

Translocal Landscapes

La porta rossa and the Use of Peripheral Locations in Contemporary Italian TV Crime Drama

Massimiliano Coviello

is Research Fellow of Film and Media Studies at Link Campus University. Among his publications are the books Sensibilità e potere. Il cinema di Pablo Larraín (Cosenza 2017, coauthored with F. Zucconi), Testimoni di guerra. Cinema, memoria, archivio (Venezia 2015), and the essay Nuove serialità in Il cinema del nuovo millennio (Roma 2020, edited by A. Cervini).

Valentina Re

is Full Professor of Film and Media Studies at Link Campus University. Among her publications are the books Streaming media. Distribuzione, circolazione, accesso (Milano-Udine 2017), L'innesto. Realtà e finzioni da Matrix a 1Q84 (Milano-Udine 2014, coauthored with A. Cinquegrani), and Cominciare dalla fine. Studi su Genette e il cinema (Milano-Udine 2012).

Abstract

The article introduces and discusses the notion of 'peripheral locations' as a key concept for understanding the relation between, on the one hand, the production and distribution strategies of contemporary Italian television and, on the other, screen tourism initiatives. After defining the notion and stressing its relevance in the European circulation of national crime productions, the article focuses on the TV series *La porta rossa* (*The Red Door*) as a case study. The series is co-produced by Rai Fiction and Vela Film (Garbo Produzioni from the second season) and is internationally distributed by Studio Canal. Set in the city of Trieste, close to the border between Italy and Slovenia, the story plot intertwines crime and fantasy. The series' production history demonstrates the complex role

played by peripheral locations in both the writing process and the represented fictional world. The Virtual Reality walking tours organised by Esterno/Giorno – a tourism organisation related to the regional film commission of Friuli Venezia Giulia, which also contributed its own funding into the production – underline how peripheral locations can help create innovative and engaging forms of screen tourism.

Keywords: Italian TV crime drama, Peripheral locations, Production studies, Screen tourism, Translocal identities

Introduction¹

This article discusses the notion of ‘peripheral locations’ as a key concept for understanding the relation between, on the one hand, the production and distribution strategies of contemporary Italian television and, on the other, screen tourism initiatives. After defining the notion and its relevance for the study of both the transnational circulation of national crime TV dramas and the formation of a European translocal imagery (first and second sections), the third section presents the TV series *La porta rossa* (*The Red Door*), set in the city of Trieste, as an exemplary case study.

The series’ production history, retraced in the fourth and fifth sections, demonstrates the complex role played by peripheral locations in both the writing and the production development processes.

Finally, the sixth and seventh sections provide a few insights into the role played by the filming locations in the creation of the series’ fictional world and into the design of the Virtual Reality (VR) walking tours by Esterno/Giorno – a tourism organisation related to the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission. The analysis shows how peripheral locations can help to create innovative and engaging forms of screen tourism.

In search of a definition: the notion of ‘peripheral location’

A recent trend in the production policy of Rai Fiction (the production branch of Italian public broadcaster Rai) has shown a distinctive turn to what we call ‘peripheral’ filming locations: Aosta for *Rocco Schiavone* (2016-ongoing), Matera for *Imma Tataranni – Sostituto procuratore* (2019-ongoing), Turin for *Non uccidere* (2015-2018),

Bologna for *L'ispettore Coliandro* (2006-ongoing), and Trieste for *La porta rossa* (2017-ongoing).

Our take on this notion is based on the interdisciplinary approach elaborated in the emerging field of Location Studies, which include “textual media studies, production studies, policy studies, geographical, topographical and place studies, literary studies, arts in general, tourism research and urban and rural studies” (Hansen and Waade 2017, 54). In this framework, peripheral locations can be discussed at three different, and yet interrelated, levels: production, aesthetics, and the socio-cultural context.

In the broadest possible sense, in Italy, ‘peripheral location’ can be assumed to mean ‘away from Rome’, i.e. away from both the production and symbolic centre of the country. The term ‘peripheral’, therefore, refers to a double ‘marginality’, both at the level of either production facilities opportunities² and visual imagery.

