
Argentine TV Fictions at International Film Festivals

Ficciones televisivas argentinas en los festivales internacionales de cine

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Abstract

This article examines the recent participation of Argentinian television series in international film festivals in an audiovisual context dominated by radical changes in production, distribution and consumption. The proposal of this work is to describe the multiple identity of contemporary audiovisual and postulate that the incursion of recognized artists in the television format —and its exhibition at film festivals— works as a legitimate double operation, elevating the series as a cultural product and artistic expression. From this perspective, the narrative and stylistic construction of two Argentine fictions will be analyzed, as well as the journeys undertaken by them —their television broadcast, online platforms and audiovisual festivals—. The conclusions of the article aim to highlight the central place occupied by the circulation and distribution of television fiction in the audiovisual industry and in the recognition spaces usually associated with film and television.

Keywords: argentine TV series fiction, filmmakers, international film festivals, distribution, consumption.

Resumen

Este artículo examina la reciente participación de series de ficción argentinas en los festivales internacionales de cine en un contexto audiovisual dominado por cambios radicales en la producción, distribución y consumo. La propuesta de este trabajo es describir la identidad múltiple del audiovisual contemporáneo y postular que la incursión de artistas reconocidos en el formato televisivo —y su exhibición en los festivales— funciona como una doble operación legitimante, elevando a la serie como producto cultural y expresión artística. Desde esa perspectiva se analizará la construcción narrativa y estilística de dos ficciones argentinas como también los recorridos emprendidos por ellas —su emisión televisiva, en plataformas en línea y en festivales audiovisuales—. Las conclusiones del artículo apuntan a destacar el lugar central que ocupan la circulación y distribución de la ficción televisiva en la industria audiovisual y en los espacios de reconocimiento tradicionalmente asociados al cine y la televisión.

Palabras clave: series televisivas de ficción, cineastas argentinos, festivales internacionales de cine, distribución, consumo.

1. Introduction

Among the large number of fictional series that started production in Argentina in and around 2010 and the years following, two are especially important for both their unique narrative and stylistic aspects as well as the journeys they undertook: *La casa* (2015), directed by Diego Lerman; and *Cromo* (2015), directed by Lucía Puenzo, Nicolás Puenzo and Pablo Fendrik. Both are televised fictions made by Argentine filmmakers, having won State grants that were part of a cultural stimulus initiative. In addition to being broadcast on public television both were chosen to compete in international film festivals, launching new award categories exclusive to television series. The latter constitutes the main focus of this study, which aims to examine, based on the case of Argentina, the growing participation of serialized products in traditional exhibition spaces such as film festivals, and, the need to reflect, firstly, on new forms of production, distribution and exhibition of narrative television series; and secondly, on the place they occupy within the contemporary audiovisual industry.

The conceptual framework we propose emphasizes the role film festivals play as spaces and opportunities for negotiation legitimization of the cultural products they exhibit. It lays the ground to explore and discover this new scenario characterized by a multiplicity of identities surrounding each medium offering a variety of forms of consumption. Within this frame of reference, we focus on the Argentine series by Diego Lerman, the Puenzo Siblings (Lucía and Nicolás) and Pablo Fendrik to analyze, in conjunction, the narrative structure, and the different forms and spaces of exhibition.

2. Theoretical Framework

In recent years, fictional series have become a form of contemporary audiovisual narrative of mass consumption, and its dissemination on a global scale is undeniable (Broe, 2019; Cascajosa Virino, 2016). It is a cultural phenomenon in which digital platforms play a central role in giving viewers access, while at the same time new viewer spaces are being promoted. This new audiovisual landscape, full

of narrative series, has modified and added new levels of complexity to their production, exhibition and consumption, while the format itself has become an area of study, creating new concepts as it develops (Gauthier, 2018; Pousa, 2018; Zafra, 2017; Scolari, 2013, 2008). The serialized fiction is no longer limited to television. Future viewing prospects include internet platforms and even, as we will see here, film festivals. These forms of circulation put us “before a business model that expands on traditional viewing options making distribution key piece to product internationalization; it not only affects purchasing strategies, but also production” (Pousa, 2018, p.18).

