>

The Global Tree Assessment (GTA), led by a consortium of international agencies, aims to assess every known tree species by the year 2020. Forty percent of the world's trees are still lacking an assessment of extinction risk. <https://globaltreeassessment.org>



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