



Talking Books

Actualities in Black & Orange - Israel 2005

by Menachem Kuchar
Published by Master Press
Reviewed by Sharon Katz

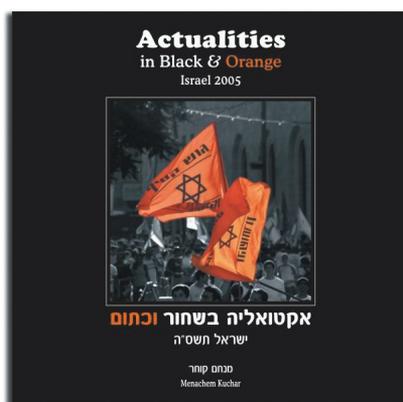
The first time I saw teenagers handing out orange ribbons, I thought, "How brilliant." With orange ribbons, orange shirts, orange bracelets and orange flags, the message of Gush Katif, and dedication to the Land of Israel spread throughout the country.

I never noticed how much the orange personal protest had become part of our lives until I viewed one of Menachem Kuchar's first and most powerful photographs, a *tefillin*-wrapped arm, bearing an orange bracelet. Then there was the flautist with an orange Gush Katif bracelet, and a Gush Katif bracelet-clad rabbi performing a wedding ceremony.

Developing the photos as black and white prints, contrasted with a touch of orange, the message is vivid - the support

for the residents and communities of Gush Katif had become a natural part of our everyday lives.

This premise became the foundation for Menachem's first book, "Actualities in Black & Orange, Israel 2005."



A beautiful and moving work, "Actualities" captures the mood of this historic period through symbols that have become inimitable parts of our lives.

A selection of photographs from Menachem's book is currently on display

in the Etzion Judaica Center at the Gush Etzion Junction, where the photographer was on hand last month at a gala book launch, attended by over 250 guests. The exhibit will continue through February.

Menachem says that while the work is not journalistic, his aim is to document the times using an art form. His book is indeed documentary art. He told *Voices*, "While I did not photograph every banner and every slogan, there is a story being told. It is the story of how ordinary people going about their everyday lives can make a statement and have an effect. Although demonized by the media, they continued to display orange as a symbol of pride and hope."

His camera always at hand, Menachem captured the growing orange world within Gush Katif and outside it. He photographed dancing with Israeli flags flying orange ribbons on Yom Yerushalayim, selling orange t-shirts in downtown Jerusalem, orange-clad folks at Me'arat HaMachpela, an orange lifesavers' flag on a Netanya Beach, and road-side mourners carrying orange flags paying their respects to a passing funeral in Gush Etzion.

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