

MARIE-RENÉE

A feature documentary by Bahman YAZDAN PANAH



Centre national
du cinéma et de l'
image animée



BANQUE POPULAIRE



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Vision Réalité



GLOBE



agefiph

Provisional title:

MARIE-RENÉE

A feature documentary by :

Bahman YAZDAN PANAH

Produced by:

Vision Réalité-CINEBLIND

SIRET : 939 992 780 00014

General Information:

Estimated Running Time: 80 minutes

Estimated Budget: 150.000€

Shooting Language: Français

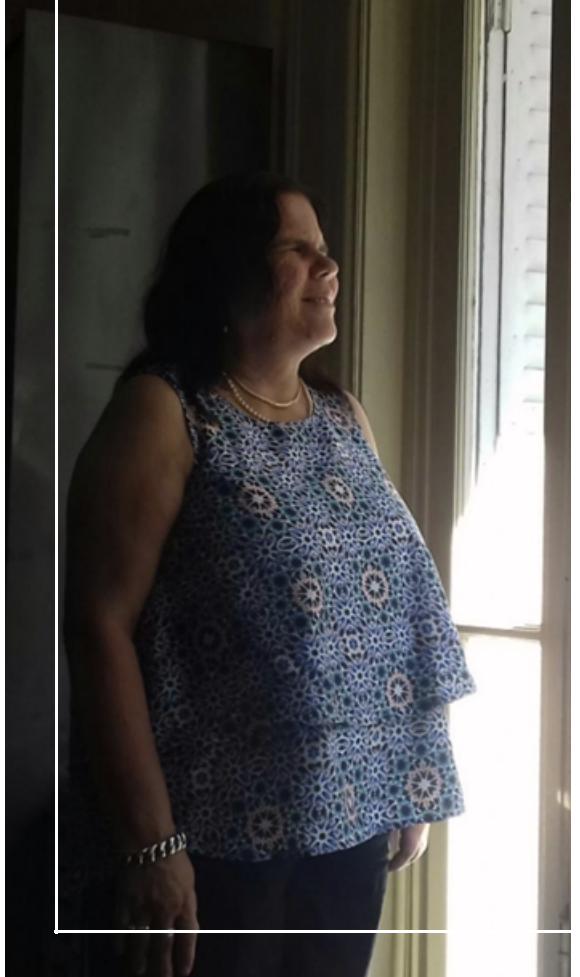
Accessibility Adaptation:

- Adapted captioning for the deaf and hard of hearing
- Audio description for the blind and visually impaired

Production Countries: France – Gabon

Production Period: 2025 – 2026

Genre: Creative Documentary / Human Portrait / Memory in Motion



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Société de production :

Vision Réalité

5 Avenue Daniel Lesueur, 75007 Paris

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROJECT

Marie-Renée is a creative documentary rooted in a profoundly inclusive approach. Through a sensitive, fragmentary narrative, it retraces the commitment of Marie-Renée Hector, 73 years old, a blind woman, former teacher at INJA, who is now devoted to the rehabilitation of a specialized school for visually impaired children in Libreville (Gabon). It is neither a linear portrait nor the story of a “mission,” but rather a passage, a journey.

The film opens in Gabon, in the intimacy of her daily life. Marie-Renée appears as someone fully integrated into local life, shown through simple gestures and concrete actions. Gradually, her commitment takes shape: sorting equipment, exchanging with teachers, accompanying students, carefully preparing a conference on autonomy.

This thread — the conference — acts subtly throughout the film without ever imposing itself. Yet it structures the narrative back-and-forth between the present and fragments of the past, discovered through sequences filmed in Paris (INJA, apiDV) and in Vendée (her family home). The story unfolds in delicate touches: a teaching moment with a blind child, an associative meeting, everyday moments shared. Marie-Renée's words, rare and measured, are inscribed within her gestures and her exchanges.

The final part of the film returns to Gabon, where the action materializes around the conference. Then, in a sober yet powerful final scene, we follow her departure from the airport; her laughter resonates, and the film fades on this vivid trace.

