

Duprass / Galut (Diaspora)

Catalog Text by Yonatan Amir

This essay was written while listening to the radio drama that was recorded and mastered to a CD in preparation for a yet to be installed exhibition. This means, that since the subject of discussion is a sound installation – that is to say, a work that uses sound waves in order to refer not only to sound, text or recorded music but also to the three dimensional exhibition space – so this essay is based on an incomplete experience. Many cataloged texts are written without a complete impression of the oeuvre on the part of the writer. They accompany almost every exhibition which includes installations, performances and works that use the gallery or museum's space, at the public domain, in time and contact with the audience. The gap between the oeuvre and the text – a gap that characterizes every interpretation whatsoever – becomes wider, if so, in light of the fact that the text is not based on a complete experience at all but rather on samples, sketches and models of the work to come, and sometimes also on conversations with its creators. As a consequence to such working method, these texts, more than being an interpretation of the work, they form a meditation of the work. Why, if so, although this is a common working method, I especially struggle to mention that the essay was written in advance?

Because that in the specific case of the sound installation "Galut" – a work by Duprass (Liora Belford and Ido Govrin) presented at "Barbur" Gallery – I feel that the above mentioned gap is not just a consequence of working constrains, but a fundamental essence that concerns the creation source as well. "Galut" places the listener/viewer as an exile in itself, and doing so by using various techniques of de-familiarization. These alienations are not soon to be solved or summarized, and in that manner, like a commentator who writes without experiencing the complete work, also the visitors that will enter the gallery on its exhibition opening will remain, to a large extent, unsatisfied and incapable for a complete deciphering, as exiles in their own land. The point of departure in "Galut" is an old text comprised of few short poems which was reedited into a play. The dispatched words from the speakers that scattered throughout the space were recorded by actors. They were asked to read from six short poems and texts written by "Moshe Gurin" – a writer born in Vilnius on 1921, named in his youth "Gurevich", and later on when he immigrated to Israel changed his name to "Govrin". He adopted the pseudonym „Gurin“ that consists of parts of both names and none of them at the same

time. The texts ("Untitled", "From a prisoner's old notepad", "Mrs. Vislevska", "Yerushalaim", „Yerushalaim shel maala“ and „Unterwegs“) were written in Yiddish and were translated by Daniel Birnbaum and Ido Govrin.

Three characters appear in the poems and they all represent the divided soul of one man. "I have become a number, no name no address to remind a man he is indeed alive, a being" says one of the characters – Tzvi G. his name is. Tzvi becomes a number out of a man. 56698 is his new number, the alienated and estranged one. A name that is being written from left to right and not vice versa as he used to. Tzvi is currently situated in a place without a place –it lacks window and door, a space that even after eating, makes him feel like nothing ever came inside him, a place where in the eternal night that dominates it, "a face cannot be seen in the mirror". The only traces to a meaningful world are "a barred shadow upon a missing floor" and even these traces are nothing but an echo or reflection of the absence of things and not the things in themselves. The territory in which the story takes place is a detached space. Its detachment is to be realized physically, and that physical detachment fundamentally represents its existential one. Belford and Govrin take this detachment and deepen in. by converting it from text to sound, the two give the written words an architectural meaning and capacity. Although the sound installation, "Galut", is based on texts it would be a mistake to understand it merely as an audio adaptation to a play (radio drama). The voiced text becomes raw material here. The stanzas are being cut; the sentences refract one another, split from each other, coming from different sound channels which are transmitted using various loudspeakers located in different corners of the space. Various background noises also penetrate through the curtain of words – music and sound samples which visualize, allegedly, the happening but at the same time indicate its artificialness. Belford and Govrin knead the things, cut and paste, deconstruct and re-launch to the world in different order. The experience of the listener is added to in that, when the entrance to and exit from the exhibition does not necessarily happen with the beginning or end of the recording. The radio drama, therefore, turns in this work into music that resists any recognized linear movement. Its sound doesn't move in a clear way, and does not directly lead from point A to point B. the split paths created by the recordings being heard in the gallery's space constitute a multi-plain and meta-time space – a grid like space, widthwise one, lacking any starting point nor final destination. This is an exilic space in the deepest and most direct sense – a detached space that travels among other spaces, at the limbo, remains irrelevant forever.

"Galut" is a fabric of distancing – distancing derived from the read text that was translated from Yiddish to Hebrew, distancing derived from the historical time that had passed since it was first written, distancing derived from the actual reading of the radio drama by actors, from the recording and processing of the sound, from the combination of music and various sound samples into the phrases, from splitting the source into eight channels and playing them in sync at the gallery's space, from the polyphonic experience that being created by the various sound sources which scattered through space, from the reverberation they produce, from the gap that occurs between the gallery's internal happening and the external world that exist behind its glassy door. Each and every one of these distancing isn't unique in itself but the integration of them all creates a branched system that lacks a vanishing point, a repetitive and inexhaustible fabric of contexts, bifurcations and developments that seems would never reach a safe harbor. This is, in other words, the exilic basis of "Galut".

[Translation from hebrew by Ido Govrin]