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# THE JOAN OF ARC CASE

A 90' PRIME-TIME EVENT DOCUDRAMA  
BY ANTOINE DE MEAUX

UHD / HD - 52' VERSION AVAILABLE  
INTERNATIONAL RELEASE : 2023



She changed the course  
of history :

A cold case following  
the most enigmatic heroine  
of the middle ages

**A**n epic rise and a spectacular fall: the destiny of a young village girl who claimed to have been sent by God to save France from the English invaders. Exalted by an entire people, she had the ear of the powerful, became a war leader, won decisive battles, liberated cities and had her king crowned. Her adventure would take a tragic turn – at the age of 19, she was burned alive at the stake after a mock trial. Between animation feature movie and history documentary, the film is a deep yet accurate dive into European medieval History, far from the conventional wisdom.

**C**oming off the heels of the resounding successes of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *The Last Stand*, *The Mystery of Joan of Arc* is the 3rd part of the documentary series *Heritage of Centuries*. The movies decipher key moments in History that changed the course of our civilization.

# A new concept

## A MEDIEVAL COLD CASE

25 years after Joan's death, the Pope and Charles VII, the King she had crowned, ordered the opening of a rehabilitation trial. Jean Bréhal, Inquisitor General of France, is in charge of the preliminary investigation and must put together the puzzle of Joan's short life. Acting like a true detective, he questions the last witnesses of her adventure: her family, her comrades in arms, the magistrates of the trial...

## ARCHIVES NEVER SEEN BEFORE ON TELEVISION

Amazingly, the vast majority of the never-seen-before documents and conclusions of Joan of Arc's rehabilitation trial have been found intact: a unique opportunity to bring her adventure to life in an innovative way.

## A LEGENDARY ICON, AHEAD OF HER TIME

Shakespeare, Cecil B. De Mille, Luc Besson... her myth has inspired the entire Western culture. Her appeal is universal. At a time when the #Metoo movement questions women's status in our societies, Joan stands out all the more as one of the great female heroines.

## THE GREATEST HISTORICAL EXPERTS

A scenario based on the work of the greatest historians from around the world who have renewed the story of Joan in recent years.

## A DOCUMENTARY WITH A MEDIEVAL FANTASY FEEL

A true and documented story, bearing a striking resemblance to the great adventures of contemporary Medieval Fantasy, among which Game of Thrones: a heroine who will abandon everything to face her destiny, political machinations and betrayals...

## A 3.0 DEEP DIVE IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

Between animation and historical documentary, the film offers a spectacular and rigorous representation of history, mixing 3D animation, real images and 3D motion design, to immerse us in a great show, at the heart of the 15th century.

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# A unique story

**1429.** The kingdom of France is ravaged by the Hundred Years' War and the English occupy the entire northern part of the country. Amid the turmoil, a young girl from a small village in Lorraine claims to have been sent by God... **Her mission: to drive the enemy out of France.**

**I**n a mere two years, thanks to prodigious popular support, Joan of Arc would change the course of history. At only 17 years old, she left her native village, became a war leader, won decisive battles, liberated cities and had her king crowned. However, she ended up abandoned by everyone, from the king she had placed on the throne to the Church. She was burned as a heretic at the age of 19.

**T**wenty-five years after her death, Charles VII reigned over a peaceful kingdom. But the people have not forgotten Joan and her memory still warms the French's hearts. Isabelle Romée, her mother, demanded justice and obtained from the king and the clergy a review of the trial! **The objective was simple: to restore Joan's memory and honor.**

**J**ean Bréhal, Inquisitor General of France, was charged with conducting the investigation prior to the rehabilitation trial. Thanks to the conclusions of his meticulous investigation, of which the witness statements and the minutes of the trial have been found intact, *The Mystery of Joan of Arc* allows us to rediscover the story of the Maid of Orléans, between the religious and the political. One mystery however remains: that of the silence of Charles VII.

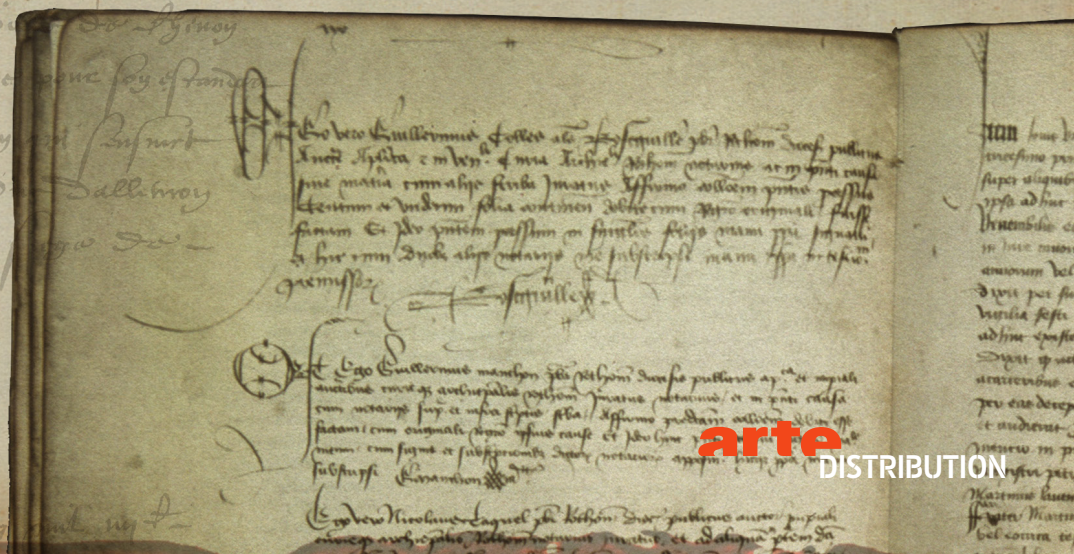
**A** tragic epic, that of a young girl with a prodigious rise and a brutal fall: Behind the myth, a heroine is revealed. And her destiny, precipitated over two years, seems truly incredible.