The project is written and directed by Bahman Yazdan Panah, blind author and filmmaker, who here engages a deeply personal and committed gaze. It is inscribed within a relationship of transmission, woven between him and his subject. The film also includes Rocco Ferrante, who is visually impaired, as assistant director and head of the editing team, underlining a concrete will for inclusion and a strong act of professionalization and visibility for visually impaired professionals.

Finally, the project benefits from the active support of the association apiDV, a committed partner for access to culture and autonomy. Shooting is planned in France and Gabon, with the support of a local executive producer, and distribution will be accompanied by accessibility tools (audio description, subtitling).

LOGLINE

Marie-Renée traces the discreet yet deeply rooted commitment of a 73-year-old blind woman, former teacher and activist, who now devotes much of her life to the rehabilitation of a school for visually impaired children in Gabon. Between two continents, she weaves daily gestures, passes on lived knowledge, and transforms care into a political act. The film explores the strength of quiet action, where intimacy becomes sharing, and fragility turns into a force for action.

SYNOPSIS

The film opens in Gabon. Marie-Renée Hector, 73 years old, blind, former teacher at the National Institute for Blind Youth in Paris, works alongside a specialized school in Libreville. For the past three years, she has returned regularly, supporting the restructuring of an institution dedicated to children and young adults with disabilities, in close collaboration with local teams.

This is not a portrait, nor the story of a “mission.” It is a passage — a crossing — between France and Africa, between daily life and engagement, between memory and action.

Threaded throughout the film is a discreet line: the preparation of a conference on autonomy. Not a central scene, but an underground current that shapes her gestures: writing, transmitting, naming what has been lived, and imagining what still remains to be done. This voice, long deferred, emerges as the response to years of listening, teaching, and shared practice.

Marie-Renée sorts, prepares, discusses, teaches. She accompanies without speeches, without staging.

Through her simple gestures — a suitcase packed, an exchange in a schoolyard, a silence received — she embodies a form of living engagement, profoundly human and inherently political.

The film unfolds in fragments, woven from sensitive moments, quiet images, shared exchanges. It does not follow a linear narrative, but the rhythm of life itself: departures and returns, impulses and pauses, listening and continuity.

The camera, guided by the attentive gaze of a director who is himself blind and a refugee, captures this presence with recognition. Their relationship becomes a red thread: a space of mutual transmission, where the French language itself becomes a ground for reconstruction, reflection, and creation.

Marie-Renée is a film about action that takes shape through repetition, care, and exchange.

A documentary work that questions pedagogy, fragility, living heritage, and the political power of ordinary gestures.

STORY OUTLINE

The film follows Marie-Renée, a 73-year-old blind woman, between her quiet life in France and her deeply committed work at a school for visually impaired children in Libreville, Gabon. Rather than a linear biography or a conventional portrait, the narrative unfolds in fragments, gestures, silences, routines, and departures.

It begins in Gabon, where Marie-Renée supports a team restructuring an under-resourced school. She is present without imposing, offering knowledge through tactile guidance, conversation, and her own lived experience as both educator and activist. The film captures everyday teaching scenes, informal tech training, and reflections on inclusion. Her actions are woven into a broader movement toward autonomy, not just for the children, but for the institution itself.

Parallel scenes in France, at home with her partner Daniel, or in meetings with advocacy groups, show the roots of her engagement and the emotional and intellectual labor behind her actions. A subtle thread runs through: her preparation for a public talk on autonomy. It is not a climax, but a structuring undercurrent, a quiet declaration that knowledge must be passed on.

Moments of tension arise: legal restrictions, bureaucratic inertia, fatigue. Yet the film resists drama. Instead, it honors the power of persistence and repetition. Even in doubt, Marie-Renée continues packing a suitcase, adjusting a document, laughing with a student.

