

Mobile Access to Knowledge



This project has been
conceived and supported
by lettera27 Foundation



lettera **27**

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Cover image: Fatimah Tuggar,
Free Kick, 2009.
Courtesy of the author.

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1. What is Mobile A2K?

Mobile A2K is a project conceived within the frame of action of Lettera27 Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to support the right to literacy, education, and the access to knowledge and information, especially in the African continent. The project is currently under development in partnership with SUPSI as an executive branch.

The curators scheduled the project over three years and into several stages, including both implementations in the African context, and occasions for dissemination in Europe.

Kër Thiossane is a non-profit association for the development of digital visual arts based in Dakar, Senegal. The association organises Afropixel, the festival of digital arts part of Dak'Art.

Doual'Art is an NGO which has been working on urban transformations for the past twenty years in order to promote the empowerment of local communities, and the development of urban awareness in Douala, Cameroon.

Chimurenga is an association promoting a pan African publication of writing, art and politics, which has been in print since March 2002. The journal is published on paper and online, and features themed performances in South Africa and abroad.

The African continent has been producing cultural contents, but due to technological limitations, they are mostly analogical and barely available on the web.

Climatic conditions make difficult to preserve digital data: Mobile A2K aims at bringing these resources to the digital world, in order to spread them through new displaying formats/tools.

Yet under development, Mobile A2K is employing scenarios, participatory design, and visual arts to focus on the interaction and interface design as a key to make contents available on the most used ICT device in Africa: mobile phones.

2. Who runs Mobile A2K?

lettera27

is a non-profit foundation, born in July 2006. Its mission is to support the right to literacy, education, and the access to knowledge and information.

lettera27 is the 27th letter of the alphabet, the missing letter, the letter yet to be, the hybrid sign, the empty box, the link between oral and written words, the connection to the future, the intersection of analogic and digital.

<http://lettera27.org/>

Kër Thiossane

is a non-profit association for the development of digital visual arts based in Dakar, Senegal. The association organises Afropixel, the festival of digital arts part of Dak'Art.

<http://www.ker-thiossane.org/>

doual'art

is an NGO which has been working on urban transformations for the past twenty years in order to promote the empowerment of local communities, and the development of urban awareness in Douala, Cameroon.

<http://www.doualart.org/>

Chimurenga

a panAfrican publication of writing, art and politics has been in print since March 2002. It was founded by Ntone Edjabe. The journal is published on the page three times/year, online monthly and through themed performances called “Chimurenga Sessions.” A flowering of organic schools of thought grown in backyard gardens, tilled and fertilised by the fundamentals of humanity preached and sometimes practiced.

www.chimurenga.co.za/

Roberto Casati

Tenured senior researcher with the French CNRS at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. He has taught at several universities in Europe and US. He is the co-author of *Holes* (MIT Press) and the author of *The Discovery of the Shadow* (Knopf), translated in 8 languages.

He is the co-curator of Mobile A2K.

<http://www.shadowes.org>

Iolanda Pensa

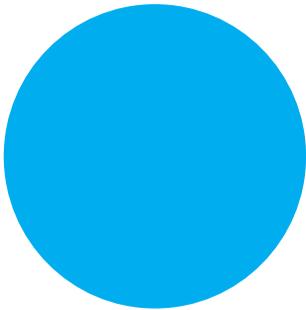
Art critic, researcher and cultural producer, scientific director of lettera27 Foundation. Founding and board member of iStrike Foundation, she worked as a freelance consultant for Doual’art and the Africa Centre. She is the co-curator of Mobile A2K.

<http://io.pensa.it/>

Davide Fornari

is a researcher at SUPSI. Ph.D. in Design Sciences from University Iuav of Venice with a thesis on humanoid interfaces, he is the executive director of Mobile A2K.

3. Mobile A2K so far



Rockefeller Foundation,
*Mobile A2K, Resources,
Interfaces and Contents
on Urban Transformations*,
Bellagio, October 2009

the international start-
up meeting



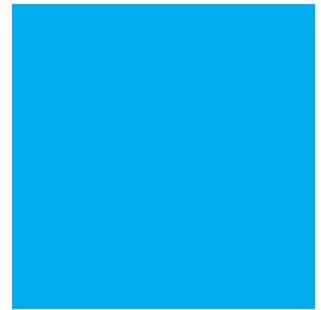
Kër Thiossane,
Bricolab: valise pédagogique,
Dakar, February 2010

