



Selection
Fall / Winter 2026 / 27

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America's Wars

For 250 years, wars and conflicts have shaped the United States of America. But the rise to the most powerful military nation has come at a cost.

From the revolution against the British Crown emerges a nation promising freedom and equality. But the bloody civil war nearly tears the United States apart. Reunited, it conquers the continent by force and rises to global power. World War II shaped the national self-image as defender of peace and freedom, while using the deadliest weapon on earth. In Vietnam, the self-appointed 'world police' wages dirty wars, betraying its own ideals. From 9/11 and the hunt for terrorists, from Guantánamo to drone warfare, the USA are trapped in a cycle of violence and power politics. Under President Donald Trump, a new era of interest-driven foreign policy begins – old certainties are fading, new wars are flaring up.

History & Biographies

3 x 50'

Produced by eco documentaries
for ZDFinfo and ZDF Studios

NEW



History & Biographies

4 **Ancient Betrayals**

Ancient Betrayals unveils the untold stories of conspiracies, murders and treachery that shaped ancient history.

Across centuries and civilizations, betrayal has been a powerful force – reshaping empires, ending dynasties and redrawing the lines of power. From the treachery that doomed the Spartans in Thermopylae to the court intrigue of Emperor Caligula and King Herod, to the treason of princess La Malinche of their own people, each episode explores a gripping real-life narrative, revealing how deception and ambition collided in high-stakes moments that defined the ancient world.

Combining expert insights, cinematic story-telling and rarely seen historical detail, the series brings to life the true stories behind history’s most infamous betrayals – many of which have been overlooked, misunderstood, or rarely been documented on television.

History & Biographies
6 x 50'
Produced by KM Plus Media production
in association with ZDFinfo, ZDF Studios
and WildBear Entertainment

NEW



Ancient Superstructures | S04

From the Acropolis and Carcassonne to Neuschwanstein, Aachen Cathedral and the Sagrada Familia, the world's most iconic monuments still conceal vital secrets.

How were they built without modern technology? What hidden structures explain their endurance? In *Ancient Superstructures* season 4, cutting-edge tools – satellite imagery, aerial scanning, photogrammetry, micro-analysis and 3D modelling – render these landmarks transparent.

Like 3.0 explorers, we penetrate their stone envelopes, decode their engineering and reveal the ingenuity, phases of construction and mysteries that have shaped their epic histories.

History & Biographies
20 x 50' UHD
S01 (4 EP), S02 (4 EP), S03 (6 EP), S04 (6 EP)
Produced by Pernel Media
in association with RMC Découverte,
Histoire and ZDF Studios

NEW



Shadows and Dust

Gone but not forgotten. From the Peking Man to fugitive DB Cooper, from Columbus's sunken Santa Maria to Cambyses's vanished armies, history's missing pieces evade recapture. Ensnared in illicit dealings, cloaked in myth and rumour, hunted by the masses, phantom fragments inspire obsession

and theories of sabotage, miscalculation and worlds undone without warning. How did we allow these precious relics to slip from our grasp? And what, if anything, is left to be found? Investigators follow trails through the past, sifting through desert sands for ancient armour, combing coral reefs for traces of first contact and parsing FBI profiles for new suspects. Amid cloak-and-dagger

rendezvous, forgotten testimonies, and new studies, are we on the verge of great rediscovery?

History & Biographies
8 x 50'
Produced by Go Button Media
in association with Super Channel
and ZDF Studios

NEW



Constantine The Great

Ancient history knows few rulers as significant as him. He fundamentally changed the Roman world – Emperor Constantine, known as the Great. The empire he ruled stretched from Italy and France to Germany, modern-day Turkey and Jerusalem.

