

BLAST THEORY



RIDER SPOKE

About the work

Rider Spoke invites the audience to cycle through the streets of the city, equipped with a handheld computer. They search for a hiding place and record a short message there, then they search for the hiding places of others. Combining theatre with game play and mobile technology, the project continues Blast Theory's enquiry into performance in the age of personal communication.

Rider Spoke begins with the audience arriving at the venue, where they can bring their own bike or borrow a bike. Following a short introduction and a safety briefing, the cyclist heads out into the streets with a handheld computer (Nokia N800) mounted on the handlebars and an earphone providing verbal instructions and questions. Using wi-fi, the screen of the device guides the cyclist and shows nearby hiding places. The interface employs imagery drawn from Mexican votive painting, sailor tattoos and heraldry: swallows flutter across the screen to show hiding places, prefab houses indicate places where others have hidden.

Once the cyclist finds a hiding place - a spot previously undiscovered by any other player - the device flashes an alert and the cyclist is asked a question by the voice in their ear. The cyclist then records their answer to the question, which can be listened to at a later stage by other riders. The cyclist continues, finding hiding places of other riders where they can stop and listen to other answers to the same questions.

As the rider rolls through the streets the focus is outward, looking for good places to hide, speculating about the hiding places of

others. The streets may be familiar but the riders have given themselves up to the pleasure of being lost.

Rider Spoke premiered with a sold out season at the Barbican, London in 2007. Other venues include British Council Athens, Brighton Festival, Budapest Autumn Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney, Adelaide Film Festival, Copenhagen Metropolis Biennial, Edinburgh British Council Showcase, Linz Capital of Culture, Ars Electronica, Bristol Do at Arnolfini, a site-specific version for FACT Liverpool, and presentations at es.Terni, Italy, and University College Falmouth.

Selected Press

"As soon as it was over, I wanted more. *Rider Spoke* was magical ..."
(ICON magazine)

"A gloriously enlivening piece of theatre... it manages to embrace the remorseless rush of the city while insisting on the individual's ability to pierce it with quiet reflection." (Metro)

Tour requirements

Size of company

Depending on audience capacity, either 3 or 5 on the road. 1 Artist, 1 - 3 Performers/Technical, 1 Production Manager.

Scale of venue

As an outdoor site specific work, *Rider Spoke* requires an indoor front of house and bike staging area for the public. A control room in close proximity to front of house, of at least 2m x 2m must be available for device and battery management. Secure storage must be supplied for the bicycles.

Session times

Rider Spoke is for the twilight and evening times, during darker winter times the game can be played in the late afternoon. Direct sunlight effects the visibility of the screens, so the first performance should start no earlier than 2 hours prior to complete sunset. The duration of *Rider Spoke* is 75 minutes. Audience capacity can be varied from 12 per hour to 20 per hour.

Site Visit

1 Member of Blast Theory for 1-2 days, to plan the game area and front of house layout. The site visit should take place at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the show. A site visit might not be necessary if sufficient documentation of Front of House space can be provided in advance.

Freight

30 bicycles, racks, helmets and lights are required and it is preferable for the host organisation to supply bicycles. Blast Theory can supply bikes, bike racks, lights and some helmets.

Working with local performers

Hosting the project requires a dedicated team of performers to work alongside the Blast Theory team. During the site visit we will meet and determine the roles based on the skills of the local artists nominated by the host. In past projects we have had a large mix of individuals working with us from performing, media and visual arts backgrounds. The second stage will see the local performers fully integrated into the team during the 4 day get-in and performance period. Meaningful and long lasting relationships have been forged this way in the past.

Local performers are particularly essential where bilingual skills and local knowledge are necessary for the presentation of the work.

Language

This work is written and performed in English. Translations exist in Hungarian, Danish, Italian and German. Please discuss further bilingual and translation options with the company.

Taking part

Rider Spoke is suitable for people age 16 years and over – please note that everybody who is less than 5.2 feet (160 cm) high needs to bring own bike along to the event.

Availability

Ongoing.

Artists' presentations and workshops

The artists are available to provide talks, presentations and workshops. Please discuss options with the company.

Production

Detailed technical specifications and insurance information are available on request.

Previewing the work

A DVD of *Rider Spoke* is available on request from Blast Theory. Further information and videos are also available here:

- <http://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/rider-spoke/>

Contact

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Credits

Rider Spoke has been developed in collaboration with the Mixed Reality Lab at University of Nottingham, Sony Net Services and the Fraunhofer Institute as part of the European research project IPerG (Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming). *Rider Spoke* is sponsored by Trek.