a workshop on one of the
formats developed in Bel-
lagio



Chimurenga Magazine,
The curriculum is everything,
Cape Town, May 2010

monographic issue n. 15:
*what would you like the world
to learn?*



Afropixel-Dak'art,
The pedagogical suitcase,
Dakar, May 2010

the Biennial of African
art showcases the results
of the workshop



Festivaletteratura,
Afrofantasy
The disenchanted teacher
Knowledge from an African
point of view
 Mantova, September 2010

three conversations for
 the dissemination of Mo-
 bile A2K

Swiss Design Network
 Conference,
Mobile A2K: Afrofantasy,
 Basel, October 2010

a workshop to raise ideas
 and visions on maps for
 Douala

Salon Urbain de Douala,
Liquid project,
 Douala, December 2010

five installations in Dou-
 ala about the issue of wa-
 ter

Cape Town
Chimurenga Chronicle
 October 2011

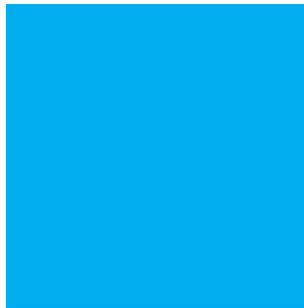
launch of “a speculative,
 future-forward newspa-
 per that travels back in
 time to re-imagine the
 present”.

4. Mobile A2K in the future



SNIS call for proposal 2011
first round
January 2011

presentation of a short
project on Culture and
Safety in Africa



SNIS call for proposal 2011
second round
May 2011

presentation of a complete research project on Culture and Safety in Africa, in partnership with SUPSI University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland, USI University of Lugano, African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications, Institut Jean Nicod, Latitude Platform for Urban Research and Design, University Iuav Chimurenga, Doual'art, Sindika Dokolo Foundation, Lettera27 Foundation

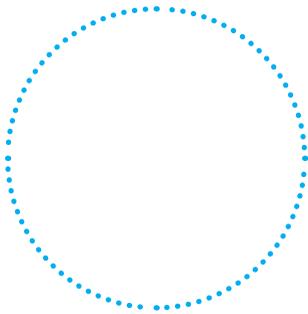


SNIS announces the
accepted projects
July 2011

co-funding from SNIS for
290'000.- Swiss Francs



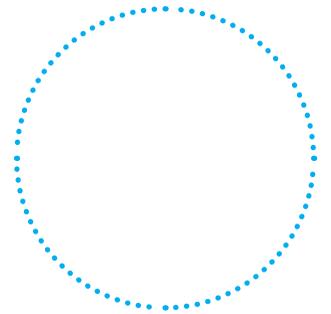
official start of the project
19 December 2011



kick off workshop
Lugano or Bellagio
February 2012



research development
February 2012-
December 2013



final conference for the
presentation of results
January 2014

Mobile A2K - Mobile Access to Knowledge is a project launched in 2009 to support the development of innovative tools for education and promote the creation of content on urban transformation.

How Mobile A2K works

A project on the move. Mobile like mobile phones, the most widespread technological objects in Africa. Mobile like the tools produced: learning units which can travel and be replicated, modules which can be adapted and used in many different settings. Mobile A2K supports the building and sharing of resources, encourages the creation of networks among participants, sharing of content, and increased participation. Mobile A2K facilitates the creation of interfaces, new and innovative ways to produce, organize and access knowledge within the field of education.

The Mobile A2K project is supported by *lettera27* in collaboration with three African organisations: Chimurenga (Cape Town, South Africa), Doual'Art (Douala, Cameroon), and Kër Thiossane (Dakar, Senegal)

What Mobile A2K does

The project supports learning units which have been designed and developed by the partnering African associations:

- Pedagogical Suitcase: a technological toolkit to learn how to create interactive works, created by Kër Thiossane
- Douala Ville d'Art et d'Histoire: a digital and analog map of Douala, accessible via mobile phone, created by Doual'Art
- Chronicle: "a speculative, future-forward newspaper that travels back in time to re-imagine the present". Back-dated to May 18-24 2008, it reports on the first week of the so-called xenophobic violence in South Africa.

Curators

Roberto Casati,
professor and researcher
Iolanda Pensa,
art critic and researcher

Executive director

Davide Fornari,
researcher at *supsi*

Partners

Doual'art, Douala, Cameroon
Chimurenga, Cape Town, South Africa
Ker-Thiossane, Dakar, Senegal

Mobile A2K on Flickr

Festivaletteratura 2010

Mobile A2K on YouTube

Video interviews

Budget

€ 92.284,34

Total budget 2009-2011 of Mobile A2K project

5. 6-8 October 2009, three days of international meetings and workshops at Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center.

