

Synopsis :

THE OTHER WAR

Photographic documentary by
Miquel Dewever-Plana

Guatemala 2007 - 2012

Chronic crime, extreme poverty and widespread corruption : Guatemala is sinking ever deeper into violence. The country's youth, lacking any perspectives for the future, flock to join the Maras. That is the name given to the gangs who terrorise the population and destroy all forms of social cohesion.

This violence is aggravated by the failure of preventative or repressive policies that have been tried by successive governments, each one as much overwhelmed by the task as corrupt. Fourteen years after the peace agreements that marked the end of the genocide perpetrated by the army against the Mayan population, this country of 13 million people has become one of the most dangerous in the world, with a daily average of 18 killings, 98% of which go unsolved. Drug dealing, smuggling of arms and of people, alcoholism, incest... all of which thrive on the poverty and unemployment of families destroyed by war and immigration.

The photographer Miquel Dewever-Plana has been recording this little-known reality in detail for the past ten years. With one certainty : it is the lack of education, the fragility of social structures and the impunity of the powerful that create the conditions for the violence. This phenomenon is coming closer to Europe, as proved by the appearance of gangs in certain large cities.

The Other War is a collection of photographs, sometimes hard but never spectacular, which are the fruit of a long investigation on the ground. Added to these images are the stories of those caught up in the system - victims, police officers, mareros – that Miquel Dewever-Plana has compiled since 2007.

Two works have been published by Bec en l'Air : « The Other War » and « Alma » (Collatéral collection) Echoing the images by Miquel Dewever-Plana of the young Alma, who for five years was a member of one of Guatemala's most violent gangs, Isabelle Fougère gives life to Alma's voice and that of the other actors in her life in a polyphonic literary recital. Her tale mixes reality and fiction to highlight the universal aspect of the fate of the young woman, confronted by the extreme brutality of a world that is falling apart.

Also available : Apps for i-Pad and Android

A web-documentary by Miquel Dewever-Plana and Isabelle Fougère, called Alma, confessions of a child of violence, produced by Upian, Arte and the VU' agency : <http://alma.arte.tv/>

Alma belonged for five years to one of the most violent gangs in Guatemala, a country ravaged by strife that amounts to war. This is her confession, up front and direct. It is a unique tale of daily life in Guatemala and within the gangs, in which the young woman's words are backed up by images and memories.