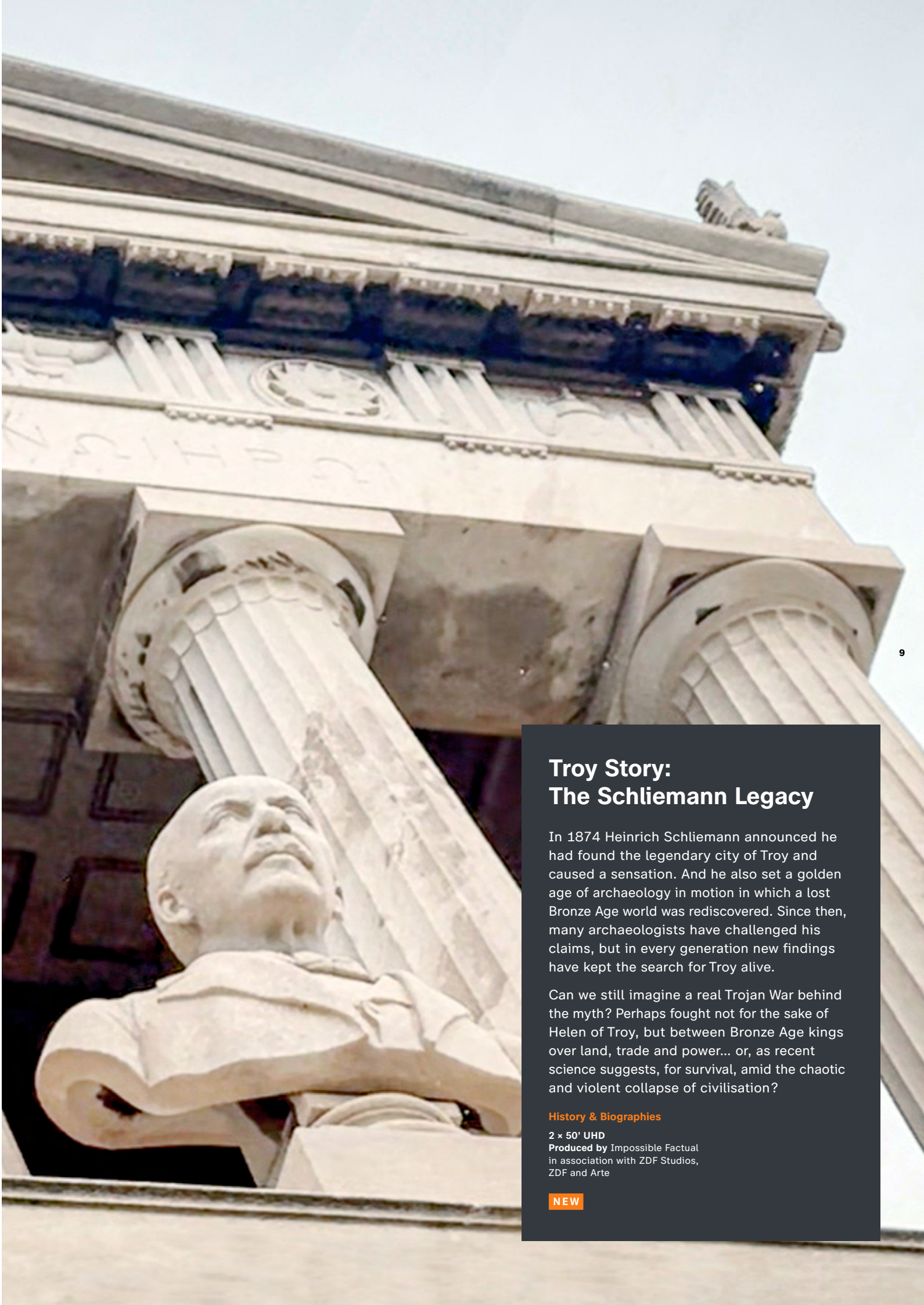
Europe is shaped by the emperor who created a new capital in Constantinople and established Christianity in the Roman Empire. Even today, magnificent buildings bear witness to his reign and his legacy.

Archaeologists are searching for clues along the stages of his life. They are reconstructing the world of a ruler who

combined power and splendour – yet grew up far from Rome in the Serbian province as the illegitimate son of a capable military man and a prostitute.

History & Biographies
2 x 50'
Produced by eco doc for ZDF
in association with Arte and ZDF Studios

NEW



Troy Story: The Schliemann Legacy

In 1874 Heinrich Schliemann announced he had found the legendary city of Troy and caused a sensation. And he also set a golden age of archaeology in motion in which a lost Bronze Age world was rediscovered. Since then, many archaeologists have challenged his claims, but in every generation new findings have kept the search for Troy alive.

