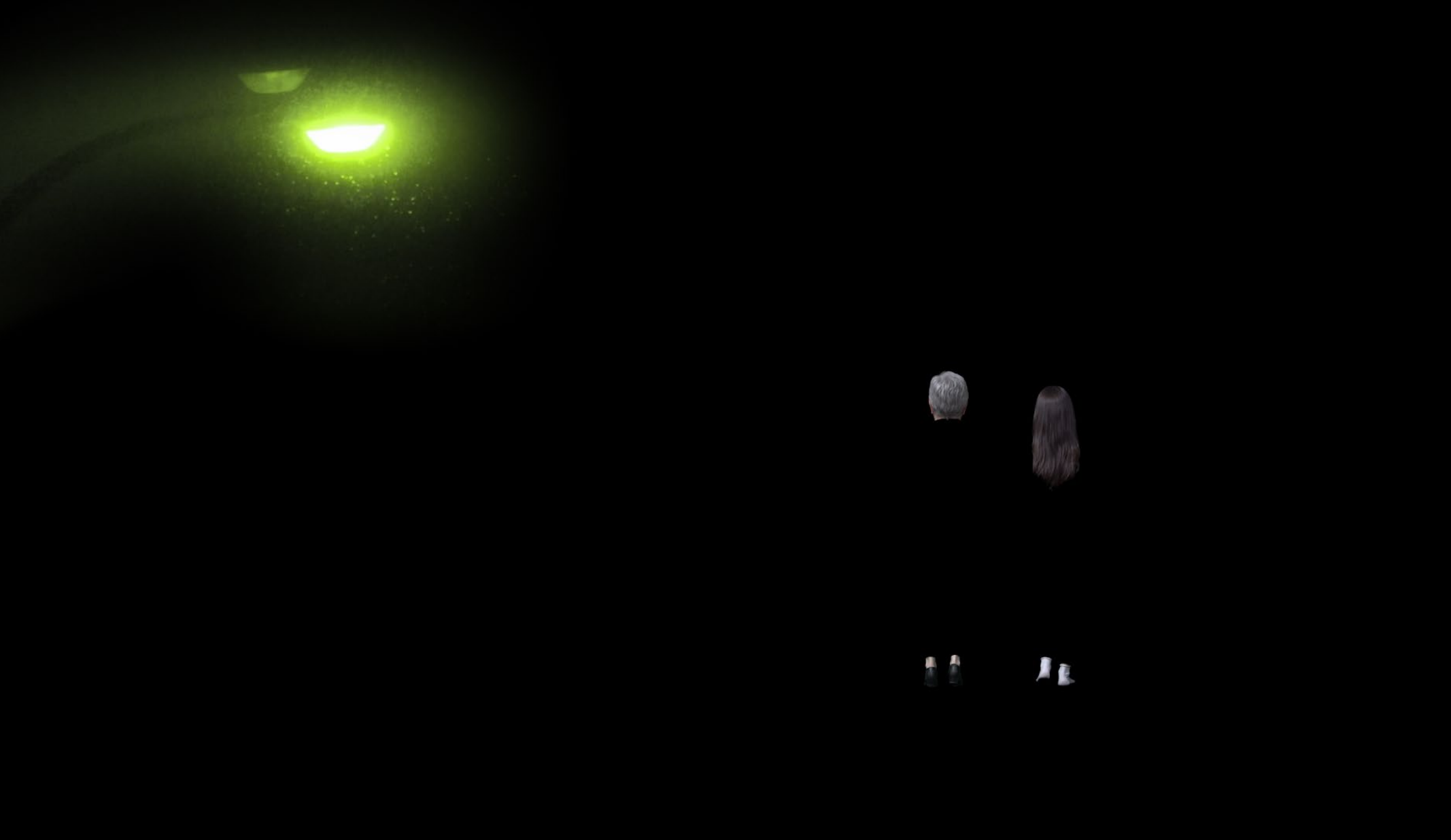


# LES IMMORTELLLES

A film by Myriam Jacob-Allard





**Original Title**  
Les immortelles

**Location**  
Quebec, Canada

**Runtime**  
26'

**Genre**  
Experimental

**Producer/Director**  
Myriam Jacob-Allard  
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**Trailer**  
[Les immortelles](#)



## Logline

Built from the audio tracks of dubbed vampire films and footage from home movies, ***Les immortelles*** is a video collage in four chapters that places mother-daughter relationships at the heart of a tale on immortality. As they come together and grow apart, the floating, recombined bodies seek to coexist between life and death. Featuring members of my family (the mother, the daughter, the sister, the granddaughter) this film explores the traces of the memories that we carry within us, and that, ghost-like, prolong our lives outside of ourselves.

