



Art and Death. A User's Manual

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Kjetil Rød

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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 paradigms 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 striking 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 examples of classical paintings, contemporary works, literature, and music that can give us a healthier relationship to our own fragile and finite lives – and thus to life itself.

Kjetil Rød

Kjetil Rød (1973–) is the editor of the visual art journal *Billedkunst*. He has published a number of reviews and essays in the Norwegian press, including the national newspapers *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen*, as well as reviews for international art publications such as *Frieze*, *Artreview* and *artforum.com*. 2019 saw the publication of Rød's books *Working through the Past: Nordic Conceptual Art as a Tool for Re-thinking History* (SKIRA editore, Milano) and the critically acclaimed *Art & Life: A User's Manual* (*Kunsten og livet. En bruksanvisning*, 2019), the foreign rights of which have been acquired by a Polish publisher. In 2021 he translated Iris Murdoch's *The Sovereignty of Good* (*Det Godes suverenitet*, Cappelen Damm) and completed the sequel to *Art & Life*, entitled *Art & Death. A User's Manual* (Res publica, 2021).