Los Angeles-based artist Charles Ray’s “conceptualist realist” works based on ordinary subjects—even his own geeky, sculptural self-portrait—often have an air of isolation or self-containment. A decade ago, Ray found a huge, fallen tree that he cut up into sections. From those, he cast fiberglass copies that craftsmen in Osaka replicated in Japanese cypress (hinoki). The Art Institute of Chicago acquired Hinoki (2007), Ray’s 38-foot-long, 2,100-pound sculpture that reassembles the big tree from those handcrafted parts. —E.M.G.