Can we still imagine a real Trojan War behind the myth? Perhaps fought not for the sake of Helen of Troy, but between Bronze Age kings over land, trade and power... or, as recent science suggests, for survival, amid the chaotic and violent collapse of civilisation?

History & Biographies
2 x 50' UHD
Produced by Impossible Factual
in association with ZDF Studios,
ZDF and Arte

NEW



Jack the Ripper: Inside the World of a Killer

In 1888 at least five women in London's Whitechapel were victims of history's most famous serial killer. The hunt for the killer revolutionised how murders are investigated – but he was never caught. Frederick Abberline, the detective in charge, has been vilified for his failure for almost 140 years.

Now, former murder detective Steve Keogh sets out to re-examine the challenges faced by his Victorian counterpart...

Joining Steve in a forensic re-investigation is historian Dr Fern Riddell, who guides us through the brutal realities of the victims's lives and of Whitechapel in 1888. A world of grinding poverty and seething tensions around immigration are exposed by the murders.

Using AI to faithfully animate historical images of the streets and people of London will immerse us in the world of 'Jack the Ripper' as never before.

History & Biographies

2 x 50'
Produced by Impossible Factual
in association with ZDF Studios

NEW



Las Vegas: From Rags to Riches

Las Vegas – the glittering city in the Nevada desert and a projection of the American Dream. Since 1905, it has transformed from a remote outpost into a railroad hub, a gangster haven, the ‘Atomic City’ and the global capital of casinos and shows.

Millions come seeking luck, success and upward mobility, yet the city also stands for risk, downfall and social divides. The film looks behind the façade of this city of extremes, where dreams and failure coexist.

Historians, croupiers, social workers, artists and homeless people reveal what

defines Las Vegas – a myth, an engine and a mirror of America.

History & Biographies

1 x 50'
Produced by Moving Story Productions
in association with ZDF, Arte and ZDF Studios

NEW



Black Death: Patient Zero

In *Black Death: Patient Zero*, we reveal the devastation inflicted on the Medieval Italian city of Siena and across all of Europe by the 14th century outbreak of plague. Killing an estimated 200,000,000 people, the Black Death remains the deadliest pandemic in history.

With first-hand testimony and historical documents, we reveal what conditions were like for parts of the continent hit by the plague and discover how people in the Middle Ages attempted to prevent and treat the disease. We trace the illness back over time to discover where it first

entered Europe and how it was brought there. And with exclusive access, we follow the work of historian Prof Philip Slavin and biologists Dr Johannes Krause and Dr Maria Spyrou, as they uncover Patient Zero: the earliest human victim of the Black Death.

History & Biographies

2 x 50' or 1 x 50' UHD
Produced by Impossible Factual Production
in association with ZDF Studios, ZDF and Arte

NEW



Inside Hitler's Reich

We know the familiar narrative: Hitler seduced the Germans. But what if that is only half the story?

Inside Hitler's Reich poses a provocative and compelling question: was Hitler himself shaped by the admiration, approval and expectations of the society around him? Through seven lives intimately connected to his rise and rule, the series reveals a complex portrait of fascination, opportunism, conformity, persecution and resistance.

Drawing on newly uncovered sources, fresh historical insights and powerful personal testimonies, *Inside Hitler's Reich* challenges conventional interpretations and offers a bold new perspective on how societies help create, sustain and ultimately define political power.

History & Biographies

6 x 50'

Scheduled for End of 2026

Produced by ECO Documentaries
for ZDFinfo and ZDF Studios

IN PRODUCTION



The Lost Library of Herculaneum

In 2026, a brand-new scientific campaign begins to unlock the secrets of an entire library of scrolls discovered buried in the Roman city of Herculaneum by the eruption of Mt Vesuvius in 79 CE. With exclusive documentary access, we will be there as a multinational, multi-disciplinary team of experts extract the lost secrets of these ancient works of storytelling, poetry, philosophy and possibly even science.

More than 90% of ancient literature has not survived to modern times. Much of what we do have is incomplete or fragmentary – every precious work recovered advances our knowledge of the ancient world. But they also give us a unique insight into the people who collected these works together and why.

