

Kjetil Rød

Art and Death. A User's Manual

Kunsten og døden. En bruksanvisning

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We are all going to die and before that happens, most of us will grow old. Nobody escapes this fate. Nonetheless, our youth-obsessed culture lacks models enabling us to reconceive and transcend the conventional notions of aging as inevitable decline and death as an anxiety-inducing taboo.

But we can do something about how we choose to understand and engage with these existential conditions. In *Art & Death. A User's Manual*, Kjetil Rød's premise is that art, literature, and philosophy are enormously helpful in this pursuit.

Rød shares the story of his uncle's passing and reflects upon his own evolving awareness of death. He gives the reader thought-provoking and accessible analyses of art, and a piercing criticism of the anxiety about aging and death that is characteristic of our times.

The result is a powerful argument for how art, when it moves us, can change our lives. In the book we encounter classical paintings, contemporary works, literature, and music which can give us a healthier relationship to our own fragile and finite lives – and thus to life itself.



Photo: Siw Pessar

Kjetil Rød (b. 1973) is the editor of the art journal *Billedkunst*. He has published a number of reviews and essays in Norwegian newspapers, as well as reviews for international art magazines like *Frieze*, *Artreview* and *artforum.com*. In 2019 Rød published *Working through the Past: Nordic Conceptual Art as a Tool for Re-thinking History* (SKIRA editore, Milano) and the critically acclaimed book *Art & Life: A User's Manual* (*Kunsten og livet. En bruksanvisning*, 2019), sold to Smak Słowa in Poland. In 2021 he translated Iris Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* and wrote a sequel to *Art & Life*; *Art & Death. A User's Manual*.

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