



# a library

A miniature depicting Ezra the scribe in front of a book cupboard (armarium), from the Codex Amiatinus (early eighth century). For much of the first millennium after the fall of Rome, book chests and cupboards remained the standard means to store and organise a library.

A Library

## How to build a library?

Some say all you need is a bookshelf and a few friends to read with. Indeed, the true power of a library doesn't lie in how many books it holds, but in how it shapes its readers and interacts with the world. Libraries are constantly evolving—not just because books change, but because the way readers engage with books changes too.

Bookshelves, as the framework of a library, reflect each era's way of understanding and organizing knowledge. They are tools for arranging ideas, deciding which books are visible and which are forgotten. If you think of a bookshelf as a collection of stories, stepping into someone's home reveals more than just books. You might find a rock, a postcard, a starfish, or even a bone. These items, alongside the books, tell stories and form a part of someone's past.

In this exhibition, we present three sculptures built on the foundation of bookshelves. Each sculpture tells a story about the evolution of libraries. Together, the three sculptures form three fictional narratives. When it comes to the past of libraries, we are all observers. But when it comes to their future, we are all participants.

2024 年 11 月 10 日 - 2025 年 2 月 25 日 # 图书馆计划

一个图书馆 (A Library)

## 如何构建一个图书馆？

有人说我们只需要一个书架和一些阅读的朋友。是的，我们有理由相信图书馆的力量并不在于它们收藏了多少本书，而在于它们如何塑造读者，如何与世界互动。进一步说，图书馆一直在不断演变，不仅因为书籍的变化，还因为读者与书籍互动的方式在改变。

书架，作为一座图书馆的骨架，其排列方式反映了每个时代对知识的理解和管理方式，是组织知识和思想的工具。它们决定了哪些书可以被看到，哪些书会被遗忘。如果把书架当作一本故事集，当你走进一个人的家中，你会发现书架上不仅仅会存放书籍，也许你还会发现一块石头，一张明信片，一颗海星，亦或一根骨头…这些物品都在诉说着一些故事，与书籍一起构成了一个人的过去。

这次展览中，我们呈现了三个以书架为底座的雕塑，这三件雕塑分别讲述了关于图书馆演变的故事。

关于图书馆的过去，我们都是观众，而其未来，我们都是参与者。

“每座图书馆都是对未来的承诺，存储的不仅仅是过去的思想，更是所有尚未到来的可能性。”

—《图书馆：脆弱的历史》 “The Library: A Fragile History”

## Library, Memory

In 1835, the young scientist Charles Darwin brought back a 5-year-old tortoise from the Galápagos Islands as a pet, naming her Harriet. Darwin was fascinated by Galápagos tortoises, especially when he noticed distinct subspecies on different islands that appeared to have adapted to the specific conditions of each. This was one of many observations that contributed to his theory of evolution.

However, Britain's cold and damp climate was unsuitable for the tortoise's growth. In 1841, under the command of Captain Wickham, Harriet was taken aboard the HMS Beagle to Brisbane, Australia. Harriet lived there until her death in June 2006, at the age of 176.

With Harriet's passing, the 19th century—a century now separated from us by over 100 years—faded completely from the horizon of living memory. Among those alive today, no one has firsthand experience of events such as the Boxer Rebellion of summer 1900 in China, the South African War of 1899–1902, or the grand funerals of Giuseppe Verdi and Queen Victoria, who both passed away in January 1901. Similarly, no one has direct memories of the grand funeral procession of Japan's Emperor Meiji in September 1912, or the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. In November 2007, the last British survivor of the Titanic disaster passed away; she had been just an infant when the ship sank on April 14, 1912. In May 2008, Germany's last World War I veteran also passed away.

Since then, memories of the 19th century have ceased to be personal recollections. They have become mediated knowledge—transmitted through media and preserved in books, archives, and other traces of reading.

It is worth mentioning that when Harriet was brought to Britain, in Manchester, Sir John Potter, then mayor of the city, was fiercely debating with council members in his office about how to establish a public space for collective memory—a public library. In 1850, the Public Libraries Act was finally passed, granting local authorities the power to establish free public libraries for the first time. This marked the first step in creating a permanent national institution that provided universal, free access to information and literature. It also reflected the era's concerns with morality, society, and education.

