



# DONKIJOTE.ORG

Once upon this time there was a clever donkey  
with his digital armour and his errant knights...

Cristian Bettini a.k.a. P.ankh

laboral

Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial



Oficina de Proyectos

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FACT SHEET

# Cristian Bettini a.k.a. P.ankh: *DONKIJOTE.ORG*

ONCE UPON THIS TIME THERE WAS A CLEVER DONKEY  
WITH ITS DIGITAL ARMOUR AND ITS ERRANT KNIGHTS...

*Donkijote.org*, the winning entry of the open competition *Digital\_LAB* 2009, is an analogue/digital project that will gather data using altogether innovative techniques during four journeys taken by the artist Cristian Bettini a.k.a. P.ankh and the donkey Minuto through different areas of Asturias. The donkey will operate as a living interface equipped with digital hardware such as a GPS, a mobile Internet connection, a computer, a camera and a video camera with which it will create a memory of Asturias, producing and collecting information, re-mapping the territory and geo-categorising knowledge. The rules of the journey are determined by the natural rhythm of the donkey's pace, giving everything that enters into our perception a measure of human attention.

The people that cross their paths, as well as Internet users, will participate in the project by providing advice and suggestions, contributing to the evolution of the project and the enrichment of the audiovisual and anthropological patrimony of Asturias.

The travellers will return to LABoral after each journey where they will carry out activities using the material they have collected. In this way, the exhibition, located in the gallery Platform 1 of LABoral, will evolve and grow throughout the length of the journey and the advancement of its digital representation, connecting virtuality to reality in an indissoluble way.

DATES: 24.09.2009-11.01.2010

VENUE: Platform 1 of LABoral and various locations throughout Asturias and [www.donkijote.org](http://www.donkijote.org)

OPENING HOURS: Wed. to Mon., from Noon to 8 PM

PRODUCED BY: LABoral's Projects Office

CURATORS: Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana

## THE ARTIST

The interests of **Cristian Bettini a.k.a. P.ankh** (Brescia, Italy, 1973), have taken him in different directions including art and culture, new media and the environment, the food chain and the conscious approach to nature. All these are brought together in his creative activity, enriched by his experiences with activism, travel and his studies in Philosophy.

In 2005, he began working on *Proyecto de camino*, travelling across France and Spain, gathering his sensations and experiences in an online bulletin. In 2006, he was selected in two master classes for independent producers and interactive narration organized by Sagasnet as part of *the Media Europa Project* in Germany.

For three months in 2007 he crossed Italy, comprising the experience recorded as *Lasino* (<http://www.lasino.org>), which constitutes a sort of conceptual prologue to *donkijote.org*. He repeated a journey of similar characteristics across Holland in 2008, adding an educational component, featured in the project *Donkeypedia* (<http://www.donkeypedia.nl>), which was presented in *Ovni Rizomas* in the Centre for

Contemporary Culture in Barcelona (CCCB), in the MIPTV in Cannes (France), in the Picnic Festival and in CineKid 2008, both in Amsterdam (The Netherlands).

### THE TEAM

**Minuto**, Asturian donkey

**Cristian Bettini a.k.a.P.anh**, artist

**Martin Ruano**, photographer and companion

**Simona Marchesi**, production assistant

*Donkijote.org* collaborates with the GreenMap project and supports the Charter for Walking and the Digital Geography Manifesto

### THE CURATORS

**Roberta Bosco**, journalist specializing in contemporary art and new media. Barcelona.

**Stefano Caldana**, journalist specializing in digital culture. Barcelona.

Together, they write on the subjects of art and digital culture for *CiberP@is*, the weekly magazine about new technologies of *El País*, as well as for other sections of the newspaper. They give classes in different Master's courses, conferences and artist presentations. They participate in debates and jury panels and write texts for catalogues dealing with the development of digital art and new contemporary artistic expressions. Amongst other projects, they have been the curators for *Conexión remota*, a selection of net art for the exhibition *Antagonismos, Casos de Estudio* in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona (MACBA) and the exhibitions *London Calling* for the Sonar Festival, *Digital Jam* and *Web as Canvas* for the Art Futura Festival in Cultural Centre

Centro de Cultura Contemporánea in Barcelona (CCCB) and *Roberto Aguirrezabala. Net.art 1998–2008* in the Huarte Contemporary Art Centre. They realized the concept and structure of the MACBA web page and are the authors of *Arte.red*, a subjective navigable history of artistic creation on the Internet <http://www.arte-red.net>

### THE SOFTWARES

*Donkijote.org* was carried out with the following software: NeoOffice, TextEd it, TextWrangler, Firefox, Cyberduck, MPEGStremclip, Audacity, ProjectPier, WikkaWiki, ImageBrowser, EasyBatchPhoto, GPSBabel, GPSPhotolinker, Skype and Adium. Registered under the license Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0

Tested successfully with Firefox

### THE OPEN CALL

*Digital\_LAB* is an open competition organised by LABoral, intended for creators from Spain and abroad. The curators of the first edition of this initiative are the art critics and experts in new technologies, Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana. The installation part of the winning project – which is awarded a prize of 20,000 Euros – will be displayed in the Gallery Platform 1 of LABoral. The virtual part will be featured on a web page created expressly for the project ([www.donkijote.org](http://www.donkijote.org)), linked to LABoral's web page ([www.laboralcentrodearte.org](http://www.laboralcentrodearte.org)). *Digital\_LAB* is part of LABoral's Projects Office programme, a permanent space at the disposal of the cultural sector, created with the intention of facilitating the production of artistic projects and promoting them on the professional circuit.

