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PRESENTS



## THE MAN WHO SAVED THE LOUVRE

**a documentary**

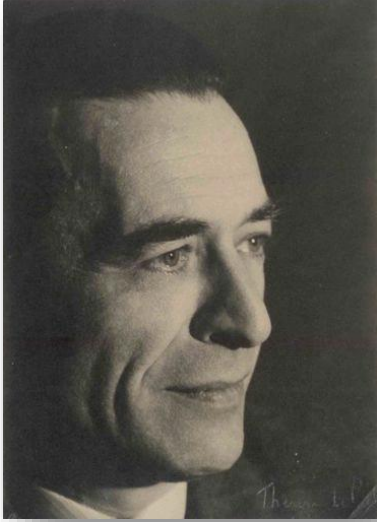
**written and directed by Pierre Pochart and Jean-Pierre Devillers**

**We don't choose our enemy, but we pick our fight.**

**Jacques Jaujard (1895-1967)**

The engraving on the Louvre Museum lintel reads: Porte Jaujard. Every day, thousands of visitors walk by the entrance that bears Jacques Jaujard name. To them, the former museum director is a virtual unknown. Yet, to those who knew him, he is the man who saved the Louvre.

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**The Man who Saved the Louvre** tells the story of a few good men and women who under the leadership of Jacques Jaujard resisted against the Third Reich's systematic campaign to plunder Europe's treasures through theft, confiscation, and forced sales. Between 1939 and 1945, Jaujard stood up to Hermann Goering's looting task force and its Vichy Regime accomplice to save state-owned and private artworks. Shifting his mental gear to an underground Resistance mode, he turned his inside knowledge of the administrative machinery into a fearsome strategy, using all to tricks in the book to stall, trespass and disregard orders without getting caught.

When the war broke out, Jacques Jaujard had been working on a meticulous evacuation and safe-keeping plan for months. His unlikely team of curators, students, volunteer guards and truck drivers carried out his risky plan. All the Louvre masterpieces were secretly transported in 71 castles and hospitals across occupied France. Bookish curators turned into Resistance fighters. For 6 years, against all odds, they kept France's cultural heritage under armed-watch.

The coveted *Mona Lisa* had to be whisked to five different locations. But it was all worth it. In 1945, Mona and her companions in exile made it back to the Louvre. Safe and sound.

**The Man who saved the Louvre** is not yet another take on World War II, but the epic story of unsung heroes who took it upon themselves to protect our hearts and souls against the enemy's insane designs. Art makes up part of our DNA, as a people. The transmission of an artist's vision of his time, from one generation to the next, feeds our collective memory and thus our identity. Here in Europe, *Guernica* is part of us. When the Baghdad Museum was looted, when the *Buddhas of Bamiyan* were destroyed in Afghanistan, we lose a bit of our common humanity. This film tells the tale of a man who fought so that today, the collective memory the Louvre harbors does not vanished. The *Mona Lisa* still smiles back at us.

## THE STORY

On the eve of 1939, Jacques Jaujard, the smart and charming deputy director of the French National Museums is promoted as director. Along with the International Committee for the Safeguarding of Spanish Art, he has just accomplished a tricky mission in civil war-ridden Spain: the evacuation of the Prado Museum. Filling 71 trucks driven by Republican Forces, they crossed the French border and made it to Switzerland. Tricky but successful. Prado works of art will safely stay at the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva until the end of the war.

Back in Paris, Jacques Jaujard is now the appointed safe keeper of all the museums of France and among them, the Louvre. His new office faces the Seine River and two floors below, the *Mona Lisa* smiles at her admirers. It looks like Jaujard is getting ready for the smooth ride of a high-ranking civil servant. But obviously historical circumstances are about to turn his life into a roller-coaster.

