

« L'ESCLAVAGE À BOURBON » “SLAVERY IN BOURBON ISLAND”

Film director : Alexandre BOUTIÉ

Scientific direction :

Prosper ÈVE, Emeritus professor at the University of Reunion.

Xavier LE TERRIER, scientific director of the Villèle museum.

Gilles GAUVIN, member of the scientific council of the Villèle museum.

Duration : 54 mn

On the occasion of the 20th of December 2024, the Department of Réunion is offering the very first historical documentary dedicated to slavery on Bourbon Island, a local production which highlights a still forgotten aspect of this part of French and world history.

This production is part of an educational and civic approach, while offering viewers unique, original and essential content to rebalance historical and cultural representations on the issue of the slave trade and slavery. This initiative is also part of the prefiguration actions of the Museum of Slavery and Housing.

The documentary, which took more than two years to make, is particularly important in the current audiovisual landscape where the Caribbean region enjoys very high visibility thanks to numerous productions on the transatlantic slave trade, while the Indian Ocean region, with its unique history, remains largely unknown to the general public, including in Reunion Island.

It is based on a rigorous historical framework, supported by numerous archival documents and in-depth analysis by specialists in the subject, in history, anthropology and psychology. These resources allow us to explore the specificities of slavery in the Indian Ocean, from the arrival of the first captives until its abolition in 1848. The wealth of stories and testimonies allows us to better understand the workings of this system, but also the legacies it has left in contemporary Réunion society.

The broadcast of this documentary contributes to the work of history and popular education that is more necessary than ever in our society. It will also contribute to enriching the teaching of the history of slavery, by broadening geographical perspectives and offering the widest possible audience a valuable tool for understanding this complex memory.

Understanding the legacies of slavery in Reunion, whether cultural, social or economic, is also one of the keys to better understanding current identity and societal issues.