## **PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES**

**24.09.2009**

### ***DIÁLOGOS [DIALOGUES]***

The *DIÁLOGOS* programme brings people closer to the art object by meeting the people that make them: the artists and curators participating in the opening of *Donkijote.org*, Cristian Bettini, Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana will answer questions from the audience about the creative process surrounding the creation of the art work and will discuss the different ways to participate in the project, both presentially and virtually.

TIME: 8 PM

VENUE: LABoral

## **WORKSHOPS IN LABoral**

### ***WHERE IS DONKIJOTE.ORG?***

*Donkijote.org* were here, but now they are gone. Where can they be found now? Where will they go? What did they discover?

Participants in the workshop will enjoy a guided tour of the exhibition during which they will be introduced to the basic notions of cartography, personalised land "mapping," collection and registry of data and Internet languages and circuits.

At the end of the visit, participants will have the chance to speak with the artist via telematic connection using Skype.

DATES: Monday, September 28th, Thursday, October 1st, Monday, October 19th, Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

TIME: Mondays from 10 AM. to 12 PM. and Saturdays from 5 to 7 PM.

INTENDED FOR: On Mondays, the content will be directed towards educational centres; on Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, will be directed to old people and to general public; on Saturdays, to general public

### ***DONKIJOTE.ORG IS IN TOWN***

Cristian Bettini a.k.a P.ankh and his donkey, Minuto, will return to LABoral, their centre of operations, to update the installation and direct workshops. The artist will make use of his stay not only to communicate his experiences to the public but to explain his use of technology. Participants will have the chance to become familiar with the project through conversation with the artist and his collaborators and to contribute in the development of the installation, incorporating their knowledge of Asturias. The information exchanged will be added to the project and will be able to be viewed on the web page.

DATES: October 14 and 15, November 4, 5, 23 and 25

TIME: two workshops a day. During the mornings from 10 AM to 12 PM; during the afternoons from 5 to 7 PM.

INTENDED FOR: In the mornings, the workshop will be directed to primary and secondary schools and universities; in the afternoons, to general audiences

#### LAST DATE IN LABoral

*DonKijote.org* brings his travels through Asturias to an end, but before he goes, he calls upon everyone he has met during these three months and all those who have followed and shared in his physical and virtual journey to participate in a meeting at LABoral. This will be the moment for a final evaluation, an opportunity to share anecdotes and information, to tie together loose ends left over from the journey and to make plans for the future.

DATE: December 12

TIME: 12 noon

INTENDED FOR: general audience

#### TRAVELLING WORKSHOPS

##### ***DONKIJOTE.ORG ON THE ROAD...***

During their travels, *Donkijote.org* –that is, the artist, the donkey, their collaborators and the technology accompanying them– will stop to give workshops in primary and secondary schools and cultural centres that they pass along the way. There they will not only explain their project but the artist will introduce those in attendance to the ins and outs of data transmission, familiarising them with alternative and artistic uses of technology.

Pay attention! Keep a watchful eye upon the roads and pathways near to your homes because, any day, *DonKijote.org* may appear on the horizon. You can also follow their adventures on their web page ([www.donkijote.org](http://www.donkijote.org)) on a daily basis and find out when they are coming to your home town.

DATES: To be determined

TIME: To be determined

INTENDED FOR: schools and educational or cultural centres in rural Asturias

## LABORAL AND THE PRODUCTION OF A TACTILE DIGITAL COLLABORATIVE MAP OF ASTURIAS

As part of Plan Avanza, LABoral has received the support of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce to develop a multimedia environment that is flexible and expandable and that will contribute to creating a collective memory of the citizenry that will, directly or indirectly, reinforce citizens' participation in the social and cultural life of their own neighbourhood / city / region. LABoral's project also intends to make the Internet a catalyst favouring social relations, helping us to get to know our neighbours better and, consequently, strengthening the community and one's sense of belonging to it.

This interest of LABoral recently led to the success of another recent project: The International Meeting of Citizens' Cartography held at LABoral this last July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup>. 67 experts in tactile digital collaborative maps participated. These kinds of maps define a new type of user / citizen. This user has a characteristic that is not shared by users of other web pages: he or she is interested in a real, physical space. The possibilities he or she discovers, the actions he or she chooses to take, will always have to do with this location (his or her neighbourhood, city, community).

