

# LILLIPUT

by SIMONE MICHELIN

In *Gulliver's Travels*, Jonathan Swift investigates the essence of human nature: would humans be basically kind and rational beings or impulsive and cruel beasts?

*Lilliput* is a metaphor that reflects on the relationships that constitute the public domain. In the context of a globalized capitalism that produces increasingly sophisticated technological prosthetics which materialize human desires, embodying them in n-gadgets, the technology of mobile communications represents the last, temporary, frontier. The artwork system puts in relief the contemporary scene of the society of control, where, increasingly, the construction of reality depends on the mastery in articulating powerful images.

Lilliput, the land of tiny men, an island where Gulliver is cast ashore, is represented here as a virtual reality, a safe tourism in the world of the everything less, where you step into the shoes of the other like an avatar that circulates insulated, comfortably avoiding its odors and possible undesirable contacts.

Welcome to Rio!

Make your own world and carry it in your pocket.

**Attention:**  
**this is an artist's text**

**SM RJ**

## **LILLIPUT**

**A situation projected for  
the opening of the  
Centro Cultural Telemar  
Rio de Janeiro  
May 2005**

### **Sinopsis**

Lilliput is a system composed of human, physical and technological infrastructures that makes feasible the production of wallpapers for cell phones in the Centro Cultural Telemar. The visitor chooses where to position him/herself in a photographic setting – a Mexican-style wooden pyramid with wooden furniture and an infinite blue background; photographs of homeless people in real size mounted on panels, with their faces missing, so that visitors can place their heads onto the cut-out bodies and pose next to real street kids available for the occasion. Cell phones equipped with cameras capture these images and make an upload to the website, where they can be combined with other virtual settings, producing wallpapers that can be downloaded by cell phone via internet.

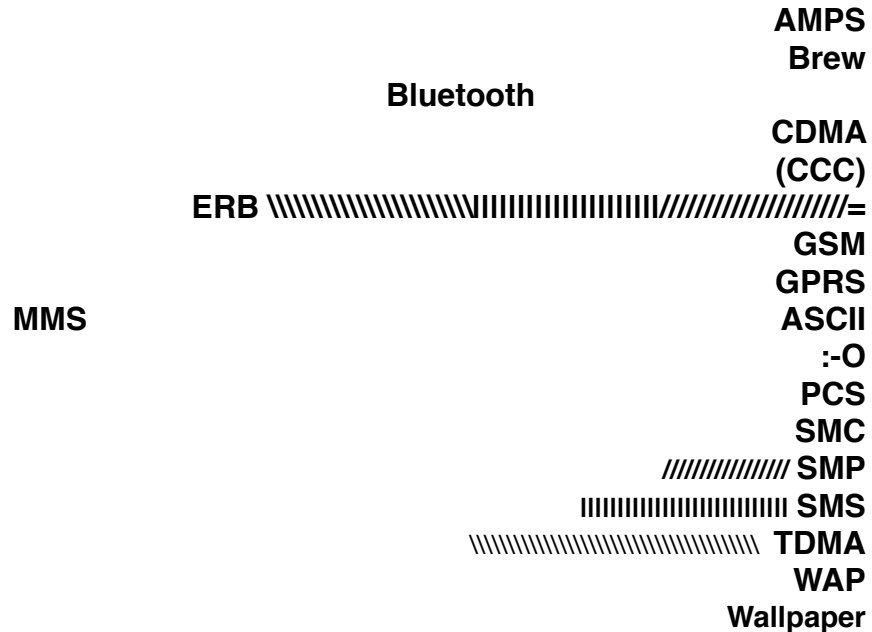
### **Technical credits:**

Phase 1: Simone Michelin  
Phase 2: LAMCE/COPPE/PEC/UFRJ  
Phase 3: visitors and users  
Photos: Coral Michelin Basso



## 1. A Little Bit of History

A few years ago, having a cell phone was synonymous with wealth. The first models to arrive in Brazil in the early 90's were extremely expensive and restricted to those who could afford not only the absurd price of the device but also high telephone rates.



These are images you can download in your cell phone and use as screens.