Rome has long been established as the main production centre for film and television fiction, while the production of entertainment, news programmes and audiovisual advertisement is equally distributed between Rome and Milan. Rome has several studios and production facilities (e.g., Cinecittà) and many companies are located in the city (especially in the Prati and Esquilino neighbourhoods). Only Rai has also studios in Turin and Naples, which are mainly used for long-running daytime soaps and children’s programmes. Mediaset, the largest Italian commercial network, and Sky, a pay TV channel, regularly use existing facilities in Rome.

In contrast to these practices that have long since established Rome as the principal site in Italy for TV drama production, a move towards peripheral locations has emerged in recent years that has conspicuously widened the representation of Italian geography and cultural heritage on screen, while also resulting in increasingly complex productions schemes. In fact, although the regional film commissions have proved instrumental in supporting production in terms of both funding and logistics, the inability to rely on established studios and facilities has often amplified the complexity of these production ventures (Cucco and Richeri 2013).

One could reasonably object that the use of peripheral locations is not a totally new phenomenon in the recent history of Italian television, as proved either by two extremely popular long-running series produced by Rai as *Il commissario Montalbano* (1999-ongoing) and

Don Matteo (2000-ongoing), and by *Gomorra* (2014-ongoing), the global hit produced by Sky. However, our concept of ‘peripheral locations’ does not exclusively imply a distance from Rome and its audiovisual production facilities. As mentioned above, the concept entails a notion of marginality that involves a series of productive, aesthetic and cultural aspects. What we call peripheral locations are locations that are not included (unlike Venice or Florence) in primary tourist routes, or that do not quite correspond to the conventional, stereotypical representation of the Italian landscape and cultural heritage – that is, locations that are quite dissimilar from Sicily (*Il commissario Montalbano*), Naples (*Gomorra*) or the small, medieval towns that characterize the landscape of central Italy (*Don Matteo*). Furthermore, the potential for visual innovation implied in the use of peripheral locations is often amplified by further aesthetic factors like innovative directing styles, complex narratives (multiple storylines, timeline manipulations, ambiguous characters; Mittell 2015), or genre hybridisation, especially through the integration of genres that do not strictly belong to the Italian tradition.

From a cultural perspective, the use of peripheral locations in crime narratives can facilitate the “embedding” of fandom engagement and emotional investment in physical places whose cultural identity plays an active role in the plot, possibly resulting in the choice of the filming locations as sites for fan conventions and meetings. Based on the categories elaborated by the anthropology of space (Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003), peripheral locations can be defined as *inscribed spaces*, namely spaces that take on new meanings through the multiple ways in which they are occupied and experienced by different groups of people. These cultural elaborations of a given environment (by means of narrative, creative and spatial tactics) embed a diverse range of experiences, emotions, memories and values (de Certeau 1984).

Finally, peripheral locations can play a relevant role in shaping the production strategies of the major audiovisual players. This is true, in particular, for such big global platforms as Amazon and Netflix, which have been increasingly connecting the “regional” with the “transnational” (Hansen, Peacock, and Turnbull 2018) by localizing ‘universal’ stories. Transcending the familiar iconography of world capitals, this strategy aims to foster the international circulation of their productions through a translocal imagery that gives vis-

ibility to under-represented territories and promotes transcultural exchanges, while also broadening the viewers' geographical culture. Again, the anthropology of space helps us understand this transformation through the categories of "translocal spaces" and "postnational geography" (Appadurai 1996), which highlight how widely diversified phenomena such as migration processes, diasporic communities and mobility experiences (travel, tourism) contribute to creating new forms of spatial belonging as well as new transcultural identities.

In this perspective, the crime genre proves doubly strategic. On the one hand, as an expression of a transnational popular culture deeply rooted in the literary tradition, it provides a shared framework (the 'universality' of the plot) in which local specificities can be integrated in innovative and challenging ways. On the other hand, the genre has always benefitted from a localised dimension that stresses the *topoi* of suburbs and gated communities, where the tensions generated by the perpetration and investigation of crimes can be accelerated and exacerbated, with great emotional resonance.

Peripheral locations and European crime narratives

The use of peripheral locations is not limited to the Italian context; on the contrary, it appears to be a significant trend across Europe as a whole. We can think of this phenomenon within a more general trend towards the transnational circulation of European works, which multiplies the opportunities to experience 'cultural encounters' and leads to the progressive formation of a cross-cultural narrative models and translocal visual imagery.

