

## **LABoral: Much more than an exhibition Centre**

Located in Gijón, Asturias, LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial was opened on 30 March 2007. It is an open platform for research, production, dissemination and interpretation of the cultural forms emerging from the creative use of new technologies.

Its cross-cutting and multidisciplinary programme targets all audiences and aims ultimately to share knowledge. To this end, the Centre provides its different audiences with many ways to get involved with the different lines of work: exhibitions, workshops, educational programmes and activities, including conferences, symposiums, debates...

LABoral serves as a space to access tools and exchange knowledge with the aim of supporting artists and creators in the development of ambitious projects in the fields of arts, science, technology and industrial creation. It is a Centre for the production of contemporary art works that will form part of our future heritage.

The Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial sees its local anchoring as a way to foster a dynamic relationship between the artistic and creative communities in Asturias with the rest of Spain and the world. Since its opening, it has established numerous collaborations and agreements with public and private bodies from different regions in Spain and Europe for the purpose of extending this network to other regions in the world.

Arising from the initiative of the government of the Principality of Asturias, LABoral was created with the aim of strengthening the field of technological culture as part of a strategy to implement alternative models for the future in Asturias and to further progress in the Knowledge Society. Organically it is a non-profit foundation, formed by corporations, private companies and institutions.

The Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial occupies 14,000 metres<sup>2</sup> in several industrial units in the workshops of the former Laboral University, built in the 1950s of the last century by the architect Luis Moya, and which today is the site of the Ciudad de la Cultura [City of Culture], a space where more than 5,000 people study, work, create...

LABoral is one of the cornerstones of what has been called "the golden mile of knowledge and innovation", a perimeter also delimited by the

engineering schools and technical studios of the University of Oviedo and the Parque Científico Tecnológico de Gijón [Gijón's Science and Technology Park], where the most innovative businesses working in information and communication technologies are concentrated.

## **ACTIVITY AREAS**

LABoral centers all of its activity and programme in four integrated and interrelated areas, among them:

- 1.- Exhibition / Diffusion
- 2.- Production / Research,
- 3.- Training / Cultural Mediation
- 4.- Communication

### **1.- EXHIBITION AND DISSEMINATION**

Showcasing and sharing work by artists and creators is the essential part of the DNA of LABoral. The contemporary artistic scene needs new strategies for production and exchange which the artist has difficulty in meeting on his or her own. LABoral forges its line of collaboration with artists and creators, providing support, resources and professional infrastructure which allow them to develop the creation process in accordance with present times.

Through exhibitions and activities such as performances and presentations in which international artists are present, the Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial is a space for interaction, facilitating access to the best of contemporary creativity for Asturians, the rest of Spain and the world.

In addition, the presence of work by Asturian creators in solo and group exhibitions and the grants for its production presents the current state of regional creation, providing a framework which allows them to “to be measured” in an international environment and establish a new work context for local artists.

LABoral wishes to combine the local and global dimensions and make Asturias a focus of interest for all those people who, anywhere in the world, are interested in today's technological art and creative industries.

The Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial in Gijón works in a network and carries out productions with high standing international institutions: ZKM, Karlsruhe *Banquete* [Banquet], Centre Pompidou, *Noches eléctricas* [Electric Nights]; TBA-21, *Pasajes* [Passages];

Museum of the Moving Image, *Gameworld* and *Playware*; Ars Electronica, *Playware*; CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid, *Auto. Sueño y materia* [Auto.Dream and Matter] and *Estación experimental* [Experimental Station]; MARCO Vigo, *Presencia activa* [Active Presence]; Le Fresnoy Studio National des Arts Contemporains (France) and Contemporary Art Center, CAC (Lithuania), *Realidad elastic* [Elastic Reality].

LABoral redesigned and readapted its exhibition spaces last 2012 to make them more accessible, taking full advantage of the vast potential of the art centre and providing better access to and understanding of the different proposals.

## Exhibition spaces

- **Exhibition Gallery and Hall.** Holds group exhibitions in the field of visual arts and new media.
- **Projects Room:** Dedicated to multimedia projects by renowned international artists, specifically conceived for this space.
- **Expanded Mediatheque.** Space for experimentation with new forms of distribution and access to art capable of pushing the boundaries of the conventional exhibition.
- **New Room.** A platform for the production and projection of emerging projects, mainly by Asturian creators.
- **Exteriors.** A garden area that combines art and leisure around a woods in process which resulted from an artist action.

## 2.- PRODUCTION/RESEARCH

New technologies have brought different languages to culture while at the same time they have revolutionised aesthetic production. Art today is crossed by technologies in all areas. It is in this field where the convergence between ICTs and postmodern culture is most clearly shown.

In the area of production, the Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial supports the creation of new work and artistic research, providing consultancy and technical support to creators as well as developing artist-in-residence programmes.

This enables a growing number of creators to produce more ambitious works with the support of staff specialised in electronics, audiovisuals, information technology, which are subsequently shown in exhibitions at the art centre.

