A VISIT TO A STUDIO – CULTURAL ENTANGLEMENTS

This evening Molly and I visited the studio of Ghiora Aharoni.

I had been here in November, as part of the class on antiquarians and design – [Link]

Then it was a visit through Peter's iPad camera – on Skype.

This evening the occasion was a reception to celebrate Ruby Namdar's novel, ten years in the writing, and winner of the Sapir Prize – Israel's biggest literary award [Link]

Not only does Namdar live outside Israel, but his award-winning "The Ruined House," (HaBayit Asher

Necherav) while in Hebrew, takes place outside Israel (in New York) and is about an American protagonist. Emphasizing the non-Israeli nature of the book, its cover features a historic photo of New York's Grand Central Terminal.

Ghiora gave me the catalogue to his new work – [Link]

Missives

Three years ago, the discovery of a trove of love letters – written by my mother in the 1950s as an adolescent girl in Israel – became the catalyst for Missives. My mother passed away almost twenty years ago, and reconciling the woman I knew with her adolescent words inspired me to explore universal notions of desire, ritual and courtship as well as the experience of retroactive memory.

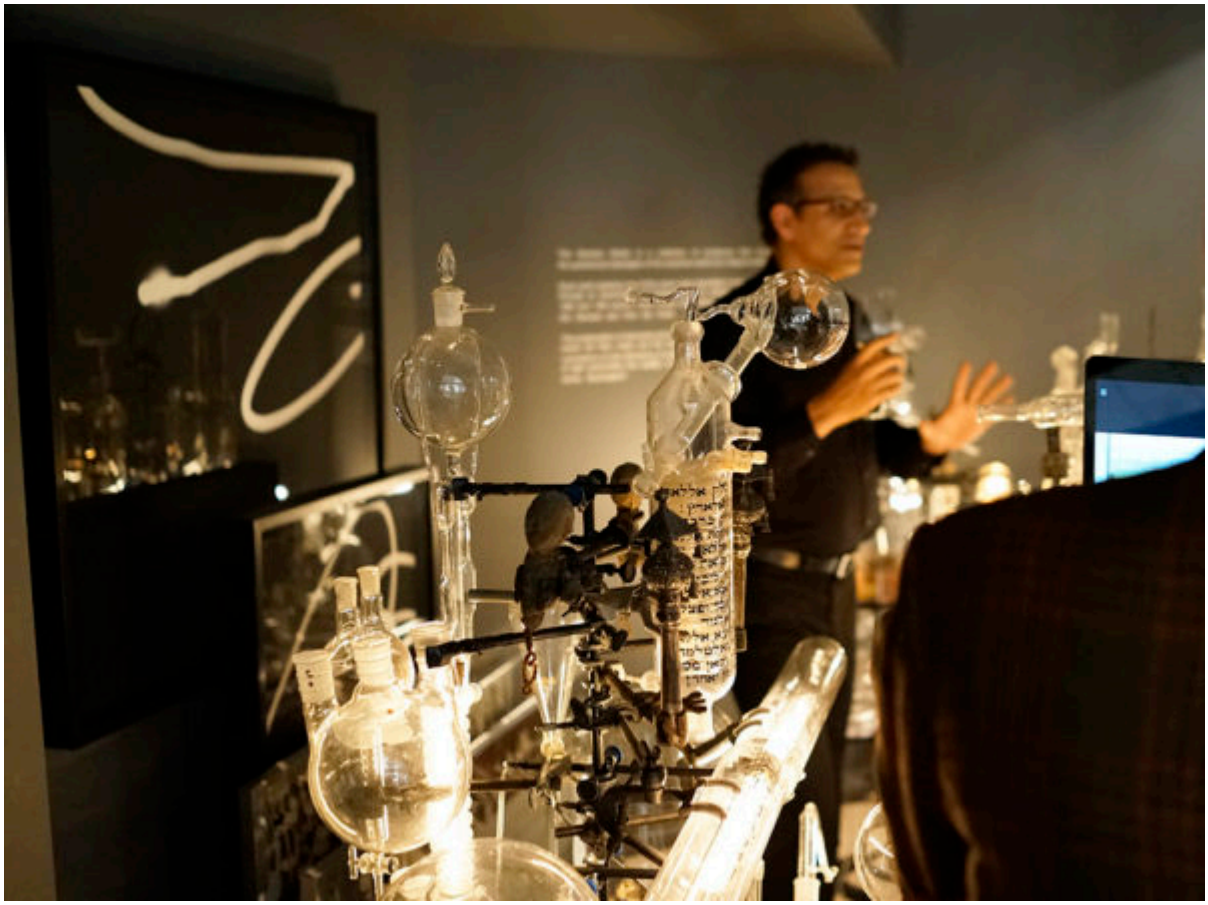
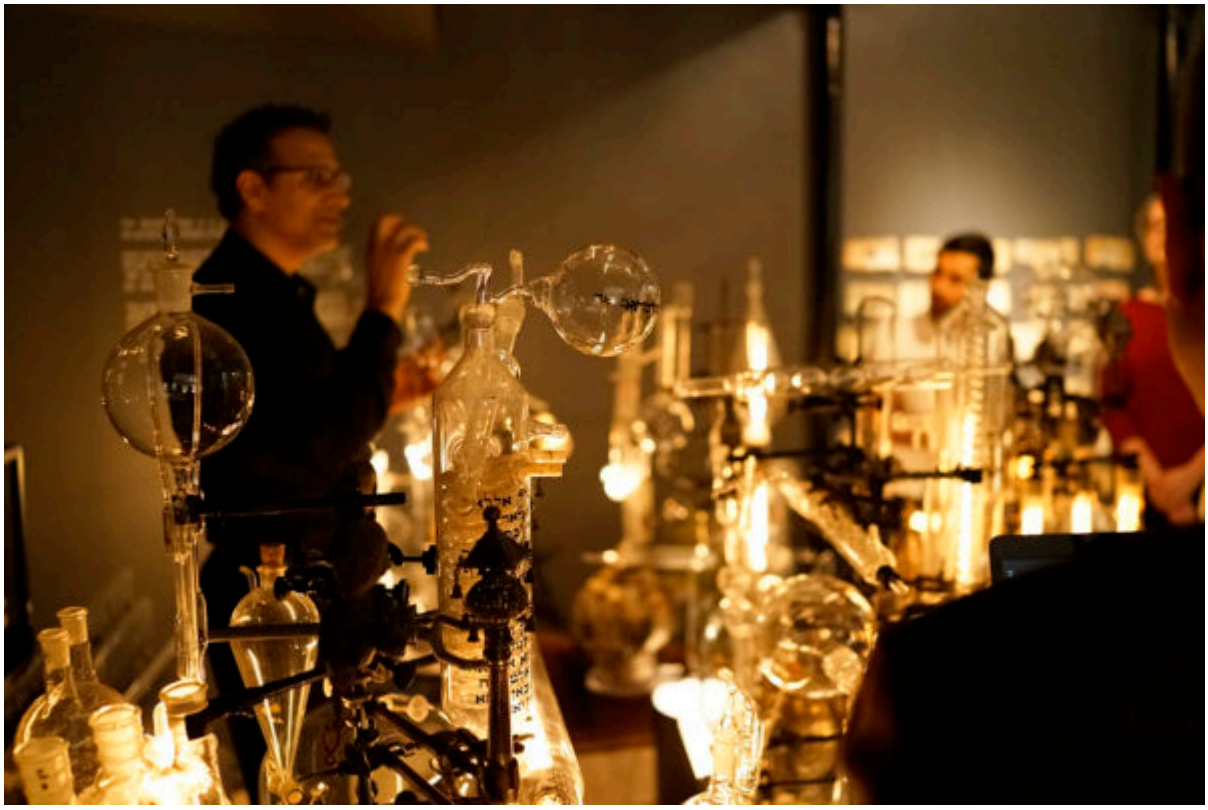
All of the works are collages: the letters (or fragments of their text) are combined with drawings and photographs, embroidered onto vintage phulkaris or floated above installations of vintage snapshots and letters that I collected in India. They fashion a narrative cycle encompassing history, symbolism and imagination.

