

Dafna Kaffeman, **Red Everlasting**, Israel/Norway

The Red Everlasting series by Dafna Kaffeman was created as part of the events of the Norwegian city of Stavanger as European capital of culture in 2008. The original series comprised ten assemblages with a clear political message.

Bound into a complex, multilayered symbolism, the works consist of glass plants, placed on handkerchiefs, which in turn are embroidered with texts by local women who received the sketched handkerchiefs without further explanations.

The texts are quotes from press articles published in Israel between 2006 and 2008 dealing with the local political situation against the backdrop of the Second Lebanon war. The use of Hebrew and Arabic amplifies the nature of the work as an act of protest. The choice of embroiderers who do not speak the language of the texts stemmed from the desire to reinforce the gap between form and content.

The beauty of nature, represented by the delicate crystalline plants, is juxtaposed with texts associated with specific political issues. Kaffeman's plants are only a pretext concealing the real message of the work. The artist selected particular plants that are typical of the Israeli landscape, whose impact is amplified by their symbolism. In the series, there are nine different varieties of wild plants that grow in Israel, and one Norwegian - *Epilobium angustifolium* (fireweed), a plant that buds after fire. Among them is *Helichrysum sanguineum* (the Red Everlasting), known in Hebrew as "*dam hamakabim*" (Blood of the Maccabees) - a central emblem of the Israeli Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers which also has given its name to the series.