

# Steve Sabella

## What are you doing now?

I'm working on several projects at the moment:

- My memoir - The Parachute Paradox: to be published in September 2016 by Kerber Verlag. The memoir tackles my journey from occupation, to exile, to liberation, as well as the colonisation of the imagination.
- Photobook - Palestine Photo Journey 1998-2007 (title TBD): Images I made during my work as a professional art photographer with the UN, will be accompanied by three essays, including one on the history of photography in Palestine by Dr Issam Nassar, and an essay on the use and abuse of images in political conflict.
- Sinopia Skylines - Sounds of the World: A series of artworks that will transform city skylines into audio frequencies through collage. Sound artists from each city in the series will translate these frequencies into audio, effectively creating, or encapsulating, the sound of each city.

**What did you find most valuable about your course at Westminster? How did the skills you learnt during your degree help you to shape your career?**

What was most valuable was the knowledge of my

professors, and their sincere efforts to push all of their students forward. When I left Jerusalem in 2007 I already wanted to earn two Master's degrees. The first one had to be in photographic theory or art practice. To counter the extreme dynamics of the art market/world, it was clear to me that artists need to strengthen their critical backbones first. I feel that my first MA validates what I do, from the perspective of the public.

## **What was the best thing about being a student in London?**

London is a city where anything you need as an artist is at your fingertips – from libraries, to printers, to binders, to art stores, to galleries, to museums, to talks. When it comes to contemporary art, London is definitely a place attuned to everything that is happening in the art scene. I enjoyed seeing all of the blockbuster exhibitions since they gave great perspectives on artists/movements I wanted to learn about.

## **What advice would you give to someone thinking of pursuing a similar career?**

When I decided to live in London, it became clear to me that to break into an international career, artists need to have knowledge of the art market and how all practitioners work together. That's why I needed to get my second master's at Sotheby's, to be able to earn a living from my art. But having said that, I do believe that the

artist's curse is that artists need to sell their work to survive. My advice would be that artists must understand the dynamics of the market, but at the same time, detach themselves from their art so that whatever happens to it (ie trading) does not contaminate the artistic process. I have learned it the hard way over the years: artists are not for sale, their art is. Once its perception is solid in the artist's mind, he or she will find it easier to navigate their career.

### **Why would you recommend Westminster as a place to study?**

The University of Westminster has great studios, library, and facilities. The photo equipment spans from the rangefinder to large format. Everything is possible. It's up to the students to utilise what's available to the fullest extent.

### **Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself, your achievements, life experiences, what inspires you, or your career that may be valuable or interesting to our prospective students or alumni?**

My advice for prospective students: Many artists, including myself in the past, were chasing after ratings, major museum exhibitions and collections. Today, I find this kind of competition to be a waste of time. Artists, in my opinion, should try their best to work with people and institutions who like, and believe in, what they do - it's all

about the journey. I want to enjoy what I do. If the art is good, it's inevitable that it will reach everywhere over time. Having said that, artists should focus on their art.