In recent decades, festivals have become fundamental to promoting contemporary audiovisual production, distribution and exhibition, having transformed into veritable international spaces of exchange (Peirano, 2018). Academic studies centered on festivals have also increased exponentially, providing greater insight into the general, global audiovisual industry. These products are intentionally created to be launched in the international market with the objective of participating in contests where the prize money is vital to production or postproduction. They also provide an established route through all the different opportunities for exhibition (audiovisual markets and festivals).

An even more recent phenomenon developing alongside the increase in consumption of fictional series is the creation of special sections within international film festivals for their exclusive exhibition. These events adapt to the current audiovisual market echoing new discursive forms and means of consumption, offering a space within which series compete for the chance to win possible production, distribution and exhibition alternatives (besides traditional television broadcasts or internet streaming). On the other hand, and in addition to building a marketing space for film promotion, festivals work to legitimize the products they feature: the prizes and critical acclaim films receive drive their launch in the international market and ensure both the recognition of their directors and the securing of their careers (Chan, 2001). In the words of Rodríguez Isaza (2014), it is “a standardized strategy (...) to elevate the artistic and cultural status of cinematographic products directed at the international market”. The large number of this type of event also generates a parallel effect of art biennialization, as

Andrea Giunta proposes when referring to the proliferation of artistic encounters held in different cities. In this sense, the biennales, similar to film festivals, are spaces in which agreements are made, business is generated and representation exchanged for international artistic production (2007). As stated by Cerdán and Fernández Labayen (2017), television accelerated and popularized the process of transnationalization that film had begun, especially in exclusive and elite circles.

Although there are still no specific studies that delve into the circulation of television series in film festivals, in recent years concepts have been developed shedding light on the present audiovisual context of digital media. In a context where audience fragmentation and the diversification of cultural consumption reign supreme, there are also technological, sociological and regulatory changes that transform the traditional model of television. Notions like hypertelevisión (Scolari, 2013), mutant television (Zafra, 2017) and convergent fictions (Pousa, 2018) describe this panorama and are crucial in order to address our object of study, all the while aiming to reveal the multiple identities of the contemporary audiovisual scene. Considering the aforementioned and reflecting on television and its impact on the history of media, the crisis model proposed by Rick Altman (1996) gained relevance upon analyzing cinema as a discontinuous history of multiple phenomena, and the three stages that overlap and repeat in every crisis: multiple identities (for the introduction of a new technology, a new social practice or a new form of exploitation); jurisdictional struggle (battle for the control of use and practice of new technology); negotiated agreement (new alliances between representational systems and actors that make, distribute and consume material).

This notion of multiple identities is effective in describing the audiovisual television narrative and is based on a number of characteristics. Multiple identities are also based on some of the features Scolari (2008) uses to define the concept of hypertelevisión, describing it as: the mixing of genres and the erasing of their limits; transmedia narration (Jenkins, 2008) consisting in the expansion of stories using different media; and active and collaborative audience participation. In the same fashion, audience creativity has also led to the creation of compound terminology that also reveal the same complexity and multiplicity. Such is the case of the

term “interactor” (interaction+actor) proposed by Gauthier (2018) replacing the traditional “spectator” or “viewer” and describing the aesthetic experience produced by transmedia narratives.

Within this new paradigm in which the limits between expressionist media and modes of consumption are erased, media convergence (Jenkins, 2008) arises as a banner for the dynamism that characterizes the current audiovisual context and how it is dominated by the circulation of content via multiple platforms, with the subsequent audience displacement. In this context, the notion of the “convergent fictions” proposed by Pousa becomes relevant and productive. The category has existed, generically speaking, since the beginning of television itself, in the link between the serialized forms of fictional audiovisual storytelling and nineteenth century pulp novels, in the practice of filmed theater and the theatrical arts, or for cinematic technology, language and rhythm (Pousa, 2018, p. 25).

It is a concept that describes the intrinsic intermediality of television, the coexistence of different modes of representation. This also characterizes cinema given that as a media form it also owes much of its existence to other cultural expressions such as theater, the circus, ballet and performance magic. The new form of expression that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century —just as in the first years of television in Argentina—, was also enriched by the prestige of actors, actresses and scriptwriters coming from theater and literature, and was thus able to enter the traditional cultural field and attract an educated audience.

