

Denied Access

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Since I was born, I have always seemed to be denied access. Denied early from the mother's womb, born in a hurry to live, only to be kept in a box, away from love's first touch.

Years have passed and that box that first separated us, is still there, invisible but just as constricting.

The box of "**You are my daughter.**"

I broke that one, finding a field of love on a foreign island, yet entering the box of a foreigner. Of other. You have to settle for a settlement, but you will always be on the outside. So I did.

But hey, I have two passports, two homes, two chances. In time, I would see it - the first one, received, while in a life-saving box, only to be taken away, far away into a country that didn't recognise me as theirs, even if my blood is Bulgarian, that didn't stop them, they wanted me to change. A baby - with denied access, due to their name. So, they changed it. This would be the first of many. Just the beginning of othering, the beginning of many boxes along the way and many name variables.

They changed me, so now I am the only family member with a different surname. No one fought for me then, no one fights for me now, when I change my name with my own two hands, as I was otherwise to be nameless, as my mother doesn't have a son, she has a daughter, so I stay nameless, with a foreign name in a foreign country, that claims to be my home.

So, I looked towards the blue passport, hoping, scheming - one day, I would go back home, to where I was born, so much in a hurry, it must have been exciting to see, no?

Well, 2025 reached and the T has been erased, so I look at my blue passport - my last hope to find a home and wish to burn it.

You were supposed to be my safe box, why?

I am a trans, queer artist working across film, theatre, and writing to explore themes such as identity, displacement, and resistance. My practice is rooted in lived experience — shaped by bureaucratic erasure, cultural alienation, and the invisible constraints of gender and nationality.

Born in the U.S., I was initially denied Bulgarian citizenship despite both my parents being Bulgarian. Later, I faced settlement processes in the UK. These border-crossings, both literal and symbolic, revealed a common tendency: the impulse of systems to rename, reframe, and confine people in boxes.

In my piece Denied Access, I invoke the image of a baby incubator — both a life-saving device and a metaphor for forced separation and controlled existence.

Through poetic language, visual storytelling, and community-building, I work to reclaim narrative power for those, whose stories are often rewritten or silenced. Denied Access was my raw reaction to Trump's anti-trans legislation and the broader rise of far-right politics in both Bulgaria and the UK. It speaks to the pain of being denied home, recognition, and selfhood — again and again, by family, state, and society. I believe art can be both deeply intimate and profoundly political.