

MONT-SAINT-MICHEL MEGASTRUCTURE



A **52'** documentary
Directed by **Alexandra Barbot**
Produced by **Paramonti**

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DISTRIBUTION

SYNOPSIS

Of all the projects undertaken since the start of the millennium, none is more ambitious than the effort to re-establish Mont-Saint-Michel to its former status: that of an island.

Mont-Saint-Michel, Megastructure tells the story of the monumental project that was carried out over a period of 10 years: the construction of a dam, a pedestrian bridge, and a new parking lot—all challenges that reveal just how extraordinary this project was in every one of its aspects and shed light on today's Mont-Saint-Michel.



NOTE OF INTENT

The documentary explores the challenges of this ten-year project: how the obstacles were overcome, and how remarkable feats were achieved despite harsh weather conditions and a sea as fierce as a hurricane. It starts by showing the threats posed to Mont-Saint-Michel, which was both becoming silted up and increasingly connected to the mainland. The stakes were high: they consisted of returning Mont-Saint-Michel to its bay. The film then details how civil engineers managed to meet this challenge through three massive construction projects.

The **dam construction project** was monumental, as it required the partial draining of the Couesnon, the river that separates Brittany from Normandy. The film highlights not only the technical feat but also the work of art behind this ambitious sedimentary “flush”.

The **footbridge** is truly exceptional: to allow the high tides to pass through, it was necessary to build a slender, linear structure that was nevertheless strong enough to withstand the often-fierce elements. Not only did it have to be designed, but it also had to be built: how do you pour concrete into piers just a few centimeters in diameter when the tides rise twice a day?

Finally, the **parking lot project** underscores the symbiotic vision behind these building projects: not to build against the landscape, but rather alongside it, using fruit trees to drain the marshy ground.

Everything in this film reveals just how extraordinary this construction project was. While the people who were part of it speak about it, a more objective perspective is provided through the accounts of urban planners and those who observed the project from a distance. The film concludes with a look at the present: what is the situation today? How are the dam, the bridge, and the parking lot holding up, and above all... how is the new Mont-Saint-Michel doing?

This story will be told by those who were there—the architects and engineers responsible for its maintenance today, as well as the technicians and workers who did their jobs while risking their lives—to give us a deeper sense of a feat that is both technological and artistic, as well as an ecological endeavor.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This documentary takes viewers on an immersive journey into the heart of one of the world's most beautiful landscapes, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and above all, into the heart of one of the most ambitious projects of the early 2000s: the restoration of Mont-Saint-Michel's island status.

Archival footage will bring the construction sites of the dam, the pier, and the parking lot to life, serving as a visual illustration of the narratives shared by the key players: architects, project managers, construction supervisors, maintenance staff, and workers. The off-camera commentary will outline the various stages of construction, extensively illustrated by 3D images that break down the dam's mechanisms and the bridge's structural components to clarify the technical explanations.

The film will contrast the Mont-Saint-Michel of yesterday—overbuilt with concrete in the 20th century—with the Mont-Saint-Michel of today, restored to the Bay. To do so, it will use drones and aerial footage to highlight what is already breathtaking: a Mont-Saint-Michel that has once again become an island during high tide, freed from siltation. A monument that is once again the only one of its kind in the world.

The film will highlight the beauty of the surroundings and monuments, which reflect the architectural challenge that the abbey once represented, and will show how civil engineering can become a work of art: these structures are designed not only to serve a functional purpose, but also to blend seamlessly into the landscape.



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