

Dossier: Arteleku to reopen on 21 June

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ARTELEKU TO REOPEN ON 21 JUNE

1. INTRODUCTION

Arteleku, the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa's Contemporary Culture and Art Centre in Donostia-San Sebastian, will reopen its doors on 21 June.

Arteleku has always sought to adapt and evolve, finding new spaces for debate on issues of contemporary art and culture. In the last year, the centre has undergone a major internal metamorphosis, the most important - or at least the most apparent - in its 15-year history.

Arteleku has new facilities, new equipment and a new image, intended to reflect the centre's interest in new production methods, more hybrid attitudes and projects and the increased importance of the Internet, the library and relations with other institutions. All this in addition to the activities it has been organising over the years.

The 21 June celebrations are intended to be a milestone in the centre's history. During the rest of the year there will be a series of new activities, presentations, projects, etc., designed to introduce the new building and bring together all those who have made up **Arteleku** over the years, and anyone else who wants to find out more about the centre and get involved in it.

2. STARTING POINT

“Arteleku stands on the periphery. It is a place where art is seen as being a fertile exchange of relations. As a laboratory it has worked very well; it has given us all a chance to reconsider our position vis-à-vis art.” (Sergio Prego)

Arteleku opened fifteen years ago. It was initially designed along the lines of the Fine Arts Schools of the time. However, rather than accepting this classification and viewing art as a set of pigeonholes, with a merely representative function, **arteleku** soon began to develop. This process was helped by an organisational dynamic which was receptive to the work, attitudes and commitment of all the different people who passed through

the centre, bringing with them fresh ideas on changing situations, interdisciplinary processes, new creative attitudes, etc.

Just as artists themselves have become more keenly aware of their position as active social partners, no longer content to remain aloof from the changes around them, **arteleku** wants to be more than merely a centre for artistic training and production, to form a space for debate and communication and an institution with a public vocation.

Over these years of ongoing dialogue and exchange, the rigid academic classifications of art have been blurred. Through a continuous redefinition of its workspace, resources and programme, **arteleku** maintained a very active position in the breach and at the fringe - in those uncertain zones where things happen that we still do not know what to call; things we do not even know whether we should be involved in.

arteleku's new structure is designed to meet the new needs of its users. Traditional workshops stand alongside new administration areas and multimedia equipment; the library has grown to form one of the centre's most important spaces; the website offers increasing amounts of information and services to a growing number of visitors and will allow projects to be presented in formats increasingly designed for Internet ; ZEHAR continues to play an indispensable role as an art publication with a constant re-examination of format and contents that reflects the medium in which it operates; and the Associated Projects have allowed **arteleku** to decentralise its activities, participating in a very diverse range of projects.

These processes of change are evidence that neither art nor **arteleku** can stand remote from the real world.

3. A NEW WORKING METHODS FOR A NEW ARTISTIS REALITY

The information society, globalisation, new production methods and the notion of the immaterial as an artistic reality... all of these factors necessitate a debate on the means of artistic production, a debate which **arteleku** seeks to foster.

Its work in this area includes: www.arteleku.net, the Associated Projects, Pensar la Edición [Think Publication] and Superposiciones [Superimpositions].

Think Publication has developed out of ZEHAR - the magazine which has become one **arteleku**'s most important instruments of communication, a forum for debate which we have used to set out the issues we consider most relevant over the years.

ZEHAR's specific approach has made it a reference point for many students, amateurs and professionals from the world of art and contemporary creation. The publication has inherited **arteleku**'s ideals of constant self-criticism and debate and is open to change, deliberation and improvement. ZEHAR has naturally evolved into an open

multidimensional platform of communication; recent developments include a web edition and a change in the magazine's format.

The **arteleku** website (www.arteleku.net) is not just a notice-board for the centre; it is a living workspace, an extension of the physical space, which can be used to develop and communicate projects specifically designed for this medium. It is an open and ever more fluid space, ranging from ZEHAR in pdf format, the *didaweb* projects, a chronicle of the Centre in *Pernan's Album*, *Publifolders* from various artists (Iñaki Imaz's folder is a fine example of open work specifically designed for this section), links to favourite sites and other projects related to **arteleku**, etc.