In this way visibility is given to the mutation of the purely exhibitory function that is taking place in the most groundbreaking art centres

which, in responding to the needs that creators have today, are evolving towards a laboratory concept.

**Plataforma o. Production Centre at LABoral.** Comprising a modular and flexible structure, this is the area for research, production and resources at LABoral and is organized into different programmes aimed at work groups, collective and individual creators and educators. The platform offers technical support, consultancy, resources and infrastructure to creators, work groups and educators and support for the creation of new work and artistic research as well as developing artist in residence programmes.

- **fabLAB Asturias:** LABoral has established a strategic agreement with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to develop and promote its digital fabrication laboratory, fabLAB Asturias. This is a pioneering initiative in Spain and the world, where there are only around one hundred and fifty laboratories with these characteristics, four of them in Spain. fabLAB Asturias is a space for research, training and production equipped with the most advanced machinery for digital design and fabrication for the creation of real and virtual prototypes through digital processes, which facilitates the inclusion of communication technologies to these objects.
- **Plato:** A space for experimentation and research on artistic events and new audiovisual forms.
- **A/V Laboratories:** Digital video and audio platform, provided with the necessary equipment for recording, editing, production and post-production.
- **Production Residencies:** Aimed at national and international creators, developers and companies. The residencies are awarded in open calls, with projects being sought to be shown at the art centre following their production.
- **Networking:** Agreements, pacts and collaboration with businesses, cultural institutions, schools, universities...

### 3.- TRAINING / CULTURAL MEDIATION

Sharing knowledge, through talks, workshops, courses, meetings, conferences, symposiums and a wide range of activities for schools and education centres at all levels and the general public are at the heart of this central concept.

LABoral offers itself as a **classroom for knowledge** on the latest trends in contemporary art and technological culture and industrial creation. To achieve this it takes as its starting point the exploration of

new teaching methods and ground-breaking formats intended to cover the current shortfall in knowledge of contemporary art and creation and the use of new technological media in schools, universities and vocational education while encouraging, at the same time, public and amateur participation.

The art centre is a **didactic resource** which complements educational work in the classrooms and contributes to the integral development of the pupils. For this purpose, it provides children, young people, creators, artists, members of the educational community and the general public with workshops and activities aimed at creating a favourable atmosphere for art, science, technology and education. All of these are conceived as a formula of initiation into the art of our time and an inter-generational meeting point to explore, comment and get to know the state of creation and contemporary culture.

Also, LABoral has established a range of agreements with universities. One example of this is the **Postgraduate programme with the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)** and other courses, including the Introduction to the Use of fabLAB, with the **University of Oviedo**. Aware of the need to understand and adapt to the changes and transformation of contemporary culture, these institutions have developed specialised training programmes with the objective of providing the tools to understand and take part in present-day culture from an interdisciplinary perspective in connection with the main debates at international level in the fields of the arts, humanities, communication and social sciences.

The Mediation team is an essential part of this task of forming closer ties with the public with activities such as guided visits and visit-workshops designed for all kinds of groups.

**Mediateca\_Archivo** provides a space for the research and diffusion of contemporary art and creative industries with a special emphasis on the intersections of society, art, science and technology. In parallel with the exhibition programme and the different activities and workshops arising from the Public Programme and Plataforma O areas, Mediateca\_Archivo carries out the work of compiling, exhibiting, organising and archiving bibliographical, video and sound materials which provide context for everything that happens or has happened at LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial. This material is complemented with the series of documents generated daily at the centre: texts, graphic material and press coverage, combined with a large amount of videos and sound clips, all of which are accessible on the web and in the Mediateca\_Archivo room.

This is aimed at drawing together diverse views and approaches to the subjects covered in the Centre's programme from a close collaboration with different collectives, curators, artists and academics, forming an open space for consultation, reading, debate and research on contemporary culture.

- **Catalogue**

The Mediateca\_Archivo of LABoral is attached to the Network of Asturian Libraries and so shares the collective catalogue of other libraries in the network. Access to other content is through the self-made consultation system implemented at the posts in the room for consulting, viewing and listening to documents as well as the interconnection among them.

Services

Access to the Mediateca\_Archivo room is open and free of charge for all users. The access system to the collection varies: direct in some cases, at a viewing desk or by accessing material directly on the shelves, while in other specific cases the user must request material from staff beforehand.

The documentary collection of the Centre may only be consulted at Mediateca\_Archivo; there is no lending service.

Available services are:

- Information held in the room
- Open access: direct consultation
- Viewing posts
- Access to online content
- Wireless connection

- **Asturian Artists' Archive**

With material by some 100 artists, active from 1950 to today, and still in the process of construction and consolidation, the Asturian Artists' Archive aims to become a key tool in drawing the map of Asturian culture. Aside from that, beyond the basic accumulation of materials, Mediateca\_Archivo has raised the need to mobilize, by means of archiving, communication and exhibition policies, the materials held in its collection. Ultimately, this plans to build a real community and, working together, design new forms of visibility for its member artists.

