



Where memory dwells

Exhumations of Spanish Civil War's mass graves

Clemente Bernad



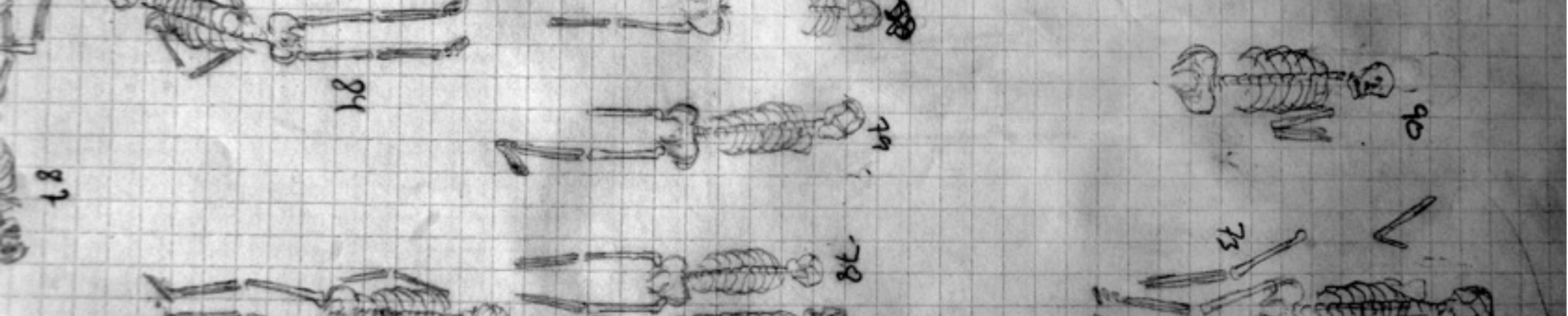
Sinopsis

2011 is the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

After the coup d'état in Spain in July of 1936, an uncontrolled, cruel and systematic repression on the part of the Fascists broke out that led to the death of some 150,000 people. The bodies of those people were left in ditches or in common graves throughout the fields and mountains of the country. These are the dead left by the Franco era; thousands of people for whom no death certificate was signed and whose families could neither bury them nor cry over their tombs. In some cases, the families continue to search for the remains of their loved ones.

This is a story full of cruelty, violence, death, and hatred. It should have never existed. But above all it is a story full of love: the love of those determined not to forget, determined to cry and to fight without cease for the memory of all those whose lives had been taken from them with impunity. Their dreams.

This project deals with the work to bring to light the past memory of the thousands killed by the Fascists at that time, proposing to reflect on this subject through a **book**, a **short-film** and a **multimedia exhibition**.



Subject

During the Franco regime the fallen who had fought with the victors were remembered and glorified. Plaques in memory of them filled the cemeteries and churches across Spain. However, the fate of the defeated was silenced. The dead who fought on the other side were forgotten, or worse yet, scorned and their families paid the price of defeat for years. Not only were there thousands of victims whose bodies continued hidden, but their memory was also purposefully silenced and brutally obliterated. The Spanish transition to democracy imposed an agreement to ignore and forget. Thirty-five long years have passed since Franco's death, but the remains of the majority of the victims continue buried in the mountains or ditches of this country.

In some places during the 1970s, families decided to recover the remains of their family members digging with rudimentary tools in the places where older members of the community remembered the common graves to be, where fear and silence had never let them tell what had happened. Nevertheless, the attempted coup d'état on February 23, 1981 transported many families back 50 years and the fear from before took hold again. They abandoned their efforts and left the work finding their loved ones at a standstill. Until now.

Ten years ago an Spanish journalist decided to recover the remains of his grandfather, buried in a common grave along with 12 other Republicans. This is how the ARMH, (Association for the recovery of past memory) came about. This was the starting point of a project that would slowly have various teams working across the country, different teams that collect the testimonies of the oldest members of the community, locate common graves and, once all collected data are confirmed, finally carry out the exhumation of the remains buried in the graves, always according to the rules of forensic archaeology. The aim of these teams is to give back their identity and dignity to those killed and forgotten, to those murdered for defending the dream of a much fairer world. It is a difficult and arduous work, and yet new projects and ideas are coming about. Some years after, this is a very controversial question in Spain. The Spanish Government proposed in 2007 the Historical Memory Law, that recognises the victims of the dictatorship. Later, the judge Baltasar Garzón tried to investigate the crimes committed by the Franco regime, but he was indicted and suspended on 14 May 2010.