The role of media narratives, the central role of everyday life, and therefore the identity and perspectives we derive from living within a particular local and national reality is crucial [...] for our perception of a transnational reality and of European others. [...] Cultural encounters matter, they are part of processes where we are able to look into (fictional) other worlds and realities, where *our own local reality and experience meets other European realities* (Bondebjerg et al. 2017, 3-4, our emphasis).

British and Scandinavian TV dramas (Hansen and Waade 2017) are a case in point: series like *Broadchurch* (2013-2017), set in Dorset, *The Fall* (2013-2016), set in Northern Ireland, *Hinterland/ly gwyll* (2013-on-going), set in Wales, as well as the Scandinavian *The Killing* (2007-2012) and *The Bridge* (2011-2018), have gained international acclaim thanks to a similar combination of aesthetic and production factors: a focus on unusual, little-known settings (or, alternatively, on unconventional aspects of well-known cities); the crucial role played by the locations in defining the series' visual style as well as the characters' perceived authenticity and narrative development; the quality of both the direction and the writing, aimed at satisfying a demanding audience that requires originality and invention even in a familiar genre like crime.

More European crime TV dramas offer different combinations of these elements: for example, *Les Revenants* (2012-2015) was shot in Haute Savoie, *La Mante* (2017) in Val-d'Oise, *Glacé* (2017) in the Pyrenees, *La Trêve* (2016-2018) in the Ardennes, *El embarcadero* (2019-2020) in the Albufera National Park, near Valencia. As for Italy, recent cases are *Il processo* (2019), set in Mantua, and *Petra* (2020), set in Genua, along with the already mentioned *Imma Tataranni*, *Rocco Schiavone*, *Non uccidere*, *Coliandro*, and, finally, *La porta rossa*, the focus of the present paper.

Case study: *La porta rossa*

Our case study focuses on the prime-time TV drama *La porta rossa* (*The Red Door*, 2017-, 2 seasons, 12 episodes per season, third season currently in production). The series is co-produced by Rai Fiction and Vela Film (Garbo Produzioni from the second season) and internationally distributed by Studio Canal, the distribution division of Canal+ (Vivendi Group). Season 1 was broadcast from 22 February to 22 March 2017 on Rai 2, the second Italian public channel. Season 2 was shown between 13 February and 20 March 2019. Both seasons are currently available on-demand on the broadcaster's streaming service, RaiPlay.

The story, a hybrid of crime and fantasy, is set in the city of Trieste, close to the border between Italy and Slovenia. In an interview given to us during the preparation of this study, the producer, Maurizio Tini, defined the series as a "high-concept product", a notion currently used to describe audiovisual products based on a "fresh,

unique, and compelling story *premise* that can be easily summed up in a single sentence or two”.³ On the Vela Film website, the premise is presented as follows: “*The Red Door* series is based on combining a classic investigation with a supernatural element: a dead police commissioner refuses to leave this world so that he can investigate his own murder and save his wife’s life”.⁴

Although Trieste contributes significantly to the series’ unique visual style and gradually acquires a stronger relevance in the development of both the storyline and the characters, the original concept placed the narrative in another location, specifically, Bologna. Furthermore, the project had been initially designed for Rai1, not Rai2. These two aspects contribute to make the series a unique case and a relevant example for discussing the role of locations in contemporary Italian television production.

The following sections provide a few insights into the series’ production history, the most significant contextual factors behind the choice of Trieste as the main filming location, and the series’ territorial impact in terms of the economic, social, and cultural benefits stemming from the virtuous relationship achieved between the production and the hosting territory. The methodology is inspired by the approaches developed in the areas of production studies and location studies, and analyse data collected through in-depth interviews with Sofia Assirelli, screenwriter (Bologna, 6 May 2019); Giampiero Rigosi, creator and screenwriter (Bologna, 7 May 2019); Federico Poillucci, chair of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission (Bologna, 7 May 2019); Maurizio Tini, producer at Garbo Produzioni (Rome, 14 May 2019); Gianluca Novel, deputy chair of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission (Trieste, 22 July 2019); and Carmine Elia, director (Siena, 9 January 2020).

