

ALL CATEGORIES

THE INVENTION OF SURGERY

2 × 45' (ENG), 90' (GER)

The exciting story from the beginning to the specialization of surgery, a fascinating journey through time from antiquity to the first performed heart surgery.

From the first medical teachings of ancient times and surgical experiments to complex organ transplants and brain operations, it was a long, bloody road, full of suffering, errors and medical dead ends. To solve the puzzle of how the human body works and to be able to do larger operations courageous medical pioneers as Andreas Vesalius, Ambroise Paré, John Hunter, James Young Simpson, Elizabeth Blackwell, William Halsted or Daniel Hale Williams had to overcome several obstacles. Quite a few patients and some physicians paid for the ambitious attempts with their lives.

The two-part documentary was filmed on the most important places in the history of surgery in Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Italy, France, Hungary and USA. With the help of reenactments, outstanding archival footage and international interviewees the two films bring various medical pioneers to life and allow the audience to experience key events in the history of surgery.



Original Title: Auf Messers Schneide – Eine Geschichte der Chirurgie
 Year: 2023
 Produced by: Autentic
 Partners: ZDF, arte, Curiosity Stream

1. The Secret of the Human Body

The first part describes what risks people took to understand the human anatomy, how they finally managed to control the blood flow and how with the help of the French king Louis XIV surgery became a recognized science.

2. The Path Inside

The second part tells of the first experiments with ether and chloroform and what changed dramatically as a result of their use. It describes how surgeons looked for ways to prevent wound infections and what finally brought success. The focus is on fearless and bold female and male pioneers who – with the help of their knives – succeeded in transforming surgery into what we know today.