The *Donkijote.org* project is also directly related to these interests. Thanks to its physical as well as virtual characteristics, the travels of Cristian Bettini through Asturias will give rise to a digital map of the region.

With the implementation of Plan Avanza, the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce wants to achieve the objectives of La Acción Estratégica de Telecomunicaciones y Sociedad de la Información del Plan Nacional de Investigación Científica, Desarrollo e Innovación Tecnológica [The Strategic Action Plan for Telecommunications and the Information Society for the National Plan for Scientific Research, Development and Technological Innovation], 2008-2011.

It is in this sense that the competition's goals include:

1. Situating Spain at the vanguard of knowledge.
2. Fomenting a highly competitive business network.
3. Promoting digital, quality public services.
4. Developing a new digital context based in:
  - a) Infrastructures and advanced telecommunications services.
  - b) e-confidence in Information Society services.
  - c) Digital content.

It was on the basis of Digital Content that the Ministry saw fit to award its support for LABoral's project. Types of projects or activities that are also eligible for assistance:

- The creation of applications and digital content for the purposes of leisure time and entertainment or artistic and on-line cultural activities, such as: videoart, interactive television, online video games, info-educational games, publicity, etc. This content should be accessible from one or various distribution systems, such as: mobile phones, digital television, broadband networks, etc.
- Social Networks: the creation of personalized content in collaboration with others for the Internet, oriented towards interaction and the creation of social networks.
- Portals for the syndication of content, that foment and facilitate the gathering of content and knowledge shared amongst users and that allow for the necessary mechanisms of their maintenance and management.
- Development of creativity and the use of content in the country's official languages.
- The creation of content specific to the information society for promotion and broadcasting in the activity areas of Plan Avanza, in such a way that it contributes to a reevaluation of the new possibilities and benefits that access to the Information Society gives to its citizens, businesses and public Administrations. Proposals relative to education and libraries will not be considered, given that they are dealt with by more specific action plans set in motion by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce.
- The creation of a network of professionals in the content sector.
- Translation systems into Spanish for web content of high social interest.
- Promotional and publicity events for social content in Castilian or Spanish.

## AN EXAMPLE OF COLLABORATION

BY **PROCOIN GROUP**

Through their Corporate Social Responsibility Programme, the Procoin Business Group participates in an increasing number of activities dealing mainly with culture and a social commitment to health and sports. With an annual budget of more than 90,000 Euros, the social responsibility programmes are part of a strategy of growth. This is because the corporation, whose capital is entirely from Asturias, has, since its foundation, understood the need to be closely tied to the society in which it carries out its activity.

The special attention that the group pays to art linked to new technologies and, especially, to art identified with the region, has already been manifest in previous activities, such as the funding and acquisition of works by Asturian artists or the sponsorship of large scale exhibitions of a notably avant-garde character, such as that of Hannah Collins (Laboral Ciudad de la Cultura, 2008).

On this occasion, it gives us great satisfaction to collaborate with LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial in the carrying out of a vital project, especially one that is linked to the region and is able to bring new technologies and creation closer together, promoting an intimate and flexible discourse that not only awakens interest in each and every one of us but also provides tremendous satisfaction for upholding the values of sustainability, humanism and cutting edge experimentation. It is a wonderful venture that shares in the values with which not only our business Group but also the large majority of our society – of which we are a part – feel strongly identified.

The Procoin Group currently comprises eight businesses and is in the process of international expansion and diversification of interests. Despite the crisis of the global economy, the stability of its structure and its business ventures have situated the Procoin Group amongst the strongest in the Principality of Asturias, backed up by the professionalism of its twenty-six years of excellent work experience and its goal of responsible growth. The businesses of the Procoin Group are advocates of responsible management geared towards the goal of immediate growth with new projects linked to environmental sustainability, tourism, cultural management and those societal-health services implemented with conscientious management that take conciliation and social corporate responsibility to be part of sustainable growth.

## PRODUCING WORKS OF ART AS AN OBJECTIVE

By **Rosina Gómez-Baeza**. Director of LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial, Gijón

“... it is most important for this kind of society to connect the global with the local. This is what I call connecting the space of flows with the space of places, and in this sense, cities that manage to connect them both, showing leadership in their intervention in global space – but benefitting the citizens that they represent – are the cities that will be the leaders of new ways of life... citizens that keep themselves informed, that are proficient with new technologies while, at the same time, preserving their culture and citizenship, these are the citizens that will be most able to produce knowledge, information and, in the end, value, in an information and knowledge economy.”

**Manuel Castells**, *The Rise of the Network Society*  
(Blackwell, 1996)

*Digital\_LAB* is an initiative that is in complete accord with LABoral’s character as a Production Centre of new works of art. It is an open invitation to artists with the objective of producing a project with both: an installation and a virtual dimension, the latter to be linked to LABoral’s web site. The curators for this first edition are the critics and journalists specialising in contemporary art and digital culture, Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana. The competition offers a prize of 20,000 Euros intended for the completion of the award-winning project. That ninety-five artists or collectives from nineteen different countries submitted their projects for production at our Centro de Arte testifies to the competition’s remarkable success.

