

An International Art Project by



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FA+

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"With this simple and elegant conceptual act, FA+ summarize and goes beyond what many artists, politicians, ideologues, have discussed for years: to present high culture at street level without making any exceptions in form or substance."

Charlotte Bydler, PhD in Art History, Professor, Art Critic and Curator

The Concept

The general idea of the project is to apply this concept in so many cities as possible, in the open space and interacting with its population. The aim of this art-piece is to stimulate the coming generations; the immigrants and the temporary visitors to read the specific author's works. Every city and author will become a "volume" in the library.

To introduce the *own* author in the city

Most of the cities have their *own* famous author who is consider belonging to its historical and cultural capital. A writer is hers/his written text. A successful and graceful way to introduce an author is by presenting quotes of the text straight as it is in an open public space, in accessible letters laying on the street for the city walkers.

THE UNIVERSAL LIBRARY concept is **to install the author's quotations** in a central, popular and well visited street, if possible located in direct relation to the author's life in the city.

An important part of the concept it is to establish the project among the local population, mainly among the youth.

Including the community

In both Stockholm and Oslo where a number of workshops done in several secondary schools encouraging the students to propose quotations; cultural associations, librarians, teachers, were invited to suggest theirs. All the population could, and many did, participate through the project's home-page; even the homeless did participate through their own magazine.

The final selection and the proofreading are done by FA+ in cooperation with the leading experts of the specific author's work.

To activate the citizens to suggest quotations is to make them aware that they are an important part as collaborators of the project and the final art-piece will be also their own creation. Many years from now, they may walk beside the quotation with their grandchildren and say "I suggested this quotation" and by that way introduce the author to a new generation.

THE UNIVERSAL LIBRARY by FA+ stays as a good example of an international model for how artists, organizations and local population can work together to do an art piece in the public space, not only for everybody's joy today but also for the surprise and delight of the coming generations over the richness of their own city's cultural heritage.



THE UNIVERSAL LIBRARY concept begun 1994 with painted quotations of August Strindberg on the street, to be installed permanently in 1998. The latest permanent installation is *Ibsen Sitat* in Oslo's main streets finalized in 2008.

At the moment FA+ is working to permanent the quotations of Søren Kierkegaard in Copenhagen, Selma Lagerlöf in Falun and Pär Lagerkvist, Elin Wägner and Vilhelm Moberg in Växjö (both cities in Sweden).

FA+ has 25 years of pioneer work behind, with a profound experience in including the involvement of the population in the public space's artwork.

It begun in the 1980's in Spain to quickly establish it in the beginning of the 90's in Sweden creating works like *Stockholm for sale*, *Il Cadavere Squisito*, *L'Art de Triomphe* and many others; for more information look at: <http://www.fa-art.pp.se/>



Permanent Art Works

The letters are laser-cut out in stainless steel and installed into the street's own material (asphalt or stone).

The materials, asphalt, stone and steel belong to the milieu in a natural way. The use of typography for the letters is totally free from decoration to obtain maximal ease in reading, and it is the same type of font used for public information boards.

Pedestrians are confronted without any prior introduction, with a selection of known and obscure pieces of the author's literary works: poetic, philosophical, political, chosen to arouse thought, and which together give a poignant picture of the author's manner of thought; its complexity and its contradictions; a permanently open book where people travel through the texts or can walk beside, walk on top of them, read them and which will continue to be a permanent introduction to the author for the coming generations of readers.

The line of quotations, also offers a fresh alternative to the unavoidable pollution of reading material about bargains, sales and advertisements from the shops along the street.

Strindbergs Citat

Stockholm 1998

Discrete monumentalism is one of the characteristics in this permanent work located on Drottning Street in Stockholm. An 800 metre long line of letters cut out in stainless steel and set in asphalt, 33 quotations from the author Strindberg's different works. The line re-construct the white line that once was in the middle of the street.

The line starts by Strindberg's last residence (now a museum) and continues along the same stretch of road where he took his daily walk. It is possible that the work passes by places where some of these citations were composed.



This street has become an obligatory stop for all tourists to the Swedish capital, which has meant that new bars, restaurants and cafes are popping up in the area.

The first reaction of some elitist politicians and journalist was to exclaim that Strindberg's texts has nothing to do in the streets as *high-tech graffiti* as they called, but belongs into the libraries and asked to be removed.

An statistical survey done by the City authorities a couple of years ago, addressing all Stockholm citizens, revealed that the 76% of the inhabitants have Strindberg Citat as the most loved art piece in the open space. Now is the desire to install even more quotations.