What can the lost library of Herculaneum tell us about one of the most important

families in Rome at a crucial turning point in history?

History & Biographies
1 × 90' or 2 × 50' UHD
Scheduled for Autumn 2027
Produced by Impossible Factual
in association with ZDF Studios

IN DEVELOPMENT



History for a Better Future

Forgotten Wisdom explores how ancient knowledge can inspire solutions for today's crises.

In *The Treasures of Nature*, the series travels from India to Norway, Germany, Sicily, Italy and France, uncovering traditional banana-leaf packaging, forgotten medicinal herbs, biblical manna, Viking seaweed use and regenerative farming methods. These practices show how natural materials and age-old techniques can reduce plastic, heal exhausted soils and support new medical approaches.

The Wisdom of the Ancestors leads to Spain, Japan, Lake Constance, Canada and Mexico. Cool cave houses, the almost zero-waste Edo society, medieval fishing quotas, Indigenous cultural burning and Aztec floating gardens reveal how people once lived climate-friendly with simple 'low-tech' systems. Together, the episodes show that many answers to our future lie hidden in the wisdom of the past.

History & Biographies
2 × 50'
Produced by Spiegel TV
for ZDF and ZDF Studios

NEW

People & Places

Secret Spain

The documentary series *Secret Spain* transports viewers to regions that rarely take centre stage: vast plateaus, remote valleys, small villages and historic cultural landscapes. Here, the films introduce people who are developing new perspectives for rural areas.

They preserve traditional crafts, experiment with sustainable agriculture, launch cultural projects and blend tradition with modern design. Their stories reveal a Spain defined not by growth and speed, but by a mindful connection to landscape, community and heritage.

The series is about personal courage, creative ideas and efforts to revitalise places long considered peripheral. The result is a multi-faceted portrait of a country whose future is being shaped beyond its major cities.

People & Places
3 x 50'
Produced by Gruppe 5
in association with ZDF, Arte,
Servus TV and ZDF Studios

NEW





Paraguay's Hidden Treasures

Paraguay's Hidden Treasures invites viewers on a journey of discovery through a country that barely features on the global tourist map, yet is full of natural wonders.

Part one visits the impressive Jesuit Reductions, the living musical heritage of the Guaraní and protected areas such as the Mbaracayú Reserve, with its wealth of wildlife including jaguars, tapirs and toucans.

Part two explores the Gran Chaco – a region of extremes where heat and drought shape life. Here, Mennonites and indigenous communities have lived side by side for almost one hundred years, sharing knowledge and building a future together. Amid vast savannahs, salt lagoons filled with flamingos and rare species such as anteaters and the elusive armadillo, a remarkable ecosystem emerges – a treasure trove within

one of South America's last great wilderness regions.

People & Places
2 x 50'
Produced by Ilona Grundmann Filmproduction for ZDF in association with Arte and ZDF Studios

NEW



Citrus World

Citrus fruits have a long tradition in art and cuisine across the globe. This series, however, goes far beyond the familiar, focusing on the natural environments in which citrus trees thrive as settings for a wide variety of agricultural practices.

In each of the six episodes, one citrus fruit takes centre stage, guiding us through the unique stories that unfold behind the scenes of its places of origin. Each film explores the exotic origins, ecological interconnections and cultural riches associated with these fruits, while also serving as a plea to protect the unique ecosystems in which they grow.

People & Places
6 x 50'
Produced by doc.station for ZDF in association with Arte and ZDF Studios

NEW

Science & Knowledge

The Body: What Is Life?

You may have seen a simple cell diagram in a biology textbook, illustrated with curved rods and dots. However, within each of our body's cells, there is an incredibly crowded and active environment, with many organelles working tirelessly to accomplish their functions.

Outside the cells, there is a universe of cells that maintain our multicellular bodies by supporting one another and sharing tasks. It is a mechanism, like an orchestra, that continues to perform the symphony of life. This stunning system was established through a long history of life on Earth.

Using spectacular CGI and extensive research, this new series from *The Body* team explores the fundamental but crucial mysteries of what drives our lives, how we perceive the world and enjoy life and why we are fated to age and so on.

