
Maria
the Undesirable



To her grandson, a woman recounts her childhood in French internment camps after fleeing Franco's Spain

— an intimate story of exile, silence and transmission.

SYNOPSIS

In 1939, Maria is only seven years old when she is forced to flee her native country. The fall of Barcelona and the victory of Franco's troops drive hundreds of thousands of Republicans into exile.

She crosses the border by night and takes refuge in France. Far from being welcomed, she is interned with her family, deemed "undesirable", in camps where she will spend five years behind the barbed wire of Argelès, Saint-Cyprien, Rivesaltes, Gurs…

Eighty years later, her grandson sets out to record her testimony. Maria recounts her childhood in the camps: daily life, fear, rejection by her mother, and a deep sense of abandonment. He takes her back to the places where she was deprived of her freedom, bringing together four generations for this intimate family journey.

Between personal memory and collective history, **Maria the Undesirable** explores a life marked by exile and rejection, but also by hope and transmission.











DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film was born from a long-held desire.

As a child, I was always very close to my grandmother. I constantly asked questions about everything. I was still very young when she first told me about her experience in the internment camps. After decades of silence, her story gradually began to emerge.

She later devoted a large part of her life to speaking in schools, sharing her experiences with students of all ages. Passing on her story had become a necessity for her. For my part, I always carried the idea that one day I would do something with her testimony. The birth of my children changed everything: it created in me an urgency not to let this memory disappear.

At first, I never imagined making a film. I simply intended to create a video for the family, in continuity with the annual films I make from our personal archives. An intimate object, intended for our relatives.

I began filming Maria in 2021. During hours of interviews, she recounted her childhood with precision, strength, and sometimes humour. Very quickly, it became clear that we needed to go further: to return with her to the places where her story had unfolded.

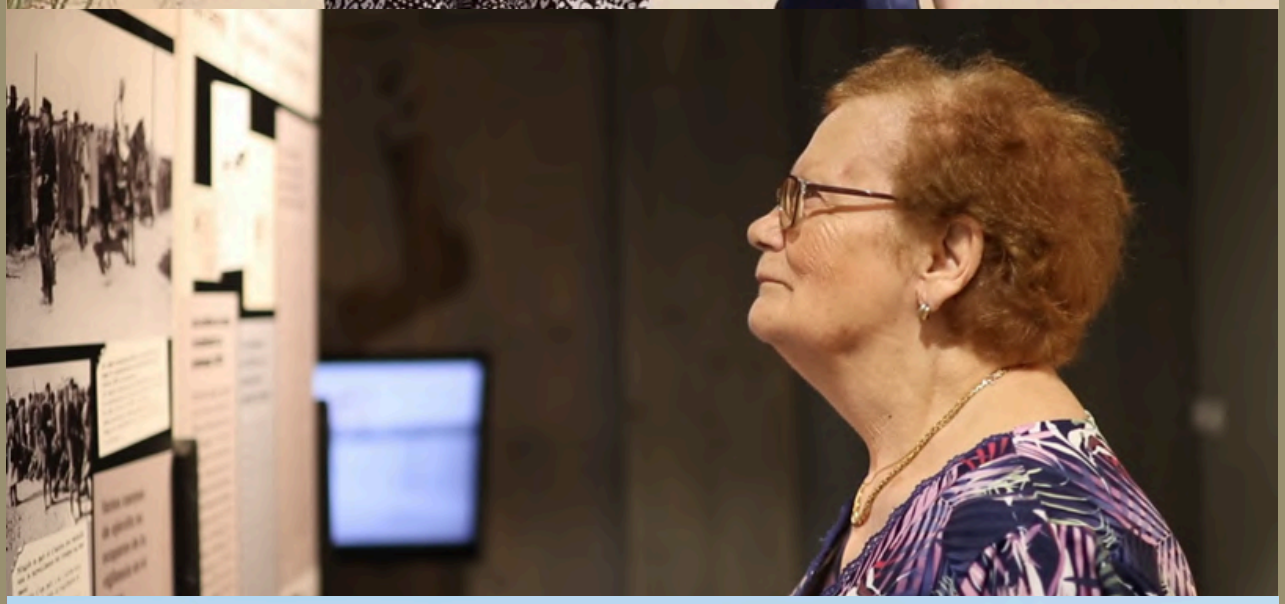
We made this journey together: Maria, her daughter (my mother), my children and myself. Four generations reunited to visit the places where she had been interned as a child. This family and historical journey, through both space and time, gave a new dimension to her story.