Shot through the lens of a blind filmmaker, the story becomes a shared space of transmission. Their relationship forms a counterpoint a dialogue without hierarchy. The final sequences, her quiet departure, a lingering laugh at the airport leave us not with a conclusion, but with continuity. The work is never done, but it is carried forward.



Director's Biography – Bahman Yazdan Panah

Born in Iranian Kurdistan, Bahman Yazdan Panah is a filmmaker, witness, and visual thinker, whose personal journey is intimately bound to his cinematic writing. Trained in management, communication, and political-cultural reflection, he discovered filmmaking on the roads of exile, at the very moment he was gradually losing his sight. This profound upheaval led him to redefine his way of perceiving the world — and to forge an aesthetic rooted in movement, listening, and memory.

This path led him to create CineBlind, a label that symbolizes a way of filming from within the loss of vision — a cinema that embraces its visual fragility as a source of creative strength. In the same spirit, he founded Vision Réalité, an audiovisual production company conceived as a space for work, creation, and support for other visually impaired people facing the same obstacles. His objective: to build a truly inclusive professional practice and provide visually impaired artists with the means to exist in the cinematic landscape.

His first project, BAHMAN (2020–2024), directed by Hazhar Ramezani, retraces his journey of exile, loss of sight, and resilience. He appears as both the central subject and co-producer, initiating a direct relationship between his life and cinematic creation. This project marked a turning point: the moment when lived experience itself became artistic material.

But it is with Hors Cadre (2025), his first work as author and director, that he affirms his voice: a first-person documentary filmed across eight European countries, shot with a head-mounted GoPro and his own voice synthesis. The film directly questions autonomy after the loss of sight, in a radical gesture of honesty and emancipation.

As a filmmaker, Bahman asserts his position as a witness: he films from received traces, from real bonds, from lived upheaval. Marie-Renée continues in this line — an intimate and committed response to a woman whose engagement transformed his way of creating, of engaging, and of living.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Marie-Renée, an unfolding action

Filming the trace of commitment through gestures and memory

This film begins with a simple act: the action of a woman, today, in Gabon. Marie-Renée, a former English teacher, blind and now retired, continues to act with conviction and modesty, supporting the rehabilitation of a school for visually impaired children.

She does not put herself forward. She does not speak about herself. She acts. And it is through her action that the film begins: an arrival in a place, a body in movement, a presence in a shared world. She is not "a Frenchwoman on a mission." She is a person fully engaged in a living relationship with a territory and its people.

From this present action, the film gradually unfolds the traces of her commitment, reaching back into the past, by fragments, to the memories, gestures, and voices that preceded it. It does not follow a strict order, but weaves back and forth between the present and memory, between the places she inhabits today and those she lived in yesterday. The narrative is anchored in lived experience, shared emotions, and modest yet powerful acts.

This film is also born of my own encounter with Marie-Renée. I met her at a moment of rupture in my life. I had lost my sight, I was a refugee, and I was beginning a profound reconstruction. Her way of being in the world, of acting without speeches, moved me deeply. I recognized myself in her presence — strong, calm, discreet. Her action left a trace in me. It is from that trace that I film. I am not an external observer. I am an engaged witness. The film does not only speak about her. It also speaks of what her commitment awakened in me.

This cinematic gesture is inspired by three philosophical perspectives that guide me. From Hannah Arendt, I retain her distinction between labor, work, and action. Marie-Renée embodies action in the strongest sense: a word embodied, a gesture turned toward others, a presence in the common world. This film does not document an action; it becomes the space that welcomes it and makes it visible.

