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# Digital-Cultural Ecology and the Medium-Sized City

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## Abstract Submission Form

- 1. Paper / Proposal Title:** A critique of participation in the digitally-mediated city through mixed reality performance events
- 2. Format:** written paper
- 3. Author(s) Name:** Marcos P. Dias
- 4. Email contact details:**
- 5. University or Company Affiliation:** Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland

## 6. Abstract (300 words):

This paper aims to critique the concept of participation in the digitally mediated city through ethnographic research on two case studies of mixed reality performance events in medium-sized cities: Blast Theory's *A Machine To See With* in Brighton, UK and Rimini Protokoll's *Ciudades Paralelas* in Cork, Ireland. Both Brighton and Cork are vibrant cities that are not part of the established network of 'global cities' but have a significant historical role in their respective countries and are economically and culturally self-sustainable. *A Machine To See With* and *Ciudades Paralelas* are performance events that combine digital technologies, narrative, urban space and citizen participation to enable reflection on our interaction with the digitally-mediated city and with other citizens (both familiar to us and strangers). Such events have been interpreted through two opposing points of view: first, the argument that such events facilitate active collaboration between participants and artists and in turn engagement of citizens with urban space and with other citizens. Second, the argument that the combination of digital technologies with urban space in such events is a form of control and surveillance that curtails citizen participation. I aim to question these points of view and propose an alternative framework that exposes the potential of mixed reality performance events to enable reflection and multiple participatory outcomes in the digitally mediated city.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

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