

an evening with gordon ball

seasons with allen ginsberg

**moviemaker, photographer, poet, storyteller, farmer, professor, best picture
chronicler of the beat generation and resounding winner in the field “who shot the
most pictures of allen ginsberg?”**

reading / talk / films

with gordon ball, josef schützenhöfer and fritz ostermayer

*a cooperation of the vienna poetry school (schule für dichtung, sfd) with alte schmiede,
vienna,*

on 24 june 2014, 7 p.m. at sfd, mariahilfer str. 88a/stiege III/ 7; *free admission*
event in english

a premiere! never before have we welcomed an incarnate “colonel” of the “virginia militia (unorganized)” as a guest at our (not quite so pacifist) halls. however, up until recently we would not have dreamed about such a thing. thanks go to josef schützenhöfer and walter famler! due to their mediation an encounter with more recent american literary history will take place; an encounter which sfd-founder christian ide hintze could not have imagined any more perfectly.

we sense a few question marks: gordon who? let’s put it slightly blasphemously: if, for many beatniks, allen ginsberg constitutes a sort of semi-religious jesus-figure, then gordon ball would be his apostle peter in this biblical ensemble. since 1968, apostle gordon has documented life at ginsbergs cherry valley farm in upper new york state where, until 1971, he also acted as farm manager. in the beginning, as grandson of a portrait-photographer, ball was less interested in the “artistic” aspect of photography, but rather saw himself as documentarian of the beat-scene around ginsberg.



allen ginsbergs committee on poetry, inc. farm, cherry valley, new york, october 1969. from left, standing: julius orlovsky, lawrence ferlinghetti, gordon ball, allen ginsberg, robert creeley. front, seated: gregory corso, peter orlovsky.

being an artist interested in multimedia, ball, who was born in new jersey and grew up in tokyo, soon found his way to the movies by way of his friend, the famous moviemaker jonas mekas. his award-winning independent movies have since been shown at not so unknown institutions such as the museum of modern art or the guggenheim museum. we are already looking forward to mr ball presenting samples of his cinematographic work at our school!



allen ginsberg, philip whalen, novelist william s. burroughs, swimming pool area, varsity apartments, boulder, colorado, july 1976.

photo © gordon ball, 2006

yes: as pulitzer prize nominated editor of a book about ginsberg's lectures, ball will, of course, also read from his books, especially from "east hill farm – seasons with allen ginsberg". so that blissful drug shivers will run up the spines of the beatnik-proven audience and that we will all be spiritually moved!

entering the homepage of the virginia military institute, one can find among the faculty a professor gordon v. ball phd in full army attire. as a european literature freak one cannot, at first, grasp it, but colonel ball, who teaches "english, rhetoric & humanistic studies" at lexington, virginia, is the same person who, together with ginsberg and others, once wanted to make the world a better place through poetry. the photo below shows that ball has not yet given up on this plan – at first sight one assumes it has been photoshopped. but holy shit: the photo is real! professor ball's cadet-classroom is actually reading one of the biggest and most scandalous poems of the 20th century:



cadets read howl, february 19, 1991, virginia military institute, lexington, virginia. photo copyright © gordon ball, 2006.

upon viewing this more than weird photo one can only agree with bob dylan: "the times they are a-changin'". ah, yes: dylans farm was then located not too far from ginsberg's beat-farm and there was frequent amicable traffic. something our contemporary witness for sure has much to tell about. because: during this "evening with gordon ball" a talk with the audience is explicitly wished for by the artist. to this effect: aural history rules, folks!

we are immensely looking forward to: gordon ball and your attendance!

fritz ostermayer for the vienna poetry school.

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josef schützenhöfer

born 1954 in vorau in eastern styria. when he was 19 he emigrated to the us where he studied painting and signed on with the navy. there, he also completed training as a dental technician. from 1975: cleveland institute of art, usn school of dental science san diego, old dominion university norfolk/virginia, maryland institute college of art baltimore, university for applied art vienna, nostrification, master of arts.

since 1997 schützenhöfer lives again in austria, in pöllau in styria. numerous exhibitions. initiator of the projet "liberation in progress" which he leads together with klaus zeyringer.

josef schützenhöfer:

"why i make art?..."

a society draws boundaries for itself and austrians do so far too much. in order for these boundaries not to be drawn closer and closer, one needs art. some kind of guarantor which steps across this border zone into illegality time and again. naturally, i like to be a part of this."

"thomas bernhard or allen ginsberg..."

this is a difficult thing, i value both very much, only with allen ginsberg there is the bonus that he was visiting artist with us at the maryland institute for a week, and he performed his songs and poems in person, therefore, allen ginsberg with standing ovation."

"character trait..."

pronounced sense of justice, hysterically allergic to church and police."

fritz ostermayer

born 1956, musician, dj, performer, author, festival designer. for years music and cultural editor with various magazines and newspaper, until today radio maker (on fm4, together with thomas edlinger). since 2012 artistic director of the vienna poetry school.

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