While the French and British Prime Ministers cave in to Hitler's demand to avoid war and sign the Treaty of Munich, Jacques Jaujard isn't wagering on peace. The Third Reich is threatening all of Western Europe and Paris might soon be attacked, bombed, looted. The new director is secretly getting ready to fight his own war. In the summer of 1939, the heads of the Louvre departments, curators and restorations workers compile prioritized evacuation lists of paintings and sculptures, conceive made-to-measure moving crates and padding material, reserve the Comédie- Française's theater set- moving trucks and enlist the employees of a nearby department store to help with the unavoidable move.... At the same time, Jaujard and a handful of curators like André Chamson, Lucie Mazauric and René Huyghe, discreetly scout out châteaux in the Loire Valley and all over the French countryside. They are looking for locations away from strategic bombing targets that will be safe enough to store thousands of works of art. The castle of Chambord is picked first.



Jaujard supervises evacuation

71 other safe havens follow.



On September 3, 1939, in response to Hitler's invasion of Poland, France and Britain declare war on Germany. The *Mona Lisa* has left the Louvre, 5 days earlier. The *Venus de Milo* and thousands of works follow in her steps. Meticulously loaded convoys take to the road in the direction of the secret locations. The theater set truck that

carries the monumental *Raft of the Medusa* gets caught in a power line. The painting makes it, but the city of Versailles experiences a memorable blackout... A couple of rear-wheel drive engines set fire to the vehicles, but *The Wedding at Cana* survives the sudden burst of intense heat. For everybody involved, evacuation is a risky business. But Jacques Jaujard had carefully thought out his entire plan and it works.

As German troops advance, Jaujard and his squadron of top curators tighten up security in the secret châteaux, involving local police, firemen, villagers and providing on-site personnel with fire extinguishers, alarms, air-raid sirens... and weapons. In Paris, the deserted Louvre remains shut down. Scattered state of the art replicas and sculptures too big to take a ride, stay behind in the galleries. The museum itself looks like a fortified building, protected by sandbags. Through the barricaded windows, the remaining guards look at Parisians as they turn part of the ornamental flowerbeds into a vegetable garden.

On June 14, 1940, German troops enter Paris. France surrenders and signs the armistice.

Marshal Pétain opts for collaboration with the occupying forces and moves his government to the southern free zone town of Vichy. For French public officials like Jaujard, this is the moment of truth. Should he resign or continue carrying out his job? Quitting means leaving the doors open for large scale looting without resistance. Jaujard chooses to use whatever means necessary to keep the French cultural patrimony alive. Almost immediately, occupation forces demand the reopening of Paris museums.

On September 29, 1940, the Louvre has to readmit visitors and the Wehrmacht propaganda photographer takes pictures of the event.

Jaujard stands before German officials his arms folded behind his back. He won't shake their hands. Count Wolff-Metternich, head of the Kunstschutz, the art protection division says to him : "You're the only high ranking civil servant I find holding down his post." Jaujard fumes.

Later, he finds out that Metternich, a former curator and art historian was actually relieved to discover a virtually empty museum. The two men end up becoming unlikely allies.



The Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), Hitler's special art looting task force, establishes its base of operations in Paris. The chain of command of the ERR stretches from Hitler, to Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, down to Reich Marshall Goering and Ambassador Otto Aetz.

Stolen art treasures from conquered countries are supposed to feed the future Führer Museum in his hometown of Linz. But Goering is also shopping for his personal collection through his own corrupted art dealer, Bruno Lohse, accumulating 2,000 works in the process. He demands that the Louvre treasures be brought back from their hiding places. Jaujard stalls for time. But the circle keeps closing in on him. On November 1940, the ERR task force takes on a new task: confiscating Jewish art collections.

Jaujard decides to protect state-owned artwork as well as private collections. Since his direct superior is the zealous Minister of Education, Abel Bonnard, who is eager to help... the Nazis, Jaujard relies solely on his unlikely team. Back and forth across the line dividing the occupied zone from the free zone, he uses intricate diplomacy and outright bluff to outwit a two-headed enemy: Vichy and the Nazis. When collections are confiscated by Vichy, Jaujard acquires as many pieces as possible, through his pre-emptive rights. When private owners entrust him with their paintings, he creates a fake Louvre inventory list. He invents a fictional auction and puts the Rothschild collection up for sale, then reacquires it and transports it to the free zone for safekeeping. The ERR turns the small Musée du Jeu de Paume into a sorting center for looted artwork. Goering regularly stops by to shop and has no intention of allowing the French administrator to document the flow of thousands of paintings shipped across Europe.

