

# CRISTIN TIERNEY

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Tim Youd

## *Retyping the Chicago Public Library*

Chicago Performance Series

June – August 2023

Supported by

Chicago Public Library

The Arts Club of Chicago

Cristin Tierney Gallery

Chicago Public Library is pleased to announce two new retyping performances by visual and performance artist Tim Youd as part of the Chicago Public Library's (CPL's) 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. During the summer, as the 78<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> novels in Youd's *100 Novels Project*, Youd will retype two iconic Chicago novels by authors with formative connections to specific CPL branches. First, Youd will retype Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Most of this retyping will take place at the Hall Branch where Wright did research and met regularly with other Black writers, including

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Gwendolyn Brooks, Lorraine Hansberry, and Langston Hughes. Youd will then retype Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*. Much of this performance will take place at the Humboldt Park Branch, where Bellow spent a significant amount of time during his childhood years. Each performance will take approximately one month.

*Native Son* (1940) by Richard Wright tells of 20-year-old Bigger Thomas, a young Black man living in a poor neighborhood on Chicago's South Side in the 1930s. In discussing his life and crimes, Wright illuminated the systemic oppression faced by Thomas and others like him. The novel was an immediate success, selling hundreds of thousands of copies within weeks of its publication. It was one of the earliest novels to speak plainly about the racial divide in America and the social conditions imposed on Black people by white society.

*The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) by Saul Bellow assails the traditional narrative assigned to American heroes. Like many protagonists, March "comes from a poor family; he does not know the identity of his father; he refuses to be trapped by fine clothing, social position, or wealth,"<sup>1</sup> but he is smart, caring, and idealistic. Despite these positive qualities, however, March never truly succeeds in making a mark on the world, or becoming the hero he feels he is destined to be. In fall 2011, *The Adventures of Augie March* was a One Book, One Chicago selection, a CPL initiative that aims to foster a sense of community through reading.

Chicago has become central to Youd's *100 Novels Project* due to the city's enormous contribution to the literature of the typewriter epoch. With the support of The Arts Club of Chicago, this will mark the third consecutive summer Youd has performed in residence in Chicago. In the summer of 2021, Youd retyped Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (at The Arts Club of Chicago) and Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (at the Union Stockyard gates). In the summer of 2022, Youd retyped Nelson Algren's *Never Come Morning* (at Phyllis' Musical Inn) and *The Man with the Golden Arm* (at the Newberry Library).



Like Youd's previous *100 Novels* performances, both books will be retyped on the same make/model typewriters used by the authors. Youd will use a Royal Arrow for *Native Son* and a Royal KMG for *The Adventures of Augie March*. When retyping, Youd types all the words of the novel onto one page (which is backed by a second sheet) by running it repeatedly through the typewriter. The words become illegible, and the accumulated text becomes a rectangle of black ink inside the larger rectangle of the white page. Upon

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<sup>1</sup> Dutton, Robert R. "The Adventures of Augie March". *Saul Bellow*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982. 42-74.

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completion, Youd separates the two highly distressed pages and mounts them side-by-side in diptych form. This performance relic becomes a formal drawing, a representation of two pages of a book. The novel is present in its entirety, yet the words are completely obscured.

## ***Native Son* retyping schedule:**

Harold Washington Main Branch: June 10, 13-17, noon to 5:00 pm

Front courtyard of Hall Branch: June 20 – July 8, Tuesdays – Saturdays, noon to 5:00 pm\*

\*Youd will perform at The Arts Club of Chicago for three days during this period, dates TBD

*In event of inclement weather, Youd's performance will take place at the Harold Washington Main Branch.*

## ***The Adventures of Augie March* retyping schedule:**

Humboldt Park Branch: July 24 – August 12, Mondays – Saturdays, noon to 5:00 pm\*

Harold Washington Main Branch: August 14-19, noon to 5:00 pm

\*Youd will perform at The Arts Club of Chicago for three days during this period, dates TBD

*In event of inclement weather, Youd's performance will take place at the Harold Washington Main Branch.*

**Tim Youd** (b. 1967, Worcester, MA) is a performance and visual artist working in painting, sculpture, and video. To date, he has retyped 77 novels at various locations in the United States and Europe. Residencies at historic writers' homes have included William Faulkner's Rowan Oak with the University of Mississippi Art Museum (Oxford, MS), Flannery O'Connor's Andalusia with SCAD (Milledgeville and Savannah, GA), Virginia Woolf's Monk's House (Rodmell, Sussex) and at the National Willa Cather Center in Red Cloud, NE. His work has been the subject of numerous museum exhibitions, including at CAM St. Louis, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, The New Orleans Museum of Art, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College, Hanes Art Gallery at Wake Forest University, and the Lancaster Museum of Art and History. He has presented and performed his 100 Novels project at the Ackland Art Museum, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Art Omi, Monterey Museum of Art, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) and LAXART, and retyped Joe Orton's *Collected Plays* at The Queen's Theatre with MOCA London. His studio is based in Los Angeles.

The **Chicago Public Library** welcomes and supports all people in their enjoyment of reading and pursuit of lifelong learning. Working together, we strive to provide equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, programs and other resources. We believe in the freedom to read, to learn, to discover.

Since 1916, **The Arts Club of Chicago** has been a preeminent exhibitor of international art, a forum for established and emerging artists, and a celebrated venue for performers from around the world. For over 100 years, The Arts Club has opened its membership to artists and patrons of the arts, and its exhibitions to the public.

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Founded in 2010, **Cristin Tierney Gallery** is a contemporary art gallery located on The Bowery with a deep commitment to the presentation, development and support of a roster of both established and emerging artists. Its program emphasizes artists engaged with critical theory and art history, with an emphasis on conceptual, video, and performance art. Education and audience engagement is central to our mission. Cristin Tierney Gallery is a member of the ADAA (Art Dealers Association of America).

## **Images**

Tim Youd retyping Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. 388 pages typed on an Underwood No. 5. The Arts Club of Chicago and Union Stockyard Gate, Chicago, September 20 – October 8, 2021. Photos by Sarah Elizabeth Larson for The Arts Club of Chicago.