Fundamental questions in today’s world concerning the challenges facing those who confront the communication society, the digital divide and discrimination arising from the introduction of new information and communication technologies, new communities positioned between the physical and virtual worlds, management and use of the tools of digital participation, fomenting art based in new technologies and the use of information systems to generate new functionalities and conceptual, aesthetic and formal innovations – these are some of the cornerstones upon which *Digital\_LAB* would like to converge. The winning project of this year’s inaugural edition, *Donkijote.org* by the Italian artist Cristian Bettini, is a compendium of all these issues.

It is well known that LABoral focuses its activity on the work of those artists and creators that use the most diverse languages for representing and reconfiguring the human condition. In carrying out its mission, it promotes an interdisciplinary vision of artistic creation, including

traditional artistic practices alongside new emergent genres. The Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial exercises its Production activities by offering different cultural professionals the chance to present their proposals for realisation and exhibition. Further, every one of its exhibitions features works of art produced specifically for the occasion, something that is very important for developing relations with the artistic and creative community. This year, the Platform 2. Resource Centre was set in motion, a ministry equipped with the latest advanced technology by which LABoral aspires to become a reference in the field of artistic production.

In his book *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells reminds us that “citizens that keep themselves informed, that are proficient with new technologies while, at the same time, preserving their culture and citizenship, these are the citizens that will be most able to produce knowledge, information and, in the end, value, in an information and knowledge economy.” Today, the Internet is not only a social tool or network, but it is also a highway for new forms of expression. Many artists currently use technologies like a canvas, a blank page, or an empty musical score, in order to express their creative ideas. This is the case for Cristian Bettini, whose work is full of this vision and transdisciplinary content. *Donkijote.org* is a polyphonic composition, as much for the resources that it utilises as for the results that it produces. It interprets reality from various points of view that are all superimposed upon one another at the same time. It is full of references to the classics of Spanish literature, not merely in its title, but in its very concept and development. It deals with the logic of the digital that transforms everything, such as man’s relationship with nature, the possibilities it offers as an instrument as well as a new mode of social interaction, globalisation and ecology, chance, simultaneity and the effect of “real time” to which telecommunications and the new media give rise, amongst other questions.

Rucio, the name by which the Sancho Panza of Cervantes refers to his little donkey, becomes Minuto, a young Asturian donkey that will embark upon four journeys across Asturias together with the artist and his companion, Martin Ruano. The routes through La Mancha are exchanged for those of Asturias, a region that the artist would like to rediscover and depict with new eyes.

The outcome of these journeys will result in a new novel-diary, transferred in the form of literature on the web, including images, videos and other material befitting this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Cristian Bettini proposes to link his work with the rich literary tradition of Spain by embarking upon a live exploration of our homeland with this miscellany of performance, telematic and media art, accessible on the Internet from anywhere on the planet but also present – with its own interactive exhibition space – in LABoral.

The primary audience of all of LABoral’s activity – the general public – will be participant in the project and will be able to take part in the journeys, in the creation of the new map of the region that will be on display in the Gallery Platform 1 and in the completion of the final product, heir to a

laboral

Centro de Arte y  
Creación Industrial

lengthy tradition and a way of looking at life itself.

I would like to express my gratitude to Cristian Bettini for this fusion between nature and technology that, in the end, offers a new way to look at Asturias from an artistic point of view. I would also like to thank the curators Roberta Bosco and Stefano Caldana for their efforts in making this exhibition a reality, an exhibition that takes place under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce. Also – and it couldn't be otherwise – I want to convey my appreciation to the Procoin Group, the Board of Patrons of La Fundación La Laboral and to the entire LABoral team whose efforts made this possible. Thanks to their support and hard work, today we can offer this new demonstration of LABoral's interest in the production of works of art.

## DIGITAL HORSESHOES

DISCOVERING ASTURIAS THROUGH *DONKIJOTE.ORG*. THOUGHTS ON THE JOURNEY OF AN ARTIST AND A SUPER-COMPUTERISED DONKEY

By **Roberta Bosco** y **Stefano Caldana**. Journalists and experts in new media. Exhibition Curators

Selecting one project from amongst 95 candidates – all of them very interesting and complying with the requirements of the *Digital\_LAB* competition of LABoral – was not an easy task. Yet, from the first moment, the proposal of Cristian Bettini a.k.a P.ankh stood out as one of the favourites. The competition was held in accordance with a fundamental aim: expand and consolidate LABoral's presence on the Internet, tightening the link between its presential and virtual activities, through a project carried out in both the physical space of the centre and on the Internet.

*Donkijote.org* not only possesses an installative and a virtual dimension – as required by the competition –but it demonstrates a perfect combination of them and also spread itself across the land of Asturias, bringing the centre –in both senses of the word– to the periphery.

The strength of *Donkijote.org* resides in its open and dynamic nature and in its multiple potentialities, arising directly from its interaction with “others,” whether they are visitors to LABoral, residents of rural Asturias, lost surfers of the Internet or lovers of cartography.

