



New Media and Virtual Reality in Turin

Italian cinema was born in Turin at the start of the 20th century and the city has continued to attract the attention of directors and promote the use of new technologies. In recent years, the audiovisual and multimedia sector has made great progress, thanks to the excellent part played by Turinese firms in the production of 3D graphics and virtual reality.

Piedmont has more than twenty top-level cinema and TV studios equipped with the latest technologies and manned by highly qualified staff, of which Lumiq, Unistudio, Euphon and Telecittà Studios are the best known. Other studios specialise in direct filming and virtual reality shots, such as the **Virtual Reality & Multimedia (VR&MM) Park**.

The VR&MM Park is a technological park established by Turin's and Piedmont's public authorities with a substantial contribution from the European Union within the compass of the Scientific and Technological Parks Project. The first and only one of its kind in Europe, it stands in the area of the former Fert studios and constitutes Piedmont's major challenge in the audiovisual and multimedia sector.

The Park is equipped with leading-edge technologies for the production and post-production of audiovisuals, and for multimedia research and prototyping. Its prime aim is the promotion and development of the technological, cultural and economic aspects of multimedia with particular reference to the employment of virtual reality. Special attention is directed to the growth of manufacturing and entrepreneurial activities.

The Park can thus be seen as a container for technologies, projects and professional skills. It operates as both an observatory and a workshop in which state-of-the-art technologies are used to develop projects and prototypes, test their practical application and assess their sustainability on the market. Joint operations and cooperation with other research centres, institutions, universities and enterprises is one of the Park's strong points. It thus acts as their catalyst through the provision of its structures and pacesetting technologies for the creation of a veritable Piedmontese technological district.

Through its four sections (New Media, Virtual Reality, Art & Communication, Format Lab and Training), the VR&MM Park operates as an observatory and workshop in which state-of-the-art technologies are used to develop projects and prototypes, and as a training centre for multimedia professionals. Its desire to reach important objectives has resulted in an association with a private partner for the management of its technological equipment.

The Park's position on the market is that of a union between a private concern (Lumiq Studios - www.lumiq.com), which operates in sectors with a high digital and creative content, namely cinema, TV and advertising, and a public body (VR&MM Park), which is engaged in research and training.

Cinema in Turin comprises both production and research. Mention must certainly be made of the **Research and Technological Innovation Centre run by RAI**, the Italian national broadcasting and telecasting service (CRIT: www.crit.rai.it), whose TLC research and experimentation ranges from terrestrial and satellite TV to interactive TV, data broadcasting and mobile TV. It contributes to the development of radio, TV and multimedia technologies, and supports the entire RAI group in the choice of its technological approach, and in the experimentation and introduction of new products and systems. The Centre is engaged in several projects supported by European and Italian funds, and works in conjunction with universities and industrial companies in research, the definition of new standards and the elaboration of new services. It has recently won international acclaim for its contributions to the study and standardisation of systems for the digital coding of

audio and video signals, development of the compression techniques currently employed for the transmission and recording of video signals, and definition of DVB diffusion and transmission standards.

Its should not be forgotten that one of RAI's production centres is in Turin. It has four theatres and technologies for the virtual studio.

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