

T

Five Walls is an exhibition of drawings by Merav Shinn Ben Alon, in which the exhibition space, itself, plays a central role. **The Kibbutz** gallery, which was founded in 1967, moved to its present location at the beginning of the seventies and has remained much as it was then. In **Five Walls** the artist is referencing and responding to an earlier exhibition shown in the gallery space in 1974 called **Five Young Ones**. That original exhibition, was updated and shown again with the title '**Reconstruction**' in 1995 by Tali Tamir, the curator of the gallery at the time, and is once again resonating in Shinn Ben-Alon's present exhibition.

Merav Shinn Ben-Alon grew up in Tel Aviv in the 1970s. A few months after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, while she was still in primary school, the exhibition **Five Young Ones** opened at **The Kibbutz** gallery. The artists who participated in the exhibition were then the 'bright young things' of the local art scene who later became the pillars of Israeli art : Efrat Natan, David Ginton, Michal Na'aman, Nachum Tevet and Tamar Geter.

By acknowledging both, the original **Five Young Ones** and its later version, Shinn Ben-Alon is presenting the gallery space as a historical place, rather than just an anonymous venue for hanging a procession of disconnected exhibitions. She wishes to present the gallery as an elusive archive, in which are buried layers of knowledge and memory.

The exhibition comprises of eight bodies of work, each using different techniques of drawing on paper. Between these there are water colours, felt pen and pencil drawings. The drawings, which come in varying sizes, are based on black and white photographs of documented 'actions', that were performed at the time of the original seventies exhibition and nineties updated version, both in the gallery space and in other venues. There are other images that appear in **Five Walls** that are based on works of female artists of the 1970's,

that were not part of the original exhibition, for example, Yocheved Weinfeld. And finally there are also images from Shinn Ben-Alon's personal artistic iconography.

The images differ from each other technically and also in their expressiveness and closeness to the original. Each image appears in a number of versions, as if the artist is experimenting and examining what emerges from each one and what touches her directly.

In her exhibition, Shinn Ben-Alon is corresponding with the work of artists from the 1970's, and bringing her interpretation and insights to the narratives of vulnerability and trauma. The conceptual art of that time dealt with these issues but only in an unspoken, implicit way, indeed at that time explicit expressions of these issues were not acceptable. Through her dialogue with the past, Shinn Ben-Alon sets out on a journey in search of identity and presents a personal narrative that reflects her present day perspective.