

Emma Wippermann

Joan of Arkansas

Winner of the 2023 Whiting Award for Drama

Joan of Arkansas is an election-season closet drama about climate catastrophe, divine gender expression, the instructions of angels, and heavenly revelation relayed via viral video. Fifteen-year-old Joan has been tasked by God (They/Them) to ensure that Charles VII (R–Arkansas) adopts radical climate policy and wins his bid as the Lord’s candidate to become the president of the United States.

// Within the technologies of gender, clothing, the theater of internet virality, and prophecy’s multitude of deceptive lexicons, a spirit holds court. Call it whatever—God, love, language—Wippermann and Joan both know that we may grieve it before we agree on its name or learn what it actually is. *Joan of Arkansas*, in its ingenious cycle of forms threading Jeanne d’Arc into our own present-day climate catastrophe, begins to articulate this presence that we stand to lose. Funny and conversational, vatic and ferocious, Joan chilled me to my core. Emma Wippermann’s voice is here for as long as we last. Listen closely.

—DANIEL POPPICK

// Often LOL funny, often scalding, often explosively flighty, and always gorgeously phrased, this text needs to be performed in every church parking lot in the nation tomorrow.

— COLE SWENSEN



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Emma Wippermann is the author of *Pleasure as a Series of Objects* (Patient Sounds), and has published work in *jubilat*, *Omniverse*, *Second Factory*, *No, Dear*, *Oversound*, *Temporary Art Review*, and *Organism for Poetic Research*. They have an MFA from Brown University and live in Brooklyn, NY.