October 09,
2009

lettera27 for access to knowledge in Africa. The project Mobile A2K Access to Knowledge, conceived and promoted by *lettera27* has been held at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, from October the 6th to the 8th 2009.

Three days of discussions and workshops, in which experts from Europe, America and Africa have confronted each other on the new opportunities for education offered by mobile telephones, Internet platforms, free licensing and social network.

And how these cognitive and technological developments are a source of profound transformation of social, cultural and urban relations, in specific areas such as Africa. Researchers, managers and experts in the fields of cognitive science, media, IT, architecture and art, together for the development of resources, interfaces, content.

Curated by Iolanda Pensa and Roberto Casati, this first stage of the broader project Mobile A2K, with its three days at Bellagio, is the source of a first contents unit, which will be made accessible through the creation of the format for a traveling, interactive and constantly evolving exhibition on urban transformations. First in Senegal in May 2010, in concomitance with the Biennale of Contemporary African Art in Dakar, to move then to Douala/Cameroon (December 2010), Cape Town/South Africa, Milan/Italy, New York/USA and Paris/France.

It is possible to follow the debate until December 2009 on the website of interdisciplines.org, interdisciplinary platform for discussion and consideration.

Image: Stacy Hardy & Graeme Arendse, An Introspective of Chimurenga Library, Cape Town, South Africa. Detail of the map. Stacy Hardy is an artist, writer, contributing editor of Chimurenga magazine and a participant of Mobile A2K. Graeme Arendse is a designer at Chimurenga. Courtesy of Chimurenga Library.

6. “Mobile A2K, Resources, Interfaces and Contents on Urban Transformations”: follow up

November 20,
2009

“Mobile A2K: Resources, Interfaces and Contents on Urban Transformations” is the international meeting focused on African urban transformations, technology and education held at the [Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center](#) from 6 to 8 of October 2009. Mobile A2K aimed at developing a format for an itinerant, modular and ever-changing exhibition.

Participation is the key to recording and accessing knowledge. Mobile A2K relies on existing resources to familiarize schools, libraries and cultural institutions with new interfaces that can help tracking and communicating urban transformations. Scholars, intellectuals and managers in the sphere of cognitive studies, media, education, architecture and art were invited to connect and think creatively about the opportunities provided by exhibition design, mobile phones, open platforms, copyleft and user-generated contents in the fields of formal and informal education.

Starting from [the position papers](#) by the co-curators [Iolanda pensa](#) and [Roberto Casati](#), the meeting focused on the experience of three already existing organisations, partners of [lettera27](#), operating within the African context to raise a brainstorming on new formats for exhibiting and communicating contents on urban transformations.

[Doual’art](#) organises conferences, such as [Ars & Urbis](#), to enact a change in the way citizens percept and live the city of Douala (Cameroun) through the arts and by commissioning works of art in distinctive spots of the city.

[Kër Thiossane](#) is an association based in Dakar (Senegal) aiming at developing a center for digital creativity. They organise [Afropixel](#), an event gathering digital artists in the African continent for the dissemination and experimentations of new practices and hardware.

[Chimurenga Library](#) operates in Cape Town as a cultural organisation, editing a magazine, organising conferences and exhibitions. They operate in the context of cultural institutions of Cape Town suggesting new and provocative views of Black/White culture in literature and the visual arts.

During the three days of the meeting the participants were involved in group discussions aiming at producing a one or two pages report on the issues and questions raised by the discussants. Thus, A2K developed concepts and formats which received benefits from the scholars and the other partners of the foundation, such as [Wikimedia Foundation](#), [Orange](#), [the African Center for Cities](#), [Moleskine](#).

The three concepts/directions of Mobile A2K are to be developed as exhibition format on urban transformations for formal/informal education within three existing projects promoted by Doual’art, Kër Thiossane and Chimurenga.

They have been provisionally labeled as **“producing and distorting maps”**, as the challenge of mapping a mapless city as Douala: given a blank slate on which to draw. How does one create a map which serves the need of the local population? What is the most appropriate means to make the city readable? Working with unmapped spaces provides a scope for thinking differently about how to represent the city.

The definition “**the exhibition as a text-book**”, says that the exhibition is a moment in time, but it has to be considered in its full dimension which requires a “before” and an “after”. The notion of continuity, as well as that of repetition is a key to learning process. The audience become a kind of a translator, because translation is in itself a learning experience and an example of knowledge acquisition.

Then, “**the pedagogical suitcase**”. Suitcases are the very symbol of mobility: the first portable typewrites were fitted into suitcases. Starting from the basic metaphor, we propose some scenarios for suitcases that could be used as instruments of mobile knowledge and learning.

