Paper Title:
CINEMA AND THE WALLED CITY

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Presentation Method
I would like to present in person (with a written paper)

Abstract
Film offers a constructed urban experience, suggesting the city to be a local network composed of nodes and non-physical links, rather than a centre and the margin. It is possible to talk about the construction of a new kind of urban network in film through a temporal representation of space, of the distant as the close. In this way, film may be a tool to shift the gaze from the aerial view to eye level to create new spatial experiences. Film space is a representation of urban space. To benefit from the ‘representational images’ of a city to build its portrait, one can explore the immaterial re-construction of cities in film. Does this argument fail though, if the city portrayed in cinema is a walled city? Can the filmmaker ‘ignore’ or overcome the physical (and mental) division defined by impenetrable walls in urban scale? This study aims to raise these questions focusing mainly on Belfast “peace” walls in Northern Ireland, Berlin wall in Germany, and West Bank wall in Israel/Palestine.
Since 2014 Cinema and Architecture in the City Collaborative Research Group in Belfast has brought academics and practitioners together to conduct research at the intersection of moving images and urbanism (www.cacity.org). Less than a year ago, CACity organised a film season Walled Cities in Queen’s Film Theatre (www.queensfilmtheatre.com). Three films were screened on three different days, and discussed with guest speakers and the audience: ‘71 (Yann Demange, 2014), Wings of Desire/Der Himmel über Berlin (Wim Wenders, 1987) and Omar (Hany, Abu-Assad, 2013) to open up a discussion around divided cities through fiction films. The season was well-received by the audience and experts, and a second season is ‘under construction.’ This paper takes these walled city films and analyses them from an architectural viewpoint benefitting from the discussions at the QFT.

• Author’s Biography

I am a lecturer and undergraduate course leader in Architecture at Queen’s University Belfast. I received BArch and MArch degrees from Middle East Technical, and PhD from Istanbul Technical University. I practiced as an architect in Istanbul and Amsterdam, and researched at the University of Pennsylvania and University College Dublin. I see myself as a promoter of learning: I taught at Philadelphia University, Delft University of Technology, and Izmir University of Economics before QUB. I teach in the areas of Architectural Design, and History, Theory and Criticism. I particularly enjoy studio tutoring, 20th century architectural history, architecture in cinema, and representation and communication.

I have been conducting interdisciplinary research at the intersection of architecture and cinema in America, the Netherlands, Turkey, Ireland and the UK since mid-1990s. Using film as a representation of architectural space and/or urban space, I study the relationship between the two to better understand and interact with the built environment and urban landscapes. I run a collaborative research group: CACity (Cinema and Architecture in the City, www.cacity.org). My research interests include cinema and the city, architecture and film, urban/architectural/film space, architectural representation and media, and design education. I also run urban filmmaking workshops for the community.