The super-computerized donkey and its travelling companion together form a multidisciplinary work, a mixture of performance, telematics and media art, accessible through the Internet from any point on the planet, possessing an interactive exhibition space in LABoral.

It is not merely a work in movement and constant evolution; it is a work that finds in movement itself its reason for being, its drive, its purpose. It is a work that reconciles nature and technology, creating a new synergy and a new rhythm between them, by travelling, searching and rediscovering the territory from an artistic point of view.

Minuto is a young Asturian donkey. Cristian Bettini, a.k.a P.ankh (beyond the semantic evocation of the famous “punk” music-cultural movement, in hindi *pankh* means heart and *ankh*, wings) is an Italian artist, based in Barcelona. Together they will go on four journeys across the land of Asturias, retransmitting daily experiences and unusual events, stories and legends, cultures and geographies, discovering hidden tales, re-evaluating forgotten places and mapping out new realities, through a system of artistic and personal parameters.

Minuto, the donkey, carry the computer, the modem, the GPS and a system of solar panels that supply the energy needed by the equipment. Cristian,

the artist, carry the cameras.

The donkey supply instinct and rhythm and the man, creativity, passion and logic. Together they become an unusual interface between Asturias and the rest of the world.

Their experiences and their travels will be recorded and retransmitted in the Gallery Platform of LABoral and on the Internet, as well as being described and narrated in photographs and brief accounts that, together with the videos, make up a dynamic online diary ([www.donkijote.org](http://www.donkijote.org)) of the vicissitudes that they undergo. In this way, Asturias and its world can be lived through the experiences of a donkey, its consort and any other more or less sporadic companions that join them along the way.

The donkey and artist will be inseparable, travelling together and sleeping together, alternating locations far from conventional routes with more familiar places, seeking shelter at night in small towns, schools, stables and private homes, where the artist will set up his tent. The people that they meet along the journey and those that want to become involved in their experiences –students, artist collectives, rural associations, tourists, or simply inhabitants of the region– will contribute to set the course of their travels and tie invisible links between LABoral and its widespread public.

The idea is to give shape to different maps of Asturias, identifying ecological trouble spots, the places man has damaged the most, wi-fi connection zones, and many more. Nonetheless, the inspiration is not merely to perform ethnographic research but to investigate new ways to live the technology, not only tightening the links between physical and virtual reality, but creating the new reality required by the contemporary human being.

In addition to supplying a vast amount of data and information on the territories through which they pass, Minuto and Cristian will offer those who follow their travels the opportunity to get involved physically and virtually in the project.

Virtually, on the web, participating in concrete decisions, making requests, or simply talking with them, enriching the journey with commentaries and recommendations.

Physically, at the installation situated in the Gallery Platform 1 of LABoral, where the public can contribute to the augmentation of a huge map of Asturias by adding their information, contributions and opinions.

Between journeys, donkey and artist will return to Gijón and settle in the ecological garden beside the Art Centre. Their stay at LABoral will give them the chance to deposit the specimens that they have collected along the way (for example soil and water samples to be analysed, with the objective of creating a contamination map), adding icons to the large map of Asturias exhibited in the gallery, involving the public in conferences and workshops on territory, hybrid reality and the conservation of the environment.

In this way, the web and the installation will both grow and evolve during

the course of the journey thanks to the contributions of the artist and his followers and the interaction among them.

The donkey and the artist constitute a contemporary image, professed heir of the Spanish literary tradition. Nonetheless, this time it is not a question of battling windmills; instead it is the struggle to appropriate technology, to liberate it from the false needs created by multinationals and to adapt it to the needs and rhythms of its users.

The journey is one of the major themes of our collective imagination, the subject of innumerable novels, movies and, of course, works of art. Since antiquity, the meeting between artists and the pleasure of discovering and describing locations has been extremely fruitful. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at the peak of the *Grand Tour*, the voyage of discovery of young aristocrats to the cradle of Mediterranean culture led to the birth of a genuinely new genre, which includes works by artists of the stature of Turner, Ruskin, Delacroix or Gauguin.

In large part, the history of man is the history of his migration. Since the time of the first hominids who left behind the ancient African continent, passing through Biblical and mythological exodus, until the conquest of space and mass tourism, the primordial aim remains the same, meanwhile the way of travelling went through great changes, that have been multiplied by the introduction of new technologies in everyday life.

By definition, the Internet is a sea of content. The consequent analogy that has given rise to a whole vocabulary of surfers and navigators has inspired many artists to launch their own journeys through this medium, granting places, discoveries and emotions immortality on the Internet. We are always talking about diaries, though in digital form, from the first examples of hypertext diaries to the birth of the blog, they have provided unexpected possibilities.

Back in 1997, Philip Pocock, a pioneer of media travel, wrote a digital and interactive diary inspired by a book written in 1740 by an ancestor traveller. Pocock recorded his travels through the Arctic Circle, the Tropic of Cancer and Ecuador<sup>1</sup>, remote places that Internet users can visit without leaving their homes.

