

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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María Elena González, Skowhegan Birch #2, 2014. Player piano roll.

MARÍA ELENA GONZÁLEZ:

TREE TALK

JANUARY 23–MARCH 17, 2019

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 26, 2019, 5-7PM

[FACEBOOK EVENT](#)

[PRESS KIT](#)

Tree Talk is the culmination of over ten years of work by internationally recognized Brooklyn and Bay Area-based artist **María Elena González**. Exploring the translation between the physical and the acoustical, *Tree Talk* investigates the unexpected visual parallels between the bark of birch trees and cylindrical player piano rolls. González transcribed the distinctive bark pattern from three birch trees found at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, and each tree yielded unique compositions

for player piano. Related drawings, prints, video, and sound installation are featured in the exhibition, demonstrating González's interest in both representations of sound as well as sound as a sculptural material. Programming during the exhibition will include a live performance featuring Mills music students using drawings of the tree bark as graphic scores, and a live performance of the player piano.

About the Artist

María Elena González is a Cuban American artist best known for her sculptural installations informed by architecture and personal experience. In 1999, González received widespread acclaim for her site-specific sculpture *Magic Carpet/Home*, commissioned by the Public Art Fund. She has been a visiting critic in Sculpture at the Yale University School of Art, a resident faculty member at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and a visiting artist faculty member at The Cooper Union. She is currently Chair of the Sculpture Department at the San Francisco Art Institute. She is also the recipient of numerous grants and awards including a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant, the Prix de Rome, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. González is currently on the Board of Governors at Skowhegan.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Visit <http://mcam.mills.edu> for full details

Saturday, January 26, 2019

Opening Reception: Tree Talk

5-7pm, Art Museum

[Facebook Event](#)

Join MCAM to celebrate the opening of this exquisite exhibition. Featured artist, María Elena González will be present and refreshments will be provided.

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

Performance: *Tree Talk: Variations on Impression*

7pm, Art Museum

[Facebook Event \(currently unpublished\)](#)

Marc Zollinger, John Ivers, and Dirt and Copper will perform works generated from María Elena González' birch tree rubbings which will be on display for her exhibition *Tree Talk*. In collaboration with González, the composers translate the visual, gestural, and topographic data found in the tree rubbings into scores to be premiered at the event. This translation of information from optical to aural describes synesthesia: the phenomena by which the stimulation of one sensory receptor, such as vision, activates a secondary sensory reaction, such as hearing. Each re-composition approaches the visual material in a variety of ways including strict graphical interpretations to differing conceptions of growth-time as the ensembles traverse open and diverse notations.

Additional programs to be announced at mcam.mills.edu/events.

ABOUT THE MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM

Founded in 1925, The Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. Through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections, the museum engages and inspires the intellectual and creative life of the Mills community as well as the diverse audiences of the Bay Area and beyond.

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