Rider Spoke invites the audience to cycle through the streets of the city, equipped with a mobile phone mounted on their handlebars. They search for hiding places to record messages, then they search for the hiding places of others. Combining theatre with game play and mobile technology, this groundbreaking 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 phone mounted on the handlebars and an earphone providing verbal instructions and questions. 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.

The cyclist is asked a question by the voice in their ear. Once the cyclist finds a hiding place - a spot previously undiscovered by any other player - the phone flashes an alert. 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 newspaper, UK]

“A highly original and exciting form of augmented travel... a delicate, almost intangible work [which] combines elements of trust and risk, irony and politics, confession and exposure, orientation and disorientation, everyday life and digital worlds.” [Realtime magazine, Australia]
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.

Session times
Rider Spoke is for the twilight and evening times, during darker winter times the game can be played in the late afternoon. 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
To reduce costs we can undertake a virtual site visit with your assistance, at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the show.

Equipment
Blast Theory provide all costume and equipment for the project's front of house including counter, illuminated signage, laptops and charging for mobile equipment.

Blast Theory also supply all mobile equipment for bikes including phones, SIMs and data, bike mounts and earpieces for a maximum audience of 20 people per hour. Additional capacity can be quoted on request. Blast Theory can also supply a limited number of helmets and lights to be loaned to audiences if required.

Suitable equipment for the bike staging area - such as bike racks - is agreed with the venue following a virtual site visit. In addition, it is suggested that the host organisation supply a small number of bicycles for those members of the audience who do not have their own.

Freight
To ship: 1 lightbox for front of house. 1 counter for front of house.

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 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 – audience members should bring their own bikes to take part.

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 film of Rider Spoke can be viewed here:
https://vimeo.com/460515692

A full project description can be found here:
https://www.blasttheory.co.uk/projects/rider-spoke/

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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.