

Reassembly as a search for identity: restitution of the maternal figure in *Sóc filla de ma mare* (2023) and *Une vie comme une autre* (2022)

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Abstract

This paper proposes an approach to the family archive reassembly strategies followed by the directors Faustine Cros in *Une vie comme une autre* (2022) and Laura García Pérez in *Sóc filla de ma mare* (2023). Both cases are examples of recent generations of filmmakers who explore the family narrative from the reassembly of images. This gesture stems from contexts in which gender and mental health intersect and leads to the questioning and reformulation of their respective maternal figures. In the case of *Une vie comme une autre*, the director starts from her mother's suicide attempt to revisit family footage shot by her father of everyday scenes. This footage gives voice to the conflict and depression that the mother experienced when she gave up her professional and personal life to devote herself to raising her children. If the paternal gaze captured in this film sought to highlight happiness, Faustine Cros's operation underscores the tension generated by the imposition of gender roles by bringing the film into dialogue with photographs and family testimonies, including that of her own mother. In *Sóc filla de ma mare*, Laura García Pérez starts with photographs from the family album in which the figure of the father has been eliminated. This intervened archive makes visible the ghost of paternal absence, which has been omnipresent in the relationship between the director and her mother. The filmmaker traces the home videos that the mother recorded during her childhood and adolescence and in which she addresses the father, out of the country for his work. This remontage not only reveals how the filmmaker's bond with cinema was born, but also formulates an agonizing time, that of maternal waiting. García Pérez structures the exploration of the family archive by filming conversations with her mother. As in the case of Faustine Cros, this dynamic of editing and manipulation of the family archive allows for the identity reformulation of the family nucleus and of the filmmakers. These are two cases in which the use of the archive resizes the notion of intimacy and privacy and allows the questioning of gender roles, in which the individual story acquires collective dimensions. The dynamics we observe in both directors can be linked to the work of filmmakers such as Alina Marazzi with her documentary *Un' ora sola ti vorrei* (2002) or the more recent, *Ainhua, yo no soy esa* (2018) by Carolina Astudillo. The so-called "archival evil", as Mireia Iniesta (2020) explains, articulates the possibility of taking up the events of the past and elaborating a re-reading where the forgotten and the ignored are at the center; in the case of Laura García

Perez and Faustine Cros, the pain and oppression of their mothers. This work aims to point out and contribute to the configuration of a genealogy of films that address, from a feminist perspective, the conflicts inherent in motherhood, in the relationships and dynamics within the family and in the family, and the systematic denial of them. From this context we ask: What contributions do the works of Cros and García Perez make to this feminist genealogy of the documentary field? What forms of reassemblage allow Cros and García Perez to subvert traditional gender roles within the nuclear family?

Keywords: archive, motherhood, identity, feminism