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The
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Museum
of Art

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Colossal Contemporary Philip Haas Sculptures Installed on Nelson-Atkins Lawn

The Four Seasons Recreates Portrait Series by Italian Renaissance Painter

Kansas City, MO. April 13, 2015—Philip Haas, a contemporary artist and filmmaker, has created four monumental portrait busts titled *The Four Seasons* which will be installed on the south lawn of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City over the course of the week of April 13th. Haas's 15-foot-tall sculptures are 3-dimensional interpretations of the Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo's portrait series of the same name.

"*The Four Seasons* portrait busts are an engaging presentation in the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park," said Julián Zugazagoitia, Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell CEO & Director of the Nelson-Atkins. "Visitors can experience the whimsical spirit of Arcimboldo's work through this contemporary, fresh, and playful lens of Haas."



Artist Rendering

As in Arcimboldo's paintings, the physical features of the four sculpted figures are rendered in botanical forms appropriate to each season. *Spring* is a profusion of brightly colored flowers. The man's cheeks are rose blossoms, petals hang from tulip earlobes and he wears a coat of green leaves with a collar of daisies. His broad smile expresses the joy of the season. In contrast, *Winter* suggests the barrenness of that time of year through the figure's headdress of twisted tree limbs and ivy and face of a gnarled grey tree trunk devoid of foliage. *Winter's* brow is furrowed and he is frowning. *The Four Seasons* acknowledge nature's rhythmic cycles and yet as sculptural portraits of people, they further represent the natural aging process from youth to old age.

"Whether I'm working in painting, sculpture or film, what fascinates me is the idea of metamorphosis," said Haas. "Through *The Four Seasons*, I am re-contextualizing the world of classical Renaissance portraiture using the transformative elements of scale, material and dimensionality, thereby altering the viewer's perspective."

The Four Seasons will arrive at the Nelson-Atkins in four 53-foot tractor-trailers and will be assembled over the course of a week by four members of the team who, with Haas, originally made the sculptures in Great Britain. Using a crane, forklift, and cherry picker, the group will put each 15-foot-tall sculpture together, starting with the steel infrastructure. The painted fiberglass skin will then be added.

"The theatrical quality of *The Four Seasons* is enhanced by the Nelson-Atkins building, which serves as the perfect 'stage set' for the marvelous portrait busts," said Leesa Fanning, curator of contemporary art. "The surprising reconfiguration of the human form through plant materials, as well as the monumental scale of the highly detailed fiberglass sculptures, will delight visitors of all ages."

Visitors are free to wander in and around the monumental sculptures. Smaller maquettes (scale models) of *The Four Seasons* will be on view inside the museum.

Adults will enjoy a special presentation by Philip Haas himself on Thursday, May 28, in Atkins Auditorium as he discusses his inspiration and process to transform Renaissance painter Guiseppe Arcimboldo's iconic *Four Seasons* into monumental, three-dimensional sculptures.

The fun, playful nature of *Philip Haas: The Four Seasons* creates thematic inspiration for a wide range of summer studio classes for visitors of all ages. Registration is now available.

The sculptures will serve as a backdrop for the museum's largest summer festival, the Donald J. Hall Sculpture Park Celebration and Kansas City's Big Picnic, Sunday evening July 19, 4-7 p.m.

Also for adults, the museum will provide an opportunity to discover another art form by Philip Haas—a sampling of the motion pictures he has directed. The museum will screen these as part of a Friday-night series in July. Check nelson-atkins.org for dates and details on all events.

Exhibition credit line: In Kansas City, this exhibition is supported by the Hall Family Foundation and the Donald J. Hall Initiative.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America's finest art museums. The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access and insight into its renowned collection of more than 33,500 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region. The institution-wide transformation of the Nelson-Atkins has included the 165,000-square-foot Bloch Building expansion and renovation of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45th and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Admission to the museum is free to everyone. For museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit nelson-atkins.org.

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