Science & Knowledge
3 x 50' UHD and 2 x 50' HD
Produced by NHK
in association with ZDF,
Arte and ZDF Studios

NEW





Mega Building Collection

From Paris's Royal Axis – Arc de Triomphe, Champs-Élysées and Concorde – to impregnable fortresses perched on sheer cliffs, *Mega Building Collection* reveals the daring engineering behind icons.

New episodes raise the stakes: combat helicopters (Tigre and NH90) syncing firepower and rescue; cruise mega-ships built at record pace; Toulon's top-secret naval base maintaining a nuclear-age fleet; US power tech spanning Air Force One to the White House; the A7 record-breaking highway keeping France moving;

and Ariane 6, Europe's next-gen launcher. Hidden systems, colossal logistics, bold minds – engineering at XXL scale.

New episodes:

- *Secrets of Combat Helicopters*
- *Ariane 6: Europe's Mega-Rocket*
- *Naval Base XXL*
- *Incredible Giant Cruise Ships*
- *Extreme Fortresses: Impossible Builds*
- *US Power: XXL Technology*
- *Paris XXL: The Royal Axis*
- *Europe's Highway of Extremes*

Science & Knowledge

28 x 50'
Further episodes in production
Produced by Pernel Media
in association with RMC Découverte
and ZDF Studios

8 NEW EPISODES

Ballooning: The Sky Is the Limit

The invention of the balloon fulfilled humanity's greatest dream: to fly above the Earth. As soon as a balloon floats through the sky, people stop and marvel.

Whether powered by hot air or gas, balloons have fascinated people since their invention in 1783. Graphic novels tell the story of the historical milestones of ballooning beyond the film.

From Leonardo da Vinci's first thoughts on rising hot air to the competition between the Montgolfier brothers and

Jacques Charles in 1783, which gave rise to the two systems of hot air balloons and gas balloons. It also recounts the daring acrobatic feats of Napoleon's 'imperial aeronaut' Sophie Blanchard, who set off fireworks over the skies of Paris from her balloon. The spectacle ended fatally for her, but her memorial still stands today in the famous Pere Lachaise cemetery.

Science & Knowledge

1 x 50'
Produced by Ifage Filmproduktion for ZDF
and ZDF Studios

NEW

Justice for Mother Earth

The global community has committed to protecting 30% of the Earth's land and oceans by 2030. Achieving this goal raises a fundamental question: how much longer can we continue to exploit the Earth?

An idea rooted in Indigenous worldviews – that nature, humans and animals are inseparably connected – is increasingly finding its way into courtrooms. This challenges legal systems that have prioritised individual rights and property, often at nature's expense.

A growing number of lawsuits are setting precedents that reshape the law. People are demanding legal rights for rivers and landscapes. A cloud forest in Ecuador survives today because a lawyer successfully defended the rights of nature against a mining company.

This three-part documentary explores old and new ways to protect our planet with breathtaking stories from 12 countries.

Science & Knowledge

3 x 50' UHD
Scheduled for Autumn 2026
Produced by ZDF
in association with 3sat
and ZDF Studios

IN PRODUCTION



The Mosquitoes Are Winning

In a deadly global battle, mosquitoes are winning. Responsible for spreading malaria, dengue, Zika and West Nile, they kill hundreds of thousands each year and are expanding with climate change, global travel and rapid urbanisation.

The film follows scientists and public health innovators across continents as they deploy bold strategies, from genetic modification to large-scale mosquito

releases, in an urgent effort to slow transmission.

Alongside the threat, the story reveals the mosquito's complex role in ecosystems, as both pollinator and vital food source.

As outbreaks rise and old solutions fail, the film asks whether humanity can outpace an ancient, evolving adversary,

or if learning to live with it is the only path forward.

Science & Knowledge

1 x 50'
Produced by Grand Passage Media Inc. /
Vector Project Inc.
in association with Canadian
Broadcasting Corporation

NEW

Wildlife & Nature

28

Tasmania’s Wild Treasures

Tasmania’s Wild Treasures explores one of Earth’s last great island sanctuaries, shaped by its Antarctic past, harsh climate and ancient rainforests.

