

## SPECIFICATION BOX:

**Surface area and sets:**  
 Total surface: 7,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
 1.3 million francs for sets  
 60,000 workshop hours  
 620 m<sup>2</sup> of painted back-drop  
 400 m<sup>2</sup> lake

**Ground surfaces:**  
 30 m<sup>2</sup> of sand  
 150 tonnes of compacted soil  
 8 tonnes of asphalt  
 32 tonnes of cobblestones  
 45 m<sup>2</sup> of floor tiles  
 300 m<sup>2</sup> of wooden flooring

**Cinema and audiovisual:**  
 3 cinema screens  
 1 shadow-play video projector  
 videowalls  
 4 slide projectors using the Fabiani effect

**Sound:**  
 Infrared headsets  
 51 sound sources combining music and text  
 original score by Michael Nyman

February and the official opening in July 1989.

SAGA-Défense, a subsidiary of the Maxwell Communications Corporation and developer of commercial space at the Grande Arche, helped with the financing for *La Traversée de Paris*. The first feasibility study in 1988 called for a budget of 35 million francs (UK £3.5 million; US \$6 million) to build the exhibit. "Everybody screamed at this original budget," according to Noviant, who notes "the space wasn't finished, there weren't even any floors, any electricity, or anything."

This sum was reduced to 22 million francs (UK £2.2 million; US \$3.7 million) which included 13 million francs (UK £1.3 million; US \$2.2 million) for the decor, 6 million francs (UK £588,000; US \$1 million) for the creation of the soundtrack and films, and 3 million francs (UK £294,000; US \$500,000) for salaries, including that of musician Michael

Nyman, who was commissioned to create an original musical score.

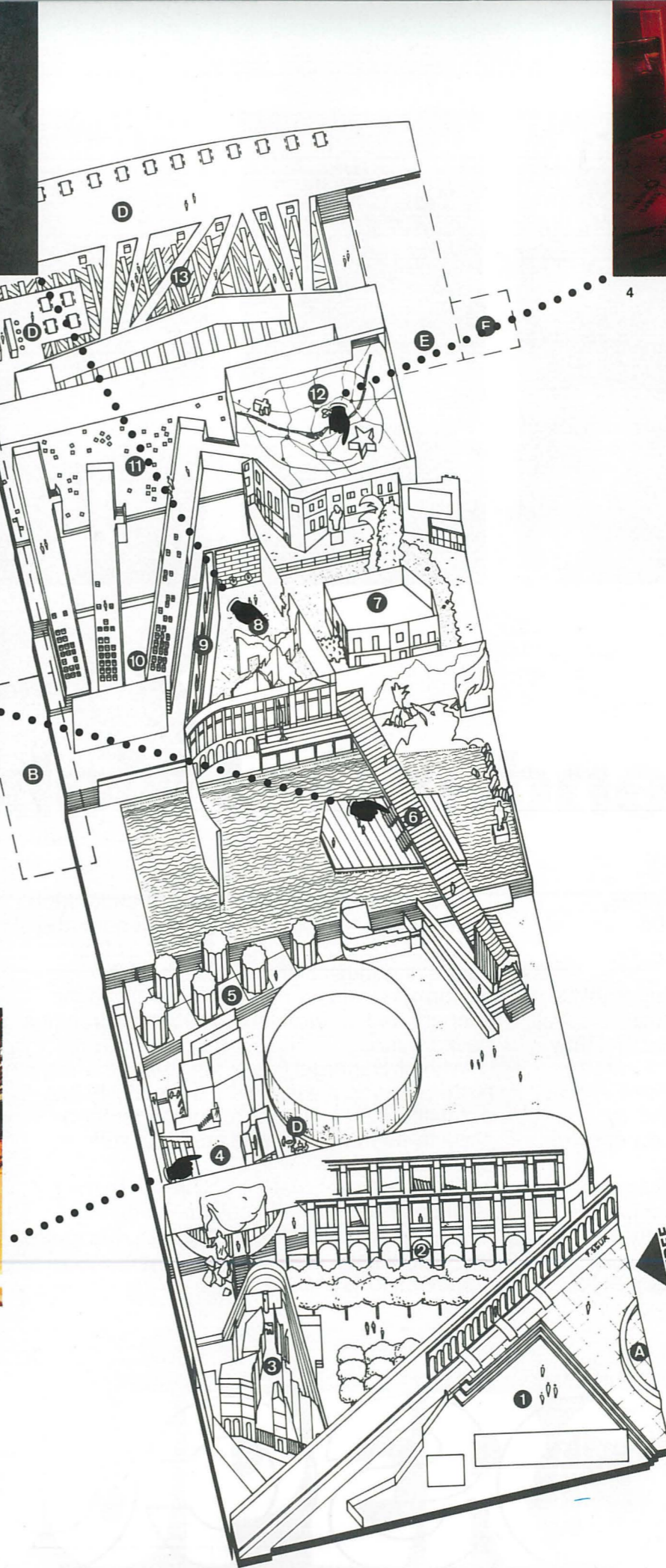
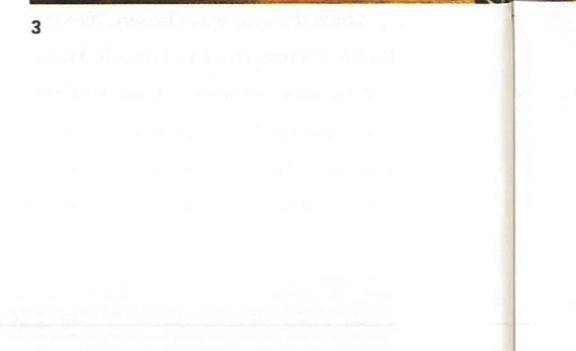
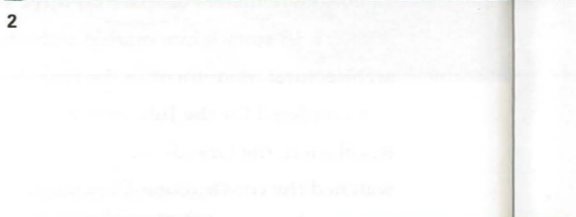
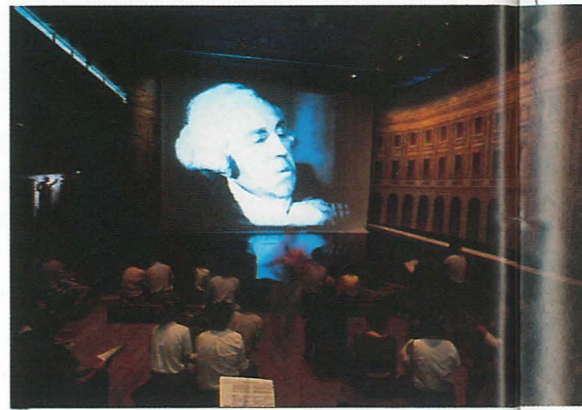
Visitors (1,500-1,800 at the same time) to *La Traversée de Paris* wear headsets whose infrared beams activate a series of Philips sound "radiators" which emit a narration and music track related to each scene. "The sound stops at the barriers provided by the exhibit, such as walls, so that you only hear what you should hear," says Noviant, "a simple principle but hard to implement. We had problems with whistling in the beginning, and the system had to be regulated. We could have actually had a more complex system with two sound zones operating at the same time — one for the narration and one for the music — but this was done in too short a time."