From Bologna to Turin

La porta rossa had a very long and complex writing process. The first version was co-authored between 2011 and 2012 by two popular Italian crime and noir writers and screenwriters, Carlo Lucarelli and Giampiero Rigosi, both based in the central Italian city of Bologna. Although production facilities are hardly available in Bologna, the series was initially meant to be filmed there. At the time, the two writers had already co-authored another popular crime series produced by Rai Fiction, *L’ispettore Coliandro* (2006-2010 and

2016-ongoing), also set in Bologna and based on short stories and novels by Lucarelli.

Coliandro is still currently airing on Rai2, the second public channel. As Rigosi explained, when the financing programme for original productions to be aired on Rai2 was discontinued, the two writers decided to set *Coliandro* aside and set about designing a brand new project for Rai1, the most watched Italian public channel. It is important to emphasise that the choice of this new channel ended up affecting the writing process in many ways, for, while Rai2 allows for more freedom and innovation, Rai1 tends to prioritise simple and linear stories told in a clear and conventional language.

Movie-savvy, irreverently ironic and politically incorrect, *Coliandro* had greatly benefited from the creative flexibility that characterizes the editorial policy of Rai2. In adapting *La porta rossa* for Rai1, the writers were expected to comply with more binding editorial constraints, such as a more linear story plot, a thorough clarity and a straightforward, conventional language. The unprecedented combination of crime and fantasy in the original concept inevitably challenged such established canons. In Rigosi's reconstruction, the 'Bologna version' interpreted the supernatural element in a highly realistic way, and the tone was very noir and gloomy – apparently too gloomy for the standards of Rai1. As a result, the project was dropped.

In 2014, when the writing team was joined by Sofia Assirelli, the project was resumed, and the story location was transposed from Bologna to Turin. The input for this change came from the broadcaster: as mentioned, Rai owns an important studio in Turin and the benefits to filming there, rather than in Bologna, were deemed relevant.

During the two-year rewriting process that followed, the main problem experienced by the authors had less to do with the new location, which they already knew and liked, than with the need to balance the hybridisation of different genres. The protagonist, Leonardo Cagliostro, is a ghost – a character type (Bartoletti et al. 2020; Ingrassia 2020) that introduces gothic, supernatural and fantasy elements that are relatively underrepresented in traditional Italian storytelling. These elements needed to be balanced with more familiar and conservative genres. The narrative frame provided by the crime thriller plot, merged with a number of melodra-

matic elements, provided a comfortable context to attain this goal. The ghost is a dead cop who is called to uncover the identity of his own murderer before the criminal has a chance to kill his wife. In the final version, the detection plot was then largely complemented with a sentimental, melodramatic storyline provided by the impossible, devastating relationship between the wife and the ghost of her husband.

The broadcaster monitored and supervised the entire process of 'genre balance', while the producer and the writers engaged in complex negotiations, which Rigosi fittingly described as a "tug-of-war". While the mix of crime and romance, with an emphasis on the sentimental, is a typical feature of many Italian productions, the particular blend of crime, fantasy and sentimentalism achieved with *La porta rossa* was described by the producer Maurizio Tini as a most original accomplishment. Although the need to comply with generic conventions slowed down the writing and production, requiring a number of adjustments between the writers and Rai Fiction's story editors, once the right balance was found, it definitely contributed to the series' success and originality.

***La porta rossa* lands at Trieste**

When director Carmine Elia entered the production process in March 2016, a few months before the shooting was due to start, he proposed a new change of location: from Turin to Trieste, where he had previously worked. In his interview, Elia declared that he loved Trieste for being a border city, suspended between the sky and the sea, between the Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe. Despite the broadcaster's initial insistence on using the studios in Turin, Trieste was finally chosen as the story's setting.

The writers fell in love with the city, and within a matter of weeks they had re-written large parts of the story to adapt them to the new location. During the interview, Rigosi explained their approach as follows:

And then someone asked: "What about setting the story in Trieste?" We said: "Trieste, a border town... And this is indeed a border story, a story on the border between life and death..." We went to visit the city. It's a beautiful city, and Federico from the Film Commission is such a great

location manager. They took us to visit a few places. We said: “We definitely have to set the story here in Trieste”. Hence we partially rewrote it based on Trieste, just before shooting began.