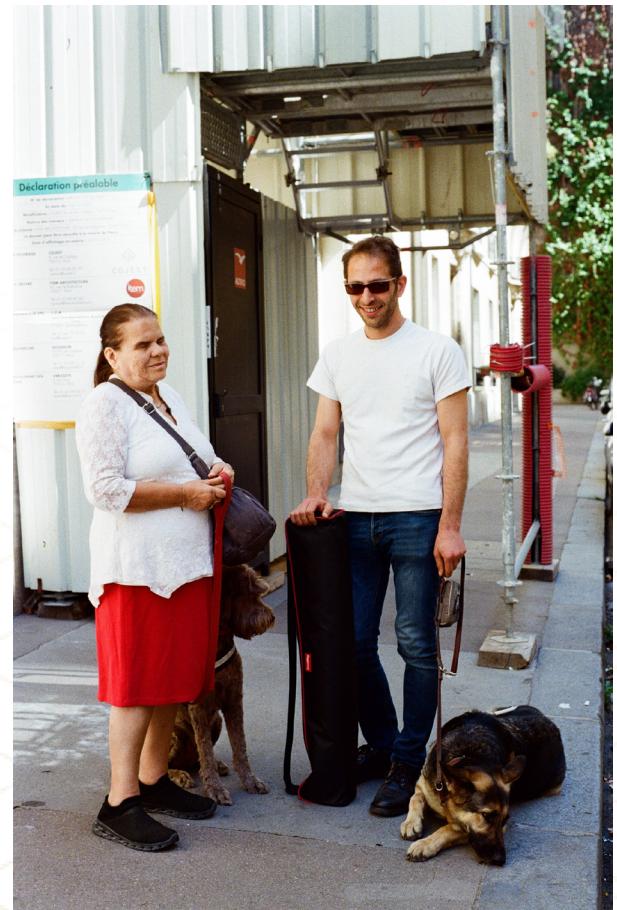
With Jacques Derrida, I am drawn to the notions of trace, care, and silence. Marie-Renée leaves traces — not only in places, but in others. The film attempts to capture what remains of her, without fixing it: a burst of laughter, a hand placed, a memory in a child's gaze. To think is also to heal. Cinema, here, becomes a way of caring for traces.

Finally, the thought of Homi Bhabha illuminates this work through his idea of the third space, the space between identities, between languages, where belonging is constructed in relation. Marie-Renée does not embody an origin. She acts in a shifting, relational, human space of hybridity.

This film is a work of relation and memory, an attempt to let an action live without freezing it or explaining it. The final image of the film is that of a departure — Marie-Renée in an

airport waiting room. She laughs. That laughter still resonates as the image disappears. The darkness remains inhabited.

Because what she does continues to act, and the film, in turn, becomes a trace itself.



DIRECTOR'S PERSONAL APPROACH

An embodied trajectory — between languages, gestures, and crossings

I am Kurdish, Iranian, a refugee, and blind. My trajectory has been shaped by linguistic ruptures, invisible resistances, and fragile yet persistent reconstructions.

Kurdish is my mother tongue. The language I speak, feel, and live. Yet it was denied to me at school, excluded from spaces of instruction. It has remained alive within me — through voice, memory, and oral transmission. It is what Homi Bhabha calls the first space: the space of the root, shifting, silent, and enduring.

Persian, an imposed language, was the one of my studies, my readings, and my first creations. I did not choose it, but I inhabited it. It allowed me to think, to read, to write. A tool of passage. Yet a tool that never truly belonged to me.

Then, one day, the French language arrived. I encountered it in darkness, in braille, with my fingers, after losing my sight. Today, it is the only language my digital tools allow me to hear. I cannot read Kurdish braille. Nor Persian. So yes: "I have only one language, and it is not mine." Jacques Derrida's phrase resonates within me each time I write. It does not exclude me. It reminds me that this language is offered to me — with listening, with trust.

French has become my language of creation. The one in which I think, film, and transmit. Not by conformity, but by reconstruction. It is also the language in which I met Marie-Renée. At first, we spoke in English. Then our exchanges shifted in nature: no longer words, but moments. She never taught me. She accompanied me. Through her attention, her quiet commitment, her constancy, she left an imprint on me. Not a method. Not a truth. A movement.

Today I live in an in-between: between languages, cultures, memories. An unstable but fertile space. It is what Homi Bhabha calls the third space — a place of passage, of invention. And it is also where Marie-Renée stands, between France and Gabon, between school and action. Her crossing resonated with mine. And it is from this resonance that I decided to go to Gabon. For me, to film is to inhabit this passage.