During the long editing process, the film changed in nature. When filming began, Maria was still there to tell her story herself. Her sudden passing during the making of the documentary profoundly transformed the project. What was meant to remain a family document became a responsibility: preserving a voice that had become irreplaceable.

The evocative power of exile, the singularity of Maria's journey, but also what it reveals on a universal level, made me realise that it would be a shame to confine such testimony to the family circle alone. The film became a way of extending the work of transmission to which she had devoted so much of her life.

Through these images, her voice, her gestures and her presence continue to exist. This film is an act of transmission, a gesture of remembrance, and a way for me to continue what she had begun.






Ruta
del Exilio

DIRECTORIAL APPROACH

I sought to go to the essential, so as not to betray Maria's words through effects or artificial staging.

The film is built around a deliberately simple device: interviews filmed in her home, from two camera angles, allowing both the continuity of her story and the nuances of her emotions to be captured. These moments of intimacy are interwoven with handheld footage shot during our journeys to the places of her past. These freer sequences anchor her words in the present, in the landscapes she crossed as a child.

At the same time, I opened the family archives and drew on historical documentation to complete her account and place it in context.

It seemed essential to offer viewers a few points of reference, allowing them to understand the historical stakes running through her personal story. The film is therefore punctuated by a few voice-over passages, accompanied by archival images and period documents.
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I wanted to create airy, luminous images that would leave space and allow the film to breathe. This choice stands in contrast to the harshness of what she recounts: a childhood marked by confinement, fear and deprivation. For me, it was important never to imprison her story within a heavy-handed form, but rather to create the conditions for listening.

I wanted to show Maria as she is: human, direct, sometimes funny, always sincere. A simple device, to allow a voice that had long been denied a place to fully exist.

MARIA

Maria Baqué — née Bagaria — was born in Barcelona in 1931.

In 1939, at the age of seven, she fled Franco's Spain and was interned in several camps in the south of France, where she grew up behind barbed wire. After the war, she rebuilt her life in France and started a family.

Later, she devoted a large part of her life to giving testimony, especially to younger generations, in order to pass on the history of the Spanish Republican exile.

Her journey, both singular and emblematic, is today an essential memory of the Retirada.



DIRECTOR

Clément Bastie is 35 years old and the father of three young children. He is a qualified teacher of biology and geology and currently teaches life and earth sciences in a high school.

His relationship with his grandmother, Maria, has always been a singular one. Although she had long remained silent about her childhood in the internment camps, he was the first person she confided in. She later continued this work of memory for more than twenty years, giving testimony in primary schools, middle schools and high schools.

This intimate bond, as well as the particular place he held in this transmission, led Clément Bastie to undertake this documentary, initially conceived as a family film.

Self-taught in directing and editing, he self-produced and directed **Maria the Undesirable** in his spare time, alongside his work as a teacher.

This first film is rooted in a desire for transmission, between family memory and collective history.











TECHNICAL INFORMATION

TITLE
MARIA THE UNDESIRABLE

DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHY, EDITING
CLÉMENT BASTIE

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
MOTION DESIGN
JOACHIM THIBAULT

MUSIC
ANTOINE DECROP
SHON

GENRE
DOCUMENTARY

RUNNING TIME
76 MINUTES

YEAR OF PRODUCTION
2026

LANGUAGE
FRENCH

AVAILABLE SUBTITLED VERSIONS
FR / ES / CA / EN

IMAGE FORMAT
HD 1920 X 1080 – 16:9

SOUND
STEREO











CONTACT

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Confidential Note for Programmers

The film contains an important narrative turn related to Maria's passing during the making of the documentary. This element gives the film a particular emotional dimension, but the director wishes to preserve its discovery for the audience. For this reason, where possible, we kindly ask that it not be revealed in synopses, public presentations or communication materials.