

## **The Embodied Narrative**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, I explore the narratives that surround my Serbian and English identity, the personal accounts gathered through some of my projects, research and arts initiatives that are expressed here in photography and narrative vignettes. I depict the emotional cartography of exile and the selfhood through images and text, reveal the challenges of subjectivity that exile brings and I invite the moderation of history as a vital step towards democratisation, not only of the national, but political imagination. My work is a dip into the experience in order to articulate it in a bearable vein and reflect on my predominantly artistic endeavour largely influenced by the story of exile. The work is positioning the Balkans in relation to the Western, mostly European prism and proposes the idea that the colonial heritage is permeating that relationship.

In my photographs and texts I perform imaginary reunification of myself. In the images I take and pose for, I am marrying the old self pre-exile and the new one post-event, trying to answer who is it now looking at me and who is it that the others see. I look at my dual identity as it did not exist before my exile or as it is unique because the ones who do not have the experience of exile have no access to such knowledge, but as everybody else, they have a varied experience of self. It is that multiple self in the others that I am provoking by my bodily presence and the refusal to allow them (to any of their selves) to mediate my experience by telling my story. As Said wrote reflecting on exile: "Only... someone whose homeland is "sweet" but whose circumstances make it impossible to recapture that sweetness, can answer those questions." (1984:55)