From egg-laying platypuses and echidnas to weedy sea dragons dancing in kelp forests, eastern quolls, pygmy possums, giant fresh-water crayfish and the iconic Tasmanian devil, the series reveals wildlife found nowhere else on the planet. Bioluminescent larvae paint starry skies in underground caves, while petrels and little penguins thrive along rugged coasts under the Southern Lights.

Around half the island is protected, yet this fragile paradise still relies on dedicated conservationists whose work safeguards wombats, devils and many other species against snowstorms, disease and human impact – an inspiring portrait of a wild world worth fighting for.

Wildlife & Nature
2 x 50'
Produced by Doclights
in association with NDR and Arte

NEW





Lord Howe Island: Reset for Paradise

Lord Howe Island, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, is considered one of the most beautiful islands in the world, not only because of its beaches and turquoise lagoons. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site because it's home to hundreds of endemic species. The underwater world around Lord Howe is also unique. Due to special current patterns, the southernmost coral reef in the world lies here.

But introduced rats threaten the unique flora and fauna. Then the determined islanders, led by naturalist Ian Hutton, fight back with the national park rangers! In a battle lasting more than two years, the rodents are defeated. Then the miracle of Lord Howe begins. Suddenly, animals that had been thought to be extinct for centuries reappear.

Lord Howe Island is proof of how humans can destroy nature and how they can save it.

Wildlife & Nature
1 x 50'
Produced by Flowmotion
in association with Arte and ZDF Studios

NEW



Surviving In the Snow

Many animals do not migrate in winter and do not hibernate either. How do they cope with snow and cold if they do not spend the winter in sheltered burrows or fly south? How do they find food when everything lies beneath a thick layer of snow or ice? The new film by the long-time nature and documentary filmmaker Hans-Jürgen Zimmermann explores these questions.

Large parts of Germany are characterized by low mountain ranges. Some reach elevations well over 1,000 meters,

such as the Harz and the Black Forest. Although winters here are not as snowy as in the Alps, in earlier years snow was a matter of course in most low mountain ranges – often for weeks. That has changed – and for some animals, this is very much to their advantage.

Wildlife & Nature
1 x 50'
Produced by Natur- und
Tierfilm Fernsehproduktion
in association with Kingfisher Films
and ZDF Studios

NEW



Cheetah: Fast and Wild

How do you transform inexperienced, captive-reared cheetahs into hunters? Experts say it's impossible, that a cheetah cub must learn at its mother's side. Captive-reared cheetahs do not know how to stalk prey or chase down fleet-footed antelope. Put them in the wild and they will certainly perish.

Enter Lilly and Iris, two sisters orphaned when their mother was killed by lions. Now, after two years in captivity, they have a shot at living wild. We follow these cats as they undergo the trials of learning to live as wild cheetahs.

This film also journeys into the wild, to feature three young cubs also learning to hunt. They have a formidable teacher, their mother. Through their experiences we see just what Lilly and Iris have missed out on – and what they still have to learn.

Wildlife & Nature

1 × 50' UHD
Produced by Fast Cat Films
in association with Canada Media Fund,
Creative BC and
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

NEW

Magic Meadows: The Power of Seagrass

It is often seen as a messy irritant on the beach and yet few people realise the global significance of seagrass. Scientists have recently discovered that this super plant holds as much greenhouse gas as the rainforests, acts as a giant purification system to clarify water, protects our shorelines from erosion and produces gigantic amounts of sugar. The world's seagrass meadows are also an essential habitat for countless creatures, some of which spend their entire existence in its undergrowth.

And yet, despite these superpowers, seagrass has a nemesis – humans. In the past 100 years, global warming, pollution, fishing and the countless anchors ploughing through the world's seagrass fields have destroyed 30% of them.

To better understand this superplant and to protect it from further damage, an international alliance of scientists has joined forces.