I do not film to represent. I film to enter into relation. Since I lost my sight, I capture what I no longer see but what I feel. The camera has become an extension of my breath, my body, my listening. Cinema has become a gesture of care — an active care, a way of being in the world with attention.

This film is not a portrait. It is not a lesson, nor a tribute. It is a gesture in return. A response to what has been transmitted to me. I do not film to transmit a model. I film to remind that each person, wherever they stand, can act in their own way, to make the world gentler, more habitable. This film is born from a link, from a passage. And if it leaves a trace, I want that trace to remain open, shifting, and available to those who receive it.

PORTRAIT OF THE MAIN CHARACTER

Marie-Renée Hector, 73, is an indefatigable activist for the rights of visually impaired people. Born with low vision in France, she gradually lost her sight, yet never allowed her disability to limit her engagement. She devoted her entire career to teaching English at the National Institute for Blind Youth (INJA) in Paris, where she left her mark on generations of students through her rigor, generosity, and deeply human presence.

Alongside her teaching, she became actively involved in the associative sphere, notably as president of the organization apiDV (Accompagner, Promouvoir, Intégrer les Déficients Visuels). There, she championed numerous concrete initiatives to improve the autonomy and inclusion of visually impaired people, both in France and abroad. This commitment also took her to Africa, where she contributed to educational projects aimed at establishing specialized schools and resource centers.

Since 2023, Marie-Renée has dedicated her retirement to a unique mission in Gabon: the restructuring of a school for children and young adults with disabilities, with particular attention to visual impairment. She travels regularly between France and Gabon, bringing specialized materials (Braille paper, adapted pedagogical tools, technical resources), thus consolidating both a logistical and human bridge between two continents.

A discreet presence, a complete commitment Marie-Renée seeks neither recognition nor visibility. Her action is grounded in a simple conviction: no limitation — physical, social, or geographic — should prevent someone from contributing to society. Her energy is calm, constant, deeply rooted. She acts without speeches, without staging.

Beyond her activist engagement, she is a mother of three and a woman profoundly devoted to others. She writes, shares, and documents with a singular voice, clear and always turned toward transmission. Her words, like her gestures, leave a lasting imprint.

A living symbol Marie-Renée's trajectory goes beyond biography. It challenges our perception of aging, disability, education, and action. She embodies the power of individual commitment, the possibility of acting even against the current, and the importance of weaving links across worlds.

Through her portrait, this film highlights how ordinary action can hold something extraordinary, and how transmission itself can offer what is most radically human.

Je soussignée, **Marie-Renée Hector**, confirme par la présente **mon accord et mon soutien entier** au projet de film documentaire *Marie-Renée*, réalisé par **Bahman YAZDAN PANAH**.

Ce projet retrace une trajectoire d'engagement qui me tient profondément à cœur, et je suis convaincue que **Bahman est la personne juste pour porter ce regard**, en raison de sa sensibilité, de son expérience personnelle, et de la justesse avec laquelle il aborde les enjeux de transmission, de pédagogie et d'autonomie.

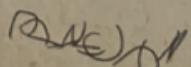
En tant que **non-voyant**, artiste, auteur et réalisateur, **Bahman incarne un regard singulier et précieux** dans le paysage cinématographique actuel. Le fait qu'il crée en langue française, langue que je lui ai moi-même enseignée, donne à ce projet une dimension humaine et symbolique particulièrement émouvante pour moi. C'est aussi une source de fierté personnelle de voir cet élève devenu artiste tracer son propre chemin de création.

Je soutiens pleinement cette démarche artistique et humaine, et je confirme ma disponibilité à contribuer activement au bon déroulement du tournage, tant au Gabon qu'en France, dans la limite de mes moyens.

