

STEVE SABELLA'S WAVELENGTHS

The Jerusalem-born artist returns to Metroquadro
with photographic works, including a new series—“On Earth”

May 3, 2018 - June 28, 2018

Metroquadro gallery is proud to present the next solo show of the award-winning and internationally exhibited artist Steve Sabella, born in Jerusalem, Palestine, and based in Berlin since 2010. Sabella returns to Metroquadro with *Wavelengths*, a constellation of photo-collages that includes a new body of work, “On Earth”. Since his first exhibition in Italy, *Eyes from Jerusalem* at Museo di Roma in Trastevere (2002), Sabella has exhibited for *Nel Mezzo del Mezzo* at Museo Riso (Palermo, 2015, curated by Christine Macel, Marco Mazzini and Bartomeu Mari), his solo retrospective *Archaeology of the Future* at the International Centre for Photography Scavi Scaligeri (Verona, 2014), and *Gates of the Mediterranean* at the Palazzo Piozzo (Rivoli, 2008, curated by Martina Corgnati). For the Fo.To - Fotografi a Torino festival, Sabella will also give an artist talk at the Museo Ettore Fico.

Since the mid 1990s, Sabella has pushed the photographic medium to its limits. His experimentation in darkroom processes and digital composition, along with his bold responses to pressing political conflicts of the last decades, has garnered him an international reputation. Critics have placed him in a distinguished caliber of contemporary artists from the Arab World and beyond, those who speak a visual language both local and global.

The artworks in *Wavelengths* redraw the shifting line between individual and collective, familiar and foreign, and even photography and painting. Often, they begin with photographs of the everyday. Digitally tiling, flipping and slicing these images, Sabella's photomontages perform an alchemy on the visible world: in “Metamorphosis” (2012), static objects become alien, making up compositions that circulate form and color like tidal patterns. The “Sinopia” (2012) series sees Bahrain recomposed through the artist's eyes—spraypainted political graffiti and its overpainting by authorities are merged into one luminous chorus; Manama's skyline is shot from 360 degrees and flattened to the form of a sound wave. Sabella then transposed this form into an audio frequency, and commissioned jazz ensemble The Khoury Project to interpret and play “The Voice of Manama”.

Artworks from “On Earth” (2018) waver between the figurative and abstract. Seen from afar, they appear as rhythmic compositions in palettes of earth, water and flesh. Up close, one notices the collages are peopled with scenes, blended together from photographs Sabella took during his road trips. Yet, there is an otherworldliness to these images of our planet. Their pictorial depth and perspective follow the logic of a dream, bearing multiple timestamps. As floating worlds between painting and photography, their visual language is at once historical and contemporary—a plastic rainbow-raft floats alongside Classical nymphs in an Edenic landscape; a lone wanderer could be walking across Mars or ancient Sparta. These collages render our world at once familiar and alien, containing many layers and innumerable connotations. Sabella leaves it to the spectator to travel through their unseen landscapes, possibly discovering a new detail, a deeper reading, on each journey.

Sabella's artworks are held in several major international collections, including the British Museum (London), Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art (Doha), and the Arab World Institute (Paris). “Sinopia” has been acquired for the permanent collections of the Bahrain National Museum and the Ramzi Dalloul private museum, Beirut, which also holds a full edition of the “Metamorphosis” collages. His 2014 monograph, *Steve Sabella - Photography 1997-2014* was published by Hatje Cantz and the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, which awarded him the Ellen Auerbach Award for Photography in 2008. Other recent publications include *Archaeology of the Future* (Maretti Editore, 2014), released alongside his retrospective, and *Fragments From Our Beautiful Future* (Kerber Verlag, 2017), accompanying his exhibition at The Bumiller Collection, Berlin.

Sabella is also an accomplished author. His memoir *The Parachute Paradox* was published by Kerber Verlag in 2016, and won the Eric Hoffer and Nautilus Book Awards for the best in its genre. London's *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed* claimed the book “proposes a subject that is unprecedented in Palestinian literature: the liberation of the self and the homeland through the liberation of the imagination.”



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