The originality of Trieste as a film location is a perfect match to the originality of the narrative in terms of genre hybridization; in addition, the city provides a unique visual identity. Its geographic and cultural location, on the Italian-Slovenian border and at the crossroad of the Latin, Slavic, and Germanic cultures, lines up neatly with a story that delves into the liminal space between life and death. The hybrid identity of Trieste matches the series’ hybrid identity. On the one hand, as an important seaport in the Mediterranean Sea, Trieste is placed at the border between earth and sea. On the other, Trieste is a prototypical Middle-European Mediterranean city – also halfway between Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western Europe. It combines Northern architectures, lights and atmospheres with the Mediterranean attitude of its people. Trieste thus perfectly embodies the in-betweenness of Italian identity, its halfway position between North and South, East and West. As a location, it makes *La porta rossa* an ideal object to explore the potential of a contamination between the Mediterranean and the Nordic versions of the Noir style.

In production terms, the choice of a peripheral locality like Trieste as a filming location was neither completely rational nor cheap. Shooting in Rome tends to be cheaper, for the financial support of regional film funds does not cover the extra costs of moving people and equipment that are not available in the area. Turin would have been also comparatively more convenient and cheaper, for, in this case as well, Rai would have been able to provide on-site personnel and technical equipment. And yet, the choice of Trieste appears to be perfectly in line with Rai’s ongoing production policy, as a public service broadcaster, to promote shooting in peripheral locations as a way to showcase regional diversity, tell authentic stories and stimulate the creativity of both screenwriters and directors. Production-wise, this policy effectively allowed the independent Vela Film company to enjoy great freedom and autonomy from Rai’s supervision.

The last important factor behind the choice of Trieste was the likelihood to obtain funding support from the local film commis-

sion. As Garbo Produzioni producer, Maurizio Tini, explained in his interview, 80% of the total budget of *La porta rossa* was provided by the broadcaster, with the remaining 20% supplied by the independent company. This is a standard ratio in the Italian TV industry. The financial contribution from the film commission, to be included in the 20% quota, amounted to €200,000. Without even counting the results in terms of local employment, the direct economic impact of this contribution on the territory was remarkable, with the expense in the region during the shooting of the first season amounting to around €3,6m (See Table 1, featuring data provided by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission).

Shooting days:	120
Preproduction – number of days:	84
Total expense in the region:	€3,600,000
Film Fund contribution:	€200,000
Multiplier:	18:1
Local professionals involved:	28
Hotel accommodations:	5.480
Local extras involved:	about 1.200

Table 1

As shown in Table 1, the relationship between the film commission, the production company and the territory involved several more levels beyond financial support. The Friuli Venezia Giulia film commission provides complete assistance to production companies, from bureaucratic procedures to contacts with local technical and logistics teams, with the aim of promoting the employment and development of local expertise. In the case of *La porta rossa*, Federico Poillucci, chair of the film commission, played a key role in scouting the locations. He personally accompanied the director, authors and producers on the premises, helping them to find the settings that best matched the series' storyline and visual style. He was even given a cameo role as a swimming instructor in one of the episodes. Furthermore, he coordinated the creation of a Virtual Reality tour

along the series' locations, based on a platform developed since 2012 in the frame of the Esterno/Giorno project.

A final major twist in the series' production history that is worth mentioning occurred in late 2016. Ironically, Rai2 resumed financing original productions just when the shooting was coming to an end. Following this turn of events, the series, originally written and produced for the mainstream channel, Rai1, was then finally broadcast on Rai2, getting good ratings and gaining a faithful fandom.⁵ In the wake of the series' success and after starting a Facebook group, *La porta rossa* fandom went on to organize a public convention in Trieste, which was held on October 19, 2019, and included a 'bottom-up', self-managed tour along the beloved filming locations.

A matter of borders: a Nordic Noir shot in Trieste

La porta rossa and its plot are only partly influenced by Trieste's difficult historical past, although they fully embrace its urban features, cultural hybridity and suggestive atmospheres. In his interview, Rigosi underlined how the use of gothic lighting, shadows and artificial rain was decided as a deliberate reference to the atmospheres of Nordic noir (Hansen and Waade 2017) and the landscapes of Northern Europe (Image 1).