This five-hundred-year journey through Paris begins on the banks of the river Seine in the 16th-century. The dipping of oars in the water combines with animated conversation of Parisians traveling on a boat, looking at the buildings along the river's edge. Sounds echo as the boat passes under a bridge, and are drowned out by horse hooves clip-clopping on the wooden slats overhead. The realistic effect of moving scenery has been created by a special process known as the Fabiani Effect, in which a 30-meter painted mural has been photographed and then projected through a series of synchronised slides using four ceiling-mounted projectors. This effect can be projected on any surface and at variable speeds. The realism of the scene is heightened by the sandy floors and barrels which provide seating.

The startling realism of the Palais Royal section, where the decor is built on a 1-to-1 architectural scale, includes authentic wrought-iron railings built to withstand winds up to 60 miles-per-hour. "This is the most realistic of the scenes," says Noviant, "and we worked from the actual plans of the building in our design." Descending a full-scale staircase reveals lower level shops representing the Paris of 1787-89.

Following the cobblestones of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, reports of the storming of the Bastille, speeches by Robespierre, Danton and Marat in the legislative assembly, and films of the Revolution projected in a large, crowded square, leads to the days of the Paris Commune. Realism is apparent in the cobblestones streets, half torn up to create barricades in front of

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*La Traversée de Paris* takes visitors on a 13 part Parisian journey. Among the stops: 1789 — listening to news about the storming of the Bastille in July 1789, we walk along the Faubourg Saint Antoine (3); 1793 — we watch extracts from classic films tracing the history of the Revolution and observe painted scenes commemorating the death of the king (2); 1871 — we see houses burned to the ground as a tribute to the Paris Commune (1); 1945 - 1970 — the city becomes a political backdrop as Parisians take to the streets to demonstrate a variety of causes (4).

*La Traversée de Paris* convie les visiteurs à un voyage en 13 parties. Parmi les étapes: 1789 — à l'écoute de nouvelles concernant la prise de la Bastille en juillet 1789, nous marchons le long du Faubourg St. Antoine (3); 1793 — nous regardons des extraits de classiques du cinéma retracant l'histoire de la Révolution et observons des scènes peintes commémorant la mort du roi (2); 1871 — nous apercevons des maisons brûlées à ras en commémoration de la Commune de Paris (1); 1945 - 1970 — la ville de Paris devient un décor de fond alors que les Parisiens descendent dans le rue pour manifester (4).

*La Traversée de Paris* schickt die Besucher auf eine Reise durch Paris in 13 Teilen. Unter anderem: man hört die Nachrichten über die Erstürmung der Bastille im Juli 1789, wir wandern Faubourg Saint Antoine entlang (3); 1793 — wir sehen Auszüge aus klassischen Filmen zur Geschichte der Revolution und betrachten gemalte Szenen in Erinnerung an den Tod des Königs (2); 1871 — wir sehen abgebrannte Häuser zur Zeit der Pariser Commune (1); 1945 - 1970 — die Stadt wird zum politischen Hintergrund für Demonstrationen der Pariser zu verschiedensten Anlässen (4).