But Jaujard manages to keep his homely employee Rose Valland on-site. It's only a tenminute walk between the Louvre and the Jeu de Paume. At the risk their lives, Jaujard and Valland go back and forth to exchange information that he then transmits to the French Resistance. Thanks to them, a 51 car freight train fully loaded with paintings never makes it out of Paris.

A member of the curator/keeper squad, Egyptologist Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt later wrote that Jaujard "not only saved material treasures, but also saved numerous persons from the occupation forces, at the risk of his own freedom and even his life." Jaujard prevented requisition of the Louvre's personnel to Obligatory Work Service in Germany.

Early on, he also sent Jewish students to the Fee Zone. But there is more to the story. Up until now, no one has ever looked into the very personal involvement that Jaujard had with the Resistance movement. In the course of our research, we have uncovered evidence that Jaujard very concretely helped the French Resistance intelligence services. He welcomed one of their leaders who was being tracked down by the Gestapo, by establishing clandestine headquarters for him in his private apartment at the Louvre. Risking his life, he was harboring Resistance fighters, sensitive documents, maps of attack-plans and weapons right there in his living room.

Around this time, underground agent Mozart enters Jacques Jaujard's life... and turns it upside down. Jeanne Boitel is the agent real name. They meet in the office of Charles de Gaulle personal representative in Paris. Her face looks familiar. Indeed, she is a famous actress who has starred in Jean Renoir movies and is a member of the Comédie Française. Love strikes and hits them both. But it is complicated because of their secret activities, the occupation... and also because Jaujard is a married man. Their intense correspondence shows Jacques and Jeanne chose to play it unsafe and engaged in a smoking affair. Married after the war, they will have a son and spend the rest of their life together.

On August 29, 1944, French fascist snipers fire from rooftops as Charles de Gaulle's parade passes by the Louvre. People in the crowd are wounded, but the end of Nazi occupied Paris is coming to an end. Paris is liberated. Jaujard stands at his post with his personnel, a French "Forces of the Interior" resistance armband on his sleeve. A new phase of his combat is about to begin: he has to get everybody back safe and sound. The team of curators and volunteers that hid the Mona Lisa and her friends in safety, must escort them back home. In November 1944, Jaujard co-establishes the Commission on Art Recovery and enlists Rose Valland as an expert. Thanks to their observations, French, American and British forces can now track down stolen artwork all across Europe. For his extraordinary work during the war, Jaujard is awarded the Medal of Resistance and named Commander of the Legion of Honor.

## THE FILMMAKERS

**Pierre Pochart** is a senior investigative reporter for Canal Plus network. Six years ago, he fell in love with Jacques Jaujard's incredible story and started doing what he does best, investigating. The incredible adventure he unveiled speaks for itself. There was no doubt in his mind that it had to be turned into a film. **The Man Who Saved the Louvre** exists because of his knowledge, creativity and driving passion.

**Jean-Pierre Devillers** is an award-winning filmmaker who has been directing documentaries for 25 years. Recently, his daring documentary tribute to the late director Maurice Pialat, *Love Exists*, was selected for the 2007 Cannes Film Festival. He also directed *A la vie à la mort*, the original documentary that inspired the widely successful French movie *The Intouchables*.

## THE ANIMATION SUPERVISOR

Fred Tribolet is a graphic designer and animation director. He creates visually mesmerizing animation for feature films and music videos - including artists like Céline Dion or Manu Chao. In 2010, his work on animated *Barking Island (Chienne d'Histoire)* won the Short Film Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

## THE VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR

Eve Ramboz is a visual effect wizard. She won an Emmy Award for her work on *Mission Impossible* in 2004. She has created visual effects for dozens of fictional works (*Prospero's Book, Demon Lover...*) and music videos (Jamiroquai, Tori Amos...). Recently, she worked alongside Spanish choreographer Blanca Li to create a mesmerizing dance/visual effect show, in which she animated 15th century triptych painted by Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.



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