



THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

**The New York Botanical Garden to Exhibit
Contemporary Artist Philip Haas's
Monumental Sculpture Series *Four Seasons***

**Exhibition on View
May 18–October 27, 2013
Courtyard of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory**



New York—Internationally-renowned contemporary artist Philip Haas will be the subject of a one-person show, titled *Four Seasons*, at The New York Botanical Garden May 18–October 27, 2013. Haas's work is distinguished by meticulously rendered tableaux seeking to illuminate the source of creativity, often through contemporary interpretations of masterworks from the history of art.

In *Four Seasons*, Haas has created four monumental, 15-foot-tall, portrait busts that reference each of the seasons and are displayed in the round. In the artist's exploration of the past, reinterpreted in the present, Haas references classical Italian Renaissance portraiture, with roots in the celebrated *Four Seasons* series created by Renaissance master Giuseppe Arcimboldo. Haas gives viewers a fresh perspective on the classical form by blowing up the scale to colossal proportions. What has formerly been a two-dimensional experience—the painted portrait—is given new context through this series as viewers are able to walk around the sculptures, to see the subjects from all sides, rather than simply in profile as with a painting. Further, as in Arcimboldo's work from the 1500s, flesh, hair, and human features have been replaced with organic material native to each season. In *Winter*, for example, the skin of the subject is represented through oversized forms of bark and hair by gnarled tree limbs and ivy. *Spring* features a riot of flower forms in bright hues arranged to represent a human portrait.

The placement of the four sculptures within the symmetrical courtyard of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory has the busts facing one another in a square configuration, creating a dialog between not only the four "subjects," but also the viewer who can walk around and in between the works, creating an involving and personal experience.

Haas comments, "Whether I'm working in painting, sculpture, or film, what fascinates me is the idea of transformation. 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 New York Botanical Garden Chief Executive Officer and The William C. Steere Sr. President Gregory Long states, "We are thrilled to present Philip Haas's remarkable *Four Seasons* here at The New York Botanical Garden. This body of work is ideal for the garden as it speaks to the present, while reflecting on the past. The contemporary forms rooted in the history of art will resonate not only with our core audience but also those passionate about contemporary art."

Haas, in marrying sculpture, painting, film, and architecture, has created a contemporary visual vocabulary all his own. He describes his process as "sculpting by thinking." Haas's groundbreaking artwork has been featured by museums including the National Gallery of Art (Washington DC), the Kimbell Art Museum (Fort Worth, Texas), Dulwich Picture Gallery (United Kingdom), and Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris). In the public realm, his work has been exhibited in the Piazza del Duomo (Milan) and the Gardens of Versailles (France). He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, as well as other awards. He has taught in the visual arts and creative writing programs at Princeton University. He lives and works in New York and London.

Four Seasons by Philip Haas is the latest commission of The New York Botanical Garden's art program. For more information on the program visit <http://www.nybg.org>

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. The Garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday and Monday federal holidays, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The best way to enjoy the Garden is with the *All-Garden Pass*, which includes admission to the grounds as well as to seasonal gardens, exhibitions, and attractions such as the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, Everett Children's Adventure Garden, Rock Garden, and Tram Tour. For ticket pricing, please check our Web site. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit nybg.org.

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

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