## Synopsis

***Death always defeats the individual,  
while the universal remains victorious.***

Edgar Morin. *L'homme et la mort*



After the death of my maternal grandmother, who was a frequent artistic collaborator of mine, I was thrust into thinking about death from a perspective that was firstly intimate, and then collective, and into imagining what remains of us after our own deaths. I started doing some research on death and, simultaneously, I took refuge in books and films about vampires.

While the desire for immortality has long been a part of human history, it has usually been in a pluralistic way, often from a collective rather than a personal perspective. However, as we see in vampire stories, the concept of immortality is more likely to be thought of from an individual standpoint. Furthermore, in these stories, the mother figure is generally dead or absent from the vampire's life, as though it were impossible for a mother figure to be associated with the notion of immortality, and even more impossible if that notion were to be placed in an eroticized and passionate context. In this way, the concept of immortality as seen in vampire stories eliminates the notion of family bloodlines, replacing them with the idea of an everlasting individual, unique and alone. In a vampire narrative where the protagonist has no origin, the presence of a mother becomes superfluous, and all mother-daughter connections are removed from the story.

In response to this narrative leitmotif, I have created a counterstory that places mother-daughter relationships at the heart of the vampire story, reconsidering the notion of immortality within the collective context of matrilinear transmission. Using the form of video collage, I reconstructed an immortality fable in four parts, using dubbed voices from vampire movies as well as family archives. Filmed with members of my own family, every scene was carefully composed to mimic the postures and movements of the actors, the staging and the framing of the original films, making it a vampiric remake-mashup.

*The mother-daughter relationship is the darkest thing in our culture right now.  
The mother-daughter, daughter-mother relationship is an extremely explosive entity in our societies.  
Considering it and changing it would shake the patriarchal order.*

Luce Irigaray. *Le corps-à-corps avec la mère*

Female genealogies are rarely represented in popular culture, and when they are, they are often either idealized or scorned, preventing our comprehension of the complex realities of mother-daughter relationships. Through fiction, it seems possible to reinvent these representations, to redefine them as meaningful models of human connection. By imbuing the story with the perspective of both the mother and the daughter, I am trying to rewrite mother-daughter relationships to portray not symbiotic connection but rather mutual recognition. This passionate story is based on reciprocity, passing from one body to another, appearing and disappearing, thus coexisting onscreen “without combining or devouring each other.”<sup>1</sup> In traditional vampire stories, the negation of the mother seems to erase all possible family ties, hence justifying the vampire’s inevitable solitude. But without a mother in the story, it is impossible for the daughter to exist or blossom.

In *Les immortelles*, immortality is passed on from one generation to the next, breaking the cycle of eternal renewal. Exploring this metamorphosis through the ruptures and continuations that exist within a lineage reveal the high tension that exists between the self and the other — an important component in all human relationships. The concept of collective immortality allows us to consider the form of immortality that takes place through memory, and that allows us to exist through others after our own deaths. In this work, I explore the traces of memory that we carry within ourselves: the memory of the other that continues inside of us, like a ghost. The theme of aging is directly addressed within a form of storytelling that generally tends to erase it. By bringing women of different ages together to interact with each other, the different generational perspectives enter into dialogue, while we see the aging body metamorphose through the same bloodline of women.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from: St-Martin, Lori. *Le nom de la mère*, Montréal, Nota Bene, p. 242



## Note on Treatment

The film was built using compositing techniques, where stories and archives intersect and respond to each other.

