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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chicago Humanities Festival and The Poetry Foundation Partner to Present **James Franco and Frank Bidart, Off the Shelf** An Evening of Poetry, Film, and Discussion

Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014 at Northwestern University School of Law

CHICAGO, IL—Jan. 29, 2013—The Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) and The Poetry Foundation partner to present **James Franco and Frank Bidart, Off the Shelf**, an evening of poetry, film, and discussion on **Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014 at 8 p.m.** at **Thorne Auditorium, Northwestern University School of Law** (375 E Chicago Ave). The program will revolve around James Franco's film *Herbert White*, based on legendary poet Frank Bidart's 1973 poem of the same name, as well as Franco's forthcoming poetry collection, **Directing Herbert White**. The conversation will be moderated by Poetry Foundation president **Robert Polito**. Tickets are on sale now to CHF Members, and go on sale to the public at noon on **Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014**. Call the **CHF Box Office** at **312.494.9509** or visit chicagohumanities.org.

For the first time, James Franco and his hero, Frank Bidart, take the stage together! In 1973, award-winning poet Bidart published one of his most famous poems, *Herbert White*. In 2010, James Franco adapted and directed it for film. Franco's own collection of poetry, *Directing Herbert White*, will be released in April 2014. Exclusive, early copies of *Directing Herbert White* will be available for purchase at the event, provided by **Graywolf Press** and **Unabridged Bookstore**.

James Franco is an actor, director, writer, and visual artist. He is the author of two works of fiction, *Palo Alto* and *Actors Anonymous*, and one work of nonfiction, *A California Childhood*. His newest poetry collection, *Directing Herbert White*, will be released in April 2014. As an actor, Franco's breakout role was as Daniel Desario in the cult TV series *Freaks and Geeks*. TV credits include: the title character in the TV biographical film *James Dean*, for which he earned a Golden Globe Award, and Franco in ABC's *General Hospital*. He has starred in several films, including Sam Raimi's *Spider Man* trilogy, *Milk*, *Spring Breakers*, *This is the End*, and *127 Hours*, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor. Franco has taught film classes at NYU, USC and his alma mater, UCLA, and is a PhD candidate at Yale University.

"James Franco is dazzlingly original and totally out there," said **CHF Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**. "Actor, director, writer—he does it all. We are excited to see what happens once he's on stage!"

Frank Bidart is the author of *Watching the Spring Festival*, *Star Dust*, *Desire*, and *In the Western Night: Collected Poems 1965–90*. He has won many prizes, including the Wallace Stevens Award and the Bollingen Prize for American Poetry. His most recent collection of poems, *Metaphysical Dog*, was a finalist for the 2013 National Book Award and is currently a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. He teaches at Wellesley College.

Robert Polito is a poet and scholar. An expert on mid-century American crime novels and film noir, he edited *Farber on Film: The Complete Film Writings of Manny Farber*, *The Selected Poems of Kenneth Fearing*; and *Crime Novels: American Noir of the 1930s and 1940s*. His most recent poetry collection is *Hollywood & God* (2009). Polito earned his PhD from Harvard and served as director of Creative Writing at The New School for two decades. He became the second president of the Poetry Foundation in July 2013.

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For more information about **James Franco and Frank Bidart, *Off the Shelf***, visit chicagohumanities.org. Tickets are on sale now to **CHF Members**, and go on sale to the public at noon on **Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014**. Tickets are available online at chicagohumanities.org or through the **CHF Box Office** at 312-494-9509, Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. **Tickets range from \$10–15, with a limited number of student tickets available. Book/Ticket packages range from \$25–30.** Visit supportchf.org to become a CHF Member. *A \$6 per order processing fee is applied to all pre-event sales. Tickets are \$5 more per ticket at the door.*

CHF Winter 2014 Schedule:

G=General Admission, M=CHF Member, ST=Students



[Vampires in the Lemon Grove: A Conversation with Karen Russell](#)

Thursday, Feb. 13, 2014 | 6 p.m.

First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5

The worlds of writer Karen Russell are wild and weird. Her latest, *Vampires in the Lemon Grove*, is no exception. Who else would morph Japanese women into silkworms, expose the surprising antidote to a vampire couple's bloodthirsty inclinations, and rewrite the Iraq war by entering the tattooed back of a veteran? *Time Out Chicago's* Laura Pearson will join this sublime storyteller, newly minted MacArthur Fellow, and one of the *New Yorker's* "20 Under 40," as she reinvents magical realism for our generation.



[James Franco and Frank Bidart, *Off the Shelf*](#)

Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014 | 8 p.m.

Thorne Auditorium, Northwestern University School of Law | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$10

Book/ticket packages also available—see chicagohumanities.org for details

Presented in partnership with the Poetry Foundation and The Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities

James Franco: actor, scholar, performance artist, novelist, director—and yes—poet! Second City no more, Mr. Franco debuts his latest poetry collection, *Directing Herbert White*, right here in Chicago. Franco shares the stage: joining him are his hero, legendary poet **Frank Bidart** (*Metaphysical Dog*); and Poetry Foundation president **Robert Polito**. Grab a glimpse of our era's Renaissance man and nab a signed copy before it hits the shelves. *Graywolf Press and Unabridged Bookstore are partnering to make exclusive, early copies of Directing Herbert White available for purchase to event attendees.*



[Mohsin Hamid: How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia](#)

Anita and Prabha Sinha Program | Tuesday, March 11, 2014 | 6 p.m.

First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5

Who doesn't love a get-rich-quick scheme? That's the conceit of Mohsin Hamid's witty and wicked novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, which cleverly mimics the self-help genre to tell the story of one man's rise from rural poverty to massive wealth. Hamid, a Booker Prize finalist and *The New York Times* bestselling author, gives voice to the relentless churning of our global moment.

About the Chicago Humanities Festival

The Chicago Humanities Festival began in 1989 as a dream shared by a determined group of Chicago's cultural leaders eager to extend the riches of the humanities to everyone. Since that first year, some of the world's most exciting thinkers, artists, and performers have come to Chicago each fall for a festival that celebrates ideas in the context of civic life. Past Festival themes include Laughter, The Body, tech knowledge, America, and last year's **Animal: What Makes Us Human**. Under the leadership of **Executive Director Phillip Bahar** and **Artistic Director Matti Bunzl**, CHF partners with Chicago's premier cultural institutions and the festival has become an annual highlight for thousands of people from Chicago and beyond. In addition to the annual fall festival, CHF also presents the spring **Stages, Sights & Sounds**, a global performance festival for families, students, and theatergoers of any age, and programs throughout the year that encourage the study and enjoyment of the humanities. Visit chicagohumanities.org for more information.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit poetryfoundation.org.

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