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The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Restoration: Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison Offers Mid-Career Survey

Recent Acquisitions Highlight Exhibition of Works by Photographers

Kansas City, MO. Sept. 3, 2008—A mid-career survey of photographs by Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison will be on view Oct. 11 through Feb. 8, 2009 with the opening of the exhibition *Restoration: Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison* in the Bloch Building at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The exhibition is comprised of mostly large-scale work dating from 1998 through 2007. There is no admission charge.

In most of the carefully constructed images, Robert ParkeHarrison appears dressed in a black suit and white shirt, an Everyman or minor helpmate of the universe. It is the job of Everyman to take care of a devastated Earth using completely inadequate equipment. That heroic, if perhaps futile, attempt to save a planet can be viewed as hopeful, sad or apocalyptic. “Although the ParkeHarrisons raise questions about ecology, human responsibility, and destiny, their works wisely allow each viewer to come to their own interpretations,” said Jane Aspinwall, Assistant Curator, Photography, at the Nelson-Atkins.



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Among the works shown will be *Mourning Cloak*, which comes from a new body of ParkeHarrisons' work and embraces the use of color. "As in their previous bodies of symbolic and allegorical work, the artists focus on issues of ritual and theatrical narrative, and on the charged relationship between humankind, technology and the natural world," Aspinwall said. "A group of brightly colored butterflies float down from above to land on the back of an Everyman seated on a bed in a cell-like room. In this context of barren isolation, the butterflies might be interpreted as symbols of hope or rebirth—the healing power of nature."

The photographs are printed from paper negatives, which have been cut and joined together to create a synthetic printing matrix. "This genuinely original technique, combined with the elaborate set construction, crosses many photographic barriers to provide a fascinating hybrid of painting, photography and performance art," Aspinwall said.

Public Programs

The following are programs planned around the exhibition. All events are free. Reserve program tickets, where noted, online at nelson-atkins.org, by phone 816.751.1278, or at the Museum.

In Conversation with Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison

2–3:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 22

Atkins Auditorium

Tickets required

Mystery, performance and invention all play a role in the photography of Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison. Join Jane Aspinwall, Assistant Curator of Photography, for a conversation with the artists. Presentation will be followed by an informal discussion with the ParkeHarrisons in Gallery L11.

Restoration: The Everyman's Journey

6 –7 p.m., Friday, Jan. 9

Gallery L11

At times poetic, fantastic and sobering, the five major series represented in *Restoration* convey the journey of the Everyman; a figure sprung from the imaginations of artists Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison. Curator Jane Aspinwall leads this gallery walk exploring the worlds inhabited by the Everyman and the challenges he faces in this allegorical tale.

Museum Tours

Guided tours of the Photography collection, including changing exhibitions, are available for school and adult groups of ten or more. Visit the Museum website or call 816.751.1ART for details.

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Museum Store

The Museum Store will receive advance copies of the ParkeHarrison most recent book: *Counterpoint*, from Twin Palm Press, and have them available for sale.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America's finest encyclopedic art museums. The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access and insight into its renowned collection of more than 33,500 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings and modern sculpture. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region and a national model for arts education. The Nelson-Atkins' expansion is also leading a field of new investments in local cultural infrastructure that is becoming known as Kansas City's "\$6 Billion Renaissance."

The 165,000-square-foot Bloch Building by Steven Holl Architects was a major milestone in the ongoing institution-wide transformation of the Nelson-Atkins. The project included the renovation of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building and the expansion of the Museum's renowned Kansas City Sculpture Park, and continues with renovations to the American, American Indian and Ancient galleries as part of the reinstallation of the encyclopedic collection. The expansion increased Museum space by 71 percent, providing new galleries, educational facilities and Museum-support spaces. The Museum raised more than \$200 million for the renovation and expansion, and \$170 million to grow the endowment fund. The expanded resources ensure that the institution continues to attract and engage the next generation of audiences and is equipped to present and interpret the art of the past, present and future.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45th and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 12 p.m.–5 p.m.

Admission to the Museum is free to everyone. Additionally, newly produced audio guides are free for visitors, presenting art & architecture tours, overall collection highlights, and select featured exhibitions tours. For Museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit nelson-atkins.org.

For media interested in receiving further information, please contact:

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Image: *Mourning Cloak*, 2006. Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison, American, Robert, b. 1968: Shana, b. 1964. Chromogenic print mounted to aluminum with acrylic and UV varnish, 34 1/2 x 40 1/2 inches. Gift of the Hall Family Foundation. © The artists via Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago

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