The Associated Projects are independent cultural initiatives carried out in close collaboration with **arteleku** and augmenting the centre's programme. Each project seeks to establish an approach to different situations, forms of production, interdisciplinary relations, etc. Projects include D.A.E., CONSONNI, AMASTÉ and BITTART which build a variety of bridges between art, culture, society, politics, spectacle, etc; MUGATXOAN, OKUPGRAF and ELEKTRONIKALDIA which explore the limits of disciplines like dance, graphics and electronic music; and ARTE & ELECTRICIDAD which examines very different forms of resistance and subjection in the relation between creation and technology.

D.A.E.

D.A.E. is a cultural association operating in a number of parallel spaces, taking the city of Donostia - San Sebastian as a venue for intervention, with projects such as Front Line Compilation, The Return of Display by Tilo Schulz, Calcinatio by KLAT and Superkongresua.

CONSONNI

CONSONNI is an artistic project oriented towards multidisciplinary artistic experimentation. It performs a variety of events geared towards analysing the characteristics of contemporaneity, extending to the specific field of the arts and other areas of society. CONSONNI is currently preparing a disc with Begoña Muñoz and a television series with Andrea Fraser.

AMASTÉ

AMASTÉ is an agency of communication and new creative forms, centring on the production and dissemination of projects related to different themes of contemporary society. Its activities include the publication of the magazine ESETÉ, The pop project Chi-gua-gua, Emancipator Bubble and the new communication plan and corporate image for **arteleku**..

www.amaste.com

BitArt

Bitart is a platform for communication between contemporary creation and the city. It organises festivals and other events, meetings between creative professionals,

workshops, collaboration with other groups and projects in the area of the dramatic arts.
http://usuarios.tripod.es/bit_art/

MUGATXOAN

Since 1998 MUGATXOAN has been a project that has been interested in the intermediate areas that occur not only between the artist, the process for each piece and the final product, but also between disciplines. We are inviting artists who focus on searching for new codes and on trying to devise other languages, who do not require large-scale production structures.

MUGATXOAN

MUGATXOAN centres on contemporary dance. The project works with the notion of intermediary space, viewing it as a place for the circulation of codes subjected to continuous movements and displacements which serve to redefine it. This year guests will include Francisco Tropea, Gary Stevens and Jennifer Lacey. The event will also be staged in the Fundação Serralves in Oporto.

OKUGRAF

OKUGRAF seeks to articulate different aspects and debates regarding contemporary graphic design. It is intended to act as a hinge, creating a space whose borders are not clearly defined, thus allowing it to produce and stage projects, relationships between artists and the public, deliberation and thought.

ELEKTRONIKALDIA

The Fourth San Sebastian International Festival of Electronic Music, to be held at the beginning of October this year, will present new musical projects in electronic format.
www.elektronikaldia.org

ARTE & ELECTRICIDAD

A&E is based on the concepts of "do it yourself" and "home tech". The project, developed by the *Fundación Rodríguez*, seeks to articulate new forms of production and distribution for contemporary art.

4. A NEW VISUAL IDENTITY ARTELEKU AS A MEETING POINT

"A versatile body in continuous mutation, a meeting point for coming and going, a type of Interception point".

Within this process of change, **arteleku** has also created its own new corporate image. This new image seeks to reinforce the ideology of the new **arteleku**, as an institution which should feed off the relations developed in each project and off the programme as a whole, trying to generate critical thinking and examine the potential of art for the social development of a creative community.

We have abandoned the centre's characteristic **A**, replacing it with a type of connector, in order to transmit the idea of **arteleku** as a point of intersection, a venue for a constant traffic in ideas, a meeting point and a starting point.

The idea is that each of these inputs or outputs should lead to communication with other people, institutions and companies, who in turn have their own set of contacts, thus forming a rich network of inter-relations.

5. THE REDEFINED BUILDING

“The best things are not always in the foreground: you have to dig down to get to the essence. In clear opposition to the increasing banalisation of culture, arteleku offers serene spaces for reflection and production”.