On the mid-term (by 2010) *lettera27* will foster the implementation of the concepts developed at the meeting in two exhibitions. One in Dakar (Afropixel, May 2010) and the other in Douala (Salon Urbain de Douala, Fall 2010). Moreover, a series of meetings on the issues and concepts concerning A2K will be presented at Festivaletteratura in Mantua (Italy, September 2010).

7. Bricolab, the workshop for the festival Afropixel 2010: a stage of Mobile A2K

February 09,
2010

From 16 to 24 February 2010 in Dakar the association Kër Thiossane will host *Bricolab*, a workshop by Jean Noël Montagné dedicated to the creation of interactive tools to be used in creative and educational processes.

The workshop in Dakar is the second stage of *Mobile A2K*, a development of the format of “pedagogical suitcase”. The “pedagogical suitcase” is one of the three concepts developed during the meeting in Bellagio in October 2009.

The Senegalese association Kër Thiossane, a partner of *lettera27*, is a center devoted to art and multimedia technology, a place of exchange and research about the opportunities offered in educational and creative contexts by ICT.

The workshop *Bricolab* is part of the residency program in preparation for the festival *Afropixel*, an event organized by the association, in cooperation with other African and international institutions, and dedicated to the intertwining of art and technology in Africa.

The “pedagogical suitcases” created by artists during their residency will be presented in the exhibition in Dakar during the festival *Afropixel*, scheduled for the month of May, in concomitance with *Dak’art*, the Biennial of Contemporary African Art. The participants of *Bricolab* are African and Caribbean artists, selected through an *open call*, who will work together to create a series of prototypes and tools, using the *open source* hardware platform Arduino.

During eight days of collective work the artists will deal creatively with each other and work together to create interactive art projects. The workshop will also provide the opportunity to experience a professional training experience, acquire knowledge, and experience a “technological know-how”.

An important part of the workshop will be, in fact, an introduction to *Arduino*, an *open source* hardware platform that can be manipulated, customized and assembled by users. So, thanks to this tool, the participants will build with their own hands a number of “pedagogical suitcases”, which contain interactive systems.

Jean Noël Montagné is an artist and creator of collaborative art projects dedicated to interactive art. In his works he uses real time interaction processes to trigger public debate on economic and environmental problems and on the conditions of the individual today. At the heart of the *Mobile A2K* workshop, these and other topics will be faced through the creative use of new technologies.

8. Creativity and education on the move: the Mobile A2K pedagogical suitcase

April 10,
2010

Technology allows artists to create ‘living’ works, which interact with the world around us, with our senses and with changes in our environment. Interactivity encourages participation and relating, through tools which adapt to different contexts and purposes. Interactivity is therefore an ideal quality for artistic practice as well as education, and in the study of transformations in the urban environment.

The idea of a ‘pedagogical suitcase’ is born from these concepts, and is one of the elements of the *Mobile A2K* project, promoted by *letteraz7* and set up in 2009 at the [Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center](#). The ‘pedagogical suitcase’ was created in Dakar during the workshop *Bricolab*, organised by the association [Kër Thiossane](#) in collaboration with Jean-Noël Montagné and a work group which included artists, computer scientists, educators, and other professionals working in the cultural arena.

The *Bricolab* work group shared professional expertise and knowledge from many areas, to design a kit of flexible interactive tools, which can be used to produce artwork, performance, and research on urban and social transformation.

The suitcase, designed to ‘react’ to various environmental stimuli and to establish different types of interaction, contains:

- a **Mini Mac Intel** computer, with many partitions, to allow use of various operating systems;
- 8 sets of 14 different **sensors** (with one, two or three parameters) which allow, for example, to detect movement, pressure, brightness, colours, shapes and temperature in the environment.
- a number of **processing cards** which receive the incoming signal from the sensors they process, connect and integrate information, and therefore represent the ‘neural network’ in the functioning of the pedagogical suitcase. In other words, they can receive input from the sensors and relate this to other tools. These are [Arduino Mega](#) cards, based on a very advanced platform, the [Arduino/FreeArduino](#).

Many of the suitcase components, such as the Arduino card or the Pure Data software, are open source technology. As well as being some of the most advanced and widely used tools, open source technologies allow users to learn how to build the tools themselves, and to find low cost materials which can be assembled in various ways depending on needs and context.