The legacy of this act can be traced through subsequent legislation, which expanded on the powers first granted in 1850. Today, the UK's 4,145 public libraries can all be traced back to this landmark act.

1835 年，年轻科学家达尔文从加拉帕戈斯群岛（Galápagos Islands）带回了一只 5 岁的乌龟作为宠物，并给她取名为 Harriet。达尔文对加拉帕戈斯陆龟非常着迷，尤其是当他注意到不同的岛屿上显然有适应每个岛屿特定条件的不同亚种时。这也是他提出进化论的众多观察结果之一。

然而英国寒冷潮湿的气候并不适合乌龟的生长，1841 年，在威克姆船长的带领下，Harriet 随“比格尔号”轮船前往澳大利亚布里斯班。直到 2006 年 6 月，Harriet 在澳大利亚一家动物园寿终正寝，享年 176 岁。

自此 19 世纪这个与今世相隔已整整百年的世纪，才彻底消逝于个人记忆的地平线之后。在活着的人当中，再没有人亲历过 1900 年夏天的中国义和团起义，再没有人能记起 1899—1902 年的南非战争，以及 1901 年 1 月相继辞世的威尔第和维多利亚女王的隆重葬礼。同样也再没有人对 1912 年 9 月日本明治天皇的盛大出殡仪式和 1914 年 8 月第一次世界大战爆发时的硝烟，拥有最直接的记忆。2007 年 11 月，“泰坦尼克号”灾难的最后一位英国幸存者离开了人世，当这艘巨轮于 1912 年 4 月 14 日倾覆时，他还只是个襁褓中的婴儿。2008 年 5 月，德国最后一位一战老兵也终于撒手人寰。

从此，对 19 世纪的回忆不再是个人的记忆，而是媒体传递的信息之一，是阅读痕迹之一种。

值得一提的是在 Harriet 被带到英国时，在曼切斯特，时任市长约翰·波特爵士在他的办公室里正与议员激烈地讨论着如何建立一个公共的记忆的场所——公共图书馆。终于在 1850 年通过了“1850 年公共图书馆法”（The Public Libraries Act 1850）这一法案，自此首次赋予地方行政区建立免费公共图书馆的权力。该法案是建立一个永久性国家机构的第一步，它为人们提供了普遍免费获取信息和文学作品的机会，同时也表明了当时人们对道德、社会和教育的关注。该法案的遗产可通过后续立法加以追溯，这些立法以 1850 年授予的权力为基础并加以扩展，21 世纪英国现有的 4145 家公共图书馆可追溯到该法案。



## Library Classification

On December 10, 1851, just a year after the Public Libraries Act of 1850 was passed, a reformer of public libraries was born in a small town near New York. He was the fifth and youngest child of Joel and Eliza Green Dewey, and they named him Melville Dewey. Raised in a rural school, he decided early on that his destiny was to reform public education. From a young age, his obsessive nature led him to advocate for “spelling reform.” He even changed the conventional spelling of his name, “Melville,” to “Melvil,” removing unnecessary letters, and for a time shortened his last name to “Dui.”

At the time, libraries faced a major challenge. With the rapid increase in book collections, traditional classification systems were struggling to keep up, leaving libraries increasingly disorganized. As a student working at the Amherst College library in 1873, Dewey recognized this issue and came up with the idea of a library classification system. He implemented his system in the college’s library, and by 1876, he had developed the first version of the classification system, which he called the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), commonly known as the Dewey Decimal System.

Dewey quickly founded the Library Bureau, which supplied libraries with materials and equipment, such as high-quality index cards and filing systems. He also standardized the size of catalog cards. The Library Bureau rapidly became a one-stop supplier for all library needs. In 1930, the Library of Congress began printing Dewey classification numbers on nearly all catalog cards, allowing libraries that used the Library of Congress card sets to adopt the system immediately.

The Dewey Decimal System introduced the concept of relative location and relative indexing. Previously, books were assigned fixed shelf locations based on the order in which they were acquired, rather than by subject. Dewey’s classification system used three-digit numbers to represent major categories, with additional decimal numbers to provide more specific detail. The classification number assigned to a book based on its subject allowed it to be clearly associated with a precise location in relation to other books in the library. With this number, any book could be located and returned to its proper place on the library shelf.

Today, the Dewey Decimal System is used by over 200,000 libraries in at least 135 countries.