It is precisely this concept that has inspired renovation of the **arteleku** building. With a land area of 4,895 square metres, instead of demolishing/abandoning in order to build something new, we have tried to redefine the building, in line with the centre's own ideology.

Like a great visual metaphor, the work is going on at the back of the building, the background which has always accompanied the artists of **arteleku** and the centre's entire network, whose aim has always been to go further, to escape superficiality and seek out a temporarily expanded space for reflection.

The original **arteleku** was designed along the lines of the old Fine Arts Schools, occupying the empty space of a factory. Today, the new and renovated **arteleku** is evolving, aware of the influence of the information society and new technologies, and the need for less factory-like spaces, with more communication and reflection.

The new building has been constructed in the interior of the existing structure: the facade has been preserved almost intact, but the internal structure has been altered and the importance of the rear courtyard strengthened.

The space has been ordered and rationalised. The new building is more permeable and transitable, with a much more open, fluid and mutable structure (glass is one of the most important features), adapted to the changing needs of its users.

Starting from the entrance, the entire administration and management area has been centralised. Beside it stands the library, in the area which used to house the artists' workshops and where courses were given. The library is perhaps the most significant of the new spaces in **arteleku**; the enlarged area reflects the way the centre has developed in its fifteen-year history, to become a space not just for production and exhibition, but above all for deliberation and communication.

In the central area, the former exhibition hall is now is a large multi-use space, with a meeting/break/dining area, which also communicates with and extends the renovated conference room, through a sliding wall.

Next to this area, there is a small multi-function studio and the multimedia workshops, occupying the former space of the traditional workshops (wood, metal, graphics, etc), which are now located outside the building. In this way we have gained space, reduced noise, but above all, we have given new life to the rear courtyard, which has now

practically become the main facade. In the near future, when the Loyola district is enlarged, it is intended that the courtyard, together with the new garden, will have a public function.

Altogether, users and visitors will find a new **arteleku** rising from the foundations of the original building. It is well worth the trip.

6. A PUBLIC GARDEN

With the idea of creating greater interaction between **arteleku** and the people of the Loyola district and promoting the idea of a public place around the Centre, a garden project has been proposed.

The **arteleku** garden will be ephemeral. Its limited lifespan is one of the most important features of its design. The garden must appear in all its splendour at the very moment of its birth. It will not have time to mature like other gardens.

Various supports have been proposed where nature will complete the design; supports forming a Cartesian structure and acting as coordinates for the disorder of nature. These elements are put directly in place with no alteration.

Bundles of mown grass will act as a support for new vegetation. They will be positioned to act as flower borders, which will then be filled with life.

The poplar grove is seen more as a crop than an ornamental feature. From the moment the trees are planted they will create spatial conditions which will rapidly reach their full splendour. Gravel will be spread beneath them to stop weeds from springing up and spoiling the balance of the garden as a whole.

The proposed furniture eschews strictly functional considerations: instead it will be conceived as an intervention with a sculptural quality.

7. THE REOPENING OF ARTELEKU 21 JUNE

Rather than a one-off opening ceremony, **arteleku** wants to hold a period of celebration and presentation, which will serve to encourage encounters and take stock of these last 15 years while at the same time laying the foundations for new relations for the future. Everything will start on 21 June, and throughout the second half of the year, there will be a series of events, presentations and projects.

7.1. PROGRAMME

The official reopening of Arteleku will take place on 12.30 in the morning. The event will be attended by the General Deputy Román Sodupe, the Provincial Counsellor for the Arts. Luis Bandres, the General Director of the Arts, María Jesús Aramburu and Santiago Eraso, director of **arteleku**.

Once the official ceremony is finished, there will be a tour of the building, followed by a reception.

When this is over, **arteleku**'s programme of festivities will begin.