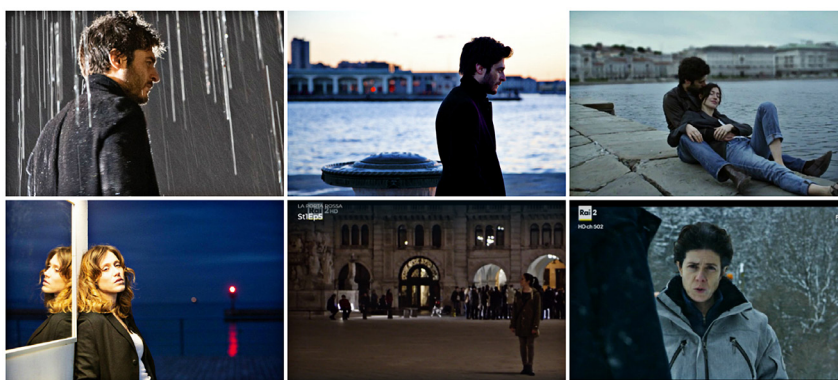


Image 1: The influence of Nordic Noir on *La porta rossa* locations.

As highlighted by Federico Poillucci during his interview, the film commission provided essential support in identifying the locations (such as historical neighbourhoods and squares, but also peripheral and lesser known areas) that could best fit the actions and the psychology of the different characters. For example, Cagliostro lives in

the old port area, a site filled with decaying buildings. His death takes place in warehouse 22, and in the final scenes of each episode he is framed alone while he looks down onto the city from one of Trieste's most distinctive landmarks, the 'Ursus' crane.

Vanessa, played by actress Valentina Romani, is a young medium who allows Cagliostro to communicate with living people. Her house is situated in the periphery, in the working-class neighbourhood of Melara. Vanessa wanders through arcades covered in graffiti and surrounded by modernist buildings, built as public housing at the beginning of the 1960s and influenced by Le Corbusier's architectural style (Image 2). The police headquarters, a place of intrigues and interrogations, are located in the RAS (Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà) Palace in Piazza della Repubblica, one of Trieste's main historical squares.

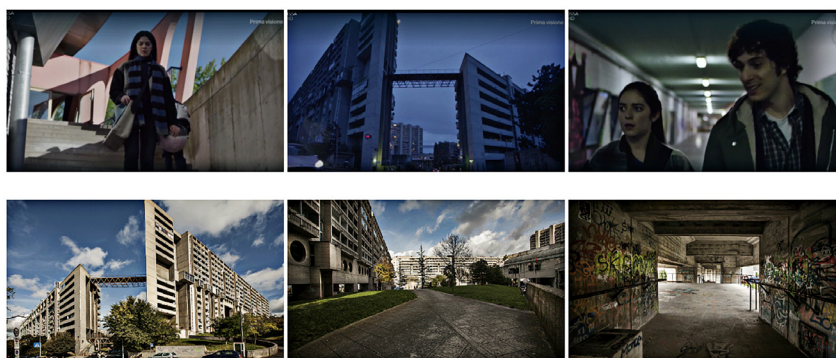


Image 2: Vanessa's neighbourhood (Melara Complex)

Discovering Trieste through *La porta rossa* VR walking tour

Founded in 2012 on the initiative of the Associazione Casa del Cinema di Trieste (a cultural body that includes the local film commission), with the contribution of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, the tourism organisation Esterno / Giorno is a project specifically aimed to promote on-location screen tourism (Beeton 2005; Lavarone 2016; Roesch 2009). It offers film tours, thematic walks and educational itineraries along the locations of TV series and films set in the region, targeting three main goals. Firstly, the itineraries are designed to promote sites that are usually excluded from traditional sightseeing tours. Secondly, they are designed in such a way as to involve

the local community and help it cope with the inconveniences of the shooting. Finally, they are meant to introduce the visitors to the basics of film language⁶.

A virtual reality platform called VirTours and developed by the Friulian company IKON is employed for sharing and creating immersive content along the different thematic walks⁷. The sophisticated technology used by Esterno/Giorno enables a screen tourism experience that is unique, to date, in the Italian context. The VR headsets allow the tourists to access short films, 360-degree immersive views, photos from film sets as well as backstage interviews.

