

Press Release

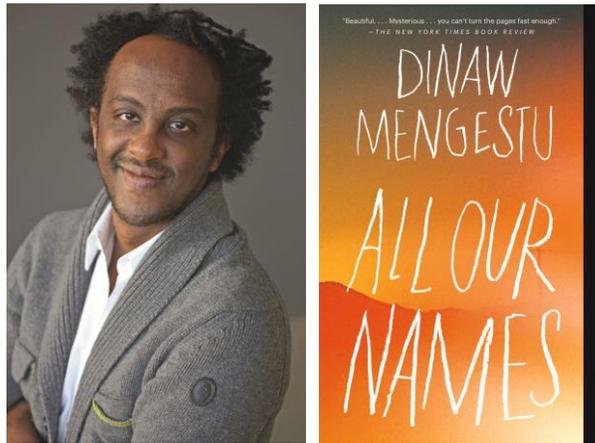
25 CHICAGO
HUMANITIES
FESTIVAL

Winter 2015

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[Read an excerpt from *All Our Names*](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Chicago Humanities Festival Presents Dinaw Mengestu

MacArthur Fellow and Award-Winning Author of
All Our Names

Wednesday, Jan. 28 at Old Town School of Folk Music

CHICAGO, IL—Jan. 07, 2015—The Chicago Humanities Festival (CHF) hosts MacArthur Fellow and award-winning author **Dinaw Mengestu** on **Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.** at the **Old Town School of Folk Music (4545 N Lincoln Ave)**. The author of *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* and *How to Read the Air* comes to Chicago to discuss his latest work, *All Our Names*, with CHF Program Director (and former WBEZ host) **Alison Cuddy**. Tickets range from **\$5-15** and are currently on sale at chicagohumanities.org or via the **CHF Box Office** at **(312) 494-9509**.

Dinaw Mengestu comes to the Festival to speak about his just released paperback novel: *All Our Names*, a sweeping, continent-spanning story about the love between men and women, between friends, and between citizens and their countries. Fleeing war-torn Uganda for the American Midwest, Isaac begins a passionate affair with the social worker assigned to him. But the couple's bond is inescapably darkened by the secrets of Isaac's past: the country and the conflict he left behind and the beloved friend who changed the course of his life—and sacrificed everything to ensure his freedom. NPR calls *All Our Names* "A subtle masterpiece," and *The New York Times Book Review* described the book as "Beautiful. . . . Mysterious . . . you can't turn the pages fast enough."

"Dinaw Mengestu is an exceptional writer and exactly the kind of artist we're excited to present this year—someone whose work both illuminates contemporary social and political realities and breaks new artistic ground," said Cuddy. "We're thrilled to have him kick off our Winter 2015 season."

[Continued]

Mengestu is an Ethiopian-American writer who was raised in Peoria, IL and Forest Park. His debut novel, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*, was named *The New York Times* Notable Book of 2007 and awarded the *LA Times* Book Prize in 2008. He also received the "5 under 35" Award from the National Book Foundation. His second novel *How to Read the Air* was published in 2010, and helped garner him a "20 under 40" Award from *The New Yorker*. He is a recipient of a 2012 MacArthur Foundation genius grant and currently lives in New York City.

The program will be moderated by Program Director **Alison Cuddy**. Before coming to CHF, she spent more than 10 years at WBEZ 91.5 FM. There she helped launch *Odyssey*, a nationally syndicated talk show of arts and ideas, hosted the flagship morning program *Eight Forty-Eight*, and reported on arts and culture. She currently hosts *Strange Brews*, a podcast about the culture and community around craft beer.

EVENT DETAILS:

G=General Public, M=CHF Member, ST=Students & Teachers



[Dinaw Mengestu](#) | Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2015 | 7 p.m.

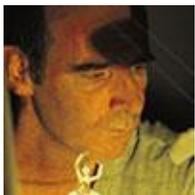
Old Town School of Folk Music, Szold Hall (4545 N Lincoln Ave) | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5

Born in Ethiopia and raised in Illinois, global citizen **Dinaw Mengestu** is one of the bright young voices redefining contemporary fiction. Over the course of three novels he's developed a distinct exploration of identity and belonging, and earned comparisons to Chinua Achebe and V.S. Naipaul. He'll discuss his latest novel, *All Our Names*, a moving meditation on the personal and political dislocations wrought by love and war.

