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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Chicago  
Humanities  
Festival**



## **Chicago Humanities Festival Announces Animal as 2013 Theme**

*100 fall programs seek new answers to the question “what makes us human?”*

CHICAGO, IL—The Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) announces its 2013 fall festival theme: **Animal**.

The festival theme seeks to capture the excitement—and tension—of recent developments in scholarship that are shifting our view of what it means to be human or animal, and changing our understanding of human nature. Festival Artistic Director Matti Bunzl notes, “The question of whether humans are animals is perennial, one that until recently pitted scientists against humanists. But a revolution is underway. The last few years have seen unprecedented convergence in once-distant fields, spurred by developments in science and shifts in the humanities.” He notes that such convergences include evolutionary biologists speculating about art as a human adaptation and literary scholars theorizing about animal communication; this year’s Chicago Humanities Festival takes this conversation in new directions with more than 100 events exploring the human-animal relationship.

In announcing an initial line-up of Festival speakers, Bunzl explains, “Animals are good to think with, affording us a unique perspective to reflect on the human condition. After all, we *are* and *are not* animals ourselves. It’s that tension we want to focus on in this year’s CHF—a new way to think about human nature. The list of Festival presenters we’re sharing today captures this fully. It ranges from primatologist Frans de Waal, who studies our closest relatives to understand the evolution of human behavior, to Maria Tatar, whose investigation of fairy tales reveals how we use animals to make sense of being human. The list also shows the range of disciplines—from science to literature—that makes up CHF’s concept of the humanities. Join us in exploring new answers to the age old question: what does it mean to be human?”

Confirmed presenters include:

- **Sherman Alexie**, beloved novelist and filmmaker, best known for *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* and *Smoke Signals*
- **Temple Grandin**, animal scientist, autism activist, and bestselling author of *Animals Make Us Human* and *Thinking in Pictures*

- **Atul Gawande**, leading medical thinker, surgeon, and author of award-winning books *Complications*, *Better*, and *The Checklist Manifesto*
- **Julia Kristeva**, leading psychoanalytic theorist
- **Susan Orlean**, *New Yorker* staff writer and author of *Rin Tin Tin: The Life and the Legend*
- **Maria Tatar**, Harvard professor and leading scholar of fairy tales
- **Justin Torres**, literary sensation and author of *We the Animals*
- **Frans de Waal**, primatologist and author of *Our Inner Ape*, *Primates and Philosophers*, and *The Bonobo and the Atheist*

More than 100 programs will take place in October and November 2013:

- Sunday, October 13, 2013 on the Northwestern University campus (third annual Evanston Day)
- Sunday, October 20, 2013 on the University of Chicago campus (seventh annual Hyde Park Day)
- Friday, November 1–Sunday, November 10, 2013 in and around downtown Chicago

Tickets go on sale to CHF members on **Tuesday, September 3** and to the general public on **Monday, September 16**. The full schedule and a listing of all programs will be available at [www.chicagohumanities.org](http://www.chicagohumanities.org) in August.

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