Film critics and crew members lead the VR visit and coordinate the content for all participants in real time through a tablet. Tourists are thus accompanied across different environments and enjoy an experience that is at once collective and personal, physical and virtual, having an opportunity to discover “invisible places” that are usually ignored in sightseeing tours, or difficult to reach.

Visitors with an interest in *La porta rossa* can choose between two different VR experiences, either a day-time or a night-time walking tour. The latter was introduced to specifically showcase the noir and fantasy atmospheres that the TV series has drawn out of the city’s locations. According to Gianluca Novel, “in a way, the location to be discovered becomes part of the mystery story”. Following the phantom’s footsteps through the city, the visitors are turned, just like Cagliostro, into as many unseen witnesses of other people’s lives (Image 3).

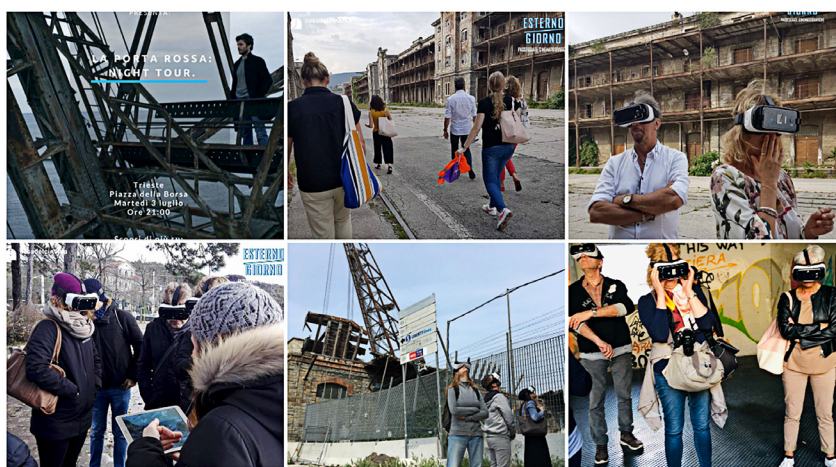


Image 3: The VR walking tour dedicated to *La porta rossa*

During the visit, the VR headsets are employed for multiple purposes. Introduced by a video featuring the leading character (played by Lino Guanciale) and shot expressly for this use, the immersive content focuses in particular on Porto Vecchio, a secluded and scarcely inhabited, yet extremely picturesque, historical area. The virtual guide leads the group of visitors to the hangars, where some of the scenes – for example, the murder of Cagliostro on the roof of warehouse 22 – were shot, while interviews and backstage videos disclose some of the backstage secrets.

On the site where ‘Ursus’, the massive crane, is located, the VR devices offer a 360-degree photographic rendition of the entire location (Image 4). The tour draws the visitors’ attention on some of the more original production choices behind the series’ location strategy. For example, a sequence at the beginning of the second season shows a group of inmates enjoy their yard time in a prison. This place is actually a shipyard in the harbour where vessels are stored dry. Tourists can explore this site while also watching an immersive video in which a photographic reconstruction of the place is combined with interactive material, enriched with the crew’s comments and short clips from the series.

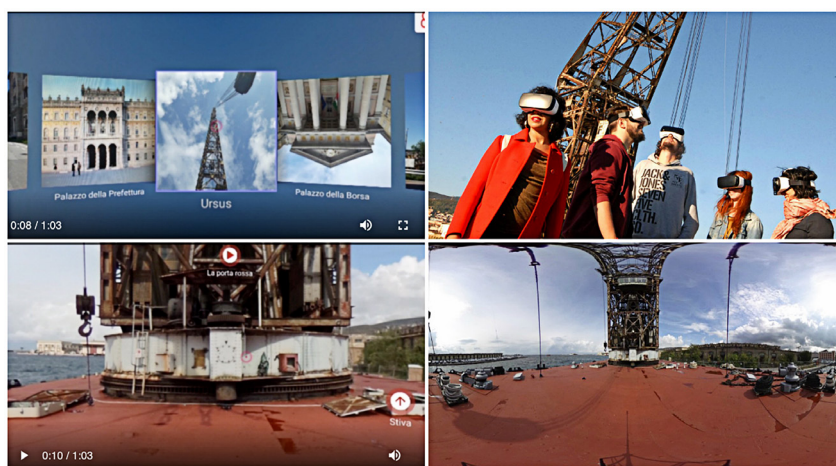


Image 4: VR visit at the Ursus crane

Along the tour, the special effects and editing techniques employed in post-production are also revealed, particularly for educational purposes. For example, when the tour reaches the storehouse in

Porto Vecchio, which appears at both the beginning and the end of the second season, recast as an old bolt factory, the VR headset lets the visitors discover that the scene's interior have in fact been shot at a technical institute located elsewhere in the city. This prompts the guide to explain the formal strategies, such as, in particular, the editing and shot/countershot techniques, employed to merge the two different locations.

