

Mikel R. Nieto

La Guerra



"The point of view of civil war is the point of view of the political" *Introduction to civil war* **Tiqqun**

War is unfortunately one of the most universal concepts that humanity has ever produced. However, la guerra (the Spanish word for war) tends to have very specific meanings in the memory of different groups of people, and in the case of Spain its meaning points in just one direction: the civil war that devastated this country for three years, leaving scars and consequences that have affected and continue to affect multiple generations. These meanings do not fall only into the domain of historians and ideologues situated on one side or the other of the conflict. Instead, these meanings have been forged through thousands of stories passed down from parents to children and from grandparents to grandchildren and, especially, through the silenced experiences, forgotten events and absences that constitute a meaning that is deeper and more difficult to put in the form of narration.

La Guerra investigates this blind spot, which comprises a fundamental part of who we are, using a sound record of the passage of time, with no precise object, in emblematic places, the sites of battles with names still steeped in historical significance: Barcelona, Paracuellos, Guadarrama, Madrid (Batalla de Ciudad Universitaria, Batalla de Madrid, Batalla de la niebla), Belchite y Gernika. The meticulous impassivity and exquisite attention with which the successive sound landscapes are recorded and modulated deflect any temptation to put monuments in place or to try to make repairs, pointing quite forcefully to the world's blunt resistance to such operations. The presence of local sound reveals the absence of a figure, of a symbol, in which to anchor narrations of the past. In contrast with the iconic site of the Battle of Belchite, where the ruins have been preserved to serve as a visible reminder of the conflict, the sound piece becomes increasingly abstract, making it more and more unlikely that one can imaginatively hold on to a fixed and recognizable point of reference.

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