Fait pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Fait à Libreville, le 25 mai 2025

Signature :



Marie-Renée Hector

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Marie-Renée project was born from a profound human encounter and from an artistic path in maturation. As director-producer, I have decided to bring this film to the screen today because I feel the timing is right. On one hand, my cinematic language has become more assured; I have developed a gaze, a writing, a relationship to images that allows me to tell this story in my own way. On the other, my bond with Marie-Renée has grown richer, nourished by exchanges, reflections, and fieldwork: I now see her in action, and I feel the urgency to capture what she transmits.

Production is carried by Vision Réalité, my company, and I am open to a French co-production, particularly to complete financing and reinforce the logistical and administrative structure. A local executive producer based in Gabon will ensure on-the-ground organization. Their role will not involve artistic or financial participation in the final work but will be essential for the implementation of the shoot.

The shoot will be structured yet flexible, with a small crew of three to five people, composed of trusted collaborators already engaged in previous projects. In both France and Gabon, this setup will allow for a subtle immersion, faithful to the intimacy of the film. The chosen equipment (Sony FX3, high-definition capture) guarantees fluid and polished images, designed both for theatrical projection and for platforms.

The distribution strategy will follow a progressive logic: first major international festivals (Berlin, Cannes, IDFA, Locarno, Venice, etc.), then other A-level festivals, followed by thematic festivals (Africa, activism, accessibility), and finally outreach toward associative networks, cinemas, streaming platforms, and television. Accessibility is a central point: the film will integrate adapted subtitles and audio description from its first distribution version.

This film is both an engaged work and a gesture of listening, a patient and sensitive construction. To produce Marie-Renée is to choose a cinema that connects, that thinks through gestures, and that leaves a gentle yet lasting trace.

ARTISTIC AND TECHNICAL TEAM (PROVISIONAL)

Director / Producer

Bahman YAZDAN PANAH – Iranian blind filmmaker, Bahman develops a sensitive documentary practice rooted in the lived reality of visual impairment. Founder of CineBlind and Vision Réalité, he advocates for an inclusive and socially engaged approach to cinema.

Local Executive Producer (Gabon)

Wilfried LENGOYE – Gabonese director and cinematographer, founder of IREC. He oversees local coordination of the shoot, bringing solid experience in audiovisual production both in Gabon and internationally.

Director of Photography / Cameraman

Farzad SHAHAB LAVASANI – Iranian cinematographer trained in Tehran and Paris, internationally awarded (Berlinale, Locarno, Busan, Slamdance, Short Shorts, Chicago). His visual sensibility and expertise reinforce the film's aesthetic dimension.

Assistant Director / Head of Editing

Rocco FERRANTE – Visually impaired, he plays a central role within the creative team. His dual position ensures continuity between directing and post-production, fostering an inclusive and innovative approach.

Sound Engineer / Composer

Stéphane POISSON – Experienced technician and musician, he has collaborated on numerous documentary projects, bringing a finely tuned attention to sound design and composition.

Production Assistant

Hazhar RAMEZANI – Iranian filmmaker and stage director, engaged with themes of body and memory. He contributes to both the logistical and artistic follow-up of the project.

Camera / Technical Assistant

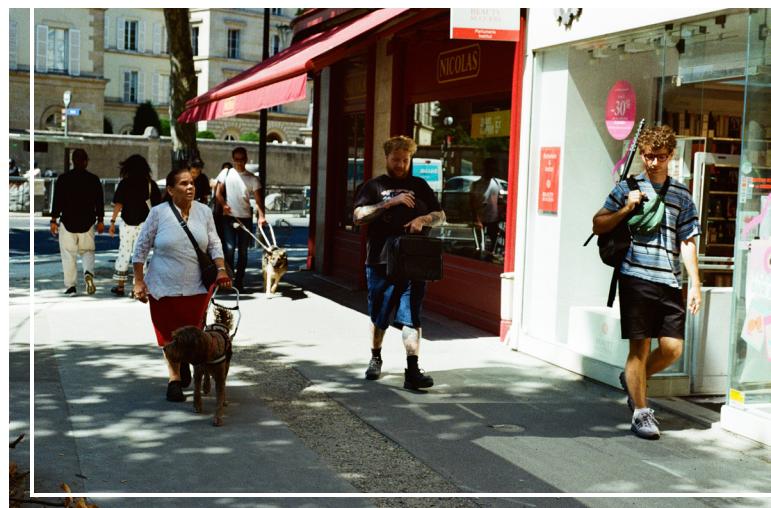
To be confirmed – A local female technician will be recruited to strengthen the camera team, depending on availability in Gabon.