Ibsen Sitat

Oslo 2008

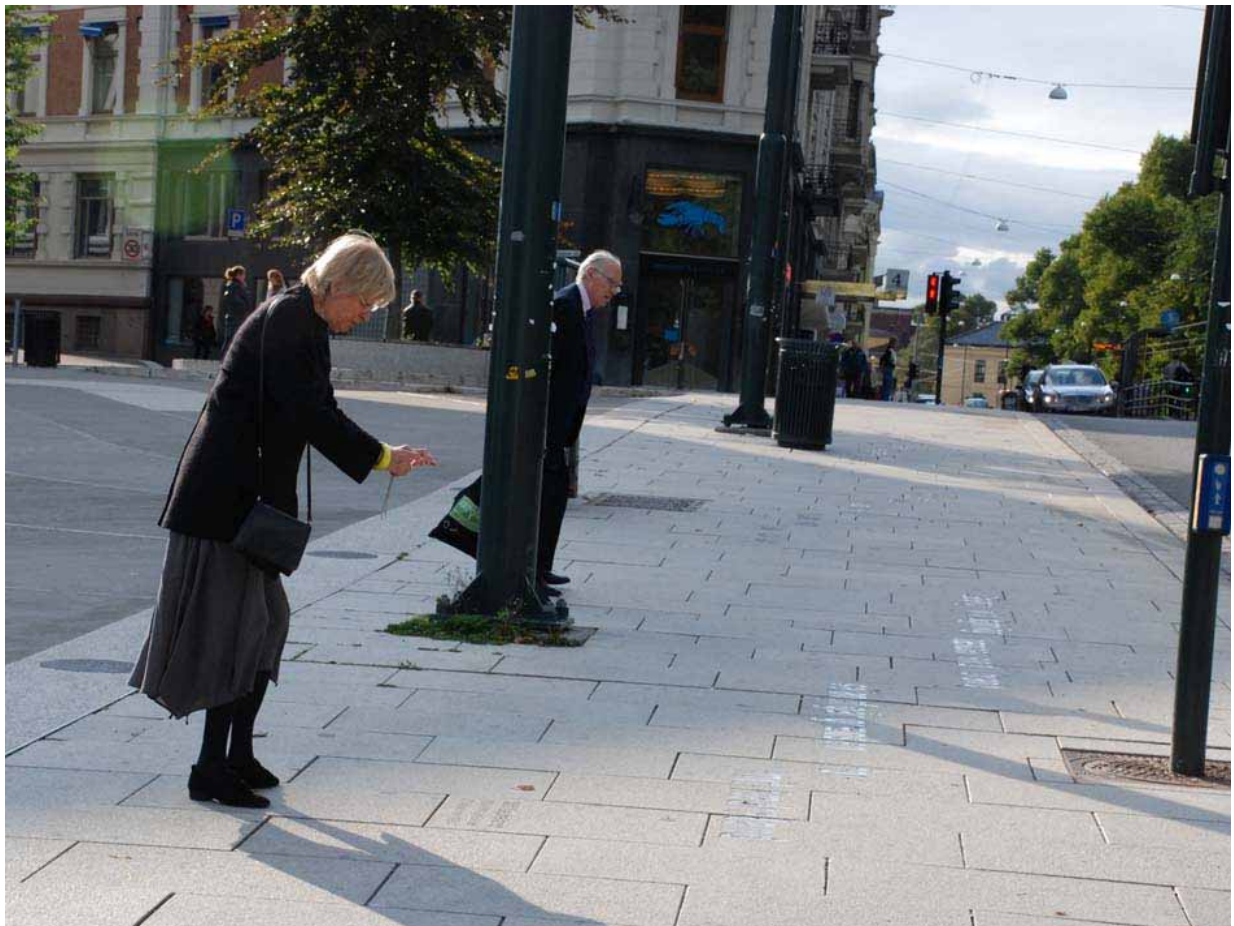
Permanent installation of Ibsen's quotations in Oslo's most central street, Karl-Johans Street, from his last residence at Arbins Street, through the route to the Grand Café.



1800 meter installation of 66 quotations using New Oslo font, stainless steel letters on granite.

The line starts (or ends) by Ibsen's last residence (now Ibsen's museum) and continues along the same stretch of road where he took his daily walk -at exactly the same time- to and from Grand Cafe.

The selection of the quotations is done in collaboration with students and other citizens of Oslo. Finally they have been carefully controlled by the world's leading expertise on Ibsen, Professor Vigdis Ystad in collaboration with Ibsen Museum's Director Erik Edvardsen.





Temporary Art Pieces

In other contexts there have been done short-lived quotation's works -some waiting for financial support to be permanent- like *Zitat – Kant on water* (Immanuel Kant), *into dead so loved* (Georg Adlesparre) and *FA+Norén/War* (Lars Norén).

Zitat - Kant on Water

For The National Center of Contemporary Art (NCCA),
Kaliningrad, Russia, July 2005

Ephemeral setting of an Immanuel Kant quotes (Styrofoam on water, floated along with the river to the sea). The quotation, in German and Russian, was: *Thoughts without content are empty. Ideas without concepts are blind.*



into death so loved.

For Duplicate 07 - Falun Triennial of Contemporary Art - 2007

Temporary installation (hair on water, lasted one month) of a quotation of officer and author Georg Adlesparre. In the Falun stream between the bridges *Falun* and *Klabb* in Falun, Sweden - August / September 2007. The quotation was: *Around my neck is placed the chain of hair that is made in memory of the one I loved the most, into death so loved.*



FA + Norén/War

Curated by Magdalena Smidova for The Living History Forum. In cooperation with Ulrika Josephsson, Sweden Nationwide Theatre

Lund, Linköping, Umeå, Botkyrka, Gothenburg, Vara and Stockholm, Sweden. September - December 2004

Installation of author Lars Norén's quotations from his (then) latest piece "War" in street signs, the street installation went on tour together with the theatre company and seminars about War/The rape of woman and children as a systematic weapon of war.



They forced me to look at while they did it



Why are you not dead?



It hurts



Daddy, let it be - I can't even get revenge



One day all the women cut off their hair