The suitcase can be used by eight users simultaneously, connected to a central computer via a network, and to a projector and a sound system. A number of sensors connected to each user’s workstation can receive stimuli from the environment and transform them in sounds and images. The information gathered and processed in each work station can interact with the others in real time. The combination of sounds and images, constantly changing, is sent to the central computer which renders it through sounds and images projected on a single screen.

The 'pedagogical suitcase' therefore establishes, through a technological network, a communication between users and the environment, where processes of collective creation and learning can take place, ever changing and unrepeatable.

The 'pedagogical suitcase' will be presented in Dakar from 12 to 21 May 2010 during the Afropixel festival, one of the partner events of *Dak'art*, the Contemporary African Art Biennale.

9. Mobile A2K at the Dakar Biennale of Contemporary African Art

May 03,
2010

The official programme of the Biennale of Contemporary African Art *Dak'Art* includes, from 7th to 21st May, the *AfroPixel 2010* festival, an annual event focused around digital creativity. Lettera27 Foundation supports this second edition of the festival, within the project *Mobile A2K*.

AfroPixel, produced by the Kër Thiossane cultural association, represents an opportunity to reflect upon the impact of new technologies on contemporary society and the potential for an active use of digital tools.

Through exhibitions, installations, performances, conferences, open discussions and workshops, *AfroPixel* produces digital work exploring the topic of active citizenship: a conscious and creative use of technology allows us to trace and to understand urban and social transformations, and to have a real impact on our common future.

Based on this, as part of its programme *AfroPixel* has focused on training in the use of open source hardware and software, and in DIY (*Do It Yourself*) skills, particularly for creating tools and content that are specific to the African continent. The 'pedagogical suitcase' is one of these tools and will be used from 12th to 21st May for the creation of an audiovisual performance with the collaboration of Jean-Noël Montagné and a group of seven artists from Mali, Martinique, Senegal and Morocco.

The last phase of *myDetour 5x5* will also take place during the Dakar Biennale. *myDetour 5x5* is an exhibition of the notebooks that have won the competition run by Moleskine, La Feltrinelli and GUT, who have supported Kër Thiossane and *AfroPixel* through *lettera27*. The 25 selected notebooks travel Dakar's streets on a *car rapide*, a minibus common in the Senegalese capital - decorated on the exterior, for the occasion, by Senegalese artist Henry Sagna. The *car rapide* will also show an interactive video installation about the project and produced with *Arduino*.

The *AfroPixel* festival is part of the international cooperation project *Rose des Vents Numériques* directed by Kër Thiossane and aimed at creating a network of African and Caribbean resources benefiting individuals and associations within the digital arts field.

10. Africa's technological vocation: lettera27 at Festivalletteratura 2010 in Mantova

July 21,
2010

On 11th and 12th September *lettera27* is taking part in Mantova's literature festival *Festivalletteratura* with *Mobile A2K*, through three panel discussions on technology, education, urban transformation and interactivity, which are key activities run by the foundation, thanks to the *Mobile A2K* project.

Through the *lettera27* network, the programme brings together educators, artists, writers, and people who actually look inside devices and tools, understand how they work and adapt them to their own particular needs, aiming to create technologies that are free and inexpensive.

The starting point is *Afrofantasy – African science fiction and fantasy as an anticipation of future and technology*, a panel discussion focusing on visions of alternative worlds in African science fiction, with Giuseppe O. Longo, researcher and writer, Stacy M. Hardy from "Chimurenga Magazine", Cheick Tidiane Gaye, writer, and Fatimah Tuggar, world-renowned Nigerian artist.

The disenchanting teacher. Rethinking education through technology, is the title of the second panel discussion, defending intelligent low-tech and supporting extreme hi-tech, chaired by Chiara Somajni, journalist from "Il Sole 24 Ore" and new technologies expert, and Robert Casati, philosopher and researcher. Participants include: Massimo Banzi, interactive tools designer and founder of the *Arduino* project, and Mark Grimes, co-founder of *Maker Faire Africa*, a travelling fair devoted to Africa's creativity in innovative technology.

The last event in the programme is *Multiplying perspectives: knowledge from an African point of view*, a talk by Rasheed Araeen, one of the most active and affirmed postcolonial intellectuals. This event will also host the *Wikimedia Italia* award ceremony, which this year is devoted to the best African contents published on *Wikipedia*.

