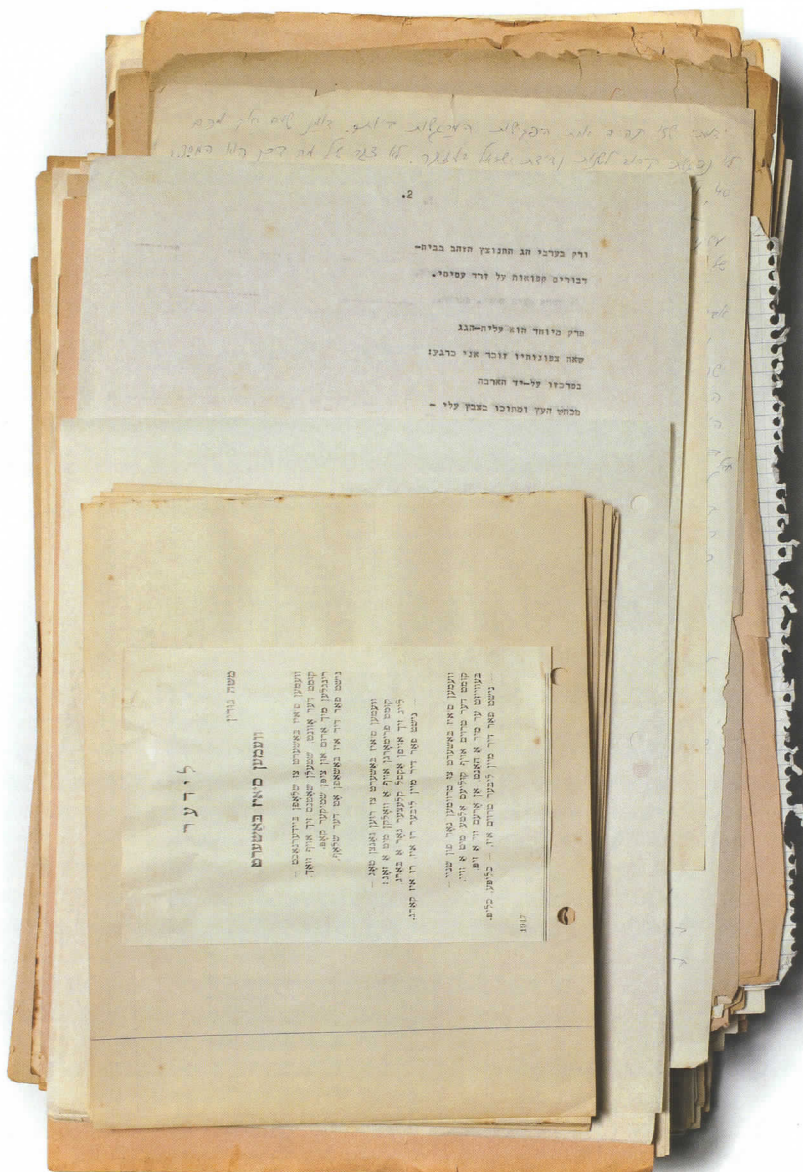


# IDO GOVRIN

## COLLIMATION



*"Time becomes a subject because it is the folding of the outside and, as such, forces every present into forgetting, but preserves the whole of the past within memory: forgetting is the impossibility of return, and memory is the necessity of renewal."*

—Gilles Deleuze <sup>1</sup>

*"Poetry tries to speak about something through something else [...] since it cannot describe the thing in its own terms, concepts and words, therefore it tries to collimate the event to a different place, a different dimension or to a different language. This isn't a representational model but rather a poetic one. Poetry tries to become a non-literal moment that is being torn and unfolded from within reality."*

—Ido Govrin <sup>2</sup>

A manuscript of poetry, a point of departure. "The narratives," Ido Govrin describes, "manifest in varied artistic mediums, unfold by means of a series of artistic revelations in dialogue with a fragmented, poetic manuscript of my late grandfather."<sup>3</sup> The narratives in Govrin's work suggest the signified yet obscure and unreachable nature of a literary work sealed shut. Alice Munro's story, "Heirs of the Living Body," describes a manuscript posthumously given to a young girl from her late uncle. The girl, a writer herself, keeps her own poems boxed with the manuscript, until one day she decides that its very nearness to her writing might contaminate her work.<sup>4</sup> She moves the manuscript to her cellar, where it is later destroyed by a flood. The story suggests how the physical presence of a text has the ability to seep into another's writing. If forgotten the text perishes. Munro's story identifies both the influence and the materiality of a literary work.