The number of cell phones users in the world has doubled since 2000. Close to 1.5 billion people, 1/4 of the world's population, has access to this service – according to the International Telecommunications Union, a UN agency

Brazilian Statistics 01/18/2005 – 65.61 million cell phones  
**Brasília has more cell phones than inhabitants**

<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/dinheiro/ult91u92551.shtml>

17/01/2005 - 17h23

### ***a little bit + of history***

**Subject:** projetMichelin  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 5, 2000 11:32 AM  
**From:** Simone Michelin <sm07@zaz.com.br>  
**To:** <joseags@telemar-rj.com.br>  
**Cc:** Ivana Bentes <ivana@ax.apc.org>

Dear Alberto

find enclosed the material asked by IVANA BENTES in reference to the expo Museu do Telefone the first text is for the catalogue

what follows is a detailed description of the whole project, in an accessible language, hopefully for Telemar

I'll be expecting an answer  
see you tomorrow  
xxxx

Michelin

<http://www.smichelin.art.br/mn02.htm>

### **0-800-speak**

+++++buzz++++ You are now at **MN.02**. This is an Artwork.

By making this call you become a co-creator. +++++buzz++++ Attention: this material has strictly artistic objectives.

The identity of participants will not be revealed. +++++buzz++++

To talk about art, dial 1

To talk about invasion of privacy, dial 2

To talk about everything, dial 3

**Above all**

### **0-800-listen**

+++++buzz++++ You are now at **MN.02**. This is an Artwork.

By making this call you become a co-creator. +++++buzz++++ Attention: this material has strictly artistic objectives.

The identity of participants will not be revealed. +++++buzz++++

To hear what other inhabitants of Rio think, use

The password

To talk about art, dial 1

To talk about invasion of privacy, dial 2

To talk about everything, dial 3

**Above all**

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**MN.01** project Rio May 2000

TELEPHONING is the simplest form of long-distance human interaction

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**Telephones were the first telecommunications technology (long-distance communication) accessible to practically all the Earth's population. And also the simplest, most direct and most interactive to this day.**

Telephones are a means of communication that make possible a conversation between 2 points, a two-way highway. (Note: nowadays, more than two)  
Starting with the same technology, the internet amplified this possibility, creating a space that can be simultaneously inhabited by different, geographically distant individuals.

Each one of these vehicles – telephones and internet – create an environment that determines the qualities (characteristics) of the information.

What we propose is filling the time-space of the trajectory, the duration that will connect 2 points of contact, while the user waits for a phone call. How?

By inserting short messages that function like the graphic/sound vignettes used in radio and television programming. **The user picks up the receiver and listens to messages randomly sent.**

0800-type phone lines will be available for receiving and collecting participant's contributions, since the collectivity will be responsible for supplying the messages. This material will generate a data bank that will be placed on the web (WWW) and will also be able to receive contributions.

This event can be considered a model for a process that intends to stimulate the collective exercise of conversation. How will the public react, what attitude will it have before this possibility without precedents and without pre-established rules?

<http://smichelin.art.br/teleanamnesis/simone.html>

The **experiment**: Rio, April 2000

- a temporary intervention in the telephone system of Rio de Janeiro
- an action that deals with shared amounts of information and unfolds in 2 communication systems whose vehicle are phone lines (**telephones and internet**);
- the purpose is creating a non-directed\* space for manifestation, with the objective of apprehending values, codes, norms and forms of representation common to the city in this moment;
- it makes means of producing information accessible;
- it intends to move within a *communication-escape*, *machine-escape*, transforming it into an *action-escape*;
- characteristics: a centralized intervention in the communication process; a training for dealing with the simultaneity of apparent sources of meaning, offering possibilities for thinking-acting in relation to it. Artist(s), scientist(s), technician(s) – social role as an ethical question (?).

On the **physical** space:

- a metaphor for transparent process, work and the creation of a reality

Telephone: *communication-escape + binding medium*

Museum: *data bank, abrigo/shelter, fonte/source*

WWW: *ágora*; public territory

\* based on the idea of data collecting for social researches using non-directive techniques

Rio, May 2005

Comments: