



THE LABYRINTH PROJECT
USC School of Cinematic Arts

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LABYRINTH PROJECT

The Labyrinth Project is a research initiative on interactive narrative at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts. Under the direction of cultural theorist Marsha Kinder since 1997, Labyrinth has been working at the pressure point between theory and practice. With media artists Rosemary Comella, Kristy H.A. Kang and Scott Mahoy working as creative directors, Kinder and her collaborators have been producing award-winning multimedia projects that juxtapose fictional and historical story elements in provocative ways. In the process, Labyrinth has invented a new form of digital scholarship combining archival cultural history and artistic practice. Their "database documentaries" animate the archive and make history come alive for a wide range of audiences.

Labyrinth designs their interactive works as transmedia networks—installations, DVD-ROMs, and websites. Their projects appear not only in cyberspace but also in the networked public spaces of museums, science centers, and other public venues.

Labyrinth's DVD-ROMs have won prestigious prizes—including the New Media Invision Award for Best Overall Design, the Jury Award for New Narrative Forms at the Sundance On-line Film Festival, and a British Academy Award for Best interactive project in the Learning category. Their installations have been exhibited at art, film and new media festivals, museums, and academic conferences worldwide. In 2003 three of their works were included in the seminal *Future Cinema* show at ZKM (the Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany) and continue to travel. In 2007 Adobe chose two works by Labyrinth (*Russian Modernism* and *A Tale of Two MAO Genes*) to feature in their promotional video on best uses of their software in higher education.

Labyrinth's projects all grow out of broad, multi-tiered collaborations with artists, scholars, scientists, students, archivists, museums and cultural institutions. In the process, Labyrinth has developed three signature genres: the digital city symphony that explores urban space through layers of time; the interactive memoir that probes the networked memories and lived experience of complex individuals; and interactive science education that explores the interplay between biology and culture and the respective representation systems of art and science. Several of their works combine these genres.

Although Labyrinth was originally launched at USC's Annenberg Center for Communication, it is now housed in USC's celebrated School of Cinematic Arts, where Kinder has been teaching since 1980. After ten years, Labyrinth is still going strong. Their projects have been funded by grants from the Annenberg, Ford, Getty, Haas, Irvine, NEH, Righteous Persons, Rockefeller, and Skirball Foundations.

For further information, contact Marsha Kinder at 213-740-5112 or mkinder@usc.edu or visit our website at <www.thelabyrinthproject.org>.