An influence is indicative in this sense not by the literal quality of the text but by the nature of the work itself as an object. The proximity of the manuscript seeps into Govrin's work. Each piece is like a poetic model that points to the manuscript without explicit quotation. The following text reflects on Govrin's object-based, figurative renewal of the manuscript.

The first work encountered in the gallery is the manuscript, which exists in its original state without digitization or copy. A vitrine displays the manuscript divided into five sections, presented in discrete piles. Pages are layered like stacked, loosened leaves. Due to their assemblage, the stacks of paper become small sculptural bodies, which withhold the inscriptions on each page. The textual work is transformed into a material installation; the textual depth of the literary work is suspended to present the gravity of the work as a physical mass. The manuscript is rendered as an object. The piled pages enclose their contents while the vitrine locks the assembly. The partitioning of the manuscript is fundamental to the insistence on a non-linear and minimal intervention for the reverence of its aura. The ineffable spirit of the manuscript turned object is respected.

As Deleuze describes in the epitaph above: the outside entity, in this case the manuscript, is folded in, and as such, is preserved in memory. The renewal is Govrin's body of sonic, sculptural work. The density, texture, receptiveness, porousness, and permeability of his work become an apparatus for the audibility and filtering of sound through a membranous surface. Multiple sun-stained pieces of waxed fabric are stitched together and installed on the floor. Underneath these pieces of fabric are small speakers, emanating a pre-verbal, buzzing whisper. The pieces of fabric are coated with various densities of bees wax, mediating the extent to which the sound is audible. The

installation consists of multiple units, each one projecting the same aural composition at staggered intervals. Resembling a pre-linguistic utterance or slow babble, the murmuring sound is indeterminate. The wax is fragrant. The sound is hidden under the fragile and intricately delicate pieces of what look like membrane, paper, or placenta. The small, encrusted sheets create a barrier to the sound underneath. Held in. Just as Govrin withholds language in the manuscript, discernible conversation is not present. A grumbled voice delineates the legibility of an unknown language. We are held outside of the work, only able to see the surface and to hear the mechanics of linguistic sound. The shape and anemic colour of these pieces of wax-coated, woven fabric resemble blank pages. Without transcribed content we are offered only incomprehensible sound. Sound is present only as structure: the pages are blank and the content is veiled.

In another room, two attached pieces of found metal panes lean on the floor against the wall of the gallery. Similarly to the multi-channel installation, sound emits from behind the object. In this piece, a tactile transducer speaker is attached to the back of the metal producing a tactile sound through the vibration of the material. Since the subwoofer speaker is not visible, the metal seems to jitter in agitation on its own accord. The static object becomes physically animated by the waves of sound. The object creaks and shakes by the affixed

speaker, anthropomorphizing the object as a breathing being. In contrast to the small, soft and porous sheets, the metal is hardened, opaque, sturdy and impenetrable. Rather than absorbing and filtering sound, the metal physically cracks with reverberation. Sound transmits by physical reaction rather than by audible filtration. The outward surface of the panels is the only visible plane of the object. Reacting to the object, which conceals it, the machine radiating sound is hidden underneath. The work oscillates between the sharp agitations of bent metal and the soft notes of a distant piano. The sound is obstructed by two blank, yet aged and rusted, pages of a book. The mutating metal sings the captured melody of a trapped unreadable story.

The object-based approaches of these artworks are not interventions but parallel responses. By avoiding semantic translation and representation, Govrin maintains the aura of the literary manuscript. The material responses to his grandfather's text indicate wormholes where dialogue between both bodies of work takes place. Govrin's work is at once positioned in relation to the manuscript while operating in a parallel yet independent dimension. Like light rays aligned in parallel, the two bodies of work do not cross paths. The manuscript and Govrin's series of responsive artworks communicate as collimated spirits in non-linear time.

<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, "Foldings, or the Inside of Thought" *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* Michel Kelly ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 327.

<sup>2</sup> Ido Govrin, unpublished thesis paper, 2013, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Govrin, qualifying paper, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Alice Munro, "Heirs of the Living Body," *Lives of Girls and Women* (Toronto: Penguin, 2005), 58–60.