Three hundred years after James Boswell recounted his travels to the Hebrides in *A Journal to the Western Isles*, the artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie followed in his footsteps, both really and virtually, recording it in *A Hypertext Journal*<sup>2</sup>, a classic work for the evolution of art on the Internet.

For enthusiasts of pre-Columbian civilisations there is *Liquid Mexico*<sup>3</sup>, the digital journey of Víctor Martínez to the mythical lake upon which was born the capital of the Aztec empire. It immerses the visitor in a virtual expedition to a place that no longer exists and that yet, nonetheless,

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Pocock, Florian Wenz, Udo Noll & Felix Huber, *A Description of the Equator and Some Other Countries*: <http://aporee.org/equator>

<sup>2</sup> Nina Pope & Karen Guthrie, *A Hypertext Journal*: <http://www.somewhere.org.uk/hypertext/journal/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Víctor Martínez, *Liquid Mexico*: <http://www.bereda.com/losos/L-M>

stimulates reflection on the past and the present of a city overwhelmed by demographic growth and environmental imbalance.

Those who prefer the serenity of river travel can opt for the poetic atmosphere created by Joseph Lefèvre and Martine Koutnouyan who, in *Au bord du fleuve*<sup>4</sup>, present their travels up the St. Lawrence River in Québec through images, sounds and brief textual fragments, that the visitor can reconstruct by creating his or her own journey.

The journals of the American explorer John Wesley Powell, written during the first expedition down the Colorado river in 1869, serve as a point of departure for *Voyage into the Unknown*<sup>5</sup>, a journey somewhere between reality and fiction by Roderick Coover, that invites the visitor to explore a wide digital panorama in which can be found memoirs of the expedition, drawing from the period, contemporary routes and journeys that heralded the discovery and development of the American continent.

A journey between the real and the virtual even managed to win a Golden Nica award at Ars Electronica in 2005. Through the secular tradition of origami (the Japanese art of paper cutting and folding), *The Road Movie or Origamization Road Movie*<sup>6</sup> materialises a journey that the members of the Japanese collective Exonemo took through their own country in a bus named *Moblab*, equipped with webcams that – at a constant pace and from different perspectives – recorded images of the landscape that were subsequently posted on the Internet and added to the silhouette of a bus. These pictures are now available in pdf format on the project's web page so that navigators can download them, crop them and edit them to create their own original souvenir of the art work and journey from which they came.

The examples are many and varied. Nonetheless, unlike these similar projects, *Donkijote.org* offers the public the chance to share the exploration of Asturias, its places of interest, its stories and contradictions, in nearly real time with barely any mediation. Above all, it provides the opportunity to become involved in different ways in the very course of the journey.

A voyage of discovery with the most ancient vehicle of transport and the most up-to-date technology, powered by the sun, eternal source. Kilometres walked that translate into hours of digital travel through the far reaches of the Internet.

At a time when new communication technologies have irreversibly modified our vital and social experience, *Donkijote.org* presents itself as an artistic tool, both sophisticated and simple at the same time, provoking uncertainty, raising questions and, without a doubt, establishing a new relationship between LABoral and its surroundings, the ones closest to it as well as the most remote. In conclusion, in the words of Proust, "The

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Lefèvre & Martine Koutnouyan, *Au bord du fleuve*.  
<http://www.turbulence.org/Works/lefevre>

<sup>5</sup> Roderick Coover, *Voyage into the Unknown*. <http://www.unknownterritories.org>

<sup>6</sup> Exonemo, *The Road Movie*. <http://exonemo.com/RM>

true voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes".

*DONKIJOTE.ORG. ONCE UPON THIS TIME  
THERE WAS A CLEVER DONKEY WITH HIS  
DIGITAL ARMOUR AND HIS ERRANT KNIGHTS*

By **Cristian Bettini a.k.a. P.ankh.** Artist

“Walking, even not being the physical creation of a space, implies a transformation of the place and of its meanings. Walking means transforming the landscape, the creation of places.

The action of going through, a line that crosses the space and the stories of the crossed space, one walk as a cognitive instrument for future planning. From the rediscovery of the primordial condition to a redefinition of the modern human condition.

Walking as independent communication media, anti-art or other-art, primary action in the symbolic transformation of the territory, aesthetic tool for knowledge and physical transformation of the crossed space, that becomes a "no-place" a hyper-space for participation, creation and networking”.

Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*

*Donkijote.org* is an endeavour which connects one of the oldest ways of transportation with the new technologies to be able to re-create and re-think the interrelationship between time and space with the purpose to produce different multimedia content and to create a low impact, high-tech sustainable social media experience. This project aims to be a cocktail of ethical, tactical, educational and psychogeographical meaning.

Until the last century, donkeys were one of the most common modes of transportation. Walking with a donkey is a very old way to walk to a destination and reach into the heart of one's emotions, to walk with the slowness of movement in body and mind. To walk in order to move, not to arrive, but to pass through and discover in every moment the beauty around.