As a result of their discovery of what lies behind the scenes through the materials presented via the VR headsets, the screen tourists are made able to relocate (Casetti 2015) the imagery of *La porta rossa* into an immersive experience (Manovich 2005), where the location's physical space is overlaid with dynamically changing multimedia content, while the series' narrative interacts with their direct apprehension of the premises.

Conclusion

Detective plots are powerful narratives devices that show an extraordinary potential to promote movie-induced tourism (Riley and Van Doren 1992; van Es and Reijnders 2018). Recent developments in Italian TV production show that the crime genre has become a relevant pull factor for peripheral locations that don't fit representational stereotypes yet offer favourable environmental conditions in terms of production requirements.

The choices and strategies behind the production of *La porta rossa*, fostered by the support received from the local film commission, have both given a significant impulse on the touristic promotion of Trieste and generated a positive direct economic impact on the territory.⁸ Rai and many other players in the Italian audiovisual sector are increasingly aware of the crime genre's potential to boost the value chain of peripheral locations. A growing share of their products is now on the map of movie-induced tourism, contributing to the new cultural geography of the European crime genre.

Regardless of the geographical context and the specific places – either rural or urban – portrayed onscreen, peripheral locations offer an original glimpse of little-known territories, thus enabling a more articulated, composite knowledge of the European landscape. In addition, they typically play a crucial role in terms of character and narrative development. As a result, they contribute significantly to

the current trend towards the development of a transnational visual culture and the formation of new transcultural narrative models.

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Notes

- 1 This article is part of a wider research on Italian TV crime dramas conducted in the framework of DETECT - Detecting Transcultural Identity in European Popular Crime Narratives, a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme (Grant Agreement No. 770151). The article combines and expands the presentations given by the authors at the "Euronoir. Producers, distributors and audiences of European crime narratives" international conference, Aalborg University, 30 September - 2 October 2019. Massimiliano Coviello wrote the Introduction, the last two sections and the Conclusion. Valentina Re wrote the first five sections. The authors would like to thank Luca Barra (University of Bologna) for his help during the research, and Daniela Almansi for the revision of the English version.
- 2 In this sense, the idea of peripheral location can be compared with the industrial notion of "distant location" (Honthaner 2010), meaning far enough from the production company to generate extra expenses (e.g., housing the cast and crew).
- 3 See "Tv Tropes", <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/HighConcept> (Accessed 29 April 2020).

- 4 See <https://www.velafilm.it/en/the-red-door/> (Accessed 29 April 2020; website no longer available in December 2020).
- 5 The audience share of season 1 was good, moving from 13,01% (3.284.000 viewers) to 14,10% (3.471.000) between the premiere and the season finale. The audience share of season 2 had a slight decrease from 12,51% (3.043.000 viewers) to 12,41% (2.807.000) between the premiere and the season finale. For a comparative evaluation, the first episodes of respectively the second and seventh seasons of *Rocco Schiavone* (2018) and *L'ispettore Coliandro* (2018) were watched by 13,09% and 10,9% of the viewers on the same channel.
- 6 More information about Esterno/Giorno's objectives and thematic walks is available on the organization's website <https://www.casadelcinematrieste.it/passeggiate-cinematografiche-esterno-giorno/> (Accessed 29 April 2020).
- 7 See, for more information, the organization's website <https://www.virtours.com/en/> (Accessed 29 April 2020).
- 8 According to a survey conducted by the film commission in 2018, the tours operated by Esterno/Giorno involved 900 participants along 45 walking tours, spread over 10 different itineraries, during 10 months. This can be judged an excellent result, especially because, due to technological limitations, the groups of tourists could not exceed 20 participants.