

PRESS RELEASE

“THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED – AN EXHIBITION ABOUT KNUD PEDERSEN”

December 10 2015 – January 24 2016

Opening: Wednesday December 9 2015, 5-8pm

With an untraditional exhibition format, Nikolaj Kunsthal presents a retrospective exhibition about Knud Pedersen. It is the story of a versatile and productive artist, project maker, resistance fighter, author, and exhibition organizer.

An art library, football in the dark, nine seconds of screaming, the loaning of the crown jewels, portrait paintings of travellers in an airport, a museum of lifts, and a Copenhagen museum of modern art. With his wealth of ideas and projects, many of which were never realised, Knud Pedersen, who died last December, was one of a kind on the Danish art scene. In his projects, the potential of ideas and thoughts was turned into the artistic material that tested its surroundings. To him, the pivotal points were an exploration of what art could be used for and how best to make it for everyone. He aimed for the utopian, rejected authorities, and the range of his imagination seemed to know no bounds.

MUSEET ER LUKKET (“THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED”) is a retrospective exhibition with no works. The title is inspired by Knud Pedersen: In 1967, he pretended to have created a much sought-after art museum in Copenhagen that he named *Copenhagen Museum of Modern Art*. Despite the fact that this museum was never given the permission to open by the Copenhagen Municipality, Knud Pedersen would later travel the world as the Director of this enterprise. The idea of the museum became the actual work. Now the museum is closed; and instead the exhibition features a series of interviews with people presenting Knud Pedersen’s work with various ideas and projects over many years. It is a biographical, diverse tale of a complex person who is driven by the idea rather than the goal, and who was ahead of his time in terms of challenging and expanding the notion of art, the art institution, and the artist. The exhibition thus also becomes an investigation of what it means, to a project maker like Knud Pedersen, continuously to be working against visionless political and cultural institutions, commercial art, and fixed conventions of what art can be, and for whom.

The exhibition consists of video interviews with people with connection to and insight into Knud Pedersen’s work over the years. The interviews have been produced in co-operation with author and journalist Oliver Stilling.

Participants: Tom Ahlberg, former Mayor of Education and Culture, City of Copenhagen; Eric Andersen, artist; Mikkel Bogh, Director of the National Gallery of Denmark; Pelle Brage-Andersen, artist and member of the artists group Parfyme; Jacob Fabricius, Artistic Director of Kunsthal Aarhus; Elisabeth Delin Hansen, former Director of Nikolaj Kunsthal; Jon Hendricks, researcher and curator for the Gilbert & Lila Silverman

Fluxus Collection, MoMA; Carsten Hoff, architect; Kirsten Justesen, artist; Bengt af Klintberg, ethnologist, author and artist; Yvonne Krogh, psychologist and a faithful borrower at The Art Library; Peter Laugesen, author and poet; Peter Alexander van der Meijden, researcher; Carina Randløv, film director; Bodil Riskær, wife/widow and day-to-day Head of The Art Library; Mette Stegelmann, day-to-day Head of The Art Library; Kim Vilfort, former footballer; Nikolaj Zeuthen, poet and author.

Short bio:

Knud Pedersen (1925-2014) was one of the co-founders of the resistance group *Churchill-klubben* ("The Churchill Club"), and for two years during WW2, he was sent to the Nyborg State Prison. In 1952, he launched *Byens Billede* ("The Picture of the City") – a permanent easel of glass and steel placed in the middle of the cityscape – and in 1957, he founded *Kunstabiblioteket* ("The Art Library") at Nikolaj Church in Copenhagen where artworks could be borrowed at the price of a pack of cigarettes. In the early 1960s, The Art Library housed a series of epoch-making FLUXUS concerts, and Knud Pedersen was instrumental in giving the movement such strong ties to Denmark due to his commitment to the scene around Nikolaj Church. He furthermore participated in several central exhibitions abroad with pieces such as *Fodbold med to bolde* ("Two-Ball Football") at FLUXSHOE, the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, 1973, and *9 sekunders skrig* ("9 Seconds Scream") at the 13th Annual Avant-Garde Festival at the World Trade Center in New York, 1977. He was the one who came up with the idea for the European Film College in Ebeltoft, Jutland, he published a large number of books and texts, and he was the father of financier Klaus Riskær Pedersen.

Contact:

Karen Mette Fog Pedersen, Head of Press Relations and Communication at Nikolaj Kunsthall, m: pr@nikolajkunsthall.dk, t: 3318 1784 / 2154 7498.