Finally, before discussing the particularities of the Argentine narrative series, one must comment on the paradox of television media participating in film festivals. Their participation has reclaimed the collective cinematographic experience of viewing televised material in a viewing room, displacing the generally fragmented television viewing experience, serialized narratives in particular.

3. The Fictional Series in Argentina

Immersed in a historical process of transformation in fictional production in Latin America, in 2010,

programming for public television in Argentina was unprecedentedly rich in narrative formats and content. Within that context the development of the fictional narrative series was particularly noteworthy, the result of government stimulus grants organized by the National Cinema and Audiovisual Arts Institute (Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales - INCAA) and the Ministry of Planning, Public Investment and Services. At almost the same time as its grand premiere in the traditional TV line-up and its launch on internet platforms, these series began to participate in new sections of international film festivals as well as those exclusive to web and television series.

A large number of these TV fictions were made by filmmakers and playwrights working in a context of legal, technological and institutional changes¹; among them, the following were selected to appear in festival programming: *La casa* (2015), directed by Diego Lerman; and *Cromo* (2015), directed by Lucía Puenzo, Nicolás Puenzo and Pablo Fendrik. Fiction by Lerman, a cinematographer renowned for films like *Tan de repente* (2002), *Mientras tanto* (2006) and *La mirada invisible* (2010) (among others) premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in a category dedicated to international TV series created by filmmakers called *Episodic-Epidemic*. *Cromo* was the only Latin America television product chosen to participate in the new *Primetime* section of the Toronto International Film Festival.

In the following, we describe these series and their journeys to reflect on the new forms of production, distribution and consumption of fictional narrative series, and the aesthetic criteria taken into consideration for project selection, criteria related to the ever-graying line between television and cinema as noted by directors, critics and festival organizers. We posit that both the artists' (directors, actors, actresses and scriptwriters) incursion in this narrative form and exhibition in film festivals doubly legitimize television series as cultural products and artistic expression. We agree with Pousa in that "the concept of auteurship, in conjunction with the intense marketing of the platforms, is what determines the presence of television productions in these festivals" (2018, p. 29), at the same time further legitimizing film festivals with the inclusion of renowned figures to their programming.

3.1. *La casa*

The fictional series by Diego Lerman was produced by Campo Cine and after its premiere on public television in March 2015, it began a tour of the different festivals and markets. Its first international showing was the same year in the Festival *Séries Manías* that took place in *Forum des Images* in Paris, and was later shown at the Cannes Film Festival (*Marche du Films*). In 2016, it was the first series that represented Latin America in the International Film Festival Rotterdam in its new section dedicated to fictional television series². Here, four episodes were shown ("Secuestro", "Revolucionarios", "Ficción" and "Virus") and it was described on the festival's website as a "bold oddity" in terms of Argentine TV series. According to the producer, *La Casa*, given its narrative proposal and production format, constitutes a novelty and the International Film Festival Rotterdam offers a great opportunity to show productions that differ from traditional television (en Van Vliet, 2016).

The fictional series covers the history of Argentina throughout the decades in thirteen standalone episodes, in which each chapter shares a common location, a mansion located in the Delta del Tigre. Each story, in addition to using different cinematographic genres and styles according to the period in which it takes place, is rooted in the country's historic and cultural context. According to Lerman, the episodes were designed as mini-films (in Gallego, 2015) and presented using different genres from the history of cinema. Each era was a formal excuse to experiment with different cinematographic languages. For example, the first episode, titled "Criatura", situated in 1929, was filmed in black and white. The style of the script is similar to the literature of Edgar Allan Poe and the aesthetic ranges between gothic and expressionist. In contrast, the following episode ("Despedida"), featuring lead characters Carlos Gardel and Alfredo Le Pera just days before the tragic airplane accident in 1935, alludes to Argentine tango films from the 30s. It's in this way that television fiction revisits different periods in Argentinian history and culture—the death of Eva Perón on July 26th, 1952, the 1978 World Cup in the midst of a military dictatorship, the military takeovers of the democratically-elected governments of Raúl Alfonsín and Carlos Saúl Menem on behalf of the *carapintadas*—, and pays homage to different cinematographic styles, among them,

Hollywood cinema of the 40s, the westerns of the 50s and the *nouvelle vague* of the 60s.

