

= Artifact ( film ) =

Artifact is a 2012 American documentary film . It was directed by Jared Leto under the pseudonym of Bartholomew Cubbins , and produced by Leto and Emma Ludbrook . Artifact chronicles the modern music business as it charts the legal dispute between Leto 's rock band Thirty Seconds to Mars and record label EMI , which filed a \$ 30 million breach of contract lawsuit against them in 2008 , after the band tried to exit its contract over a royalties dispute . Thirty Seconds to Mars is shown working with producer Flood to create the 2009 album This Is War , meeting with lawyers between recording sessions .

Artifact had its world premiere at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival where it received the People 's Choice Award for Best Documentary . Critics praised the examination of the state of the modern music industry and its focus on the relationship between artists and record companies . The film received a limited theatrical release beginning November 23 , 2013 , before being released digitally on December 3 , 2013 .

= = Synopsis = =

The film follows rock band Thirty Seconds to Mars as they first learn of and then begin to fight a \$ 30 million lawsuit brought by record label EMI . At the time , they had been writing songs in preparation for the follow @-@ up to their 2005 album A Beautiful Lie . For the bulk of the film , the band , consisting of Jared Leto , his brother Shannon Leto , and Tomo Milčević , is shown working with producers Flood and Steve Lillywhite to create what would eventually become This Is War . Between recording sessions , they meet with lawyers to negotiate for the band 's survival .

Beyond the band 's specific legal issues and insight into the making of the new album , the film also examines the state of the modern music industry as a whole , focusing on the complex relationships between major labels and their artists . Other musicians give their first @-@ hand accounts of their own experiences in the business . The logistics and economics of how a record company works are explained by music industry insiders , including former EMI employees , music producers and music journalists . They trace the impact of the growing American economic recession on the industry , wherein many companies were taken over by larger groups who thought they could save them . In this instance , Terra Firma Capital Partners sought to rescue EMI despite having little experience in music management .

Meanwhile , Thirty Seconds to Mars are also shown struggling with larger questions of art , money , and integrity . Vignettes in this vein include " people talking about everything from love , art , war , the state of the music industry , and the world . " Participants include Irving Azoff , Bob Lefsetz , technologist Daniel Ek ( founder of music streaming service Spotify ) , Bob Ezrin , Neil Strauss , as well as musicians Chester Bennington , Brandon Boyd , and Serj Tankian . Daniel Levitin , neuroscientist and author of the popular science book This Is Your Brain On Music , also appears , as do the Leto brothers ' mother Constance and a family friend .

= = Background = =

Despite selling millions of albums , Thirty Seconds to Mars found themselves more than a million dollars in debt to EMI , the parent label of Virgin Records , to which the band was signed at the time . The band also said that they had made no profit from the album sales . In reaction to this , in August 2008 , the band attempted to sign with a new label after completing the A Beautiful Lie tour . This in turn prompted EMI to file a lawsuit stating that the band had failed to produce three of the five records they were obligated to deliver under their 1999 contract . Thirty Seconds to Mars responded to the suit by stating that under California law , where the group is based and had originally signed its deal ( which Virgin had entered into with the by @-@ then @-@ defunct Immortal Records ) , one cannot be bound to a contract for more than seven years . The band had been contracted for nine years , so they decided to exercise their legal right to terminate " our old , out @-@ of @-@ date contract , which , according to the law , is null and void . "

In a statement , an EMI spokesperson maintained that the label had been forced to take procedural , legal steps in order to protect their investment and rights during contract renegotiations initiated by the band and management . However , Thirty Seconds to Mars also expressed dissatisfaction with the then @-@ recent Terra Firma takeover of EMI , as most of the employees the band had worked with were fired as a result of a major restructuring under TF chairman Guy Hands . The band were among several of the label 's artists , unhappy with the transition , who quickly tried to terminate their contracts ; the list also included The Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney . Former EMI executives gave interviews describing how the sale resulted in massive upheaval and staff cuts .

After nearly a year of legal battles , Thirty Seconds To Mars announced on April 28 , 2009 , that the suit had been settled . The suit was resolved following a defence based on a contract case involving actress Olivia de Havilland decades before . Jared Leto explained , " The California Appeals Court ruled that no service contract in California is valid after seven years , and it became known as the De Havilland Law after she used it to get out of her contract with Warner Bros. " Thirty Seconds to Mars then signed a new contract with EMI . Leto said that the band had " resolved our differences with EMI " and the decision had been made because of " the willingness and enthusiasm by EMI to address our major concerns and issues , [ and ] the opportunity to return to work with a team so committed and passionate about Thirty Seconds to Mars . " After the suit 's resolution , Nick Gatfield , EMI Music 's president of A & R labels for North America and the United Kingdom , stated , " We are thrilled to have set aside our differences and signed a new agreement with Thirty Seconds to Mars . Our relationship has been extremely rewarding and successful , and we 're eager to move forward and put our global team to work . "