Until now. Today, over 70 years later, the grandchildren of the victims seek to break ground and carefully exhume the remains of their own in an act of dignity, memory, pride, fury, and love. And now there are, finally, the cameras to photograph each of the exhumations under way, each one of the bones that comes to light, each of the objects too – espadrilles, buckles, glasses, rings, pencils, matchbooks, buttons – that emerge as though frozen in time, and also each of the faces that appears in those dark pits, to show how that had all come to pass and that what some had wanted to hide emerges from the ground seeking, simply, its place in history. Tzvetan Todorov has said that it is better not to vainly fight sterile battles with the past, and that it is preferable to conduct an examination of why and how to extol memory. He's probably right. But what lies behind the tens of thousands of people who were essentially murdered in Spain from July 17, 1936 onward in what were crimes against humanity, a genuine holocaust, remains to be judged. The memory of all those people does not need any sort of elevation, only truth, justice, light, and respect.

Photography has always been closely related to memory and truth. Photographs speak of the past and of those we shall never see again the way they were when photographed. Photographs fill our world with memories and melancholy, they look us in the eye and bluntly ask about our own identity.

I believe that photography is the perfect means to portrait this process of bringing back the past, of recovering the past: it is not only to bring back the memory of those lying in forgotten graves but also to keep a record of another period, to remember our present time, when we finally begun this project, a way to explain why and how it was done. The relation between photography and the Spanish Civil War was at the same time intense and fruitful: the war was a tragic episode that helped establish many of the bases of photojournalism. But while those photographers documented how was the fight against the fascism, the Franco troops and their sympathizers killed thousands of people far from the cameras, hidden in the night and in the silence. Now, using photography as a means to reflect on this process of recovering past memory will help us complete the circle by photographing precisely what had been hidden for almost seventy five years.

And toward that end, the images we need are not those that require grand conceptual or artistic explorations, nor those that construct elaborate theatrical spaces or falsify or transfigure anything; To obtain said images it is sufficient – as in the case that concerns us here – to go to where the events in question are taking place, to the same places where the crimes were committed, exactly where memory now grows unfettered – to go and simply to look. It is enough to go there, to these places so close to our own houses, where now there is something happening that must be photographed





Book

“Kept awake” is the name of the book published by Alkibla Editorial.

There is a certain kind of silence that speaks, that roars, and calls to account. And it exists in the graves of those executed during the Spanish Civil War, graves which are still waiting to be opened today. The sound begins with the disinterring of those bodies, which had been hidden but not forgotten. In the photographs of Clemente Bernad the murmur of the dead can be heard, and the work represents a rigorous testimony of the scientific, political, and sentimental process that accompanies each exhumation. The findings reconstruct that which lacked documentation, complemented, in turn, by the collaboration of experts in various disciplines coordinated by Francisco Ferrándiz: Ana Aliende, Clemente Bernad, Christian Caujolle, Carme Coch, Francisco Etxeberria, Alberto Fernández, Francisco Ferrándiz, Almudena García-Rubio, Lourdes Herrasti, Germán Labrador, Berta Martínez, Jorge Puente, Luis Ríos, Manuel Rivas and Emilio Silva.

Kept Awake, the title of this book, plays with the double meaning of the Spanish word *desvelados*. The first layer – meaning, fending off sleep – concerns the dead, while the second meaning – to shed the veil – is incumbent on society as a whole.



Authors book's Bios

Ana Aliende

With a degree in philosophy and the educational sciences, and a doctorate in sociology (1995) from the University of Basque Country, Ana Aliende is an associate professor at the Public University of Navarra. Since 1995 she has worked as a teacher and researcher within the Department of Sociology at the Public University of Navarra, and since 1998 she has participated in the interdisciplinary doctoral program at the University of Basque Country, which has classes throughout Latin America. Her current investigative interests center on the role of science and its applications in so-called “knowledge societies,” and on the importance of expert knowledge and emotionality as a means of understanding the changes brought about by the experience and identity of the subject in the contemporary world.

Christian Caujolle

Caujolle is a journalist, writer, and art curator. His first projects on photography were published in *Libération*. He founded the gallery VU in 1986, was artistic director of Gatherings in the Photographic Arts (France, 1997), and is in charge of *Voir et Dire* collections as well as the CCF Foundation of the Actes Sud publishing house in Paris. He has been the visiting curator at the Rotterdam Photography Biennial (Holland, 2000) and at PHotoEspaña (2001). He has participated in a range of catalogues (including those of Michael Ackerman and Chema Madoz, among others), and has published monographs on artists such as William Klein and Raymond Depardon.

Carme Coch

An archeologist with a specialty in anthropology, she has worked with the Aranzadi Science Society since 2003 in the exhumations of human remains from the Spanish Civil War.



