

LARGE PRINT

Raffaella
della Olga:
Typescripts

PLEASE
RETURN TO BOX
AS YOU EXIT THE
EXHIBITION



10/10

RAFAELLA DELLA OLGA: TYPESCRIPTS

For the past decade, Raffaella della Olga has made unique artist's books using modified typewriters and multicolor ink ribbons on a range of materials—from tracing paper to photo paper to sandpaper. Della Olga (b. 1967, Italy; lives and works in France) worked briefly as an attorney before becoming an artist; now, seeking refuge from the limitations of language, she grinds down the characters on her machines and communicates through form, color, texture, and rhythm. Della Olga plays her typewriters like instruments, following a script in some cases and improvising freely in others.

Each of della Olga's artist's books explores a different conceptual or technical idea and is titled with a sequential number preceded by the letter I. This stands for tapuscrit, French for “typescript,” a now uncommon term for an author's original typewritten text. Like that

word, della Olga's work joins the mechanical with the manual, expressing gesture through the machine. She drags and smears her ink ribbons and inserts textiles into the typewriter carriage, conveying their texture as text. Weaving and typewriting are linked by the up-down, side-to-side directionality of the grid—a structure that della Olga both studies and subverts.

This exhibition, della Olga's first solo museum show, presents her artist's books alongside her typed paintings and cut-fabric works. Her work is accompanied by rare books and artist's books from the Clark Library, spanning the late nineteenth century to the present, which reflect the typewriter's still-vivid potential as a creative tool.

Raffaella della Olga: Typescripts is organized by the Clark Art Institute and curated by Robert Wiesenberger, curator of contemporary projects.

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by the Edward and Maureen Fennessy Bousa Fund for Contemporary Projects and Dena M. Hardymon, with additional support from Katherine and Frank Martucci. Generous support for the catalogue is provided by Michael Alper and Bruce Moore.