Wildlife & Nature

1 x 50'
Produced by Flowmotion Filmproduktion
in association with ZDF, Arte and ZDF Studios



Awards

Vassa Wildlife Festival:
Best Underwater Winner

International Underwater
Film Festival Tachov: 1st prize

Constructive World Award

AVAILABLE



Home Sweet Home – Incredible Animal Habitats

What would it look like if animals used their homes like humans do – to eat, sleep, survive and thrive? In this entertaining series of animal habitats, we peek into their bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens and even bathrooms: from the shell 'bedroom' of the coconut octopus to the grassy 'lounge' of a pride of lions, from the rainforest canopy 'pantry' of the vibrant macaws to the natural hot

springs 'bathroom' where snow monkeys relax and unwind. We even catch a glimpse of a red kangaroo joey looking out at the outback from its fur-lined and cosy 'nursery' – its mother's pouch.

Each episode deals with a different theme, including oceans, deserts, grasslands, rainforests, rivers and wetlands. Travel the globe, discover the

wildlife that lives there and tour their fascinating residences through the lens of a human home.

Wildlife & Nature

6 x 50'
Produced by WildBear Entertainment Production
in association with SCREEN QUEENSLAND
and ZDF Studios

AVAILABLE

Wild About Art

Some animals sing, some dance and others achieve architectural feats. But do they develop imagination and artistic skill, or merely follow innate patterns? What about Suda, the elephant who paints her friend with brush and colour – genuine talent?

Art takes time and effort, a disadvantage in survival. Yet when dance, music and building serve courtship, it pays off. No wonder that some animals even seem to have a ‘personal style’. One male bowerbird collects mostly black beetle wings, another prefers blue bottle caps, presenting diverse displays for females.

Early human art also aimed to impress mates. With the first melodies, art became a ‘language of emotion’. Today it has grown beyond biological purposes, yet its origins lie in the animal kingdom. Art, too, did not fall from the sky.

Wildlife & Nature

1 × 50' UHD
Produced by NDR Naturfilm /
Doclights for NDR
in association with WDR, SWR,
Arte, ORF

NEW



The Story of Skin

When we think about organs, we often mean the heart or stomach, but the skin is the largest and most complex organ in our bodies. Across the animal kingdom, skin is incredibly versatile. It grows hair, feathers, or scales and can provide camouflage, change colour, stretch, or even shed. While human skin is watertight, many animals rely on porous skin to breathe. Amphibians, like bullfrogs, are the master at this, doing 80% of their breathing through their skin, though the permeability leaves them vulnerable to toxins.

Skin is also packed with nerve receptors that send sensations to the brain, warning us of danger, pain, irritation and temperature changes. Some animals, such as raccoons, have super senses due to long hairs or hypersensitive skin. From the largest mammal to the smallest invertebrate, skin is a wonder of nature.

Wildlife & Nature
1 x 50'
Produced by Doclights
in association with ZDF Studios

AVAILABLE



Fantastic Fish

For generations, we have only viewed fish as food, but perhaps it's time we revisit our aquatic ancestors and get to know them better. These stunning and diverse creatures are full of surprises and like mammals, fish can be incredibly tender and complicated in their interactions.

Take the wolf eel, for instance, a fish with a fleshy face and massive jaws that mates for life and is known to be a highly attentive parent. Or the scalloped hammerhead shark that, contrary to popular belief, is a fascinating and gentle creature with a romantic courting ritual. The evolution of mudskippers provided them with modified gills that function like lungs, as long as they are kept damp, enabling them to breathe out of the water. As we explore these and other sea creatures, we find ways to protect them and keep our oceans full of fantastic fish.

Wildlife & Nature
1 x 50'
Produced by Doclights
in association with ZDF Studios

AVAILABLE



Wild Talk

A new five-part wildlife and science series explores the latest exciting research on animal communication that decodes the complex languages of animals and discovers that they are just as talkative as humans. Each episode reveals how animals communicate, showcasing the scientists at the heart of this

research and the technology they are using – from computer simulations to AI programme and sophisticated recording devices, such as bat detectors.

We reveal how king penguins use a special call to locate their young and how researchers are trying to decode the different barks of dogs. We also look at the waggle dance that honeybees use to communicate where food sources are

located and how butterflies talk by using UV patterns on their wings.

At last, we can eavesdrop on the secret conversations going on all around us.

Wildlife & Nature
5 x 50'
Produced by Off the Fence for ZDF Studios
in association with ZDF and Arte

AVAILABLE

