



## Marching to a Different Beat

*Beat poet Gregory Corso subject of a UC festival*

**MATT MORRIS** // JAN 14, 2009

Poet Gregory Corso has been called "The Last Beat." Indeed, that is the title of a new documentary by Gustave Reininger to be shown as part of the upcoming "I Gave Away the Sky" Corso festival at University of Cincinnati.

The festival will consider Corso's work and legacy through an art exhibition, lecture, poetry reading, an evening of music and the film. The term "last," in regards to Corso, refers to the fact he outlived other Beat writers — notably Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Corso died in 2001 at the age 70 after writing such touchstones as *The Happy Birthday of Death*, *Gasoline* and *Bomb*.

The festival begins with an art exhibition in UC's Reed Gallery that opens on Jan. 20. Curated by Evan Commander, *The Stars in the Sky Are Still Boss* gathers the work of local and more widely known artists around Corso's own drawings, paintings and selected manuscripts. The other included artists reflect some of Corso in their work and elaborate on Corso's own visual work that, while sometimes naive, is built with the same passion as his poems. The frenetic doodles in Corso's art will no doubt seem even more animated beside the work of Chris Johanson and Raymond Pettibon, who each poetically editorialize their cartoonish drawings with clouds of handwritten text.

Kim Krause's meditations on Greek mythology through kaleidoscopic abstract oil paintings will do well in calling out Corso's own quest for inspiration. And Ginsberg's photographic portraits of Corso will be displayed in relation to Ryan McGinley's photographs that capture fleeting moments involving intimate tribes of friends.

The festival continues with a lecture by co-curator Matt Hart on Jan. 22. Then there is a poetry reading with at least six readers that aims to honor "the poetics and *poesy* of Gregory Corso"

on Jan. 29. Both events are at 6 p.m. in UC's Reed Gallery in the DAAP building and are free to the public. Hart will be lecturing on *The Golden Dot*, an unpublished manuscript of Corso's.

At Memorial Hall on Feb. 3 at 7 p.m., music will come into play as David Amram's original score for the 1959 film *Pull My Daisy* will be presented in a new arrangement by local performance artist Jane Carver in *Muse-Sick: The Corso Suite*. All the more thrilling is that after recently acting as the composer-in-residence for the Democratic Convention, Amram will be present to conduct Carver's work as well as several of his own pieces. Musicians from UC's College-Conservatory of Music will perform the whole evening's concert.

All of these events lead up to the preview of the not-yet-released documentary *The Last Beat*. Narrated by Ethan Hawke, the film follows Corso in his last years as he traveled the globe in search of inspiration and traces down the mother he had never known. The film will be shown on Feb. 6 at 5:30 p.m. in the DAAP Theatre, Room 4400, followed by a closing reception for the festival in the Reed Gallery from 8-10 pm.

By using the multidisciplinary approach to study Corso's writing, the event organizers show how the arts are fields of research and discovery. Corso's epitaph reads: "*Spirit/ Is Life/ It flows through/ The death of me/ Endlessly/ Like a River/ Unafraid/ Of Becoming/ The sea.*"

If our present memories of this "last Beat poet" are a drizzle now, one hopes those attending the festival will experience the full crashing waves of Corso's enduring importance to literature and the arts.

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**Go to [www.igaveawaythesky.com](http://www.igaveawaythesky.com) for more information on the GREGORY CORSO festival.**

**<https://www.citybeat.com/arts-culture/lit/article/13018147/marching-to-a-different-beat>**