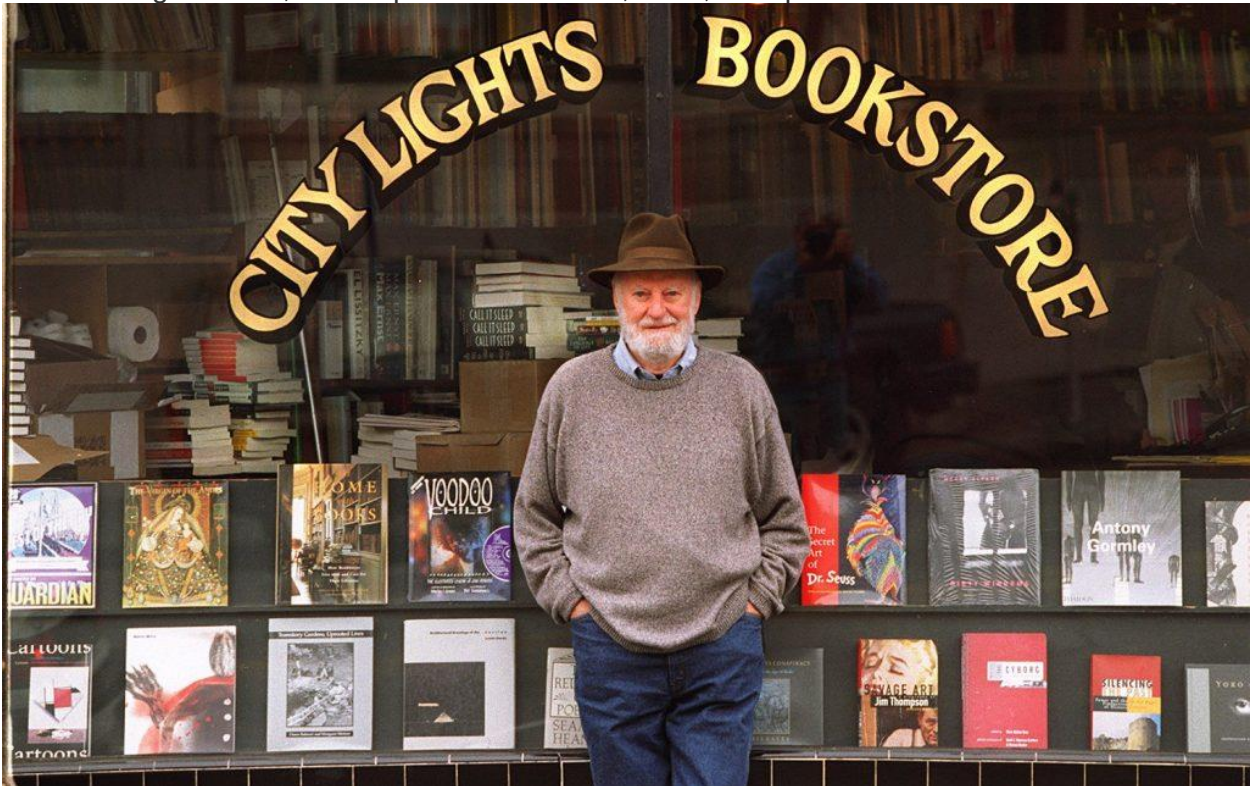




## Art of and by Ferlinghetti in 2 shows for his 100th birthday

Sam Whiting March 8, 2019 Updated: March 12, 2019, 1:49 pm



Lawrence Ferlinghetti, shown at his City Lights bookstore in North Beach, is being honored for his 100th birthday.

