

Language/Beats

Book celebration, reading, discussion

Barrett Watten: *Zone: correlations* (Chax Press)

Erik Mortenson: *Allen Ginsberg in Context* (Cambridge University Press)

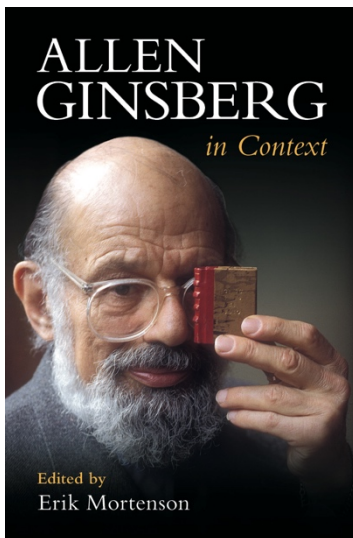
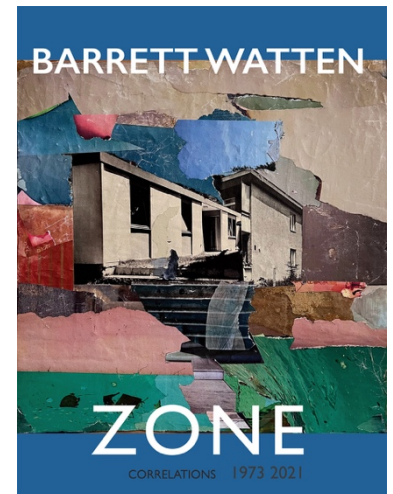
Third Mind Books

118 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor

7:00 P.M. Thursday, June 11, 2026

This event marks the publication of Barrett Watten's collection of experimental writing *Zone: correlations* (1973 2021) and Erik Mortenson's edited volume *Allen Ginsberg in Context*. More than that, it celebrates the working relationship and literary dialogue between a Language writer and an innovative scholar of the Beat Generation since 2003, when Mortenson earned his PhD at Wayne State under Watten's supervision.

Barrett Watten will discuss the early influence of Beat writers (particularly Ginsberg and Burroughs) on emergent Language writing in the 1970s, connecting passages from their writings with his early development. He will then point out that influence in works from his recent collection, *Zone*.



Erik Mortenson will present his recently published volume on Allen Ginsberg, reflecting on Ginsberg, his compositional strategies, and his influence on later generations of poets. Discussion will then focus on topics such as theories of language and its use, the pushing of boundaries and limits, and poetry as political resistance to examine points of intersection between Ginsberg's multifaceted work and Watten's *Zone*.

The public is invited. A Q&A session will follow, inviting audience participation.

On *Zone: correlations*: “The correlations in this remarkable book take parataxis on mind-spinning trips across time, place, genre, medium, language, and author, producing strikingly emotional results. . . . Throughout, there is the characteristic Watten tone, the reader’s building sense that the cool, polished surfaces of these lines are somehow, and barely, managing to contain a kind of analytic fury.” —David Kellogg

On *Allen Ginsberg in Context*: “Ginsberg is essential to an understanding of 20th century poetry. . . . Ginsberg produced a staggering body of work that garnered attention not just for its innovative style and personal candor, but for its range of theme and willingness to meaningfully engage the world in a bid to change it. Taking a broadly chronological approach, this volume provides a comprehensive overview of the major issues, themes, and moments essential to understanding Ginsberg, his work, and his outsized influence on the cultural politics of the postwar both in the US and globally.”

<https://chax.org/shop/zone-correlations-1973-2021-by-barrett-watten/>
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/allen-ginsberg-in-context/FE298C2B4984970822945A5DCF9EAE16>

Bios:

Barrett Watten is a poet, critic, and editor with numerous publications from the 1970s to the present. He is author of *Frame* (1971–1990); *Bad History*; *Progress/Under Erasure*; *Not This: Selected Writings/He mo: Избранные тексты*; co-author of *Leningrad: American Writers in the Soviet Union* and *The Grand Piano: An Experiment in Collective Autobiography*; author of critical works such as *Total Syntax*; *The Constructivist Moment* (Rene Wellek Prize); and *Questions of Poetics*; subject of the edited volume *Barrett Watten: Contemporary Poetics as Critical Theory* (Aerial 8); and professor at Wayne State University.

Erik Mortenson is the author of three book-length studies of the Beat Generation: *Capturing the Beat Moment: Cultural Politics and the Poetics of Presence* (2011; a CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title); *Ambiguous Borderlands: Shadow Imagery in Cold War American Culture* (2016); and *Translating the Counterculture: The Reception of the Beats in Turkey* (2018). He edited *Allen Ginsberg in Context* from Cambridge University Press (2026), and co-edited *Rethinking Kerouac: Afterlives, Continuities, Reappraisals* (2025) and *The Beats and the Academy: A Renegotiation* (2023), while publishing numerous journal articles in the field. He earned his PhD at Wayne State University and teaches at Lake Michigan College.