Each episode of *La casa* begins the story with a narrator introducing the characters and their immediate past. The narrator also explains the history of the house and stories related to its inhabitants. The oral narration that comes before the title and the opening credits is accompanied by a juxtaposition of archive images of both documentary and fictional nature in various formats: pictures, newspapers and videos. The last episode, one of four featured at the Festival Rotterdam, titled "Virus", builds a dystopian future narrative (1929) in which a virus threatens the world's population. Surprisingly that future is not that different from the time in which this article is written, immersed in the vicissitudes of the COVID-19 pandemic. The introductory voice takes us to the summer of 2021, to the days in which Sofia (Erica Rivas) is organizing a party in the mansion to celebrate her 21st birthday. Images kaleidoscope in a dizzying montage, an amalgam of photographs that accompany the narrator's story or complete their representational effects following the sound score. For example, the viewer hears electronic music filter out from the party as well as a police car siren. This narrative opening finally takes us to the year 2025, when Sofia's father falls ill and she dedicates herself to taking care of him over the next two years. As the narrator's voice says, "they will be sad years that will lead to the house's slow but sure decline".

After the prologue and the presentation of the title of the series, the beginning of the story brings us to the year 2029, at the exact moment when Sofia and her significant other arrive at the house on the Tigre wearing masks. She is pregnant and the dilapidated vacant family residence represents a safe refuge away from the city. The latest news from the press report devastating numbers and information, such as the building of field hospitals, mandatory quarantine, curfews in various cities and the closing of international borders. The desolation and concern affect Sofia's mood as well as the spaces she occupies. The lighting paints the rooms with cold, neutral tones that oscillate in between gray and green, colors that contribute to creating the episode's dystopic ambience. Once they are settled in, the couple warns that the ramshackle house was not thought of as

a refuge only for them. First, her sister (María Merlino) arrives together with her partner (Carla Crespo) and later the mother (Cristina Banegas). Evidently, Sofia has not kept in contact with either of them for various years and living together only brings out and makes worse conflicts between them. The color pallet, the close-ups and fixed medium shots used to film indoor spaces without a doubt increase the climate of hostility and emphasize the tension and deterioration of the relationships among the three women.

As a result of the journey through festivals and markets as well as the highly regarded international impact of Lerman's proposal, the French company *Loco Films* acquired the rights to the series. It also won awards in the third edition of "Nuevas Miradas en la Televisión" (2015) given by the Universidad de Quilmes in the categories of Best Fiction, Best Actress (Erica Rivas) and Best Soundtrack (Gustavo Pomenarec) and was nominated for Best Series and/or Telefilm of the Silver Condor Awards (2016).

For Lerman, the incursion into narrative series meant the chance to experiment with cinema on television (in Van Vliet, 2016) and promote the type of work falling under the concept of "*cinematic series*" (Keslassy, 2015). This is another example of a label exemplifying television's multiple and varied identities, using a concept similar to the idea of "cinematic" television proposed by Mills (2013). This concept alludes to those programs that prioritize visual aspects to a greater degree than regular television programs and in which technology makes for superior image and sound quality, as well as an even higher level of editing. The director of *La casa* emphasized that the series was filmed with a single camera, the *mise-en-scène* was more elaborate than that usually found in television, and the "cinematographic approach" caught the attention of actors and actresses from the world of cinema, theater, and television eager to take part in the experiment.