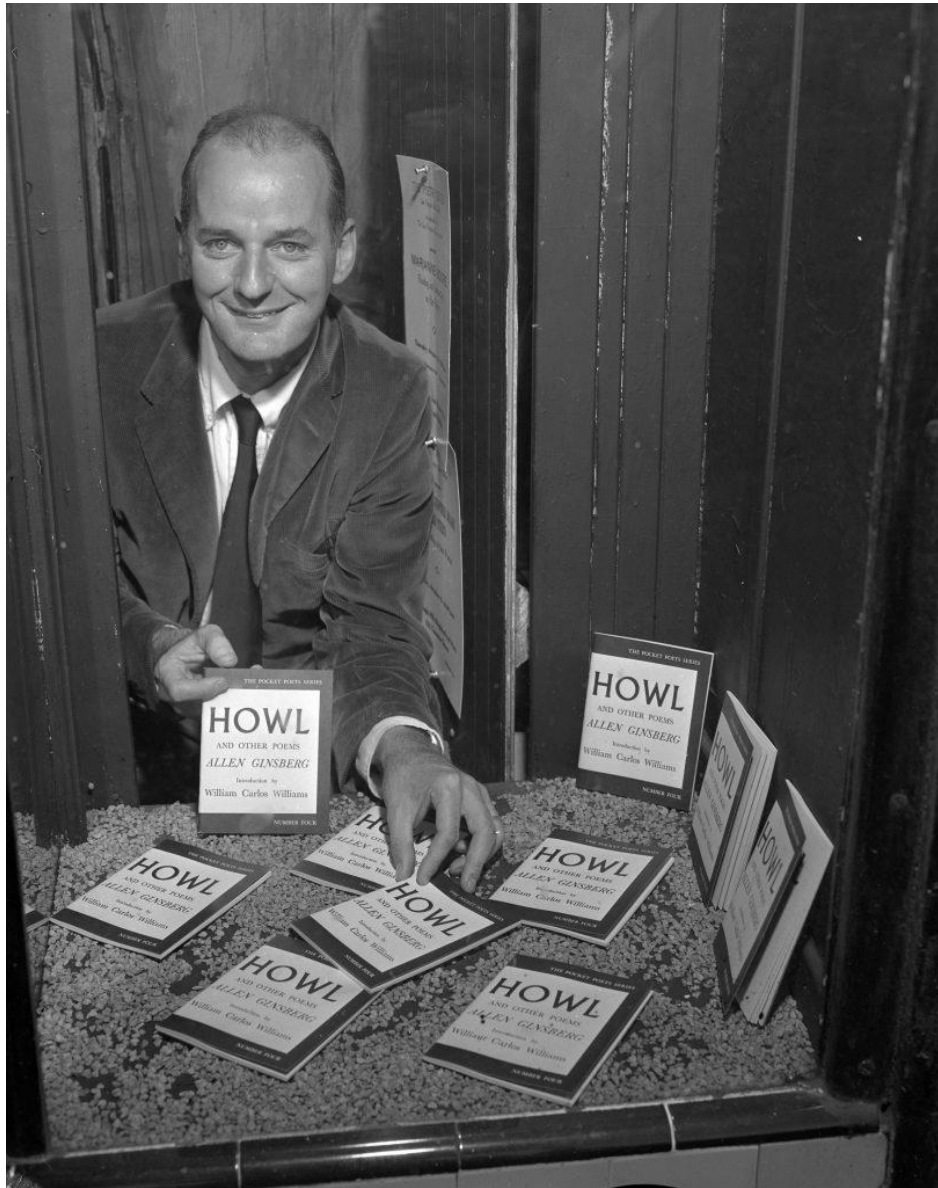
Photo: Stacey Lewis, The Chronicle 1995

Two things **Lawrence Ferlinghetti** has done in abundance — besides writing poetry — is paint and pose for pictures. And there are enough of each to fill a gallery.

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

To that end, in honor of the North Beach bard's 100th birthday on March 24, Rena Bransten Gallery is showing the paintings of Ferlinghetti, and Canessa Gallery is showing pictures of Ferlinghetti.

The 27 images at Canessa, mostly black-and-whites of Ferlinghetti reciting and entertaining in San Francisco and abroad, were pulled from the archives at City Lights Booksellers & Publishers and are currently on view. Newly framed, they hang on brick walls in a single room, forming "Ferlinghetti in Photographs."



Lawrence Ferlinghetti in 1957 with Allen Ginsberg's famed collection.

Photo: Bob Campbell, The Chronicle 1957

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

Canessa keeps limited hours, noon to 3 p.m. Wednesdays, and requires visitors to ring a buzzer for an office worker, who comes down the stairs to let them in and allows them to browse images unattended. But on Ferlinghetti's birthday, a Sunday, the gallery will be open all afternoon as part of the civic **celebration centered at City Lights Booksellers** and spilling across the Jack Kerouac Alley to Vesuvio Cafe and further down Columbus Street at Cafe Zoetrope.

Ferlinghetti has sent his regrets in advance, letting fans know he won't be in attendance, so the nearest representation might be the pictures on the wall at Canessa.

Also on March 24, the pictures will move with a free screening of "Lawrence Ferlinghetti: A Lifetime in Poetry," by Giada Diano and Elisa Polemini. The 50-minute documentary will run every hour between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.



"S. Francisco," 1993, by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Photo: John Janca, Rena Bransten Gallery

The exhibition at Bransten, called "Lawrence Ferlinghetti: 100 Years Without a Net," was curated by gallery owner Trish Bransten. She visited Ferlinghetti's studio in Hunters Point and made her selections, in conversation with Ferlinghetti.

RENA BRANSTEN  
GALLERY



Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Deux,” 1950. Photo: Rena Bransten Gallery

What immediately caught her attention was the blindfolded couple in “Deux,” which was shown in the traveling exhibition **“Beat Culture and the New America, 1950-1965”**, mounted by the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1995. Painted in 1950, it is the earliest work in Ferlinghetti’s collection.

She also found a second blindfolded figure, in a painting from 1993. Called “Liberty No. 2,” it shows the figure rowing a boat that has the Statue of Liberty as its passenger.

RENA BRANSTEN  
GALLERY



Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Liberty #2," 1993. Photo: Rena Bransten Gallery

In the gallery, these hang in succession, bridging 43 years. The show opened March 2 and Bransten is still trying to link the blindfolded figures.

"It has something to do with the promise of ancient civilization not being fulfilled," she says. "That is Lawrence's call to action as a painter and as a publisher as well."

In all, there are 31 works in the show — 10 paintings and 21 drawings — most of which have never been exhibited.

"They really reflect Lawrence's sense of humor," she says. "He's always thinking about the failures of Western civilization."

RENA BRANSTEN  
GALLERY



Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Voyage II," 2016. Photo: Diane Roby, Rena Bransten Gallery

"Deux" sold on opening night, but still available is "Voyage II," completed in 2016. It is Ferlinghetti's final painting before he retired due to failing eyesight.

He's not been to the gallery to see the show, but Bransten is hopeful. She has Champagne on ice.

# RENA BRANSTEN

## GALLERY

“I’d like to toast Lawrence’s 100th birthday and this incredible body of work that he has created,” she says. “His massive reputation as a poet eclipsed the appreciation for his visual art.”

**“Lawrence Ferlinghetti: 100 Years Without a Net”:** Paintings. Rena Bransten Gallery, 1275 Minnesota St., S.F. [renabranstengallery.com](http://renabranstengallery.com)

**“Ferlinghetti in Photographs”:** Photographs. Noon-3 p.m. Wednesdays. Special hours 1-5 p.m. March 24. Through March 27. Free. Canessa Gallery, 708 Montgomery St., S.F. [www.canessa.org](http://www.canessa.org)