



"Tractor," a 2005 piece by Charles Ray. The Art Institute of Chicago is hosting his work.

CHARLES RAY

## ART EXPLORING THE REAL AND THE UNREAL

KEN JOHNSON

▶ Charles Ray, one of today's most critically admired sculptors, has since the 1970s produced an extraordinarily varied oeuvre whose common thread has been a preoccupation with reality and illusion. Since the late 1990s, he has been creating works of terrific technical ambition and sometimes controversial subject matter. For "Charles Ray: Sculpture 1997-2014," the Art Institute of Chicago has devoted the 18,000 square feet of its second floor Modern Wing to just 17 pieces, affording lots of breathing room for each. "Horse and Rider" (2014), a full-scale equestrian self-portrait, will be displayed elsewhere in the museum. It's one of four works in the show that have not been previously exhibited.

Most attention-getting will probably be "Huck and Jim" (2014), a bigger-than-life sculpture of the two heroes of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain, both naked. A version was supposed to be displayed on the front plaza of the new Whitney Museum, a plan that the museum ultimately rejected fearing misunderstanding and controversy. (Through Oct. 4, [artic.edu](http://artic.edu).)