11. MobileA2K: Afrofantasy, the disenchanting teacher, knowledge from an African point of view

September 07,
2010

From 11th to 12th September *lettera27* takes part in [Festivalletteratura 2010](#) in Mantova, presenting *Mobile A2K: Africa Interfaces Education Technology*. The programme includes three seminars, taking place at the Seminario Vescoville. Lively discussions among international participants will focus on the potential application of interactive and open technologies, promoting active participation within education and training.

lettera27 is in its fourth year as event partner, supporting African authors and encouraging participation not only by writers, but also by technology experts, artists and designers. The *Mobile A2K* project gives this year's participation both a title and a soul, stimulating reflection on urban transformation, ICT (Information Communication Technology) and education in Africa.

On Saturday 11th September, at 12.15 pm, the programme starts off with *Afrofantasy: African science fiction and fantasy as an anticipation of future and technology*. The seminar focuses on one of the lesser known aspects of contemporary African culture: literary visions of possible future worlds in Africa, born out of a merging of narrative and technological imagery.

During the seminar, Giuseppe O. Longo, an Italian professor whose research combines Information Theory and science fiction, shares his thoughts with [Cheikh Tidiane Gaye](#), poet and writer, born in Senegal and currently living in Milan, [Fatimah Tuggar](#), Nigerian artist working with digital art and photography, and Stacy Hardy (bio wiki), writer and contributor to "[Chimurenga Magazine](#)".

On the same day, possible worlds and visions for the future will again be at the heart of the discussions, which will explore the most useful technological tools available for teaching know-how, and in what ways technology may contribute to training and education in the future.

At 5.15 pm Chiara Somajni, a journalist from "Il Sole 24 Ore" who writes about creative and social use of digital technology, is hosting the seminar *The disenchanting teacher. Rethinking education through technology* developed by Roberto Casati and Chiara Somajni.

Participants include Massimo Banzi, consultant, interactive design teacher and designer of [Arduino](#), Mark Grimes, co-founder of the online networking spaces [ned.com](#) and [NedSpace](#) and co-organizer of the [Maker Faire Africa](#). A number of prototypes and technological tools, created to re-think teaching methods and "teacher-student" interactions, are also at the heart of the programme. These include the *Pedagogical Suitcase*, project carried out by the Kër Thiossane association based in Dakar, in collaboration with *lettera27*, presented for the first time in Italy by its designer, Jean-Noel Montagné. Other tools presented are: [Oliboard](#), a blackboard produced by Olivetti, combining interactivity and multimedia content, [Tinker Toolkit](#), one of the most recent evolutions of the Arduino card, and IBM [Mobi3](#), one of the most successful projects bringing together schools and mobile phone technology companies.

On Sunday 11th September at 12.15 pm, don't miss key seminar *Multiplying perspec-*

tives: knowledge from an African point of view, with [Rasheed Araeen](#), conceptual artist and critic, founder of the journal “[Third Text](#)”. This is a unique opportunity to meet, in Italy, one of the leading figures of post-colonial critique. An original perspective is presented on the Mediterranean origin of western culture and how Asia and Africa are often misunderstood in their contribution to the production of knowledge.

Following the discussion, the third annual [Wikimedia Italia Award](#) ceremony will announce this year’s winner, selected for the best work on an African subject (presented as text, music, visual art work, or other form). The work must have been released during 2010 under the Creative Commons license.

12. Mobile A2K at Festivalletteratura: learning to bring technology to life

October 07,
2010

2 days of seminars, 3 panel discussions, 11 international guests, more than 500 participants, 3 live radio broadcasts, 15 entries created on Wikipedia.

These are some of the numbers that describe the participation of *letteraz7* at Festivalletteratura 2010 with *Mobile A2K: Mobile Access to Knowledge: resources, interfaces and contents on urban transformation*. These numbers are intertwined with thoughts and experiences presented by the guest speakers and the impressions shared by the audience participants, as well as discussions on the work of *letteraz7* during the past year, dedicated to new inspiring ideas on the relationship between education and technology.

African science fiction can represent an experimental lab which can help us increase our understanding of change in society. This was the theme of *Afrofantasy*, where different perspectives were presented and discussed. Contributions included the history of the relationship between science fiction and society by Giuseppe O. Longo, the collage of cultures and tools in the works of Fatimah Tuggar, a trip to an African technological and cultural future, presented by Stacy Hardy, and a call to the past and to traditions by Cheikh Tidiane Gaye, Senegalese poet and writer.

The disenchanting teacher, the panel discussion hosted by Chiara Somajni and Roberto Casati, explored the question of how we can use technological innovation to create new ways of teaching and learning. Mark Grimes and Massimo Banzi suggested that the secret of true technological innovation in the field of education must be based on an understanding that technology should not be perfect, indeed isn't perfect, and cannot, by itself, offer a definitive answer. Rather, it should be a way to try and actually do, create new communities, and look for solutions. Technological inventions and new interactive products were presented at the end of the discussion.

