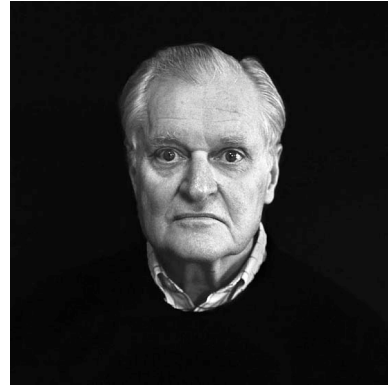


Wadsworth Atheneum Presents Free Poetry Reading and Book Signing with Pulitzer Prize-Winning Poet John Ashbery in January

HARTFORD, Conn., December 7, 2011 – In conjunction with the Wadsworth Atheneum’s special exhibition *Patti Smith: Camera Solo*, on view now through February 19, 2012, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet John Ashbery will read from his 2011 translation of Arthur Rimbaud’s *Illuminations*. The nineteenth-century French poet Arthur Rimbaud served as one of Patti Smith’s greatest muses and is the inspiration behind an installation created specifically for the exhibition.



“John Ashbery has gifted us with an exquisite, untainted translation of Rimbaud; a transmission as pure as a winged dove driven by snow,” said Smith of Ashbery’s *Illuminations* translation.

The reading will take place on Thursday, January 26, 2012 at 6 pm in the Aetna Theater and will be immediately followed by a book signing. It is free and open to the public.

Considered by many to be the most important living English-writing poet, Ashbery is internationally recognized and has won nearly every major American literary award. The National Book Foundation awarded its 2011 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters to Ashbery in recognition of his outstanding achievements as a twentieth-century poet.

Born in Rochester, New York, Ashbery received a B.A. from Harvard University and an M.A. from Columbia University. His *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (1975) won three major American prizes: the National Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Ashbery is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and was a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 1988 to 1999. He received two Guggenheim Fellowships and was a MacArthur Fellow from 1985 to 1990. Ashbery was recently awarded the Medal of the Center for French Civilization and Culture by New York University for his translations and his long connection to French literature. His own work has been translated into more than twenty-five languages. In addition to his poetry, Ashbery

has written about the visual arts, serving as executive editor of *Art News* and art critic for *New York Magazine* and *Newsweek*.

This public program is made possible through the support of the Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation. A snow date of February 16 is planned in case of inclement weather on January 26.

The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art is located at 600 Main St., Hartford, Connecticut. The Museum is open Wednesdays to Fridays, 11 am – 5 pm and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am – 5 pm, and the first Thursday of every month 11 am – 8 pm. Please visit wadsworthatheneum.org for more information.