Post-Production (Sound and Image)

To be defined according to the chosen location for post-production (France or Gabon).

Translation / Subtitling / Audio Description

To be implemented during the finishing stage, in full compliance with accessibility standards.



PARTNERS

apiDV

A national association recognized as being of public utility, apiDV works to promote the cultural and professional autonomy of visually impaired people. It supports the project as a reference organization.

IREC (Images Record)

A Gabonese audiovisual production company founded by Wilfried Lengoye, acting as local executive partner, responsible for logistical and administrative coordination on Gabonese territory.

TECHNICAL SHEET

Working Title: **Marie-Renée**

Format: **Creative Documentary**

Estimated Length: **80 minutes**

Project Status: **In Development**

Main Language: **French**

Planned Accessibility: **Subtitles adapted for the deaf and hard of hearing / Audio description for blind and visually impaired audiences**

Shooting Locations: **France (Notre-Dame de Monts, Vendée – Paris) – Gabon (Libreville)**

Countries of Production: **France – Gabon**

Planned Shooting Period: **August – November 2025**

Post-Production Period: **December 2025 – March 2026**

Image: **4K DCP**

Sound: **5.1 + audio post-production (stereo mix and accessible version)**

PRODUCTION TIMELINE

1. Development: November 2024 – October 2025

November 2024 – September 2025 (Completed phase):

Consolidation of the artistic and strategic dossier for co-producers and institutional partners.

In-depth interviews with Marie-Renée and those directly impacted by her work, refining the film's narrative axes.

2. Pre-production: October 2025 – December 2025

October – December 2025:

Securing complementary funding (regional funds, CNC, foundations, private partners).

Administrative and legal procedures: filming permits (France & Gabon), image rights, access to schools.

Recruitment of the main technical team (DoP, sound engineer, assistants).

Technical and artistic scouting in key locations.

Coordination with associations and local structures in Gabon (partnerships, mediation, authorizations).

Development of a detailed shooting plan including travel and sensitive periods.

3. Production: January 2026 – April 2026

January 2026 – France (Phase 1):

Filming preparation scenes: Marie-Renée before departure, gathering materials, exchanges with associations and relatives.

Capturing introspective moments rooted in Marie-Renée's French daily life.

April 2026 – Gabon (Phase 2):

Immersive shoot in Libreville: scenes at the school, interactions with children, teachers, and local partners.

Capturing moments of transmission, pedagogical gestures, and concrete engagement in the field.

Collecting testimonies from people directly impacted by Marie-Renée's action.

4. Post-production: February 2026 – July 2026 (Editing running in parallel with production)

May – July 2026:

Finalizing picture edit.

Sound post-production.

Musical composition.

Color grading.

Sound mix.

Creation of accessible versions (subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing, audio description).

August 2026:

Finalization of the film.

Creation of communication materials (poster, teaser, press kit, trailer).

5. Distribution and Promotion: August – December 2026

September 2026 – January 2027:

Submission to major international festivals.

Submissions to thematic festivals (disability, human rights, Africa).

Organization of private screenings for partners, funders, and involved associations.

Contacts with broadcasters and platforms.

February – May 2027:

Release in arthouse cinemas, institutional and educational screenings.

Negotiations with platforms (Arte.tv, France.tv, Netflix, etc.) and documentary TV channels.

Awareness campaigns in partnership with NGOs and networks engaged in inclusive education and accessibility.

MARIE-RENÉE

Un film documentaire de :Bahman Yazdan Panaha



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ouvrir l'emploi
aux personnes handicapées