TICKETS:

For more information about the **Dinaw Mengestu** program, visit chicagohumanities.org. Tickets range from **\$5-15** and are on sale now [online](#) or through the **CHF Box Office** at **(312) 494-9509**, Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Discounted tickets are available for CHF members and students/teachers. To become a member, visit supportCHF.org. A **\$6 per order processing fee** is applied to all pre-event sales.

ADDITIONAL WINTER PROGRAMS:



[Le Petit Cirque](#) | By Laurent Bigot | Jan. 17–18, 2015 | 2 & 5 p.m.

Adventure Stage Chicago at the Vittum Theater (1012 N Noble St) | G \$20

Within a circus-like, tabletop installation, electroacoustic musician Laurent Bigot sets various objects in motion. A "circus of sound" and a theater of objects, *Le Petit Cirque* is made from odds and ends, salvaged material and cheap gadgets. Action nourishes sound and sound gives new meaning to action, via improvisation and the chance of mechanics. The piece explores two distinct and interacting concepts. The first is how stereotypical circus imagery alters one's perception of the performance's musical aspect. The second, and more abstract, is how sound allows the spectator to see these theatrical situations from a different perspective. The spectator skips from one point of view to another, engaging ears, eyes, skin, imagination, and thought associations. *Le Petit Cirque* is presented in partnership with Adventure Stage Chicago and the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival, and supported by the Cultural Service at the Consulate General of France in Chicago.



[Scott McCloud](#) | Friday, Feb. 13, 2015 | 6 p.m.

Art Institute of Chicago, Rubloff Auditorium (230 S Columbus Dr) | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5

In *Understanding Comics* **Scott McCloud** made it cool to take comics seriously. Now the man hailed by graphic icons from Neil Gaiman to Alan Moore is back with a brand new graphic novel, five years in the making! *The Sculptor* reworks the classic tale of an artist willing to do anything to succeed, including making a deal with Death. Join Scott McCloud as he takes to the CHF stage to discuss life in and outside of comics.



[Kim Gordon](#) | Thursday, Feb. 26, 2015 | 7 p.m.

Music Box Theatre (3733 N Southport Ave) | G \$18, M \$14, ST \$8

Book and ticket package: G \$38, M \$33, ST \$33

Is there anyone cooler than **Kim Gordon**? The founding member of the seminal band Sonic Youth is also a talented musician, artist, writer, and, oh yeah, role model to a generation of women. Now she's written a memoir recounting her life as a musician and artist, including her partnership and eventual professional and personal breakup with Thurston Moore. *Girl in a Band* takes us back to the post-punk scene of New York in the 1980s and '90s, when Sonic Youth helped create a musical revolution. Come spend the evening with Gordon, a trailblazing lady of rock and roll, with a special opening performance by Girls Rock! Chicago. *This program* is presented in partnership with the Music Box Theatre.



[Cristina Henríquez](#) | Wednesday, March 18, 2015 | 6 p.m.

Instituto Cervantes of Chicago, Auditorium (31 W Ohio St) | G \$15, M \$10, ST \$5

Cristina Henríquez's *The Book of Unknown Americans* follows the journeys of two families—one Panamanian, one Mexican—from Latin America to their adopted homeland of the United States. At its heart, though, this is a love story, one by turns suspenseful and wry. Henríquez returns to the CHF stage with a story that offers a resonant new definition of what it means to be American.

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ABOUT THE CHICAGO HUMANITIES FESTIVAL

For 25 years, the Chicago Humanities Festival has celebrated the questions that shape and define us as individuals, communities, and cultures. For the intellectually curious, CHF's vibrant **year-round programming** and robust **Fall Festival** offer the opportunity to engage with some of the world's most brilliant minds. Collaborating with leading arts, cultural, and educational organizations, it presents scholars, artists and architects, thinkers, theologians, and policy makers that change how we see the world, where we're from, and where we're going. CHF also presents the spring **Stages, Sights & Sounds** international children's theater festival.

The Chicago Humanities Festival has grown from **eight programs in one day at a single venue in 1990**, to **160 programs year-round at more than 25 venues** in and around Chicago. Over the past 25 years, CHF has put on more than 2,600 programs and performances, and presented more than 3,300 speakers and artists, including: 10 Nobel Prize winners, 70 Pulitzer Prize winners, 52 MacArthur Award recipients, 16 Tony Award winners, 10 Grammy Award winners, and seven Academy Award winners. Visit chicagohumanities.org for more information.