



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

# Hiring a CGI Studio in Italy

Why the hard part is not the new building but the old street around it: the six tells of a pasted-on render, an ageing brief, and what to ask your own consultant.

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## START HERE

# The junction is the job

Almost every Italian commission touches something that already exists — an infill in a street of centuries-old facades, a conversion inside a retained shell, a new volume behind an old wall. Modelling the new building is the straightforward half. The image lives or dies in the few centimetres where new work meets old fabric.

And the failure is specific, recognisable and extremely common: a clean, accurately modelled, well-lit new building that is unmistakably sitting *on top of* a photograph of an old street rather than standing *in* it. Everyone sees it. Almost nobody can name it, so the comment round fills with requests to change the sky.

*AI helps most where nature carries the frame — greenery, water, planting. On a bare urban block it helps least.*

DIM KUZMENKO, CO-FOUNDER, MAVERICK FRAME STUDIO

Which describes an Italian street precisely. There is no foliage to hide behind and nothing generative to lean on. The old fabric has to be observed and built, and that is a budget line, not a filter.

## What you are actually commissioning

Three jobs, not one. **Match the plate** — camera, lens, light and grain. **Age the new work** to whatever date the image is set at. **Rebuild the old work** properly, because flat photographic facades beside a modelled one are what breaks the picture. Price a montage that skips the third and you are buying the problem, cheaply.



Maverick Frame production render.

## STEP 01

# Six tells of a pasted-on building

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Run these on any montage before you sign it off, in this order. It is roughly the order in which a viewer notices them, and the first four can be fixed in a comment round.

**01 The shadows disagree**

The new building throws its shadow one way, the parked cars and the lamp posts in the photograph throw theirs another. Pick any real object in the plate and compare direction and length against the new work. This is the most common error and the most visible.

**02 The edges are too clean**

A real building meets the sky along a slightly imperfect line — aerial haze, a little bloom, a hair of softness. A rendered one meets it with a scalpel. Look at the roofline at full size.

**03 Nothing is dirty**

Rain-wash streaks below sills, a darker band at the base where the pavement splashes, biological green on the shaded side. New work in an old street picks this up quickly, and an image with none of it reads as a model of a building rather than a building.

**04 The colour temperature is off**

The new work reads cooler or warmer than the fabric next to it. Cover the render with your hand and compare the two whites in the photograph, then uncover it. The shift is obvious once you look for it.

**05 Focus and grain do not match**

The plate has lens softness at the corners, grain, and fringing on high-contrast edges. The render has none of it. This is the giveaway at large print sizes and in a panel presentation.

**06 The old fabric is a texture, not a building**

Existing facades left as flat photographs with painted-on shadow: shutters with no depth, cornices with no undercut, window reveals with no thickness. This is the expensive one, it cannot be fixed in post, and it is the one most often quietly skipped.

Five of the six are correctable late. The sixth has to be decided before modelling starts, which is why it belongs in the brief and in the quote — not in a comment round, where it becomes an argument about scope.

## STEP 02

## The ageing brief

Ageing is a specification, not a mood. Write down which surfaces are new, which are existing, and what condition the existing ones are in on the day the image is set. Then send photographs of them, because no library texture is your wall.

| SURFACE                     | WHAT VARIES, AND GETS NOTICED                                                                                   | WHAT TO SEND                                                          |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Rendered plaster</b>     | Colour, patch history, hairline cracking, and the visible line where an old repair stops.                       | Photographs in flat light, one close crop per colour on the building. |
| <b>Stone</b>                | Which stone, how it was cut and finished, and how much darker the sheltered parts have gone.                    | The stone named, plus a photograph of a built example nearby.         |
| <b>Terracotta and cotto</b> | Fired colour spread across a run, efflorescence, moss and dirt sitting in the joints.                           | A photograph of the whole roof plane, not a single tile.              |
| <b>Brick and pointing</b>   | Joint width and profile, and repointing done in a different mortar — common, and very visible.                  | A photograph of the actual wall, square on, with scale.               |
| <b>Shutters and joinery</b> | Paint age, colour drift across one elevation, and how many are closed at the hour you chose.                    | A note on how many are shut, and a photograph of the worst one.       |
| <b>Metalwork</b>            | Ironwork, gutters and downpipes, and the staining that runs below them.                                         | Whether it is restored, replaced or left as found.                    |
| <b>The new work itself</b>  | Whether it is shown on handover day or some years later. Materials chosen to weather look wrong when shown new. | One number: the age, in years, that the image represents.             |

### One line to put in the brief

"Image is set **N years** after completion. Existing fabric to be reproduced from the supplied photographs, not from library materials." The second half is the part that does the work — it converts ageing from an artistic decision somebody makes at 2am into an instruction with evidence attached.

## STEP 03

## The survey pack, and questions that are not ours

Two things to get right before anyone models: what you photograph and measure, and what you establish with your own advisers. The first is a studio conversation. The second explicitly is not.

### The plate and survey pack

- |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photograph from the position the image will be seen from, at the hour it is set for     | <input type="checkbox"/> Shoot every surface that will be reproduced: flat light, square on, with scale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record camera, lens, height and position — this is what makes alignment possible at all | <input type="checkbox"/> Get a measured survey or point cloud where new work meets old                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoot much more of the street than you expect to use, including both ends               | <input type="checkbox"/> Note what is temporary — scaffolding, parked cars, market stalls, a skip       |

The survey line matters more than it looks. Old buildings are not orthogonal, walls lean, and floors are not level. Geometry guessed from a photograph will be out by enough to show exactly where the new work lands against it.

### Questions for your own heritage consultant

Put every one of these in writing to the people advising you on this specific site, and get the answers before you brief images. They change the brief, and they change it most expensively when they arrive late.

- Does this site or building fall under a heritage or landscape constraint, and which body reviews it?
- If so, what visual material does that body expect, and in what form?
- Are viewpoints nominated by anyone, or do we choose them?
- Is a montage from a surveyed position required, or is a model view acceptable?
- Must the existing condition be shown alongside the proposal?
- Is there any requirement about how materials and colours are represented?
- Who on our side signs the images off before anything is submitted?

We are a rendering studio. We do not know what any soprintendenza, comune or landscape authority requires on your site, and **no guide that claims to know is doing anything but guessing**. Everything above is a question to ask, not a statement of what applies.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

# Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

| COMMISSIONED WORK     | FREELANCER      | STUDIO          |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Single exterior still | \$100 – 300     | \$250 – 600     |
| Single interior still | \$120 – 350     | \$300 – 700     |
| Package, 5–8 views    | \$600 – 1,500   | \$1,500 – 4,000 |
| Animation, per minute | \$1,000 – 3,000 | \$3,000 – 8,000 |

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

### How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

### The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING  
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES  
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT  
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW  
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360



MAVERICK  
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# When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

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SEE THE WORK

[maverickframe.com/gallery](https://maverickframe.com/gallery)

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Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.