List of Asturian artists who belong to the archive [\[+\]](#)

<http://www.laboralcentrodearte.org/es/files/2012/mediateca/aa>

- **Work Groups**

Through a close partnership with the local community (students, teachers and, generally, subjects from all walks of life interested in taking part) a number of work groups have been organized by Mediateca\_Archivo. With a distinctly educational vocation, the aim is to support the construction of a space for dialogue in which expertise is pooled. Something similar to a public forum for debate which is cross-cutting and where all the lines at the Centre converge. A space to see, read and share all together.

#### **4.- COMMUNICATION**

The transition from conventional analogue formats to digital is breaking old paradigms.

The key objective of activity at LABoral is to develop a community aware of new technological languages, who acquire a critical base which empowers them to analyse the use of new technologies and participate in an effective exchange of knowledge.

At a time when new dynamic creative platforms are emerging that are committed to the new forms of transmitting and producing information, LABoral Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial is pursuing an integrated communication strategy, aimed at meeting the information needs of its different audiences, combining conventional communication methods targeted at the traditional media with other channels associated with harnessing the full potential offered by the Internet, new technologies, social networks and Web 2.0.

- Numerous integrated and cross-cutting channels
- Publications and conventional activities: calls, press conferences, presentations, press releases and kits, videos, photographs, catalogues, brochures, flyers, invitations...
- Web 2.0. and a strong presence in social networks and other channels for content distribution are far-reaching tools to engage with the Centre's geographically-dispersed publics and audiences.
- New delivery platforms for graphic and audiovisual content

#### **LABlog**

In March 2013 LABoral set up a bloggers blog, LABlog, which is a collaborative project with the participation of a group of independent bloggers interested in art and new cultural forms, offering a new vision of the activity at the Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial in their posts. Through their writings in this space the reader can discover week by

week a more personal vision of activities at LABoral and contemporary art practices from the different perspectives of the eight participants in the project. Laura Cano, José Luis Calderón, Nuria García, Semíramis González, Montaña Hurtado, Marta Lorenzo, Román Torre and Naiara Valdano are responsible for the content and report on everything that is happening at the Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial.

<http://www.laboralcentrodearte.org/es/files/2013/bloglaboral>

Also, the art centre has a specific project blogs:

**mapaSONORU, school dropout prevention programme, TV\_LAB, LABoral-UOC, etc.**

### **Own Channel in iTunes U**

Since March 2013, LABoral has become the only cultural institution in Spain to have its own channel in iTunes U.

LABoral, which is included in the section Más allá del Campus [Beyond the Campus], which is aimed at cultural and artistic institutions, has organized its multimedia content in accordance with its lines of action. As well as audiovisual information on the centre, under the heading *Qué es LABoral* [What LABoral is] users may gain access to archive collections of exhibitions, production, education and training. The centre has also made available to the public its *Encuentros en LABoral* [Meetings at LABoral] section, which includes interviews with curators, artists and the protagonists of the creative processes, and *Procesando* [Processing], the part which contains a series of interviews with Asturian artists produced by the art centre and made by Fiumfoto. At this initial stage all users will have at their reach over one hundred audio and video archives related to the activity at LABoral.

<https://itunes.apple.com/es/institution/laboral-centro-arte-y-creacion/id511331041>

### **Applications for mobile devices**

LABoral launched an application for mobiles and tablets in February 2013 which allows anyone to virtually visit its exhibitions without having to physically go to the Centro de Arte y Creación Industrial.

In the form of an expanded brochure, it offers multimedia information on the artists, works and curators, including texts, photographs and videos. In addition, it contains a list of activities related to the show and an exhibition location plan in the spaces at LABoral, and general information on the Centre with opening times, admission rates and contact details. The LABoral App is free and can be downloaded free of charge through the distribution platform Google Play for Android system and also at App Store for devices running the iOS system, such as iPhone and iPad.

<http://www.laboralcentrodearte.org/es/files/2013/aplicacion/app>



## **Web**

From 30 March 2007 and 31 December 2012, 805,081 people have taken part in the different activities organised by LABoral as part of its programme. The website ([www.laboralcentrodearte.org](http://www.laboralcentrodearte.org)) recorded 777,218 visitors who consulted 3,921,255 pages between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2012.

## **Social Networks**

**Twitter.** 8,000 followers.

**Facebook.** 9,000 fans. Increase of 57.43% in 2012.

**Facebook Asturian Artists' Archive.** With 4,000 friends

**You Tube.** 551 videos. 165,484 playbacks. 87,324 playback minutes

## **Recognitions**

- Third best Cultural Initiative in Spain in times of crisis, according to the barometre “The Culture Observatory” of the Fundación Contemporánea. 2011
- Award for the best Cultural Website in Asturias. 2011
- Finalist in 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the GijónconCalidad prize, Museums and Centres of Interest category. 2011
- Finalist in 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the GijónconCalidad prize, Museums and Centres of Interest category. 2012
- Award for the best Non-profit Marketing Initiative for the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Communication campaign. 2012