**J**oan of Arc is an almost mythical historical figure, one of the most famous characters in world history and the figurehead of female heroines. At the heart of the longest conflict that ever ravaged Europe, she played a decisive role in turning the Hundred Years War around.

**W**ho can say what Europe would look like, were it not for Joan of Arc? By crowning King Charles VII, she put an end to the possibility of an English France and opened the way to the construction of modern nations.

**M**ore than a major historical figure, she has become a true myth that has inspired all Western culture, whether in literature (Shakespeare, Voltaire), cinema (Lumière, Cecil B. De Mille, Luc Besson) or music (Leonard Cohen, Madonna). Since the 19th century, a multitude of statues of Joan of Arc (on horseback, in prayer or at the stake) have been built throughout Europe. Known and revered worldwide, there are also statues of Joan of Arc on the other side of the world, in the United States, India or Australia!

**J**oan of Arc is so ubiquitous in popular culture that everyone thinks they know this epic story that ends with Joan's death, burned by the English in Rouen, after a mock trial. But this is only the starting point of this story!



# A rich artistic universe

**3D animation** offers an innovative point of view, an aesthetic that develops a rich dialog between documentary sequences and fiction. It helps as much in the rigorous representation of the past as in the staging of this fresco mixing epic and emotion. The film uses *Motion Capture*, which is almost unique in the world of docu-fiction. This technique records all the nuances of the actor's performance and transfers them to virtual characters.

**The film is illustrated with UHD images** to complement and respond to the animation sequences. The landmarks in Joan of Arc's story as they are today will enrich the 3D reconstructions. Aerial images (forests, rivers, cathedrals, etc.) of Joan of Arc's journey will be used to draw a map of the French kingdom.

**Sequences in 3D Motion Design** let the viewer understand complicated notions in a simple and enjoyable way. They make the historical and geopolitical context of the Hundred Years War, the geography of the battles but also Joan's journey through France easy to follow.

**Precious artifacts** have survived the centuries untouched: from the archives of Joan of Arc's trial to the minutes of the rehabilitation trial. Showing them on screen reinforces their role as "exhibits" and adds to the iconographic record of Joan of Arc's case.

**To emphasize the pivotal testimonies of the witnesses Jean Bréhal interviewed, the film will be inspired by contemporary trial drawings that will be animated in 3D Motion Design.** This strong and resolutely modern visual universe gives the spectator the feeling of being part of the investigation.

**The film will highlight the fascinating material culture of the Middle Ages: accessories of daily life, furniture, liturgical art, armor, swords, etc.** These precious preserved objects complete the documentary dimension of the film and reveal the diversity of this era.

# Original narrative choices

## A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE ON TELEVISION

The film uses the codes of the detective story: questioning the facts, collecting clues, confronting versions – as a detective might do in an investigation – in order to build a renewed and exciting story.

## RISE AND FALL

1429. While the whole of northern France was under the yoke of the English, Joan devoted herself solely to repelling the enemy. She won decisive victories but ended up paying the ultimate price. From the liberation of Orléans to her death at the stake, the film retraces the essential stages of her adventure. **A prodigious rise and a brutal fall... Before her posthumous rehabilitation!**

## JOAN OF ARC, A GEOPOLITICAL CHARACTER

Dive into the heart of a founding moment of modern Europe, between politics, diplomacy and military strategy. The film looks back at the turning point of the Hundred Years' War. Thanks to Joan, Charles VII reconquered his kingdom, at the cost of bloody battles, new alliances, and an increasingly massive popular support. The film lays out the tactical background of each battle for its audience and makes them discover the landmarks of this story. It also gives a cartographic representation of the geopolitical stakes...



**F**ew films have focused on Joan's political aspect. And yet it is key in understanding her formidable rise and then her brutal fall. This entire conflict was about the power struggle between the king of France and the king of England – both thought themselves the most legitimate to govern the kingdom of France. And to bolster said legitimacy, the powerful constantly sought to use Joan for political purposes, both in her life and in her death. First set up as an emblem of the kingdom of France, she was then discarded by Charles VII, who nonetheless owed her his crown... And the issue of her trial was just as political: if Joan of Arc was not legitimate, then neither was the one she helped gain the throne. With that in mind, it is easy to see why King Charles VII was so keen on her rehabilitation...



# The angle of the rehabilitation trial: a first-person narrative

**F**or the first time, *The Mystery of Joan of Arc* offers to revisit the myth of Joan of Arc based on a fascinating historical event that is little known to the general public: the rehabilitation trial of 1455. Jean Bréhal, Inquisitor General of France embarks on an incredibly precise and meticulous preliminary investigation... as a shrewd politician, he understands that if his sponsors want Joan to be rehabilitated, it may be to conceal the role they played in her downfall. He cannot afford any mistake, so his work must be flawless. **A high-risk investigation for him... but a thrilling one for the audience!**

**J**ean Bréhal is assisted in his task by Pierre Fournier, a young idealistic monk, our narrator, a fictional character created for the needs of the story. This young monk, raised in the cult of The Maid of Orléans and eager to prove her innocence, will discover aspects of her life that he did not know. **As the investigation progresses, he will have to question his beliefs...**



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