图书馆，分类

在“1850年公共图书馆法”颁布后的一年，1851年12月10日，一个公共图书馆的改革者在纽约附近一个小镇出生，是乔尔和伊丽莎·格林·杜威的第五个也是最后一个孩子，取名为梅尔维尔·杜威（Melville Dewey）。他上农村学校，很早就下定决心 - 他的命运是改革大众教育。自小偏执的他就主张“拼写改革”，他把名字通常的“Melville”改为“Melvil”，没有多余的字母，并有一段时间将姓氏改为“Dui”。

当时的图书馆面临着一个棘手的问题 - 随着藏书数目的极速增长，图书馆原有的分类系统面临严峻的挑战，图书馆变得杂乱无章。还是学生的杜威也意识到了这个问题，1873年，他在阿默斯特学院图书馆工作时，提出了图书馆分类系统的想法。他将分类应用于那个图书馆的书籍，直到1876年，他才有了第一个版本的分类，并命名这种分类方法为杜威十进制分类（DDC），俗称杜威十进制系统。随后他立即创立了图书馆局（Library Bureau），为图书馆提供用品和设备，销售高质量的索引卡和文件馆，并建立了目录卡的标准尺寸。图书馆局迅速成为图书馆可能需要的用品和设备的一站式供应商。1930年，美国国会图书馆开始在几乎所有的卡片上打印杜威分类编号，从而使所有使用国会图书馆卡片套装的图书馆都能立即获得该系统。

十进制数字分类法引入了相对位置和相对索引的概念。以前，图书馆给图书固定的书架位置与购置顺序而非主题有关。该分类法的符号使用三位数字来表示主要类别，小数点后的数字可以扩展到更多细节。图书馆分配的分类号可以根据图书的主题，明确地将某一特定卷册与图书馆中的其他图书相对应的位置。有了这个编号，就可以找到任何一本书，并将其放回图书馆书架的适当位置。到今天，至少 135 个国家的 200,000 个图书馆使用该分类系统。

## Library, Pirate

The term “pirate” is synonymous with “piracy.” In *What is the Common in the Asian Commons?*, Lawrence Liang, Prashant Iyengar, and Jiti Nichani remind us that the earliest pirates emerged because they were deprived of ownership over the commons. As “children abandoned by the land,” pirates “mutinied against their working conditions and created an alternative order that challenged the division of labor and capital.” Shadow libraries, a modern manifestation of this, are online databases that make academic papers and novels openly accessible to the public. These databases often provide materials through copyright-infringing piracy.

The need for shadow libraries arose due to the difficulty people in developing countries face in accessing scientific knowledge. Between 1995 and 2015, the global population enrolled in higher education grew from 283 million to 725 million—a 2.5-fold increase. This growth was particularly pronounced in regions like Africa, South America, India, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe. This trend drove the commodification of scientific publications. Major publishers like Elsevier, Axel Springer, and John Wiley monopolized the market. Researchers, who seldom receive payment for submitting articles, often provide peer reviews for free as well. This system left scholars with little incentive to oppose shadow libraries.

In the early 2010s, publishers like Elsevier and Springer charged an average of \$30 per article and \$3,000 to \$20,000 for annual journal subscriptions, with most of the revenue going to publishers. As costs soared and scanners and digital devices became more widespread, large-scale online shadow libraries began to emerge.

One example is Anna's Archive, a shadow library created by someone using the pseudonym Anna. It was established as a direct response to the 2022 crackdown on Z-Library. Anna's Archive describes its mission as “cataloging every book in existence” and “tracking humanity’s progress in making all these books conveniently available in digital form.” As of September 21, 2024, Anna's Archive contains 37,666,367 books and 105,835,081 academic papers.

French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, in his book *The Postmodern Condition*, sharply observed that in an information-driven society, knowledge becomes a form of currency. This raises critical questions: Who owns knowledge? Who decides what knowledge is? Who decides what should be decided? In the information age, the question of knowledge is more than ever a question of power.