Rasheed Araeen, one of the most important intellectuals in the field of post-colonial critique, was the key speaker in *Multiplying perspectives*, the third panel discussion. At the centre of the debate were important current political and cultural issues. Araeen's reflections revolved around knowledge, on how to produce it and share it. He focused on European roots to show how knowledge is always universal and shared, and not the result of a clash between civilisations. In order to bring to the surface these cultural roots, Araeen suggested focusing on history, and called for a collaborative effort.

The event also hosted the Wikimedia Italy Award ceremony, which this year selected the best content released on a Creative Commons license during 2010. Frieda Brioschi, president of Wikimedia Italia, presented the award to the Sun-baRadio team.

A special mention was made to "Nigrizia" for sharing under a Creative Commons license the full archives for the journal, founded in 1883. "Nigrizia", media partner for *letteraz7* within Festivalletteratura, took part in the festival during the two days with its Afriradio team, who streamed the panel discussions online, which are now available as podcasts (listen >). The team also produced a number of small video interviews with the guest speak-

ers. The interviews explored the *Mobile A2K* themes: ideas, stories and experiences on mobile technology, education and interactivity.

[Watch at the photo album on Flickr](#)

13. Visions from the future: the Mobile A2K workshop in Basel

October 26,
2010

On 29th October, *Mobile A2K* will take part in the [Swiss Design Network Conference](#) with its [Afrofantasy](#) workshop. The *Swiss Design Network Conference* is an annual symposium on design and innovation and this year's theme is *Negotiating Futures – Design Fiction*. The event, which will be held in Basel, is organised by the University of Applied Sciences - Western Switzerland. The *Mobile A2K* workshop will take place during the three-day programme, providing an opportunity for reflection on imagination, future and design in Africa.

In their work, African artists and science fiction writers imagine future worlds, impossible technologies and new interfaces (as highlighted by Stacy Hardy during her participation at [Festivaletteratura 2010](#)). These visions can help us to take action in the present, particularly in addressing the objectives of *Mobile A2K: Access to Knowledge*. This *lettera 27* project supports the creation of new tools for training and education, for promoting access to knowledge and for telling tales of urban change in Africa. *Mobile A2K* is a travelling project which supports the activity of a number of African associations. One of its next stops will be the city of Douala, in Cameroon, as part of the 2010 *SUD-Salon Urbain de Douala* from 4th to 11th December.

Since 1991, the cultural association *Doual'art*, a *Mobile A2K* partner based in Douala, has been working across the city's districts on projects focusing on infrastructure, design, art-work and installations. As part of [Douala Ville d'Art et d'Histoire](#) one of *Doual'art's* recent projects, during the past few years specially designed information panels have been placed at sites of historical significance. This project has also proved to be a powerful tool in making Douala a safer city, promoting active citizenship and facilitating access to and sharing of knowledge. *Doual'art* is continuing its work, enhancing the cultural panels project, as a reproducible, innovative and educational tool, through access to information on the web and via mobile phone. The workshop encourages participants to contribute to *Doual'art's* work with ideas and connections in a way similar to how the African artists represent future worlds, impossible technologies, and new interfaces. The discussion is focused on two fictional scenarios, a 'Creso' scenario and an 'Apollo 13' scenario. Working in 'Creso' modality as suggested in the book by Ian Ayres and [Barry Nalebuff](#), unlimited wealth and the best technology are taken for granted. In the 'Apollo 13' modality, participants are trapped in an emergency situation, with limited and low tech tools. In response to "Houston we have a problem", they must somehow come up with a way to save their skins and make it back home using the available resources. The methodology, which compares 'Creso' and 'Apollo 23', has been developed for *Mobile A2K* from an idea by Robert Casati, to help think about resources, contents, and interfaces in Africa and across the world.

The workshop, led by Davide Fornari and Iolanda Pensa, The workshop brought together leading names from the world of design, such as [Gaia Scagnetti](#) and [Nicolas Nova](#) with *Mobile A2K*. Project's next stop, promoted by *Doual'art*, will be at the *SUD-Salon Urbain de Douala* in Douala, Cameroon, from 4th to 11th December 2010.

14. Urban arts at SUD 2010

December 02,
2010

From 4th to 11th December 2010 the city of Douala (Cameroon) will host SUD 2010 - Salon Urbain de Douala, a triennial public art event organized by the association Doual'art and directed by Marilyn Douala Bell, president of the association, and Didier Schaub, artistic director of this second edition of the event.

