

off the fence.

Legendary Megastructures

3 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Construction Works of God: Lourdes, The Oversized Sanctuary

1858, Virgin Mary appears 18 times in the Grotto of Massabielle. At first, nobody believes it, but when the Catholic Church recognised the place, the construction of one of the biggest Christian complexes begins, and pilgrims rush to visit it... Today, it is the second most visited Catholic complex with about 600000 visitors per year. How did the architects manage to build big enough structures to welcome all these believers?

52 hectares, is the surface area on which the domain of the sanctuary spreads. It includes natural places such as the grotto, as well as monumental structures built by men: 15 pools, a church, no less than three basilicas, and a 1500 metres-long Stations of the Cross. Let's get back to the construction of these extravagant edifices.

Four religious edifices were built one after another. The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in 1866, the Rosary Basilica in 1881, the Basilica of St. Pius X in 1956, and finally, the church of St. Bernadette in 1986. All built in different styles and different times, what technical challenges had to be risen to for these

constructions to see the light of day? What difficulties were encountered during the works? This film is the incredible story of a serious challenge: how to succeed in welcoming hundreds of thousands of believers while respecting and resisting the hostile natural environment of the Gave de Pau river.

2. The Incredible Transformation of Paris by Haussmann

Napoleon 3rd had one ambition to modernise the whole French capital city. Why? Because he had lived in London, a city that impressed him, and that Paris at the time was simply the opposite, a huge putrefaction workshop, where misery, plague and diseases worked together, with no room for the air or the sun to break. Napoleon employed Haussmann, who seemed to be the right man for the job, to take on a mission to aerate, homogenise and embellish Paris. How did they do it? Which revolutionary transformations did they undertake?

The major Parisian road links that we know today were pierced by Haussmann. How did he manage to clear such large routes ? Sacrifices were needed, entire families were expropriated, how many people were moved out of their homes to allow these construction works ? How many houses, buildings, streets

and passages were destroyed ?

The transformations didn't stop here, a lot of buildings were erected, the railway stations Gare de Lyon and Gare du Nord, the townhalls of each arrondissement... not to mention the creation of huge parks and green spaces. Such considerable works demand the intervention of many players. Who were these men and how many were they ? This film tells the story of this gigantic metamorphosis that founded Paris as we know it today.

3. The Paris of Napoleon 1st

We often think of Napoleon 1st as the incredible legislator and war leader, but we tend to forget that he was a prolific patron and instigated many constructions that are anchored in the Parisian landscape. The Arc de Triomphe, the Vendôme Column, the Palais de la Bourse, the church of La Madeleine, the building of bridges and piercing of canals... This film tells the story of these megastructures that we owe to Napoleon 1st.

How many architects, sculptors, workers, had to be called for these constructions? How to build such imposing sites in the heart of Paris? How long did these construction works last as they were often disturbed by an unstable political context? Why were these changes necessary? What innovations in terms of materials and what technical prowesses their constructions engendered? This film will answer these questions. Let's throw it back to the extraordinary transformations of the First Empire, a precursory work that will be extended and amplified during the Second Empire.