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**Madison Square Park Conservancy's
MAD. SQ. ART
Presents
Alison Saar: *Feallan and Fallow*
Featuring Four Seasons of New Work
Accompanied By
A Pair of Towering
Treesoul Sculptures**

**On view daily in
Madison Sq. Park
Sept 22 – Dec 31, 2011**

Install Wed, Sept 14 - Fri, Sept 16

***Please contact FITZ & CO for details**



*Credit below

New York—Madison Square Park Conservancy's Mad. Sq. Art announces ***Feallan and Fallow***, a six-piece installation featuring four newly commissioned works by Los Angeles-based artist Alison Saar. Drawing inspiration from the cyclical qualities of life and nature, Saar's ***Feallan and Fallow*** will take park-goers and visitors on a journey through the four seasons as inspired by the ancient myth of Persephone in the urban oasis that is Madison Square Park. The series will premiere alongside two of the artist's known *Treesouls* (1994), standing fourteen feet amidst the Park's surrounding foliage. ***Feallan and Fallow*** is a commission of the award-winning Mad. Sq. Art program, and will be on view daily from September 22 through December 31, 2011.

For the occasion of the Madison Square Park installation, the artist presents four larger-than-life works cast in bronze featuring the seasons as embodied by the female form at different stages of maturation. *Spring* is depicted as an adolescent girl perched high within the branches of an existing tree. Her wild head of roots cascade downward to conceal her face as chrysalises in various stages of hatching are shown woven within her hair and covering her body as if lively, fluttering moths emerging from cocoons. *Summer* is depicted as a pregnant woman whose womb holds a swarm of fireflies, illuminated at the center of the bronze sculpture for all to see. *Fall* is represented by a woman of the harvest with a head of branches extending upwards, barring no leaves but a smattering of pomegranates, some whole and others split. The woman holds her skirt in both hands catching the fallen fruit while others descend to the ground. *Winter* is shown by a curled stone-like figure, cast in bronze in which the seasons come to rest, only to start anew once more.

Together the series tells of the Greek myth of Persephone, daughter of Demeter and Zeus, who embodied the earth's fertility and whose tale gave rise to the establishment of seasons. Abducted by Hades and forced to live in the underworld, Demeter's mourning of her lost daughter led the earth to become barren. In turn, Zeus negotiated Persephone's release on the condition no food would pass her lips though Persephone was eventually tricked by Hades into sharing pomegranate seeds. In consequence, Persephone was confined to living in the underworld for six months, and the earth for six, giving rise to the four seasons as we know them today.

In addition to the new series, the artist presents two *Treesouls* (1994) to stand 14 feet high among the Park's existing foliage. Comprised of found and sculpted wood with copper cladding, the pair depicts a coupled young man and woman whose legs dissolve into the earth as a web of searching roots.

Artist, Alison Saar, comments: "When I lived a few blocks from Madison Square Park I'd often stroll through and was always amazed by the transformation of the park throughout the year. Not only with the fall foliage and the barren winters, but also how the park itself would be bustling in the summer and nearly dormant in the winter. *Feallan and Fallow* depicts the seasons, but also speaks of our physical maturation and the ebb and flow of creativity."

"Alison Saar is a phenomenal talent, an artist who works in the figurative tradition while creating art that is rich with metaphorical and mythological significance," notes **Debbie Landau, President of the Madison Square Park Conservancy**. "We are proud to present *Feallan and Fallow*, a body of works that collectively weave a poignant narrative of human and earthly life cycles, a focus that resonates strongly with this reborn and revitalized historic public space."

More About the Artist

Alison Saar was born in 1956 and raised in Laurel Canyon, CA. The daughter of an art conservator and the well-known artist Betye Saar, Alison developed a fascination with art objects and artifacts from around the world at an early age. Inspired by Outsider Art (such as Simon Rodia's *Watts Towers* in Los Angeles), pre-Columbian and African art, as well as her mother's oeuvre, Saar's sculptural work examines our collective relationship to nature and the mythologies that bind disparate cultures together.

Saar received her BA from Scripps College in 1978 where she studied with noted art historian Dr. Samella Lewis, and went on to earn her MFA from Otis-Parsons Institute (now Otis College of Art and Design). Saar has been artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York City (1983); Roswell Museum of Art, New Mexico (1985); Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C. (1986); and Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire (2003). She has received two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1984 and 1988), and was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 1989, and Flintridge Foundation Award for Visual Artists in 2000.

Saar's work is included in many public collections, including the High Museum, Atlanta; Walker Institute, Minneapolis; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Whitney Museum of American Art (where it was included in the 1993 Biennial), New York, among others.

In 2008 Saar completed *Swing Low*, a monument to famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman on 123rd Street in Manhattan. *Swing Low* is a permanent installation presented in cooperation with New York City Parks & Recreation and New York City Department of

Cultural Affairs.

Alison Saar is represented by LA Louver Gallery, Los Angeles.

Mad. Sq. Art and Madison Square Park Conservancy

Mad. Sq. Art is the free, contemporary public art program of the Madison Square Park Conservancy.

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Since 2004, Mad. Sq. Art has commissioned and presented premier public art installations in Madison Square Park by acclaimed artists including Bill Beirne, Jim Campbell, Richard Deacon, Bill Fontana, Ernie Gehr, Antony Gormley, Jene Highstein, Tadashi Kawamata, Mel Kendrick, Sol LeWitt, Olia Lialina & Dragan Espenschied, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Roxy Paine, Jaume Plensa, Shannon Plumb, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Jessica Stockholder, Mark di Suvero, and William Wegman, among others. In March 2011, Mad. Sq. Art received the International Art Critics Association (AICA-USA)'s 2010 Second Place award for "Best Project in a Public Space" for the organization's exhibition of *Antony Gormley: Event Horizon*, which featured 31 sculptures of the human form placed in and around Madison Square Park and on the rooftops of architectural treasures throughout New York City's Flatiron District and environs. Most recently, Mad. Sq. Art presented Jim Campbell's *Scattered Light*, an installation of three works of orchestrated light, and the premier of *City of Nature* by film artist Kota Ezawa. Currently on view through September 11, 2011, Mad. Sq. Art presents *Echo*, a towering 44-foot-tall sculpture of the face of a young girl in dream state, which marks the New York City public art debut of acclaimed Spanish artist Jaume Plensa.

The Madison Square Park Conservancy, a public/private partnership with New York City Parks & Recreation, is the nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping historic Madison Square Park a bright, beautiful and lively public space.

For more information on the Madison Square Park Conservancy and its programs, please visit <http://madisonsquarepark.org>.

*Rendering of Alison Saar's *Fall* (2011) in Madison Square Park, Cast Bronze, 150 x 53 x 48 inches (approx.), Photo by Tom Leiser / Courtesy the artist and Madison Square Park Conservancy

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