

Mama ? Yaya ?

work in progress

by Nina Violette

WORK PROCESS IN CAN SERRAT RESIDENCY

- FROM JULY TO AUGUST 2025

The project began with a dozen photographs stolen long ago by a child from a silent family. These images revealed fragments of my grandmother Maria's life in Sallent, her hometown in Catalonia—just twenty minutes from Can Serrat. Forced into exile in France at 18 during Franco's dictatorship, Maria took her own life a few years later. Her story, like her memory, remained buried in silence.

Nearly fifty years after her disappearance, these images allow us to see her for the first time—climbing trees, swimming in the sea, tending the land. I sensed the deep bond she shared with her homeland. For those of us who know nothing of her, the land became the only remaining trace, the only possible link. I began to wonder: how long does the earth retain our DNA? This question sparked a research-based exploration of the relationship between women and the Catalan territory, viewed through the lens of migration during the Civil War and dictatorship.

Can Serrat, near Maria's birthplace, became more than just a working space—it became a living subject of the work. As the granddaughter of an immigrant, I began shaping my own relationship to this land. Surrounded by Maria's photographs, I immersed myself in the history of the region—its environment, industries, poetry, and political memory. I wrote about the resonance of working with ghosts in a landscape full of life.

I explored Sallent, consulted archives, retraced locations captured in the photos. Drawn to mountains, forests, rivers, and beaches, I initiated textile-based actions as a way to weave connection with the land. Textile – text – narrative—I use weaving as a tool to translate the language of the living, and to gather the voices of the places I pass through.

A central thread of the project is the Llobregat River, a symbol of life, labor, and transition. Once a heart of the textile industry, it also carries myths of disappearance and death—embodying the tension between presence and absence, rootedness and exile.

During my time at Can Serrat, I led collective weaving workshops and writing sessions on care and connection. I also began learning Spanish and Catalan, in order to access archives and interview women who migrated from Spain to France during the 20th century. These exchanges aim to explore their ties to their homeland and give rise to further collective weaving actions.

These two months mark the beginning of a three-year project examining the connections between France and Catalonia, supported by DRAC Nouvelle-Aquitaine as part of its Artist Creation Grant.



Untitled, action, 2025, Sallent, Catalonia.



Untitled, action, 2025, Sallent, Catalonia.



El río que baila en mis heridas, action, 2025, waterfalls Els tres salts, Catalonia.



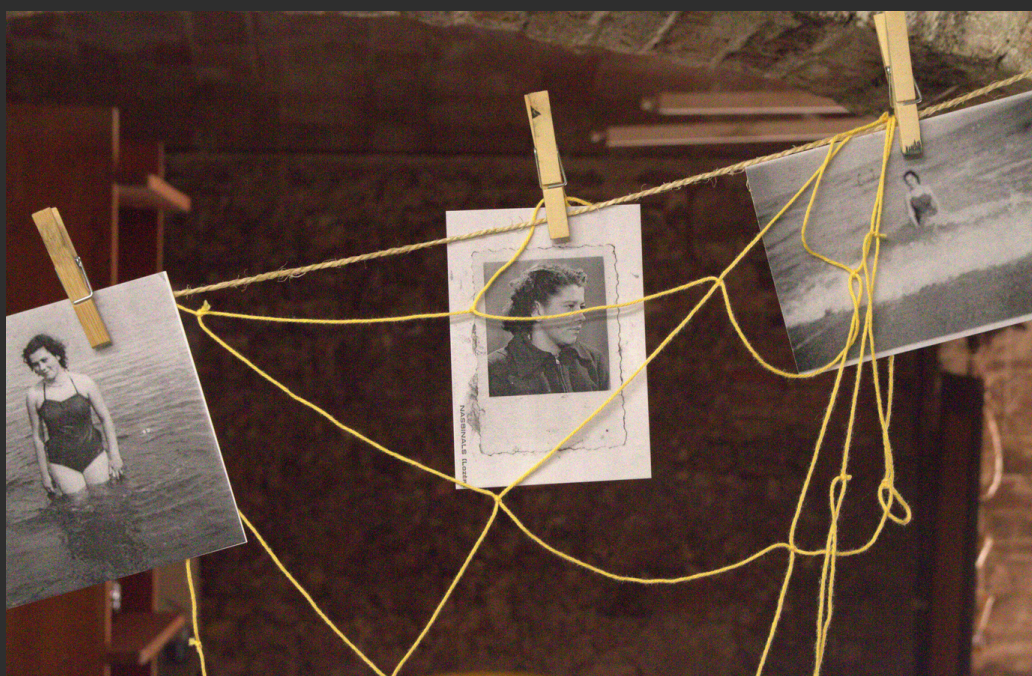
Dins la pell de l'ona salada, action, 2025, Tarragone, Catalonia.



Net, action, 2025, Tarragone, Catalonia.



Studio documentation - Photographs of Maria -, action, 2025, Can Serrat.



Studio documentation - Photographs of Maria - 2025, Can Serrat.



Studio documentation - weaving from action in Sallent - 2025, Can Serrat.