With respect to the space conferred to them at the Film Festival Rotterdam, the artistic director Bero Beyer together with the curator Léo Soesanto created the section *Episodic —Epidemic*³ to celebrate all the ways in which filmmakers express their art and find the best way to present different types of narratives (Pritchard, 2016). In the

festival program, and in the introduction to this section, Soesanto explains the name, which comes from the idea: "Television series have become such a cultural force that they spread like a virus— affecting our conversations, the mind of film-makers working for television and the programmes of film festivals (Toronto, Berlin, Sundance)" (2016, p. 206). In addition, Film festival curators also echo recurring questions surrounding the growing consumption of the television series —"Films versus series. Is the cinema better than TV? Is TV the new cinema?" (2016, p. 206)— emphasizing the non-partisan nature of the segment. The curator indicates that the name "*episodic*" was chosen to identify the core aspect of telling stories over several episodes, which allows for experimentation in rhythm and tempo. Within the modalities of the new section (documentary, feature-length format, *binge-watching*) Lerman's series was classified under the title of "experimental", emphasizing in the catalogue description the use of different genres and styles over time. It is a fictional construction carrying a complex narrative structure, one of the distinctive features of hypertelevision (Scolari, 2008).

3.2. *Cromo*

The opposite occurred with the series created by brothers Puenzo and Fendrik, given that a few months before its television premiere, the new *Primetime Series* section was launched at the Toronto International Film Festival with the showing of three episodes (out of twelve). The first two episodes and the eighth episode were shown for their importance to plot development⁴. Written with the aid of CONICET researchers, the story focuses on solving the crime of a scientific researcher who is investigating the contamination produced by toxic waste from a tannery and the damage caused to the ecosystem of Esteros del Iberá (in the province of Corrientes) and its population.

Set in north-east Argentina, Valentina Riera (Emilia Attias) carries out investigative field work in the waters of the large wetland to measure chromium levels. The results show alarmingly harmful rates, for both the Executive Director of the company responsible (Daniel Veronese) and the surrounding population who have no choice but

to be accomplices in order to save their jobs. The threat of people finding out of the tannery's illicit dumping of toxic waste is the motive of the crime involving the protagonist in the first episode. From this point, a story is built via clues that will unravel all that which surrounds and covers up the attack, featuring various police dramas clichés: the love triangle, the contract killer, the hiding of the murder weapon, the threatening of a witness, a colleague/lover in the investigative lead and police corruption.

An invariable feature in the genre and integral part of the storyline is the flashback, a mechanism that structures and organizes the different plots in the serial narrative. Without being tied to a chronological order of events, the story travels back and forth between past and present, not only in order to solve the case, but also to portray in detail the protagonist's professional and personal life. In addition to constituting the crucial element of the flashback, some clues from the past materialize in the present via different technological devices, like security cameras, voice messages and emails. As proof of the tremendous production efforts, the series isn't limited to the different landscapes of the Corrientes area or the School of Exact and Natural Sciences at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (City of Buenos Aires), but also features other natural landscapes like those of the Marambió Base (Antarctic), Lahuel Huapi National Park (Neuquén) and the Perito Moreno Glacier (Santa Cruz). These locations, aside from setting the stage for the different climaxes in the storyline, they also make an impressive visual transition point between sequences.

Lucía Puenzo compared her television experience with her work in film and recognized, as one of its benefits, the longer amount of time assigned to filming (twelve weeks). This advantage allowed for experimentation and resulted in numerous subplots, the closing scene of each episode being the only television component (in Gallego, 2015b).

After the showing of *Cromo* at the Toronto International Film Festival and the recognition it received, the French company *Pyramide International* bought the distribution rights to adapt the series into a feature film. The company's president, Eric Lagesse, mentioned the increasing porosity between cinema and television (in Goodfellow, 2015) in addi-

tion to recognizing a “cinematographic quality” in Argentine fiction. The same was observed by Nicolás Puenzo upon comparing, from a technical standpoint, the series with an American production (in Lingenti, 2015). The producer stated:

This production system, for us as professionals of the film industry, allowed us to think of this miniseries as a 12-hour film, where what is important (...) is not what is told but how it is told, the rhythm, the tone, the soundtrack. We had all the freedom in the world (2015).

This series’ journey finally ends with its adaptation into a full-length film *Cromo. La película de la serie* and its premiere on the Contenidos Digitales Abiertos (CDA) platform on Friday, January 15th, 2016⁵. In contrast to being well-received earlier at the Canadian film festival, the fiction’s launch as a feature film did not have the same result.

