

BIOGRAPHY

Steve Sabella, born in Jerusalem in 1975, is a London / Berlin based artist. He is **the holder of the Ellen Auerbach Award (2008) granted by the Akademie der Künste** (Academy of the Arts) in Berlin and short-listed & exhibited for the Terry O'Neil Award of Contemporary Photography in the UK (2008). Sabella is also **one of the commissioned artists** for the inauguration of the *Arab Museum of Modern Art* due to open in Qatar Dec. 2010.

Sabella's international shows include: *Neighbors in Dialogue* (Istanbul, Turkey 2007 and Sarajevo, Bosnia 2008), *Gates of the Mediterranean* (Rivoli, Italy, 2008), *Palestine, La Création Dans Tous Ses Etats, Institut du Monde Arabe & the National Museum of Bahrain* (Paris 2009), *Deconstructing Myths & Realities*, Gallery Caprice Horn, Berlin, *NOW - Contemporary Art of the 21st Century, Phillips De Pury* (London 2009), and *This is Not a Love Song*, The Empty Quarter gallery (Dubai 2010), *Award Month, Akademie der Künste (Berlin 2010)*, a **retrospective solo Steve Sabella In Exile** at the Metroquadro Gallery (Turin 2010) and **The Interrupted Image**, Nicholas Robinson Gallery (New York 2010).

Sabella's project *jerusalem in exile* explored the mental image Palestinians held of Jerusalem and has gained international attention, leading to its **production into a documentary film**. Consequently, Sabella has been giving a visual form through photomontage to the 'state of mind' of living in 'mental exile'.

Steve Sabella studied art photography at the Jerusalem School of Photography and New Media in 1994, and holds a BA in Visual Arts from the State University of New York (2007). Sabella received his first MA with a **Caparo Award of Distinction in Photographic Studies (2008) from the University of Westminster** and his second MA in Art Business (2009) at **Sotheby's Institute of Art in London**. Sabella **gave art talks / presentations** in several places including the **University of Cambridge**, Turin University, SOAS, University of East London, **Accademia Albertina Delle Belle Arti in Turin**, Rostock University, Akademie der Künste in Berlin & and the **British Museum in London**.

Sabella's artworks and life triggered much media attention, including several TV & film documentaries. His earlier artworks have been reviewed in *Palestinian Art* by Kamal Boullata (Saqi Books 2009), and recent artworks have been reviewed in *New Vision: Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century* (Thames & Hudson 2009). *In Exile* was on the **front and back cover of Contemporary Practices journal VI, 2010 including two retrospective reviews**.

Steve Sabella's artworks have been collected by Ars Aevi museum in Sarajevo and leading collectors in the Middle East (Barjeel Art Foundation).

EDUCATION

- 2008 - 2009 MA, Art Business, Sotheby's Institute of Art, London, UK.
- 2007 - 2008 MA, Photographic Studies, University of Westminster, London, UK.
- 2005 - 2007 BA, Visual Arts, State University of New York, USA.
- 1994 - 1997 Three year studies in Art Photography at the Naggar School of
Photography, Media & New Music in Jerusalem.

EXHIBITIONS (group, selected)

- Sept 2010 New York, The Interrupted Image, **Nicholas Robinson Gallery**.
- Jun 2010 Berlin, *Young Academy*, **Akademie der Kunste**
- Mar 2010 Dubai, *This is Not a Love Song*, **The Empty Quarter Gallery**.
- Jan 2010 Bahrain. *Palestine la Creation dans Tous Ses Etats*, **National Museum of Bahrain**.
- Sep 2009 London, UK. *NOW Art of the 21st Century*. **Phillips de Pury**.
- Jun 2009 Paris, France. *Palestine la Creation dans Tous Ses Etats*, **Institut du Monde Arabe**.
- May 2009 Berlin, Germany. *Deconstructing Myths & Realities*, **Gallery Caprice Horn**.
- Mar 2009 East Sussex, UK. *In Exile*, **Independent Photographers Gallery**.
- Nov 2008 London, UK. *In Exile*, Fulham Palace. **Artwork short listed for the Terry O'Neil Contemporary Photography Award**.
- Oct 2008 Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. *Mentalopia* at Collegium Artisticum City Gallery as part of the Istanbul Collection for **Ars Aevi Museum**.
- Sep 2008 London, UK. *In Exile* as part of the SKIP INTRO exhibition.
- Apr 2008 Turin, Italy. *In Exile* at Palazzo Piozzo as part of the **Gates of the Mediterranean, curated by Martina Corgnati**.
- Jul 2007 Jerusalem. *Challenging Walls*, an international exhibition that was **projected on the Separation Wall in Jerusalem**.
- Mar 2007 Istanbul, Turkey. *Mentalopia* as part of the *Neighbors in Dialogue* exhibition, **curated by Beral Madra**.
- Jun 2006 Cork, Ireland. *Exit*, Art in a Social Context, organized by Boomerang Theatre.
- Nov 2005 Bethlehem. *Kan Yama Kan* as part of an International exhibition on Land People & Identities at the International Center of Bethlehem.
- Jan 2005 **New York** . *At Home* at the Abrons Arts Center.
- Sep 2004 Ramallah, Palestine. *Till the End – spirit of the place* at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center.
- Oct 2004 Frankfurt – Germany. Frankfurt Book Fare, as part of the Palestinian Ministry of Culture participation.
- Jan 2003 **Chicago, USA**. *Mind, Body, & Soul*, **ARC Gallery**.
- Dec 2002 Rome, Italy. *Eyes from Jerusalem* at the **Museum of Rome in Trastevere**.
- May 2002 Jerusalem. *Homeland* at the Jerusalem School of Photography.
- Apr 1999 Jerusalem. *Kick Off*, The New Gallery.
- Feb 1998 Tel Aviv. *Search* at Beit Ha'am gallery.
- Jul 1997 Tel-Hai. *Untitled (light boxes)* at the Tel-Hai museum.

EXHIBITIONS (solo)

May 2010

Retrospective exhibition on the concept of exile at the Metroquadro Gallery in Rivoli/Turin in Italy.

July to October 2005

Kan Yama Kan & Till the End at the French Cultural Center in Jerusalem and at the Franco-German Cultural Center in Ramallah, Palestine.

September 2003 to April 2004

End of Days at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Nablus, the International Center of Bethlehem, Al-Hallaj Gallery in Ramallah, French Cultural Center in Gaza, and French Cultural Center in Jerusalem.

November 2002

Life is Splendid at the Artotheque De Montreal gallery in Montreal Canada.

September 2002

Identity at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah.

August 2002

Search at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah.

February 1998

Search at the French Cultural Center in Jerusalem.

SELECTED AWARDS / HONORS

- 2010 One of the **commissioned artists** for the inaugural exhibition of the **Arab Museum of Modern Art** in Qatar due to open Dec 9, 2010.
- Artwork on the **Front & Back cover of the 6th edition of Contemporary Practices Art Journal**. The same artwork at **Christie's auction** April 27, 2010 for the International Modern and Contemporary Art (Dubai).
- 2008 **Holder of the Ellen Auerbach Award (2008)** granted by the Akademie der Kunster (Academy of the Arts) in Berlin, Germany.
- Caparo Award of Distinction** for the MA in Photographic Studies, University of Westminster.
- Short listed and exhibited for the **Terry O'Neil Contemporary Photography Award** in the UK.
- Said Foundation scholarship** for a second Masters degree (Art Business at Sotheby's Institute of Art).
- 2007 **Chevening Scholarship** for a Master's Degree in Photographic Studies at the University of Westminster.
- Chosen as **Artist of the Month** (May) at The Virtual Gallery in Birzeit University in Palestine
- 2005 Chosen **as one of Palestine's Trade Marks** in Pillars Magazine (Feb issue).
- 2004 Photographer of the Aga Khan Architectural Award 2004 (first prize) that was granted to the Welfare Association for its architectural revitalization project carried out in the Old City of Jerusalem.
- 2002 **Winner of Young Artist Award** competition organized by A.M. Qattan Foundation in Ramallah..

ART TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

- 2010 **University of Cambridge**
Invited to present and discuss my work as part of *the Conflict in Cities and the Contested State* workshops at CRASSH.
- 2009 **British Museum, UK**
Presentation of my artwork in the Arched Room. Talk was part of the presentation by Dr Venetia Porter on recent and future acquisitions.
- Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere at Turin University, Italy**
Talk focused on *Jerusalem in Exile* (2005) and *Imagined Cities*.
- School of Oriental & African Studies SOAS, London**
Deconstructing Exile as part of the three day workshop: *From the Nile to the Indus - The Contemporary Art of the Middle East and Pakistan*. Key speakers included Dr Venetia Porter, Rose Issa and Anthony Downey.
- Rostock University, Germany**
Deconstructing Exile as part of the *Scholarly Discourses and Their Representations* workshop.
- 2008 **University of East London, UK.**
Invited as a guest artist for an art presentation for the MA Refugee Studies at the University of East London.
- Warwick University, UK.**
Art Talk / Lecture. *What Do Pictures Want*, as part of workshop on Cross-Cultural Encounter, and Inter-Religious Dialogue in Europe and the Middle East.
- Akademie der Künster (Academy of the Arts), Berlin.**
Presentation to members of the academy as part of my nomination and award of the Ellen Auerbach Award for the year 2008. Award included the publication of an art book on my work.
- Accademia Albertina Delle Belle Arti Torino, University of Turin, Italy.**
Presentation of my artworks as part of *The Gates of Mediterranean* exhibition curated by Martina Corgnati.

