Charles Ray, *Horse and rider*, 2014



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1 Close Looking and Principles of Design

- What do you see as you approach and walk around the sculpture?
- What do you think the artist was trying to communicate about movement or space?
- What do you wovnder about the choice of material or the way it's placed in the landscape?

*Consider using terms like **line, form, scale, balance,** and **negative space.***

2 Learn More About the Artist:

- Charles Ray was born in 1953 in Chicago, Illinois. At age 7, his family moved to Winnetka, Illinois until 1981, when he moved to Los Angeles, where he still lives and works today.
- Ray's first art lessons were at a **commercial art school** started by his grandmother in 1916. When Charles attended, the school was run by his parents. He later studied art at the Art Institute of Chicago, earned his BFA from the University of Iowa, and his MFA from Rutgers University. He then became the head of UCLA's Sculpture Department for over 20 years.
- Ray is focused on making sculptures of people, animals, and objects. Many are carved from solid metal, like **stainless steel**, using a high-tech process that mixes hand carving with industrial machines. He works very slowly and carefully, sometimes spending years studying his subjects and making many different versions in different sizes. His attention to small details is very precise - he adjusts each part of the sculpture to guide how people look at the whole piece.

About the Artwork:

- *Horse and rider* follows the long tradition of making equestrian statues—sculptures of people on horseback—to honor brave military heroes. Ray's sculpture is different. It doesn't sit on a tall pedestal like most do, and instead of a famous soldier, the artist himself is riding the horse without reins.
- The sculpture is a self-portrait, "I am not a rider and the horse knows it. I tried to sculpt my nervousness as well as that of the horse" (excerpt from catalogue of the Kunstmuseum, Basel, 2014).
- The horse, Hooper, once appeared in movies and TV shows. In the sculpture, Ray portrays both himself and Hooper as older, awkward, and no longer powerful. Instead of heroic, they appear vulnerable and uncertain, giving the work a more honest, personal feeling.
- Ray began with a clay model, then 3D scanned and carved it from solid stainless steel using computer-controlled machines called CNC routers. Stainless steel is rust and corrosion resistant.

Glenstone Connection:

- The sculpture weighs 9.5 tons (over 20,000 pounds) and its weight is supported from below where Glenstone's administrative offices are located.
- Glenstone has the largest the collection of Charles Ray's work which includes drawings, film, and sculpture. You can also find his work in Room 8 of the Pavilions.

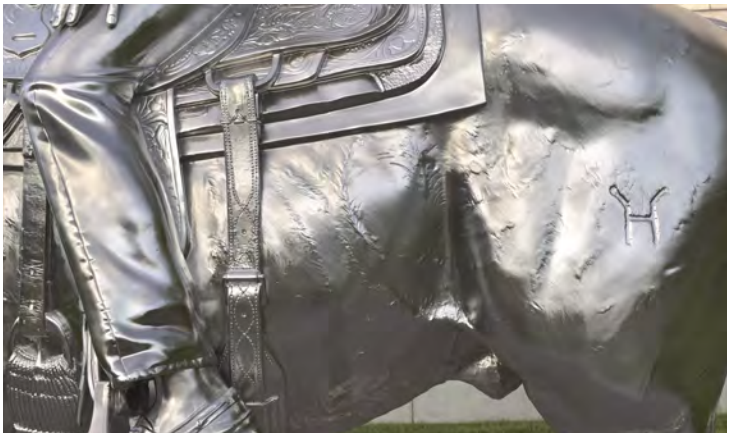




Charles Ray with Glenstone associates in Room 8.



Horse and rider in the Spring at Glenstone.



Detail image of *Horse and rider*.

3 Reflect

Worldview and Social Impact

Imagine you are the sculpture, or a person encountering it for the first time.

- Describe the horse, then describe the rider. How does this make you feel about their relationship?
- How does this sculpture compare to other monuments or statues you have seen?
- As you move around the sculpture, the balance shifts—how does this affect your view of power, leadership, or responsibility?

This invites discussion of empathy, interpretation, and perception.

Details and Material

Examine a section of the structure closely.

- Notice the muscles of the horse and the rider. What details do you see that make the sculpture feel realistic? What verbs describe what you see?
- The rider has no reins and he isn't wearing horse-ridding shoes or gear. How do these missing details change how you understand the sculpture? What descriptive words help explain that idea?
- What do you see in the poses, gestures, or expressions of the horse and rider?

*Introduce terms like **presence, proportion, relation, anatomy,** and **vulnerable**.*

Personal Reflection

After moving through the sculpture, reflect:

- I feel... (emotion or reaction)
- I think... (insight or idea sparked)
- I am... (state of being or identity)

Connect art to personal meaning, mindfulness, and self.

Charles Ray, Horse and rider, 2014
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Photo: Ron Amstutz

Accessibility Note: You can step on the mowed grass.