In contrast with Diego Lerman, after their work on *Cromo*, the directors once again turned to working on a series. As for Lucía Puenzo, considering the hiatus in Argentine cinema in recent years (in Gallego, 2018), she began work on various projects outside Argentina (in Chile she directed the series *La jauría* and in an interview she mentioned working on a Netflix project in Colombia and another in the USA). Pablo Fendrik also took this same path and directed *El jardín de bronce* (2017) and will soon film the adaptation into mini-series of the Argentine police drama *Entre hombres*. In this case, it is important to mention that the narrative series format has ultimately become a job opportunity for both Argentine directors as well as actors and writers. Considering the general cultural crisis, in addition to that of televised fiction particularly in the second half of the decade, the lack of state policies that protect the sector, the lack of local productions and the subsequent lack of work and import of foreign fiction; narrative series premiering on online platforms attract more and more film and theater professionals. Not only do they see them as a job opportunity, they are also a way of exploring a new language.

The *Primetime* section of the Toronto Film Festival was created in 2015 and, according to the festival’s artistic director, Cameron Bailey, the space focuses on the new golden age of television character-

ized by “high-quality global programming, terrific writing, and direction that rivals the best feature filmmaking” (Hertz, 2018). The event coordinator also says that:

“Film and television have been converging for years, with many filmmakers gravitating towards television to experiment with that medium. Primetime will highlight these developments internationally, spotlighting the growing intersection between these two moving-image cultures and industries” (Powell, 2015).

As we can see, TV products enter these special sections —both in European and Canadian festivals— guided by renowned filmmakers, who are responsible for establishing the link between the two media and guarantee a steady offer of projects with the aforementioned “cinematic quality”. Therefore, a prosperous link is forged between the two formats while at the same time ensuring a flow of audiences willing to dedicate time within the extensive cinematographic agenda that characterizes these festivals to see television episodes. In regards to viewers of these productions, Bailey says: “We realized the audience for independent film is the same as those following those serial works” (Hertz, 2018).

3.3. Blurring limits

Television’s growing audience, the increased offer of streaming products and services, and the collaborative efforts that arise in said spaces form the basis for what Yúdice calls cultural networks. These are characterized, in this particular situation, for being collaborative systems that link new processes with more traditional practices, while “bringing together creators from more learned and traditional sectors and new media (digital, internet, etc)” (2003, p. 12). This burgeoning coexistence between different formats requires traditional festivals adapt to the new paradigms and dynamics of cultural production and consumption. In addition to the interrogatives inherent to the creation of new exhibition spaces within the cinephile programs, these events propagate the creation of specialized markets, awards and forums for debate and thought as to these new audiovisual production modes. In this sense, the need for traditional spaces to adapt makes for an environment of trans-

formation (technological, regulatory, cultural) in which the agreements and alliances are in full swing. Mutant television, in the terms proposed by Zafra (2017), dominates this new audiovisual era of permanent transformation and is the result of this context of change. Within this unstable panorama, a landscape subject to new configurations, one must understand that the narrative and expressive forms of serialized storytelling are permeable to other artistic languages, especially, when the ever-expanding terrain begins to overlap with cinema.

The aesthetic criteria considered by the selection of projects seem to be linked to the ever-graying line between cinema and television. Previous studies have addressed the influence of the cinematographic visual styles in television series as a manner of quality assurance (Cortés & Rodríguez, 2011), putting special attention on the expressionist elements transferring over from cinema into serial productions: composition and planning, camera movements and the form of principal photography. However, the rise of series began to caught the attention of critics, producers and festival coordinators alike and led to reflection on the ever thinning and blurring line separating television and cinema. For Michael Lerman, *Primetime* coordinator:

“Cinematic television has provided a new lane for the consumer’s experience of cinematic art (...) These series not only push the boundaries of what can be presented, but also demonstrate how it can transcend culture, visual arts, and communications” (Hertz, 2018).