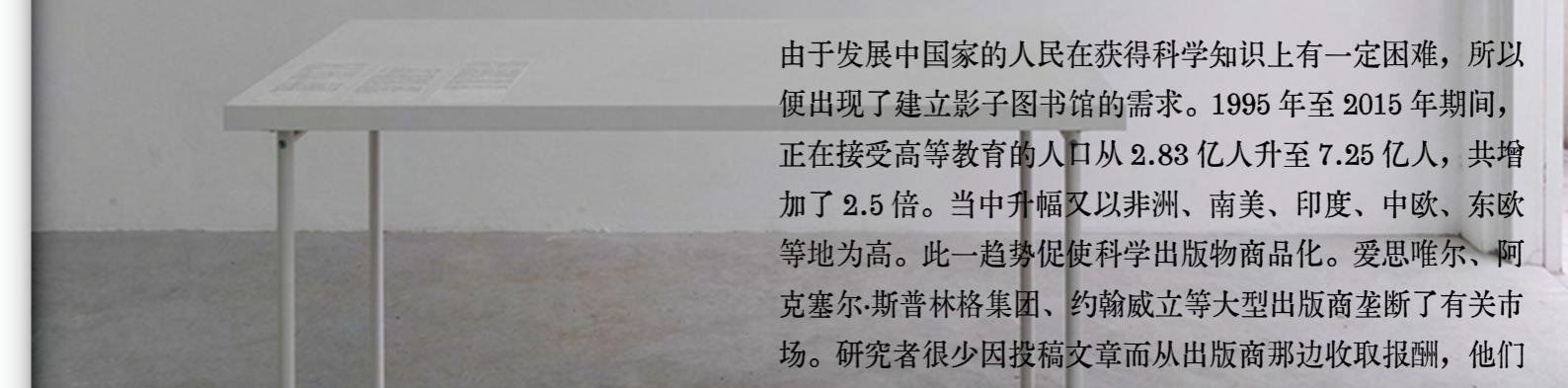
## 图书馆, 海盗

“海盗” pirate 一词与“盗版”同义，在《亚洲公地意味着什么》一书中，劳伦斯·梁 (Lawrence Liang)、普拉山特·伊恩加尔 (Prashant Iyengar) 和吉蒂·尼查尼 (Jiti Nichani) 提醒我们，第一批海盗的出现实际上是因为他们被剥夺了公地的所有权，而作为这些“土地的弃儿”，海盗们“会对他们的工作条件发动兵变，并创造一种挑战劳动分工和资本分工的替代秩序”。而影子图书馆 (Shadow libraries) 正是将学术文献和小说开放提供予大众的一类在线数据库。此类数据库大多都以侵犯著作权的盗版的方式向人们提供文献内容。

由于发展中国家的人民在获得科学知识上有一定困难，所以便出现了建立影子图书馆的需求。1995年至2015年期间，正在接受高等教育的人口从2.83亿人升至7.25亿人，共增加了2.5倍。当中升幅又以非洲、南美、印度、中欧、东欧等地为高。此一趋势促使科学出版物商品化。爱思唯尔、阿克塞尔·斯普林格集团、约翰威立等大型出版商垄断了有关市场。研究者很少因投稿文章而从出版商那边收取报酬，他们有的还要无偿为该些文章进行同行评审。这种情况使得学者们欠缺阻止影子图书馆的动机。在2010年代早期，爱思唯尔和斯普林格平均一篇文章要价30美元，订阅一年份的期刊则要价3,000至20,000美元。这些收入几乎全部落在出版商手里。随着付费愈来愈高，以及扫描仪和电子设备日趋普及，大规模的在线影子图书馆开始应运而生。

Anna's Archive 就是一个影子图书馆的一个例子，由化名为 Anna 的人创建。它的建立是对2022年关闭 Z 图书馆的执法努力的直接回应。它自称旨在“对现存的所有书籍进行编目”，并“跟踪人类在以数字形式方便地提供所有这些书籍方面所取得的进展”。截至2024年9月21日，Anna 的档案包括37,666,367本书和105,835,081篇论文。

事实上在法国哲学家让·弗朗索瓦·利奥塔尔 (Jean-françois Lyotard) 的“后现代状态”一书中，就曾尖锐的提出信息化社会中的知识成为一种货币，那么谁将拥有知识？谁决定知识是什么？谁知道应该决定什么？在信息时代，知识的问题比过去任何时候更是权利的问题。。





THE LIBRARY PROJECT

An exhibition project by B09K  
Ruidan Zou, Mengyu Sun, Yue Yuan