SUD represents a new stage in the *Mobile AzK* project, supported by lettera27 Foundation, Doual'art being one of its partners. The *Mobile AzK - Mobile Access to Knowledge* project was launched in 2009 to support the development of innovative tools to serve education and encourage the creation of content on urban transformation.

How does technology help us re-think formal and informal learning processes, for example in the case of a set of events? During the SUD festival, *Mobile AzK* will gather materials – text, sounds, images, actions – to represent Douala through an interactive map which will be produced during 2011.

Douala is the true heart of SUD, which is designed as an artistic event which can trigger processes and transformations in the city. Five city districts host specific artist interventions. Thanks to SUD, Douala becomes a laboratory for social and artistic experimentation: what kind of impact can art have on African cities and on the daily life of the people who live there?

Ars&Urbis, an annual observatory focusing on the relationship between art and urban change in Douala, run in collaboration with cultural institutions and the university, has developed the themes which inform each SUD event. The 2010 theme is water.

During 2010 a number of events and meetings, both in Douala and in the Netherlands, have shaped the preparatory stages of the SUD triennale. These meetings, laboratories and residences have given life to the 19 works of SUD 2010, urban installations which interpret the central theme of water according to diverse languages and points of view: water as a source of experiences connected with sound and perception, as in the work *Promenade Liquide*, by German sound designer Christina Kubish and in *Le jardin Sonore*, by French artist Lucas Grandin; water as a story about the local area and the daily lives of the people who live there, as in *Face à l'eau*, by Cameroonian artist Salifou Lindou; water as a resource and common good at the centre of *Source*, an installation by Belgian artist Philippe Aguirre.

SUD - Salon Urbain de Douala is an event produced by Doual'art, Centre for contemporary art focusing on experimenting with new urban practices in African cities, and supporting artists who are working and doing research on these themes.

15. Jengu Project Work in Progress: Do It Yourself. The work of Bili Bidjocka for SUD 2010

January 11,
2011

Bili Bidjocka, Cameroonian artist living in Paris, founder in 1995 of the Matrix Art Project was commissioned by [doual'art](#) to produce a work on the theme of water, which is at the heart of [SUD 2010](#), the second edition of the [Salon Urbain de Douala](#). In Douala, Bidjocka created a map and 180 flags positioned on the only bridge crossing the river Wouri and close to springs identified during preliminary research by the artist.

Bili Bidjocka's work is a search for Douala's springs, where water comes to surface sustaining life all around it. It is supported by [lettera27](#) within the project [Mobile A2K - Mobile Access to Knowledge](#) to reveal the constant movement, the connections hidden beneath our feet, and the search for a new interface to observe the city and be a part of it. *Jengu Project Work in Progress: Do It Yourself* is part of a wider project led by [doual'art](#) on geomapping and making documentation on Douala available online.

The map is composed of a portrait of the city from above, a postcard and a drawing on the wall showing the boundaries of the urban area. Light blue threads carry the water to the river, recreating the hair of Jengu, which is both the title of the work and a water spirit of the Wouri river. In local folk tales, Jengu becomes a mermaid or a small creature with fins instead of hands and feet.

Whilst Jengu's appearance is different in each tale, the common element is his long hair with its power to charm and entangle. His hair, like strands of water merging into the river, is at the centre of Bili Bidjocka's map. Douala, seen from above, is a new portrait of Jengu: imaginary, as Jengu's portraits always are, and imaginary as maps which evoke places through symbols. Most of the four million people living in Douala are not familiar with maps as tools to navigate the city, and only a few are familiar with aerial views and cartographic symbols. Bili Bidjocka's work helps people get to know their own territory but also to stop and observe, to imagine their world and themselves.

The council provided the cartography of the water system in Douala, and students from the Faculty of Geography of the University of Douala surveyed the springs, identifying twenty sites. "The springs are everywhere" says Bili Bidjocka "There are springs beneath houses, here and there, in an infinite number of places. My springs are real and imagined. On the map and on the flags I wanted to recognise the importance of the ones that are already known, but also invent new ones, because research is a never-ending process". Anyone can report the discovery of a new spring, photograph it, and tell their story about it. Bidjocka's work therefore continues with the participation of the community, called to contribute to the search for new access points to water.

Jengu Project Work in Progress: Do It Yourself is supported by [lettera27](#) within [Mobile A2K](#), a project on resources, interfaces and content on urban transformation, launched in 2009 in collaboration with [doual'art](#) and other African organisations. Bili Bidjocka's work contributes to current thinking and research on interactive maps, and on producing educational content involving the audience.