Animal and human speeds are the only natural one. Walking with a donkey is a feeling that takes you back in time, to a slow era in which the traveller signed each day with his steps. Today as in those days the donkey, fellow traveller, will relieve the heavy burden of work for the man. Walking with a donkey is impressed on the history of the human race since the beginning of travel, the first steps of humanity into this world, since people from the south began migrating and left their own land to find a new one. Humble and faithful, the donkey awaits the beginning of travel with patience.

The donkey, a real social network, will become a mobile collective device

using solar cell panels to power a notebook, video camera, photo camera, GPS, and mobile modem to simultaneously produce media content to upload on the net and develop a digital geomapped-storytelling. It will surf the net as a walking browser that anyone can ride. The complete road will be mapped in real time on the net by GPS, and users can access the current position.

This allows:

- Live a real time experience by following the donkey's everyday life and encounters along the way;
- have new tools to learn about history, geography, cultural traditions, flora and fauna, environment, by geotagging the knowledge;
- make questions and collect answers, feelings and hopes, habits and dreams from users; in this way gathering a collective memory;
- interact with the traveller and between each other by send greetings, impressions, ideas or suggestions...

In this spirit of collaborative interaction, it will be possible to produce an online experience that will broadcast reality and real people through an open and interactive story that will be told by means of a free, constantly updated and universally accessible device, where users and visitors can become co-protagonists by editing their own contributions and where virtual becomes real in a melting pot of travel, adventure, daily life and culture.

The relationship between time and space changed a lot in the twentieth century, and now humanity lives in a limbo of perception, thinking everything is "right here" and "right now". This journey wants to recreate a tactile approach to the world with the purpose of producing media content while keeping contact with what is real. Such an approach could make it possible to build a natural relationship between old and new, preserving them both.

We are living in a world in which our connections grow every moment but in which everyone is more individual. We have to shake ourselves loose from the old places where it was possible to share, (we gain new ones and have begun to use them), to communicate. We feel as though we are everywhere and nowhere. We need for our narration to be connected with time and space in order to be real again.

Travelling is like tracing a line in a drawing. It is just connecting one place with another. On this main line many other connections grow-- to people, places, stories. In travelling the goal is not the destination but the journey.

Step by step, slowly we can balance time and space. A step as first nexus will let us link the stories of different people and places. The analogue step will be in symbiosis with the digital transmission of data, to connect virtual with reality in an insoluble way for a multi-dimensional structure, starting from ancient history and moving into the present.

Technology does not have to work against nature but can provide access to it. Now it is possible for all of us to broadcast ourselves and influence the general interpretation of the world. My intent is to consciously utilize

this era of technological revolution, using technology in order to allow a clear understanding of our world, of our lives.

Situationism has already explained the power of a psychogeographic *detournement*, but the stage is not a city anymore, with the addition of global networks. In such a dimension the results could be unpredictable.

Our light passage leaves nothing, not even an ephemeral trace, on the land but everything will be committed to digital evidence, a contemporary mapping.

Marcello Faletra writes in *Cyberzone*: "The true great philosopher of the practical ratio is not Kant, but Cervantes' hero Don Quixote, who fought with the nothingness of windmills". For a long time I have been on a quest to find and create an action and expression of experience full of purity of ethics and aesthetics, without compromise. The mode of movement and resulting action I want to propose with this project are clean from an ethical point of view, and sustainable for the environment: this good practice is a necessary condition allowing for the freedom to criticize or to show other possibilities, to provide an educational tools or just show a point of view on social and cultural subjects. A script does not exist. "Questa sera si recita a soggetto" (Tonight we improvise), as Pirandello suggested, to offer a living platform, a free journey, that let imagine and deliver a useful tool for researches and investigations, both digital and physical.



FOTO: Martin Ruano Prieto

Cristian Bettini and Minuto with all the technological equipment



FOTO: Martin Ruano Prieto

A picture of the preparatory travel of *Donkijote.org*, with Cristian Bettini and the donkey Minuto in the Picos de Europa area



FOTO: Martin Ruano Prieto

In the image above, Minuto, in the stable before one of its travels



FOTO: Martin Ruano Prieto

Part of the technological equipment used in the *Donkijote.org* project



FOTO: Martin Ruano Prieto

Before starting each of his travels, Cristian Bettini designs the routes that will permit him to make a new digital cartography of Asturias

## THE FRAMEWORK FOR LABORAL CENTRO DE ARTE Y CREACIÓN INDUSTRIAL

In March 2000, the Lisbon Extraordinary European Council decided to boost community policies at a moment when the economic map of the European Union member countries held out the promise of competitive development. All the leaders taking part at the Summit agreed on a commitment to place Europe at the forefront of the Information Society (IS).

The globalisation of the economy and the growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) provide clear evidence of the progress and trends in contemporary society, and this is particularly true in the sphere of culture, entertainment and leisure. The technological challenge consists of ensuring that economic and social transition does not leave behind any segment of the citizenry and that its fruits are shared equally. That is the main goal of the "e-Europe" initiatives organised by this Commission.

The Information Society defines a new social model that aims to enable the whole of the citizenry to generate access, use and obtain information and knowledge from any place and at any given time.

With the aim of contributing to this new society, the Government of the Principality of Asturias has devised a "Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in the Principality of Asturias" (e-Asturias 2007), a programme incorporating the European and international principles commonly accepted and ratified at the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003), adapting them to the specificities of Asturias.

LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial can be placed within that general design, and lays its foundations on the idea of fostering the production and consumption of new media art.

The initiative is implemented along three lines:

- Creation of an environment for development with the participation of an open network of multidisciplinary creators and users working at the LABoral Centro de Arte.
- Execution of tasks of research, production of exhibitions and events, and coordination and documentation concerning the use of new media in both theory and practice.
- Generation of web communication channels open to the public, allowing its involvement in the artist's creative process.

## AUDIOVISUAL CONSUMPTION IN ASTURIAS

In 2008, the Information Society registered a positive evolution in Spain as shown by the indicators related with the proportion of Internet users (48.8%) and the level of technological equipment, which are transforming leisure and entertainment habits and the configuration of Spanish homes, according to data from the INE, Spain's official statistics board.

In Asturias, according to last wave of EGM (General Media Studies) in October-November 2008, 48.2% of the population was connected in the last month.

Internet has produced new digital habits, like talking to friends in chat rooms, listening to music downloaded from the Net, sharing music, reading digital press, etc. New uses occupying a long consumption time (131.9 minutes at home and 81.9 at work).

According to sources from INE, half of Asturias population from ages 16 to 74 uses Internet. There are no differences regarding gender, but there do exist when we look at level of education and the economic circumstances of the homes, a factor that makes a big difference in access to new technological equipment and, therefore, to new ICT.

In the first half of 2006, 56.1% of families in Asturias had a PC, and 40.5%, Internet connection.

Asturias leads Spain's regions in access to Internet through cable network, and stands third in the ranking of homes connected with broadband, with the Canaries in the lead.

## THE LABORAL FOUNDATION. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial Foundation is a cultural body to serve the general interest, as well as the governing body of the art centre. The aims of the Foundation as described in Article 6.1 of the statutes are “to promote and disseminate art and industrial creation through the management of LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial.”

### **BOARD OF PATRONS OF LA FUNDACIÓN LA LABORAL. CENTRO DE ARTE Y CREACIÓN INDUSTRIAL**

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## **WHAT IS LABORAL?**

The LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial is a space for artistic exchange. It was born with the aim of establishing an alliance between art, design, culture, industry and economic development, and aspires to become a space for interaction and dialogue between art, new technologies and industrial creation. Between its walls, it opens the way to the production, creation and research into the most recent artistic concepts.

LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial is in the old Universidad Laboral as part of the set of projects developed by the Principality of Asturias for its City of Culture. Gijón, Asturias.

## **LOCATION**

LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial is located in Gijon, Asturias, at around three kilometres from the city centre. Premises originally conceived for vocational training now house the over 14,400 functional square metres that are devoted to the exhibition, research, training and production of new art and creative industries.

Address: LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial  
Los Prados, 121  
33394 Gijón (Asturias)

## **Getting There**

By car

A-8 motorway. Take bypass on arrival to Gijon. Salida (exit) km. 385 Viesques. Follow directions to Hospital Cabueñes. Take third exit at third roundabout.

The Centre has a public car park.

By bus from Gijón

The bus stop for the Centre is "Parada Universidad Laboral". The bus lines available are the following:

Line 1 Cerillero- Hospital de Cabueñes

Line 2 Roces- Hospital de Cabueñes

Line 4 Cerillero- Viesques- Hospital de Cabueñes

Line 18 Nuevo Gijón- Hospital de Cabueñes

By plane

Closest airport: Asturias (Castrillón). Around 40 km from the Centre.

A8 motorway, direction Gijón.

## **OPENING HOURS**

OPEN 12 noon to 8 pm

CLOSED Tuesdays (except public holidays); 1st January and 25th December

**ADMISSION**

General public €5

Reduced €2

Students (University card, Youth card or International Student card); &gt; 65 years old and unemployed

Free: Friends of LABoral, &lt;10 years old, journalists, members from ICOM (International Council of Museums)

Days of free admission: All Wednesdays of the year plus 18th May (International Museum Day)

Saturdays and Sundays on July, August and September

Joined tours Ciudad de la Cultura:

General fee: 6,00 €

Reduced fee: 4,25 €

**SERVICES****Info LABlounge**

Lounge area in lobby for browsing publications.

**LABdesk**

Information and admission in lobby. The Centre provides audioguides and guided tour services in several languages for the exhibitions.

**LABcloakroom**

Free cloakroom service for all visitors.

**Labshop**

LABoral has a shop on the ground floor where visitors can find written materials published by the Centre as well as limited edition original objects. You can also purchase on line.