



Kenneth Goldsmith: Retyping a Library

09.06. – 07.08.22



Kenneth Goldsmith, Retyping a Library (2002-2020)

In collaboration with Lofoten International Art Festival we are delighted to announce *Retyping a Library*, a solo exhibition by Kenneth Goldsmith (b. 1961). Curated by Francesco Urbano Ragazzi, artistic directors of LIAF 2022, and Anne Hilde Neset, director of Kunsternes Hus, the exhibition presents a new commission by the American artist and writer.

Overview

- The New York-based artist and poet Kenneth Goldsmith is shown for the first time in Norway.
- He is the founder of the avant-garde web archive UbuWeb, recently acquired by the New York Public Library.

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- The exhibition is presented in the lower exhibition hall and in parallel with two solo exhibitions by Ragna Bley and Kim Hiorthøy.
- A collaboration with Lofoten International Art Festival.
- Open to the press by appointment. Contact leonie@kunstnerneshus.no

Program

Thursday, 9 June | 18:30

Opening reception at Kunstnerne Hus. Announcement of the LIAF 2022 artist list by Francesco Urbano Ragazzi and guided tour of the exhibition by Kenneth Goldsmith.

Monday, 13 June | Time TBA

Conversation between Kenneth Goldsmith and Anne Hilde Neset on libraries and archives during the [Future Library's Symposium](#) held at the public library Deichman in Oslo

About the exhibition

Retyping a Library is a monumental new intervention by Kenneth Goldsmith for the gallery on the ground floor of Kunstnerne Hus. At the centre of the exhibition space, more than 200 boxes are arranged to form a cube that resembles a minimalist sculpture. Inside each box there is a manuscript on onionskin paper that bears witness to the titanic task the artist has set himself: to copy all the volumes in his library with a typewriter.

Retyping a Library could either be a stoical exercise in attention or a well-conceived scam. It is certainly a celebration of literature and the daily work it takes to produce it. "Goldsmith's artistic work has always been driven by a dedication to literature, art and archives, and questions of ownership and copyright," says co-curator Anne Hilde Neset. This is how the artist describes the birth of the artwork:

"In 2002, I began retyping my library. It was during the heyday of file-sharing and copying was everything. It seemed to me that things only had value if they existed in multiples; politically and socially I felt that if everyone couldn't have something, then it had no value. So in 2002, I sat down and retyped *Moby Dick*. Cut to lockdown. I often found myself sitting alone in the studio. And at those moments, my mind began to drift back to 2002; what if the retyping my library project had gone in another direction? What if I started it up again, letting it evolve into a hybrid project, one in which literature fused with visual art?"

Retyping a Library ties in with the practice of uncreative writing that Goldsmith theorised and implemented through radical copy-paste in projects such as *Day* (2003), *Printing Out the Internet* (2013), and *The Hillary Clinton Emails* (2019). In the display cases scattered throughout the exhibition space at Kunstnerne Hus, each copied book is additionally associated with a portrait of its author drawn by Goldsmith himself. The potentially infinite replicability of the copy thus enters into dialogue with an artefact of absolute singularity, highlighting the hand behind the activity of appropriation and rewriting. The same dialectic is exhibited on the walls of the room, where more than 200 signatures of the authors are printed on paper to form a grid stretching from the floor to the ceiling.



The library ranges from authors like Theodor Adorno to Unica Zürn, via Lydia Cabrera, Hélène Cixous, Karl Ove Knausgård, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, to Jun'ichirō Tanizaki, and many more.

Kenneth Goldsmith's *Retyping a Library* anticipates some of the themes shaping the next edition of the Lofoten International Art Festival. The curatorial duo Francesco Urbano Ragazzi explains: "We see the exhibition at Kunstnerne Hus as a preview project for LIAF. Kenneth's work hides some references that have inspired our edition of LIAF: from Shelley to Nakamura. It is made of an authorship that is multiple and singular, it deals with isolation and community, digital scarcity and democracy, it pushes us to think not so much about the possibilities of artificial intelligence as about the automation already in place of the human mind."

The title of LIAF 2022 and the names of the invited artists will be revealed at the exhibition opening at Kunstnerne Hus.

About the artist

Kenneth Goldsmith (b. 1961) is an American author, poet and artist. He has published ten poetry books and several essays, including *Wasting Time on The Internet* (2016) and *Duchamp Is My Lawyer: The Polemics, Pragmatics, and Poetics of UbuWeb* (2020) about his large digital archive of avant-garde art, UbuWeb. In 2013, Goldsmith presented the exhibition *Printing Out the Internet* at the Labor Gallery in Mexico, where he filled a room with ten tons of paper in honour of Internet activist Aaron Swartz. In 2019, he exhibited *HILLARY: The Hillary Clinton Emails* at the Venice Biennale, where he printed all 62,000 pages of Clinton's controversial emails.



Kenneth Goldsmith © Jerónimo Álvarez

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