The arguments that outline the permeability between the two media are based on advances in technology that offer better image and sound quality, prioritizing visual style, the presence of prestigious directors, screenwriters and production crews in the film industry that venture into serial formats, narrative complexity and large production budgets. The call for experienced actors and actresses in cinema and national and international theater brings even more prestige to television series, generating higher expectations and guaranteeing a certain level of performance. As we mentioned at the beginning, fictional television series constitute a new cultural reference

that emerged around 2010 thanks to technological advances, “together with interest in making audiovisual storytelling more sophisticated via ambitious content and subject matter, and a new type of production that imitates cinema, referred to by some authors as cinematic quality or television” (Pousa, 2018, p.19). Narrative series have sparked numerous debates around the quality of television (Jenner, 2018; Bourdaa, 2011; Thompson, 2003). The fictions addressed in this paper respond to various academic study criteria that also reflect on quality. *Cromo* and *La casa* as described earlier particularly stand out for their aesthetic innovations, innovations that present the importance of the themes they explore and the presence of renowned directors, actors and actresses in the Argentine cultural industry. Without a doubt, these after the festival season.

4. Conclusions

Immersed in this ongoing process conclusions are, for now, provisional, and may indeed lead to new questions. As more and more series are produced, we will be able to see if festivals, in the same way that they brand identities for filmmakers, favor certain approaches to narrative themes and styles. This issue brings us back to that proposed by Giunta in relation to the bienales and the homogenization of art, which is expressed in the repetition of artists and in an agenda of reoccurring themes. In addition, we can examine whether the incursion in the serialized format has an effect on the creators’ aesthetic cinematographic production.

The expansion of the audiovisual industry towards the narrative series together with new, multiple forms of consumption, form part of a cultural process within which dissemination and exhibition play a leading role. Within the context of distribution in recent years, spaces assigned to watching fictional television series multiplied, providing new outlets in which Argentine productions had the chance to reach new markets and receive international recognition. In addition to *Cromo* and *La casa*, other Argentine series formed part of the festival programming. For example, *El aparecido* (2011, Mariano Rosa) participated in the Almería

Film Festival (Andalucía, Spain). In addition, internet series like *Los mentirosos* (2019, Alejandro Jovic) and *Noches de amor* (2019, Pedro Levati) formed part of the 2019 official Cannes series Festival, and *Gorda* (2018, Tamy Hochman, Bárbara Cerro and Sol Rietti) was invited to participate in the *Days Drama Series* of the Berlinale Series.

Finally, this progressive incursion of television and internet content into the film festival circuit, undoubtedly reinforces the position of narrative series as a cultural product in the audiovisual industry. As a result, special industries were also created for this format in film and TV award ceremonies.

La Casa and *Cromo* were nominated in 2016 for Silver Condor Awards held by the Association of Cinematographic Journalists of Argentina, unveiling the new category of Best Series and/or Telefilm. Starting in 2018, the Martín Fierro Digital was created in recognition of internet fiction series filmed, largely, by Argentine universities. Indeed, we can see a double-dynamic here: on the one hand, narrative series explore alternative forms of exhibition in television; and on the other, film festivals no longer question including said cultural product in their line-up, echoing trends in new forms of audiovisual production and consumption.

Notes

1. In the legislative context of 2009, Law No. 26.522 on Audiovisual Communication Services (Ley de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual 26.522 - LCSA) was passed; in 2010, Argentina implemented free digital TV (Televisión Digital Abierta - TDA) and institutionally-speaking, created the grants promoted by the National Cinema and Audiovisual Arts Institute (Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales-INCAA) and the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services— These transformations leading to the increase in fiction programs on public TV are thoroughly discussed in Soria (2018).
2. Note that the director had already participated in this festival with his film *Tan de repente* (2003) and the mid-length film *La guerra de los gimnasios* (2005).
3. This section is a continuation of the *Changing Channels* program organized in 2013 by the Rotterdam Festival. The objective of this space was to exhibit series made by independent filmmakers for television and internet.
4. *Cromo* was also available to subscribers on Netflix and, just like *La casa*, on CDA (Contenidos Digitales Abiertos) and Cont.ar.
5. Taken from: <http://emiliaattias-uruguay.blogspot.com/2016/01/cromo-la-pelicula-de-la-serie.html>. The full-length film is currently available on the Cont.ar platform and is shown as a 2-hour special, a summarized version of the series.

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- How to cite this article:

Soria, C. (2020). Argentine TV Fictions at International Film Festivals. *Comunicación y Medios*, (41), 117-128. doi: 10.5354/0719-1529.2020.56658