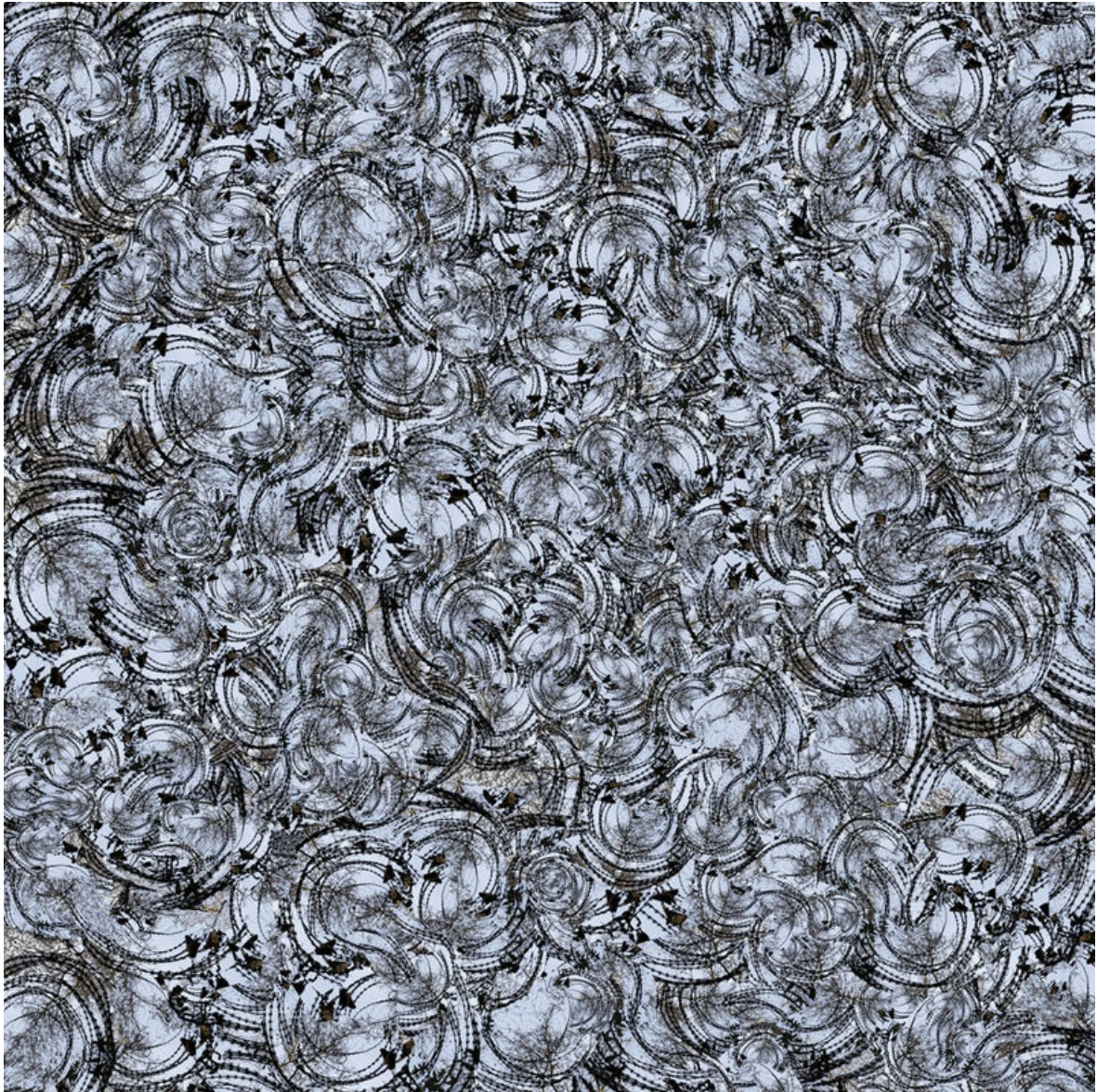


Life In Berlin: 'The Parachute Paradox,' Part One

 nprberlin.de/post/life-berlin-parachute-paradox-part-one

By Monika Müller-Kroll



- "Metamorphosis 5" (2012, 160 x 160 cm, Lightjet print on diasec, 3.5-cm aluminum box edge) by Steve Sabella.

Courtesy of Steve Sabella

Listen

Listening...

2:58

Steve Sabella is a Jerusalem-born and Berlin-based visual artist. His collages and photographs give concrete form to the paradoxes of life growing up Palestinian among Israeli settlements in Jerusalem's Old City. It can be complicated, so I'll let artist Steve Sabella introduce himself:

"When people ask me where I come from, I say I come from planet Earth. I mean, where else? Then they ask, 'Where were you born?' which I think is the right question. I acknowledge one-hundred percent where I come from, where I was born, which is the Old City of Jerusalem, where I lived for almost thirty years."

We're in the studio to discuss his new memoir, *The Parachute Paradox*, about Sabella's life and work.

"The only way to move forward is to move forward," Sabella tells me. "I do believe I was living in exile, mental exile, for many years even in my home city of Jerusalem. So what do we do? So I created my own visual dilemmas and once I solved these, I found my own liberation. And I came to terms with my past."

"You solve these problems visually," I respond. "So can you talk about the 'Settlement: Six Israelis and One Palestinian' project as a kind of example?"

"I wanted to create a work that somehow mirrors the conflict in Palestine and Israel," says Sabella. "So I looked for six Israelis who served in the army, and I asked all of them to strip to their underwear and stand in a line: Six, one next to the other. But I also stripped myself and stood across from them on the other side. And I called this work 'Settlement: Six Israelis and One Palestinian.' Ironically, how can one Palestinian pose a threat on the six Israelis? The installation itself creates a visual tension."

"Is it important to you to have *The Parachute Paradox* come out in Arabic?" I ask.

"Yes, absolutely," he responds. "I was looking to have the Arabic version come out first. It was very important for the book to come out in Arabic, because it comes, from my humble opinion, at a moment where there is a sense of defeat in the Arab world, especially in Palestine. In my opinion, the book brings back agency to the individual, to the imagination. We are now seeing a generation of Palestinians that can't even imagine living in freedom, so how on earth can one expect to liberate the land of Palestine? If the mind is not liberated, there is no way to liberate anything. In three words, the book could be about decolonization of the imagination. "

Steve Sabella's memoir, *The Parachute Paradox*, is now out in a limited edition from Kerber Verlag. In the next installment, Sabella shares excerpts from the book.

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