

# Stitched Wounds

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Palestinian artist Steve Sabella discusses his new book, *The Parachute Paradox*, in which he explores the concept of liberating the imagination.

In *The Parachute Paradox*, Berlin-based Palestinian artist Steve Sabella discusses life in Jerusalem, the occupation of Palestine and ultimately reaching liberation of the imagination. For Sabella, art is the path to liberation, and recently writing has become a significant part of his work. When he left Jerusalem and moved to London in 2007, he still felt the occupation to be dwelling in his body and consciousness.

When did you first realise you wanted to write this book?

I actually wanted to write this book when I was 20 — it just took 17 years for me to decide to pick up my pen, or in this case open my laptop. In November 2012, there was a moment when I felt I had achieved personal liberation and I wanted to shout that out to the whole world.



What sort of issues do you delve into regarding the Israeli-Palestinian occupation?

The book looks critically at both sides, all from first-hand experience. But at the core is an investigation into the colonisation of the imagination, where the colonised can no longer think or even dream independently from the occupier. The occupation of the land is obvious, but the colonisation of the imagination seems to be mostly invisible. But if Palestinians can no longer imagine living in freedom, then we definitely have a deeper dilemma to solve. If anything, I hope the book brings back agency to the individual, through self-liberation. Once the mind is liberated nothing is impossible.



What was the hardest chapter to write?

Chapter 8, on my daughter Cécile Elise. I was scared that I would not be able to convey the immeasurable amount of love that I have for her. The chapter details the first few years of her life, when we lived in Jerusalem, and were not able to communicate with spoken language. But while we lived in London we found a new language, the language of exile. We started to build our own world. I struggled with this chapter because I had to convey feelings that had no words. It's a chapter on love and loss, on eternal exile and the search for home.



What do you hope to accomplish by publishing this book?

Many people ask me this question. From the perspective of an artist, I always like to share how I look at the world and perceive it. When I don't share this creative energy it gets stagnant within me and I get sick. When I'm done with a project I always feel liberated. And with this book in particular, it seems to target Palestine and Israel and calls for the end of the brutal occupation. It also deals with the reality that we all live under systems that dictate to us how to live, think and even imagine. I want everyone who reads it to feel that our imaginations are free. I want them to consider what I'm convinced of today, that imagination and reality are two sides of the same coin, and that we create our own realities.

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