= = Production = =

Artifact was made on a limited budget provided by Leto and producing partner Emma Ludbrook through the production company Sisyphus Corporation . It was shot digitally and filmed in various parts of Los Angeles , California , beginning with the advent of Thirty Seconds to Mars ' legal struggles in August 2008 . Four camera operators taped more than 3 @,@ 000 hours of raw footage involving the band , ending in 2009 with the lawsuit 's resolution and the subsequent release of their new album . The footage included real @-@ life recording sessions and legal meetings . The final film was produced by Ludbrook and Leto , who also made his directorial debut under his longtime pseudonym Bartholomew Cubbins . Shelby Siegel served as supervising editor . The film 's soundtrack features songs by Thirty Seconds to Mars , with additional music provided by Cliff Martinez and Maya Arulpragasam .

Given the band 's successful use of the De Havilland Law , Leto contacted actress Olivia de Havilland , but she declined to participate on @-@ camera , although she did agree to meet with him .

The film was initially planned as a documentary about Thirty Seconds to Mars ' creative process while recording their next album , but upon the advent of the lawsuit , was retooled as a documentary about making that album in the face of a legal battle that might prevent it from being released . Leto described the film as " a really special , DIY project . " He explained , " We all shared a part of our lives that we 've never shared on @-@ screen before , a very intimate and personal part of our lives . We take you ... inside the studio , and in our hearts , and in our minds , to share how difficult this point is in our lives ? just battling this massive corporation , and fighting for what we believe in . " Upon the film 's release , Leto told Rolling Stone that " I hope that artists and audiences watch this film and get a greater understanding of how things work [ in the record industry ] , because understanding is the beginning of change . "

= = Release = =

Artifact premiered at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival on September 15 . It was later screened on November 8 , 2012 at the opening night of the DOC NYC , a New York City documentary festival . In November 2012 , it was announced that The Works International had

picked up international sales for the film . On November 26 , 2012 , Artifact received the Audience Award at the 22nd Gotham Independent Film Awards . On March 13 , 2013 , the film was screened at the South by Southwest . It also appeared at the Melbourne International Film Festival on August 9 , 2013 . Thirty Seconds to Mars held a special screening of Artifact on August 31 , 2013 on the online platform VyRT .

The film was released on DVD in September 2013 through VyRT . It received a worldwide theatrical release beginning November 23 , 2013 . FilmBuff released the film to digital retailers and video on demand services on December 3 , 2013 . At the end of 2013 , Artifact was included among the iTunes Movies Indie Hits of 2013 . In February 2014 , BBC Worldwide picked up international television rights to distribute the film .

= = Reception = =

Upon its premiere at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival , Artifact was favorably received by critics and audiences for its look inside the state of the modern recording industry . It received a standing ovation and won the People 's Choice Award for Best Documentary . Jason Gorber , writing for Twitch Film , described Artifact as an interesting film " asking a number of important questions about the commerce of art , and does so in an engaging way . " Film critic Kenji Lloyd awarded Artifact five stars out of five and called it " one of the greatest music documentaries ever made , and an important documentary for our times . " He felt that the film " gives an honest , frank , and inside look at the antiquated system that bands are faced with when they 're attached to a major label . " Allan Tong of Filmmaker wrote that Leto " does a fine job ( with his editors ) of weaving the lawsuit with interviews from rock journalists and former EMI executives . " Samantha Stott from The New Transmission felt that " Artifact is one of the most honest pieces of work about the industry to have ever been made . It is a real credit to everyone involved and that shared their opinions , views and insights . "

Ann Hornaday from The Washington Post praised the film , describing it as enlightening and engaging . Francesca McCaffery of BlackBook commented that the film " highlights the creative challenges of making art in a way that many documentaries often aspire to , but rarely achieve . " She also praised Leto 's direction . Film critic Mike McGranaghan awarded the film three and a half out of four stars and wrote , " Artifact is a fascinating documentary because it pulls back the curtain on the music business . " He said that the film works both as an " accounting of a good band making an album during a bad time " and as an " indictment of a business practice that screws the people who actually make the product . " Natalie Robehmed from Forbes stated that the film " vitriolically breaks down what Leto considers to be grave imbalances , showing in one infographic how label contracts can result in bands accumulating debt with every release thanks to promotional costs , recording bills and advances record labels recoup . " Isabel Cupryn from Criticize This ! gave the film four stars out of five and called it the Super Size Me of the music industry .