

## FOREWORD

Adi Nes's new cycle of photographs deals with an age group that predates the protagonists of his previous series, and with a setting that alludes to the town in which he grew up. Instead of uniformed soldiers we now encounter teenage boys from development towns, who undergo a journey of initiation and identity formation with captivating innocence. Invoking memories of his adolescence in Kiryat Gat, Nes is able to re-confront his personal history, and ascribe it to a more significant place, where childhood memories fuse with classical Greek mythology and Israeli myth. The hybrid of local and foreign mythologies allows reexamination of both Nes's particular world in the present and the worlds of myth and art that serve him as a formal prototype and a point of reference.

The space in which Nes situates his boys is restricted to a confined stage—amidst the peeling walls of public housing and in the desolate streets of the development town. The body of water, intended to conjure up the clear lake in which Narcissus discovers his reflection, is but a muddy puddle along an urban sidewalk. The stage delineating the scene of action focuses the viewers' attention on the drama transpiring before them, which illuminates the exposed bodies of its protagonists with a soft and delicate golden light. Landscape elements, as portrayed in the photographs alluding to Castor and Polydeuces or to Danziger's *Nimrod*, seem to be but a "backdrop" for the scene in the foreground, which emphasizes the gap between the figures and the surroundings in which they act. The closed, viewless window, seen in a room where six youngsters of different ages sleep, only reinforces the sense of distress permeating their whole being.

Adi Nes joins a respectable line of artists including Yossi Breger, Miriam Cabessa, Ohad Meromi, Yehudit Sasportas and Yoav Shmueli—all of them recipients of the Israeli Art Prize awarded by the Nathan Gottesdiener Foundation. We are deeply grateful to Yael and Nathan Gottesdiener for their dedication to and interest in young Israeli art. We would like to extend our thanks to the exhibition Curator and jury member, Ellen Ginton, for her devoted work. And finally, we would like to thank Adi Nes for drawing our attention to such a rich and intriguing world found within our midst.

Prof. Mordechai Omer  
Director and Chief Curator