Stories: quotes from dubbed vampire films are acted out by the women and girls of my maternal family, weaving a story that is told repeatedly. Each family member re-interprets the different segments, lip-synching to the chosen audio segments. Filmed separately, the images are then edited together, juxtaposing different bodies in the same spaces, decontextualized on a black screen as though they were outside of time, and mimicking the movements and stances of the actors in the original scenes. Addressing ideas of loss and reconciliation in family lines, the fragmentation and the attempts at collage create a sort of tension: between coming together and growing apart, between life and death, the distant floating bodies try to coexist.

Family archives: the props from the sets of the original films are reconstituted from family archival videos. This footage from home movies allows me to partially reconstruct these sets, creating a feeling of déjà vu in a nod to fantasy cinema culture, while also alluding to the more intimate aspects of how we archive our daily lives. Each image is first isolated, cut out and fragmented, and finally put in relation with other images in the form of a collage-remake.

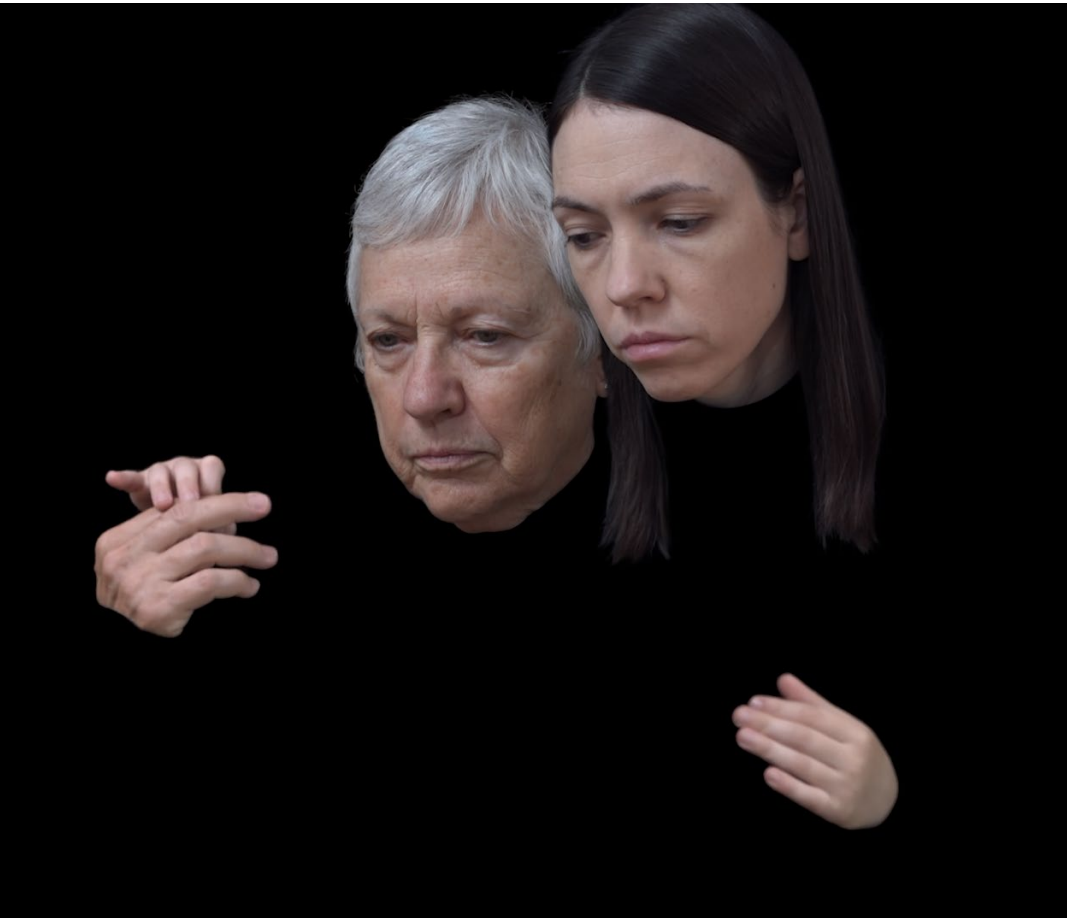
While it is based on found footage of vampire films, *Les immortelles* escapes the codes inherent to that specific genre, and instead tries to create an ambivalent tension somewhere between puppet theatre and video art. By working with my own family members and with stories from popular culture, I am trying to push the limits of the close family narrative to imagine a fiction that has the potential to become a new collective history. This work therefore allows me to emphasize the many possible ways of making an intimate story universal, from the moment when it is told, when it is imagined.