On the 21st of June we will be giving the starting signal for **memory**. With collaboration from several artists various events will be taking place that aim to contribute to the celebration of the reopening of **Arteleku**. **Memory** includes events ranging from taking an aerial photograph on the terrace roof of the building; the presentation of a book and a video with memories and accounts of **Arteleku**'s activities; an intervention in the workshop area; placing a banner on the front of the building; and a magazine rack-like piece that will be placed in the multipurpose room. Ibon Aramberri, Ixone Arregui, Iñaki Garmendia, Xavier Salaberria, Asier Mendizábal, Asier Pérez, Mikel Ubeli, Amalur, Idurre are among the artists who have taken part. The various pieces and interventions will be presented on the 21st of June, and some of them will enable the audience to take part. **Memory** itself also leaves the door open to further audience participation over the 3 months that it'll be on for.

7.2. Memory

Memory consists of a series of situations and events specifically set up to accompany the re-opening of **Arteleku** during this three-month presentation period. It is a conscious exercise in bringing to the surface our shared memories and emotional ties with our surroundings. To do this the centre has been considered to be an activity scenario: on the one hand, its collections have been revised to tailor them to fit in with contemporary codes from a specific point of view. On the other, activities have been carried out in situ in various areas and formats.

All this is a way to show off our new architecture for the first time, and to publicise the centre. Different small-scale events and initiatives are superimposed over one another and integrated in space and time, in order to establish a new set of relations between the audience and their surrounding environment. These are based on recycling work with a life of its own, that has been readapted to be used in new circumstances with a mainly local scope.

The working method we have kept is one in which responsibility is shared between various artists, in order to collectivise the **Arteleku** experience.

8. MUGATXOAN 2002

MUGATXOAN 2002 has been set up on the basis of the idea of intermediate space as a place in which codes can circulate, but which is redefined by the continuous movements and shifts that it is subject to. This is why the programme moves between two cities, Donostia and Oporto, and takes place in two places: **Arteleku** and the Serralves Foundation.

El programme starts on the 20th of June and ends on the 21st of July and the presentations are: \$Shot, Lacey / Lauro / Parkins / Cornell; Dora Dream, Sandra Cuesta; El eclipse de a. , Amaia Urrea; A space odyssey (2002), Cuqui Jerez. Tiro Inflectido, Francisco Tropa; Reflections, Five Minutes objects, The house, and Here and There, Gary Stevens; and Jèrôme Bel, Jérôme Bel. These public presentations form part of a six-week project between June the 10th and July the 19th, during which fifteen young participants will be sharing in processes by Francisco Tropa (17-21/06) Gary Stevens (24/06 to 11/07) & Jennifer Lacey (15-19/07). These participants will also be starting an individual project that we hope you will be able to see programmed at Mugatxoan 2004.

9. ARTELEKU AND MANIFESTA 2004

“Arteleku ties in perfectly with the philosophy of MANIFESTA, the notion of the young artist working with renovative processes and new technologies, a notion which is closely related to the artist’s social and urban involvement and his or her capacity to create public art”. (Lourdes Fernández, General Coordinator of MANIFESTA)

MANIFESTA 5, the European biennial of work by young artists, will be held in the city of Donostia-San Sebastian in 2004. The project will be managed and coordinated from **Arteleku** and many of the participating artists will also be working here. It will be a highly important moment for the centre, putting the building and facilities to the test and bringing us into contact with artists and institutions from very different backgrounds.

The aim of this cross-border biennial is to “infiltrate” different urban environments in order to foster a climate characterised by dynamism, vitality and cultural diversity.

Over a five-month period, there will be a series of exhibitions, projects, conferences, Internet exchanges and collaboration projects between the different participating artists will in different venues in San Sebastian.

The first edition of the MANIFESTA biennial was held in Rotterdam in 1996. This was followed by Luxembourg in 1998, Ljubljana in 2000 and Frankfurt in 2002. MANIFESTA is a cross-border European event. The programme for each event is adapted to the city in which it is held and its cultural infrastructures.

The committee from the foundation which chooses the host city is made up of directors from some of Europe’s leading museums and centres. They include the president of

the foundation Henry Meyric Hugnes, French Bonami, director of the Venice Biennale 2003, Kasper König, director of the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, and Vicente Todoli, director of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea in Oporto. Among other activities, the biennial will include an exhibition of work by 40 European artists selected by the curators appointed by the Manifesta foundation.

