

DONKIJOTE.ORG, BY CRISTIAN BETTINI, IS THE
WINNING PROJECT OF THE *DIGITAL LAB*
COMPETITION

The proposal of the Italian artist is to make a digital map of Asturias using a donkey equipped with mobile digital technology.

The artist will receive 20,000 Euros for the production and exhibition of his work in the Gallery Platform 1 of LABoral.

Stand by me, by the cultural collective Basurama, received an Honourable Mention.

Donkijote.org, by the Italian artist based in Barcelona, Cristian Bettini, has been selected as the winning project for *DIGITAL LAB*, an open competition organised by the Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial in Gijón, intended for creators from Spain and around the world, whose objective is the production of a work of art with both an installation and a virtual dimension.

The success of this initiative by LABoral, with the curatorial services of the journalist specialising in contemporary art and digital culture, Roberta Bosco, is manifest in the ninety-five artists or collectives originating from nineteen countries that submitted proposals for production by the centre.

The jury also awarded an Honourable Mention to *Stand by me* by the cultural collective Basurama (<http://www.basurama.org>).

Donkijote.org will be exhibited at LABoral from the 24th to September, 2009, until January 11th, 2010. It is an analogue/digital blend that collects data in an innovative way: using a donkey traveling through different locations. Previously tested in Italy and The Netherlands, the project aims to obtain a real image of the different European identities, noting their similarities and differences, in the effort to determine what these groups know about each other.

The work comprises a living web platform, composed of a donkey equipped with a series of mobile digital instruments and accompanied by two caretakers - the artist himself, Cristian Bettini, and a collaborator from Asturias. The objective is to create a contemporary digital map of Asturias by collecting data and images, contributing to the preservation of local audiovisual patrimony in a very unique way.

Cristian Bettini has been in charge of this project since 2006 and was selected in two courses of the *European Media Project: A seminar for narrative interactive storytelling* in Stuttgart and *Master Class for*

Independent Producers organised by Sagasnet.de.

Bettini began to peregrinate in 2005 across France and Spain, compiling sensations and experiences in an online bulletin. Later, in 2007, he travelled for three months by donkey across Italy (<http://www.lasino.org>). He repeated the journey with a donkey across The Netherlands (<http://www.donkeypedia.nl> – in collaboration with 4XM.nl).

Donkijote.org is the name the artist has chosen for his project in Asturias.

A LIVING BROWSER

The donkey will function as a living browser: generating information, demarcating geographical information, recording traveling routes, collecting items, asking questions in the search for answers and sharing all of these things *online* in real time. The animal will be equipped with digital recording and information capture equipment such as a GPS, modem, computer and digital and video cameras all powered with solar energy. The journey will become a common memory, producing and collecting information, re-mapping the territory, geo-categorising knowledge and places, sharing all of this content physically as well as digitally.

Anyone who crosses paths with the artist and the donkey will become co-authors of the project, which, according to the author, aims to "travel through and dialogue with Asturias, sharing in the region's audiovisual and anthropological heritage."

The physical incarnation of the map, carried out primarily with free software, will be on display in large-screen format in the Gallery Platform 1 of LABoral. It will be updated in real time, at the same rate in which the artist and the animal journey through various paths.

The virtual dimension of the work will be located on a web site. Web navigators and visitors to LABoral can interact with *Donkijote.org* using video chat, mobile phones and social networks like Twitter, thereby becoming guides and mentors of the project, assigning tasks to the donkey and artist.

Cristian Bettini is confident that his work will result in an open and interactive document, giving all the users - true co-protagonists - an online experience connecting the real world and the web, using real recordings that demonstrate and preserve the culture of Asturias. In carrying out this project, Bettini was assisted by Martín Ruano Prieto (a photographer from Gijón) and Simona Marchesi (Italian artist and expert in film, television and new media).

BIOGRAPHY

For years, the interests of Cristian Bettini have been headed in different directions, towards the areas of art and culture, new media and the environment, the food chain and a conscious effort to be closer to nature. All of this is brought together in his activity thanks to what his experiences with activism, travel and his studies in Philosophy have given

him.

2009. Presentation in OVNI 2009 Rizomas (CCCCB). Barcelona.

2009. Finalist for the Cross Media Project for Educational / MIPTV. Cannes, France.

2008. Presentation of the *Donkeypedia* project in the 2008 Picnic Festival. Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

2008. Participation in CineKid 2008 with the Donkeypedia project - Amsterdam – The Netherlands.

2008. Participation in the international conference *walk 21*, 9th International Conference for Walking. Barcelona.

2007. Participation in the summit *Non Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture* (<http://summit.kein.org/>). Berlin, Germany.

2007. *Dyne:bolic*, workshop on open source operative systems, in Tesla (<http://coredump.buug.de/pipermail/rohrpost/2007-May/010660.html>), Berlin, Germany.

2006. *Red button = red herring?* Zero-One event (<http://www.01zero-one.co.uk/about.htm>). London, United Kingdom.

2006. Masterclass for independent producers, organised by Sagasnet (<http://www.sagasnet.de/>). Munich, Germany.

2006. Seminar on Seminario *Storytelling*, Interactive Narration, organised by Sagasnet (<http://www.sagasnet.de/>). Stuttgart, Germany.

HONOURABLE MENTION OF BASURAMA

The Jury also gave made honourable mention of the project *Stand by me* by Basurama which, with an enormous mural of electrical domestic appliances, asks important questions about the consumption of electricity and the price this has on the home.

Basurama is a collective dedicated to investigation into and management of culture; their area of study and action has become focused upon the processes of production, the generation of waste that this implies and creative opportunities this contemporary situation provides.

Founded in La Escuela de Arquitectura de Madrid, the group has evolved and adopted new methods since their inception. Their goal is to study phenomena inherent to the mass production of waste, both real and virtual, in consumer society, offering a new perspective on how to provoke thought and entice an appropriate response. The group catches glimpses of something in these processes of production and consumption that forces us to ask important questions, not only about the way we exploit our resources, but how we think about, work in and perceive reality.

The Jury which selected *Donkijote.org* comprised not only Roberta Bosco but also the LABORAL team, led by their Director, Rosina-Gómez-Baeza, and the exhibition area manager, Ana Botella Díez del Corral. The selected project will receive a prize of 20,000 Euros for its production.

DIGITAL_LAB is part of the Projects Office programme of LABORAL, a permanent space at the disposition of the cultural sector, established with the intention of helping to produce artistic projects and introduce them into the professional art circuit

Many of the submitted works followed a line of inquiry preoccupied by the nature and its degradation, biodiversity and the relationship between man

and machine. Others sought immersive spaces for physical and sensorial experimentation or used virtual platforms like Second Life or My Space; All of the submitted projects followed the terms of the competition by comprising an installation and a virtual dimension.

The largest number of artists who chose to try and produce their project with LABoral come from Spain (34), followed by the United States (14), the United Kingdom (10), Argentina (8), Germany (5) and Italy and France (4 from each). Interest in this international competition can be seen in the participation of artists from other countries such as Brazil (3), Mexico and Korea (2), Serbia, Finland, the Philippines, Austria, Hong Kong, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Peru and Colombia (1).



Image of Cristian Bettini with his technological donkey.