[Translated from the French by Ellen Warkentin]



## Biography

Myriam Jacob-Allard is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker who works primarily with video, performance, craft and installation. Her practice focuses on popular culture and drawing on collected stories as well as on songs and family myths, her work reflects on matrilineal transmission, memory and forgetfulness.



Her work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions, as well as in international festivals. Screenings of her work include: IFF Rotterdam, Festival des Cinémas Différents et Expérimentaux de Paris (Jury Prize), Dok Leipzig, IFF Message to Man (Centaur Prize for Best Experimental Film), Tallinn Photomonth, among others, and recent exhibitions include: *Une voix me rappelle toujours* at the National Museum of Fine Arts of Quebec (2022-23), *L'horloge de la television indiquait deux heures du matin* at Glassbox, Paris (2022), *T'envoler* at Dazibao (2019), *Once Upon a Time... The Western: A New Frontier in Art and Film* at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal (2017-2018) and *The Grand Balcony* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in the context of the Biennale de Montréal (2016-2017). She holds an MFA in Visual and Media Arts from UQAM. The recipient of many grants and awards, she was awarded the Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Fellowship in Contemporary Art (2015), and recently she received the Quebec Studio in Paris Grant for a six months residency at La Cité internationale des Arts of Paris (2022).





## Selected Credits

cast and lip-sync Alice Larouche • Émilie Jacob-Allard  
Myriam Jacob-Allard • Claire Jacob

image and sound editor Myriam Jacob-Allard

editor adviser Michel Giroux

cinematography Simon Plouffe • Myriam Jacob-Allard

visual effects Myriam Jacob-Allard • Simon Beaupré  
Charles Marchand • Geoffroy Lauzon

animation Myriam Jacob-Allard

mixer Bruno Bélanger

colorist Sylvain Cossette

# Filmography

## **2020 Les quatres récits d'Alice (Alice's Four Stories)**

- Premiered at the 49th International Film Festival Rotterdam, NL
- Jury Award, Festival des Cinémas Différents et Expérimentaux de Paris, FR
- Centaur Prize for Best Experimental Film, IFF Message to Man, RU

## **2019 Se faire emporter par le vent (Carried Away by the Wind)**

- T'envoler, Dazibao, Montreal, CA

## **2019 T'envoler (Fly Away)**

- T'envoler, Dazibao, Montreal, CA

## **2016 Une voix me rappelle toujours (A Voice Always Reminds me)**

- Le Grand Balcon, La Biennale de Montréal, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, CA

## **2014 Les soleils se couchent à l'ouest (Suns Set to the West)**

- L'Expérimental {recherche/art}, Traverse Vidéo, La cinémathèque de Toulouse, FR

## **2011 J'ai un amour qui ne veut pas mourir (Never Ending Love)**

- Super Short Film Prize, Georges Laoun Opticien et OBORO, Montreal, CA

## **2010 Maman, ne t'en fais pas (Mommy, don't Worry)**

- International Event for Contemporary Video Creation FIVAC, Camaguey, CU

## **2010 Soldat Lebrun: devenir et être le héros (Soldat Lebrun: to Become and to Be the Hero)**

- DÉSDORDRES, festival féministe transdisciplinaire, Lille, FR

## **2009 Willie Lamothe: devenir et être le héros (Willie Lamothe: to Become and to Be the Hero)**

- Once upon a time... The Western: A new frontier in Art and Film, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, CA

## **2008 Les princesses qui pissent (The Princesses Who Pee)**

- Panorama de la relève queer/féministe canadienne en vidéo d'art, UEEH. Marseille, FR / Turku, FI / Copenhagen, DK