SELECTED ART BOOK REVIEWS 2009

- 2009 **New Vision: Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century (Thames & Hudson)**
Christie's Launch in London. Edited By Hossein Amirsadeghi, Nada Shabout & Salwa Mikdadi. Reviewed artworks: *In Exile* & *Cecile Elise Sabella*.
- Palestinian Art 1850 to the Present (Saqi Books).**
Review of earlier artworks (*Identity*) by Kamal Boullata.
- The Gates of Mediterranean (SKIRA)**
Exhibition Book/Catalogue curated by Martina Corgnati, Rivoli – Italy 2008

TV / FILM DOCUMENTARIES

- 2010 **Ma'an TV Productions, Palestine. Europe Through Their Eyes.**
TV Documentary on my Art & Life in Europe. Producer Amany El-Khayat is creating five TV documentaries which will be aired in Palestine and Europe. My participation is approximately 55 minutes.
- 2007 **Eyes Infinite Films, USA. Beyond Blue & Grey.**
The film consists of five episodes. Two of them were about *Jerusalem in Exile* (2006) and *Kan Yama Kan* (2005) artworks respectively.
- 2003 **Israel TV Channel 1 Productions. Steve Sabella**
Documentary by TV director Avi Peretz. Artworks featured included *Identity* (2002) and *End of Days* (2003).
- 1998 **Israel TV Channel 1 Productions. Steve Sabella**
Documentary by TV director Avi Peretz. Artworks featured included *Search* (1997) and earlier artworks.

ART GRANTS

- 2010 Akademie der Kunste (Academy of the Arts) in Berlin partially sponsors the publishing of a monograph.
- 2007 French Consulate and the French Cultural Center CCF sponsor the *Jerusalem in Paris* week organized by Steve Sabella.
- 2006 Generous art grant from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation AECI to sustain the *jerusalem in exile* (2006) project for six months.
- 2005 French Cultural Center CCF fully sponsors the making of the art exhibition *Kan Yama Kan* and its touring in five Palestinian cities.
- 2003 French Cultural Center CCF fully sponsors the making of the art exhibition *End of Days* and its touring in five Palestinian cities.

PUBLISHED ACADEMIC ESSAYS

- 2009 '*Valued*' in the 'West', Sold in the 'East' - *The Need for a Virtual Code of Ethics?* Contemporary Art Practices journal - Volume V.
- Is The United Arab Emirates Constructing its Art History? The Mechanisms that Confer Value to Art.* Contemporary Art Practices journal - Volume IV.
- Palestinian Conceptual Art. Emily Jacir Shifting to an Art that Engages the Mind of the Viewer.* Contemporary Art Practices journal - Volume III.

MUSEUM / FOUNDATION COLLECTIONS

- 2010 Edition 4/6 of *In Exile* artwork was acquired by the Barjeel Art Foundation (Sheikh Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi) collection in the UAE.
- 2007 Edition 1 of artwork *Mentalopia* (10 pieces) is part of the permanent collection of Ars Aevi museum in Sarajevo.

AUCTIONS

- 2010 Christie's Dubai. International Modern & Contemporary Art, April 27.
- 2009 Exhibition & Auction NOW Art of the 21 Century at Phillips de Pury, London.

Downloads of the articles below are available on stevesabella.com.

2010 **Endorsed by Arttactic (insider view of the art market) as an Artist to Watch in the Middle Eastern Report June 2010.**

Steve Sabella: In Exile

By Charlotte Bank

Nafas Art Magazine - Universe in Universe

These contorted passageways through his own psyche led the artist to the roots of his wounds and gave him an inkling of the possibility of healing. While the destructiveness of being uprooted was at the center of In Exile, Sabella's newest works move, release and liberation into the foreground. Euphoria (2010) alludes to the blissful feeling of being freed of mental fetters. This feeling – possibly short-lived, as the artist himself concedes – is expressed in playful-seeming, uprooted trees..."

Steve Sabella

Retrospective by Martina Corgnati

Review Contemporary Practices Journal, VI, 2010

From 1997 on, the images, series and projects of Steve Sabella are periscopes drowned in the invisible of human condition, the uncanny and the search for a meaning; an "exile" that starts as physical and contingent and ends becoming mental, a category of the soul that needs an answer, or a series of answers from each one of us; answers that change – evolve during a lifetime. So, Sabella raised the horizon to his own eyelevel: From a contingent one to a universal one, escaping every rhetoric, though not losing his identity as an artist, but on the contrary, conquering it.

