

4 Timber!

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.