

2003 "Shahid"

"WESTEND" (2011)

Raphie Etgar

The work *Shahid* originates in the atmosphere of the Al-Aqsa intifada with its bloodshed and victims. The work is based on a poster meant to recruit volunteers for the jihad- the holy struggle of the Islamist organization in the territories of Judea, Samaria' and Gaza. The recurrence of events - terror attacks, targeted killing, and military reactions - created a wild reality of loss, sorrow, and suffering.

A reality of faded emotions that became a daily routine. "Shahid" is a Muslim religious term originating in the Christian martyr. Literally, it means "witness, a man whose deeds bear witness to his faith". According to Muslim tradition, "Shahid" is title given to a Muslim following his death if he died while following a religious commandment or during a religious war.

In the Arab countries, this title is used for soldiers who die in battle. Among the Palestinians, this title is given to those who died during the intifada, and especially suicide bombers. A shahid is considered to be one whose place in heaven is promised, according to the Quran: "Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their lord; They rejoice in the bounty provided by Allah,"(Sura 3, Al-i-Imran, ayat 169)

In keeping with the design of the poster, whose role is also to glorify the young Muslim's recruit to a holy war, Sudaey creates a kind of holy icon, combining the Christian saint and the Muslim shahid. In the painting, the character from the poster seems like a young man dressed in a medieval novice priest's garment with a saint's halo around his head.

The painting is done in acrylic on a tapestry-like fabric, and its partition to squares is also reminiscent of the pixels contained in a digital image.