Francisco Etxeberria

A medical doctor with his degree from the University of Basque Country, he is a specialist in legal medicine and forensics, as well as anthropology and biological forensics. He holds a masters degree in medical law from the Complutense University of Madrid, and is president of the Aranzadi Science Society, to which he has belonged since 1973. There he leads the working group on the study of the disappeared and the mass graves of the Spanish Civil War, which has collaborated with various historical memory associations in over a hundred exhumations throughout the country. He is also a member of the Experts Committee of the Human Rights Commission of the Chilean Government for the investigation of those disappeared during the dictatorship, and he has received the Human Rights Prize from the Autonomous Delegation of Guipúzcoa in 2006, and the Human Rights Prize awarded by the Basque Government in 2007.

Alberto Fernández

Fernández holds a degree in biology from the Autonomous University of Madrid, as well as a diploma in criminal studies, with a specialization in forensic genetics. He has worked in the Genetic Forensics Department at LabGenetics, where in addition to carrying a current forensic caseload, he is also involved in the identification of bone remains from the period of the Spanish Civil War.

Francisco Ferrándiz

With a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley (1996), he is the lead scientist at the Institute of Language, Literature, and Anthropology at the Center of Human and Social Sciences, as well as the principal researcher of the project I+D+i: Las políticas de memoria en la España contemporánea: Balance de una década de exhumaciones (2010-2012).

Almudena García-Rubio

With a degree in history from the Complutense University of Madrid and having studied at the postgraduate level in physical and forensic anthropology at the University of Granada, she has participated in the exhumations with the Aranzadi Science Society, among other groups, since 2003. Currently she is part of the team in charge of the identification process at the Anthropology Practicum at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

**Lourdes Herrasti**

Holding a degree in geography and history, and a professor of secondary education, she is a member of the Anthropology Department at the Aranzadi Science Society. She has carried out several projects related to funerary archeology, has directed and participated in various investigative projects, and has published numerous articles on paleopathology, anthropology, and ritual. She is an active participant both in the exhumations and in the study of human remains discovered in the mass graves of the Spanish Civil War.

Germán Labrador

Professor of Contemporary Spanish Literature at Princeton University, with a PhD in Spanish Literature and an undergraduate degree in Hispanic and Romance Philology from the University of Salamanca, he has completed his doctoral studies at the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne), the University of California, Berkeley, and New York University. His research is situated along the disciplinary borders of philosophy of culture and cultural studies, in the process of attributing a genealogy to subjects and voices excluded from history and with the aim of producing accounts that can serve the imagination of alternative modernities in the context of the always insufficient peninsular modernity. *Culpables por la literature. Poéticas e imaginarios de la transición española* is the title of his doctoral thesis.

Berta Martínez

An archeologist, she holds a degree in geography and history from the Complutense University of Madrid and a masters degree in Americo-Indian studies. Since 2007 she has worked on exhumations related to the Spanish Civil War as a member of the team at the Aranzadi Science Society, directed by Francisco Etxeberria, and on the subsequent bone analysis as a member of the Anthropology Practicum at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

Jorge Puente

Puente holds a degree in the biological sciences and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in forensic sciences from the Medical School of the University of Santiago de Compostela. Since 2006 he has worked as General Director of LabGenetics with the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory and with the Department of Biology at the Autonomous University of Madrid in the genetic identification of bone remains from the mass graves of the Spanish Civil War.

**Luis Ríos**

With a degree in biology, he is an assistant on the Anthropology Practicum in the Biology Department at the Autonomous University of Madrid. Since 2005 he has worked on the exhumation and identification of bone remains from the common graves of cemeteries of prisoners from the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath.

Manuel Rivas

Considered one of the most outstanding voices of contemporary Galician literature, he has written in diverse genres such as the novel, essay, and poetry. In 1996 he was awarded the National Narrative Prize.

Emilio Silva

A journalist, with a degree in sociology, he is the grandson of the first victim of the Francoist repression to later be identified through a DNA test. The grave in which the remains of his grandfather were found, alongside the skeletons of twelve other Republican citizens, was exhumed in a ditch in October, 2000. From that moment forward, he has been one of the chief exponents of the Association for the Recovery of History Memory, where he has since served as president and he has collaborated as a volunteer. The objectives of that collective are to obtain the truth, justice, and reparations for the victims of the Franco dictatorship, and to work for the social recognition of those who sought to construct the first Spanish democracy during the Second Republic.



Book's credits

Dimensions 15 x 21,5 cm. Paperback, 272 pages.