Enlarged and printed on fragile Japanese paper, the letters are transformed into precious objects/artifacts, amplifying their earnest, teenage yearnings. Crumpling the letters preserves my mother's privacy and only reveals random threads of phrases— creating a tactile yet ephemeral metaphor for concealed feelings. The crumpled letters, combined with vintage photographs from India that document random, specific moments in the lives of others, connect my mother's sentiments to a universal and elusive landscape of memories.

Snippets of the letters are integrated with drawings of symbols, of architecture and images of daily life that I have observed during my travels throughout India over the past decade. The drawings, decontextualized from their original setting, evoke a visual vernacular that is both personal and communal. Printed on handmade Japanese paper in the collages and embroidered on the phulkaris (shawls from Punjab which are often given to a bride at the time of her marriage), the imagery has the potential to signify anticipation, love, memory, spirituality and the passage of time – all of which eluded my mother and the object of her desire.

Integrating these embroidered drawings with the phulkaris' precise geometric compositions creates a visual language that traverses time, geography, cultures and reaches beyond my own family history.

Individually, these dialogues represent fragments of retroactive, yet unsentimental memories, and they also express my passion for India and its culture. Collectively, they embody the experiences – from the quotidian to the sublime – that occur at the intersection of travel and memory.

studio space – hybrid third space

The visit in November – images courtesy of Ghiora Aharoni and featuring his Genesis Sculptures [Link]