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Press Release

PORTA MAGGIORE (TRILOGY)

BY MARCO G. FERRARI

"A story of a lake in Rome that spontaneously formed. How the community around it defends it and the principles it holds. Scattered, throughout, are my dreams."

"Porta Maggiore (trilogy)" is a three-part film project that traverses Rome's Pigneto–Prenestino district through a participatory documentary lens. It presents an urban geography transformed into cinema and a neighborhood turned into a living archive, centering on a lake born from an industrial accident that has asserted itself as a political and environmental space. Directed by Marco G. Ferrari, **"Porta Maggiore (trilogy)"** navigates these territories and weaves them into a single, complex cinematic structure.

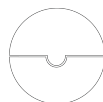
The trilogy stems from the **Porta Maggiore project**—carried out in Rome between 2017 and 2021 through courses, screenings, exhibitions, and film projects—and focuses on the Pigneto district and the Lago Bullicante ExSnia as spaces shaped by collective practices, urban transformations, and forms of cultural resistance.

In the film, cinema serves as a relational tool: it is not merely a depiction of the area, but a space where the territory organizes itself into a shared narrative. The trilogy's three parts create a sensory map of the urban present:

"Il Lago" (The Lake) follows the civic mobilization to protect the ecosystem that emerged in the Ex-Snia area and the campaign to have it recognized as a natural monument. **"Il Quartiere" (The Neighborhood)** examines Pigneto amidst urban transformations, cultural practices, and social dynamics, including the reopening of the Nuovo Cinema Aquila as a symbolic local landmark. **"Le Proiezioni" (The Projections)** brings together a series of open-air film events held during the production process, where the act of viewing becomes part of the landscape itself.

Produced between 2017 and 2025 in Rome (production) and Chicago (post-production), the film is the work of Marco G. Ferrari—who handled directing, cinematography, sound, and editing—and involves a network of local cultural organizations active in the city's eastern district.

"Porta Maggiore," explains Marco G. Ferrari, "originated from an encounter with the community dedicated to reopening the Nuovo Cinema Aquila, and it evolved through years of relationships, cultural practices, and shared processes within the Pigneto area. The work took shape through a long period of observation and participation—developed over time via meetings, collaborations, and collective initiatives—that involved various groups, associations, and organizations active in the eastern part of Rome."



I. Porta Maggiore—Il Lago, follows the community of resident activists as they defend Lago Bullicante ExSnia, a naturally formed lake and ecosystem that emerged from accidental and illegal human activities within an abandoned viscose factory complex. The activists are fighting against future commercial development in their effort to have the lake recognized as a national natural monument. Video Link (138 min.)

II. Porta Maggiore—Il Quartiere, explores the Pigneto–Prenestino neighborhood surrounding Lago Bullicante ExSnia and highlights a series of challenges faced by the community of resident activists. These challenges include the reopening of the Nuovo Cinema Aquila movie theater, issues related to gentrification, and the campaign to restore the #81 bus service to their neighborhood. Video Link (109 min.)

III. Porta Maggiore—Le Proiezioni, documents seven outdoor projections that the filmmaker installed at Lago Bullicante ExSnia and in the neighborhoods surrounding the lake during the five-year filming process, highlighting structures, stories, and fantasies embedded in the area. Video Link (60 min.)

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