Photographs 125 BW photographs of Clemente Bernad

Coordinator Carolina Martínez

Textual Coordinator Francisco Ferrándiz

Graphic Design gráfica futura

Proofreading Jonathan Blitzer

Translators Jonathan Blitzer Eleanor Pitt

Photomechanics Cromotex

Printer Brizzolis

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Movie: "Dying for dreams"

The film runs approximately 30', and it shows more a personal view of the subject than a journalistic approach.

The film has three plot lines:

-The first is María Alonso's story, from La Bañeza (León). María Alonso was imprisoned with her mother and daughters during the month of July 1936, and she was killed at Izagre along with 9 young men from La Bañeza.

As she had an infection at her right ear, she left one of her earrings at home when she was arrested. 72 years later, when the ARMH volunteers were exhumating her mortal remains, they discovered one earring. They tried unfortunately to find the second one, until Josefina -her daughter- stopped them saying that she had the second one since María's death.

This real story has been adapted and narrated for the film by the Spanish poet **Juan Carlos Mestre**, National Poetry prize 2009.

-The second one is a trip through the places where remains the symbology of Franco's regime. This is a dark trip under the original music composed for the film by **Mikel Gaztelurrutia**, a young Spanish composer.



-The third one is a trip through different places where mass graves have been exhumated since year 2000. It shows Laurentino Fernández's story, whose mother was killed because she was the teacher of a little village called Burón. The story of the mass grave at Villamayor de los Montes, where 46 men were killed. The burial of 81 people killed and exhumated from a mass grave at Magallon. The exhumation at Loma de Montija. The exhumation at La Legua. The exhumation at Urzante. It also shows the work at the forensic-archaeologist laboratories of the Basque Country University at San Sebastián and of the Autonomous University of Madrid.

Title Dying for dreams

Year 2011

Running time 24'

Screenplay and directed Clemente Bernad

Cinematography Clemente Bernad

Editing Manuel Bauer

Music Mikel Gaztelurrutia

Sound Design David Mantecón and Ismael Calvo

Executive production María Luisa Asiain

Produced by Clemente Bernad

Production Manager Carolina Martínez



Multimedia exhibition

We don't think the exhibition in the classical way of showing photos hanged from a wall, but we want to integrate photographs and sounds in an audiovisual show. The idea is to create an intimate environment where the spectator could make an approach to the facts that happened in Spain since July 1936.

It's possible to choose between two different exhibitions:

-The most complete way consists in four screens where approximately 1,000 photographs run in a 20 minutes loop.

.One screen shows faces of people killed by Franco's regime since the beginning of the war.

.Another screen shows places where there are mass graves

.The last two screens show photographs of the exhumations of mass graves: the work of the forensic & archaeological teams, the relatives, the exhumation of the bones, the work at the laboratories, the burials, etc.

-When it's no possible to have four different projection screens, we can integrate the four projections in an individual screening. It runs 20 minutes, and shows half of contents of the complete exhibition.

We highly recommend to show the movie simultaneously with the exhibition, preferably in a separate room.



Lectures & presentations

In the case you only need a lecture or a presentation of the book, we can offer you a 10 minutes projection. It contains a summary of the whole show.





Author Bio

Clemente Bernad was born in Pamplona in 1963.

Bernad holds a degree in fine arts from the University of Barcelona and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in sociology from the Public University of Navarra. Since 1986 he has worked as a freelance photographer for the press and is a member of the Italian photography agency Contrasto.

Bernad holds a degree in fine arts from the University of Barcelona and a Certificate of Advanced Studies in sociology from the Public University of Navarra. Photographer, filmmaker, and independent documentarian since 1986, he has a marked interest in social and political themes in the most immediate cultural context.

He is most known for his work "Jornaleros" about Andalusian agricultural wage laborers, his work from Chiapas after the Zapatista Uprising, "Mujeres Sin Tierra" about Saharan women, his participation in the "Pobres en Nosotros" project about marginalized youth, and his extensive work on the political conflict in the Basque Country.

In 2004 he published "Malika's dream", about the return of Malika's corpse back home. She was a young girl from Morocco who died trying to reach Spain on a small boat. He made his first documentary film on the same subject.

His most recent work has been from Latin America. He has worked on "Where memory dwells" since 2003.

At present, he continues to work as an independent artist, teacher, and writer.



Information

Technical Data

Book "Kept awake". 272 pág. 125 BW photographs. 28 €.

Multimedia exhibition. 4 screens in a 20' loop. (Possibility of an individual screening)

Documentary "Dying for dreams". 24'

Available from October 2011

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