Steve Sabella - The Journey of Artistic Interrogation and Introspection

Retrospective Review by Yasmin El Rashidi

Contemporary Practices Journal, VI, 2010

*Palestinian-born artist Steve Sabella could well be a younger, more alternative, more artistic version of the late Edward Said. Like the literary exile who lived in an enclave of a world he had created for himself on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, surrounded and consumed and embedded in the construct of texts that deconstructed the reality he struggled with, Sabella is one who lives in an equal state of alienation – confined to an exile that transcends place: London, and rather is contained in the bounds of his mind. **A mind that like Said's did deconstructs only to rebuild again, but in this case, using a terminology of visual narratives.***

SETTLEMENT

by Bina Sarkar

International Gallerie magazine, Issue 25, 2010

Convincing six Israelis to strip for him and stand in their underwear, Sabella creates an artwork that is uncommon in the region as it shifts from ubiquitous views of 'Nostalgia'. Instead, it engages the viewer in a strong visual debate and thought.

Territory in Exile - Exile of Identity

In Exile reviewed by Stephanie Ravel

L'Agenda Magazine, Jan 2010

A leading figure of the new wave of Palestinian artists, Steve Sabella is reworking the image of Palestinian art. Conceptual and psychological, his photomontage series In Exile challenges the traditional approach to the Palestinian question.

Steve Sabella in Exile - Conversation with the Artist

Retrospective Review by Sara Rossino

Solo Exhibition Catalogue by the Metroquadro Gallery in Italy - May, 2010

The first time you find yourself in front of the artworks which make up the In Exile series by Steve Sabella, you have a strange feeling of familiarity. Not with regards to the places which are featured in the images, fragments of a subjective reality which is alien to the viewer, details of the everyday London life which the artist has been living with his family for the past three years since he left the Old City of Jerusalem. These shards of captured memories, deconstructed and reconstructed, are intimate to Sabella because they belong to his daily dimension, but are distant from the spectator, lacking a familiar or recognizable reference, extracted from an anonymous anywhere.

2009

Steve Sabella

In Exile & Cecile Elise Sabella reviewed in *New Vision - Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century* (Thames & Hudson & TransGlobe Publishing).

One of the most important themes running throughout all of Sabella's work is the concept of exile, the result of growing up in a divided city such as Jerusalem: 'As far as I remember I always felt out of place in my city of birth. Alienation was surrounding me. Kamal Boullata [another Jerusalem artist] remarked...how I function like an artist in exile even though I lived in my city of birth. It took me a few years to understand the meaning of his words. I was not "physically" in exile. It was Jerusalem that was exiled and hence...all those who lived in it were in exile.'

Reconstructing Deconstruction

In Exile reviewed by Gerhard Charles Rump
Contemporary Art Practices Journal, Vol. V, 2009

Sabella serializes different single images to form a kind of overall structured image, a super-image. The function of the super-image is broader and bigger than that of the individual images it is composed of. His metaphor of the city (of Jerusalem) is that of windows or window-fronts or parts of house-facades. There is light coming from within, and the tilting and mirroring (in symmetries) adds dynamism to the super-image thus created

Von Angesicht zu Angesicht (Face to Face)

Settlement - Six Israelis & One Palestinian, Review by Doerthe Engelcke
Zenith Magazine, Jan 2009

Der Besucher betritt den Raum und sieht sich sechs lebensgrossen Fotografien von Israelis in Unterhosen gegeneinander. Dreht er sich um, blickt er in das Gesicht des Kuenstlers selbst: Steve Sabella. Auch in Unterhose. Automatisch solidarisiert sich der Betrachter mit einer Seite, in einem unbewussten Prozess. Die Gegeneberstellung kreiert einen Spiegeleffekt und hinterfragt die Identitaet beider Parteien. "Sechs Israelis formen einen Koerper, und mein Abbild wird gedacklich in sechs Koerper zersetzt", erklaert Sabella

Jerusalem in the Heart Two Urban Artists in Exile

Kamal Boullata in Palestinian Art (Saqi Books 2009)

And yet, it is in Sabella's conscious avoidance of photographing Jerusalem that the visual artist has managed to recreate the universality of a place with which he identifies. In that respect, his search for his true self may be likened to those monks who, drawn by Jerusalem, came from distant lands only to spend the rest of their lives in bare and desolate landscapes. Only there could Sabella find a Jerusalem where he might breathe fresh air.

PRINTED PRESS / MEDIA CLIPS & TV DOCUMENTARIES

An extensive detailed list of printed press, reviews and TV documentaries can be furnished upon request.

UPCOMING EVENTS

For updates of up coming art talks, exhibitions and publications refer to <http://stevesabella.com/calendar.html>