



1



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the painted facades. A series of 3-D photographs memorialize the Paris Commune, and serve as a break in the realistic decor of the exhibition.

"From the 1850s on, after the invention of photography, we let photographs and films tell the story, rather than architecture," says Noviant, in explaining the more abstract look of the modern sections. The final sections of *La Traversée de Paris* include a cinema with newsreel footage from 1920-1945, and videowalls projecting political events in Paris from 1945-1970.

"The decor for film and the theatre is the technique that best adapts to this kind of exhibit," according to Noviant, who worked with Barré on the choice of designers. Film production designer Marc Petitjean worked with Noviant on the overall design, with a team of designers and architects, including Mara Goldberg and Henri Rouvière, who had both worked on *Cités-Cinés*. "We are reaching out to a large public," says Noviant, who felt that the aesthetics of architects and plasticians might not be appropriate.

"For the cinema, the decor is specific to the scenario and secondary to the story,"

says Petitjean, "but here we tell the story with the decor." Petitjean, who created the barricades, cobblestoned streets, and houses of the Paris Commune section, used paintings and photographs as historical reference. The facades of the streets are painted wooden panels hung on floor-to-ceiling cables, and were built by Genre Eve Décor, one of thirty scene shops involved in the project. Located in Bordeaux, they worked from a model built by Petitjean. "We used theatrical and film scene shops for the decor," he explains, "and asked for bids from three or four companies. Some of the walls are wood with styrofoam used for depth, and others are cinderblock with painted plaster."

The first of the two barricades designed by Petitjean uses real cobblestones, lent by the city, on the bottom, giving way to styrofoam reproductions higher up. The second barricade is built on a curved wooden frame covered with a thin layer of real objects — from carriage wheels to pitchforks. "The exhibit is a mix of real and false," says Petitjean, referring to a real statue lent by the Rodin museum. "I don't like to make fakes of real things,

Set designer Marc Petitjean worked with Patrice Noviant on the overall design of *La Traversée de Paris*. Petitjean created a model (1) representing his impression of the barricaded Paris streets and painted facades. The decor uses real Paris cobblestones lent by the city's warehouses (2).

*Le décorateur Marc Petitjean a travaillé avec Patrice Noviant sur la conception globale de La Traversée de Paris. Petitjean a créé un modèle (1) représentant ses impressions des rues barricadées et des façades peintes dans Paris. Le décor utilise de vrais galets de Paris prêtés par les entrepôts de la ville (2).*

Bühnenbildner Marc Petitjean arbeitete mit Patrice Noviant am Gesamtdesign für *La Traversée de Paris*. Petitjean baute ein Modell (1), das seinen Eindruck von den verbarrikadierten Straßen und gemalten Fassaden von Paris widerspiegelt. Die Ausstattung benutzt echtes Kopfsteinpflaster, das von der Stadt geliehen wurde (2).

except in the cinema where everything is false. Here we have the counterpoint of something real in the midst of all this fake decor."

The lighting for the exhibition was designed by Daniel Delannoy, a young French lighting designer, who worked frequently with director Patrice Chéreau. After his unexpected death in May 1989, "someone had to come in and finish the lighting," says Noviant, "but we never really achieved what Daniel wanted." The lighting includes 200 computer-controlled instruments run by an AVAB board.

Along the impressionistic itinerary of *La Traversée de Paris*, its visitors become the crowds of the city, making the exhibit a collective as well as an individual experience, linking architecture, visual arts, and the theatre. Noviant would like to export *La Traversée de Paris* to other places, as well as design future exhibits based on other cities. "I like to find what's essential in a city," he says, "what addresses itself to the world at large." For Noviant, producer as much as architect, has discovered that all the city's a stage.