

## **Estudio elemental del Levante**

(Luis López Navarro)

2018

With its out-of-control and plagued-by-contradictions development, the region of Levante in Spain is an anthropologic laboratory and a mock-up of contemporary Spain.

Beyond the classic tourist beach icons and paella, the region of Levante offers a number of identity signs with deeper and subtle meanings for the native observer who knows how to read them. Looking at the everyday scenes, the photographer finds elements that suddenly relate to him (and relate to each other), loaded with connotations.

Levantine icons like the music bands, palm groves and bricks make their appearance. Also making an appearance is the story of the red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*): a parasite from Southeast Asia which attacks palm trees, drying them up and provoking their death. This silent plague, which is violently destroying the iconic Levantine landscape, works on our significant micro-universe as a metaphor for the invisible degradation, the underlying putrefaction of a system that looked healthy. Where there was opulence, beneath there was a parasite undermining it all. Where the surface was brilliant, underlying it there was a systemic disease.

Playing with such meanings, photography works here as a collection of prints that group together in a symphonic score made of several voices, under the pervasive surveillance of brass bands. “Elemental Study of Levante” is a requiem for a way of life that had its moment of crazy glory. It is a delirious musical score and its musical structure is a temporary chaos.

Delving further into the photographic language that began with “El porqué de las naranjas” [The reason for oranges] (Mack, 2014), this work aims to squeeze the meanings offered by the photographer’s most immediate environment, where you can find manifestations of all phenomena, of all the relationships.

The triangle formed by the palm, the brass band and the red palm weevil defines the spiritual map of the systemic crash of contemporary Spain, a violent and creaky shock. It all forms a dissonant symphony. A desperate warning, the shrill screech of metal can be heard in the images themselves.

To visualize the infection, to study the sin, decay, putrefaction as a condition for redemption. At what point was the Levante fucked up? We have already heard in these images a desperate prescient warning.