T40

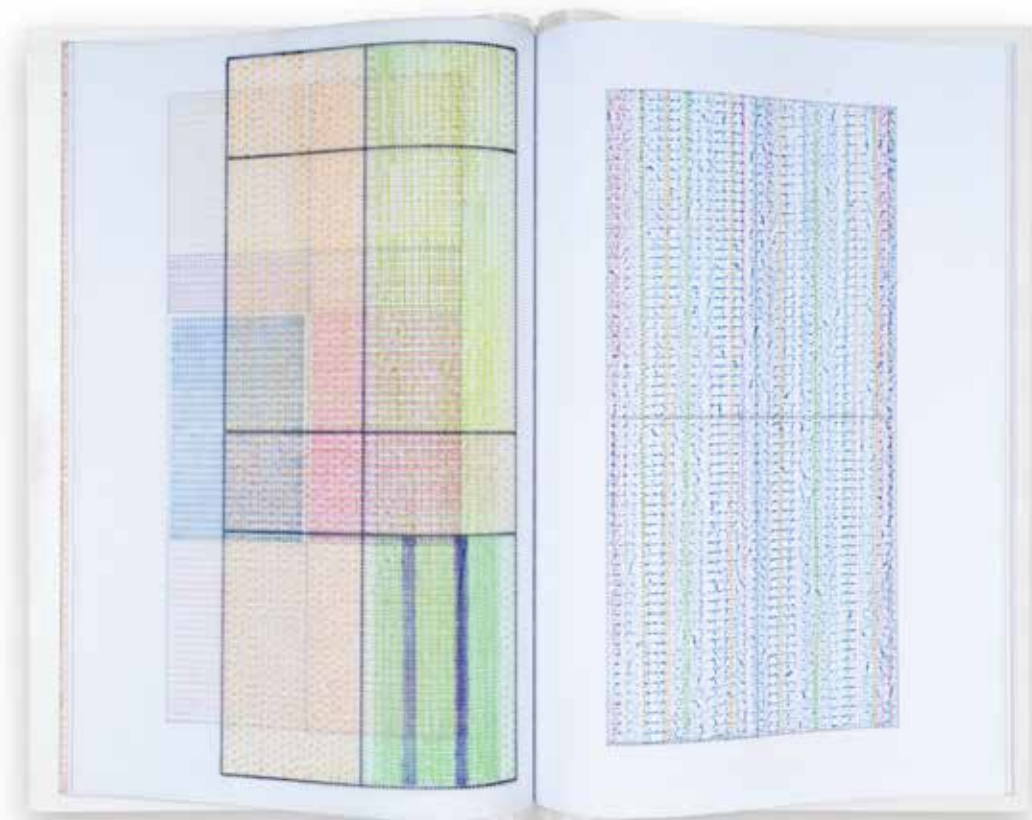
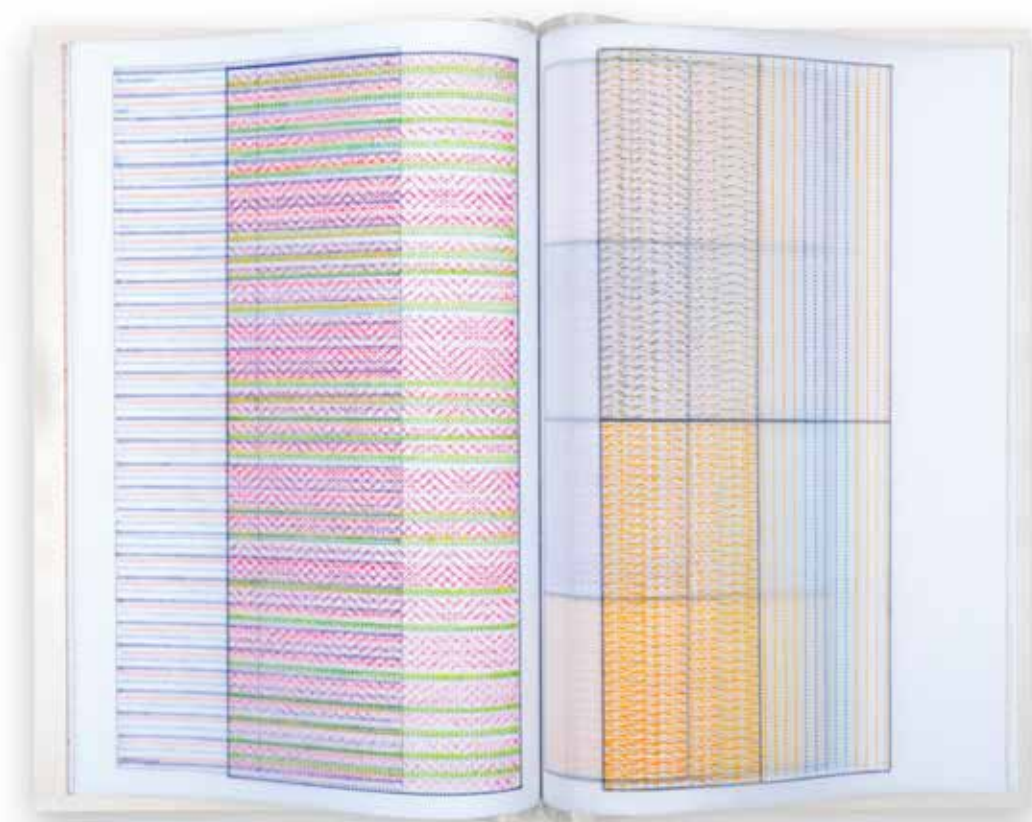
2023

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on copy paper and tracing paper, with PVC cover

Using only a typewriter, della Olga develops variations on a rectangular grid, which she thinks of here as a window. As one turns the pages, these forms shift in color and composition, position and opacity.

The window has long served as a metaphor for artistic representation and the way a picture frames a view; here, the rectangles also evoke a typographic grid—the fundamental structure of a book.

Clark Art Institute Library, acquired by the Clark with support from Jay and Mercedes Nawrocki



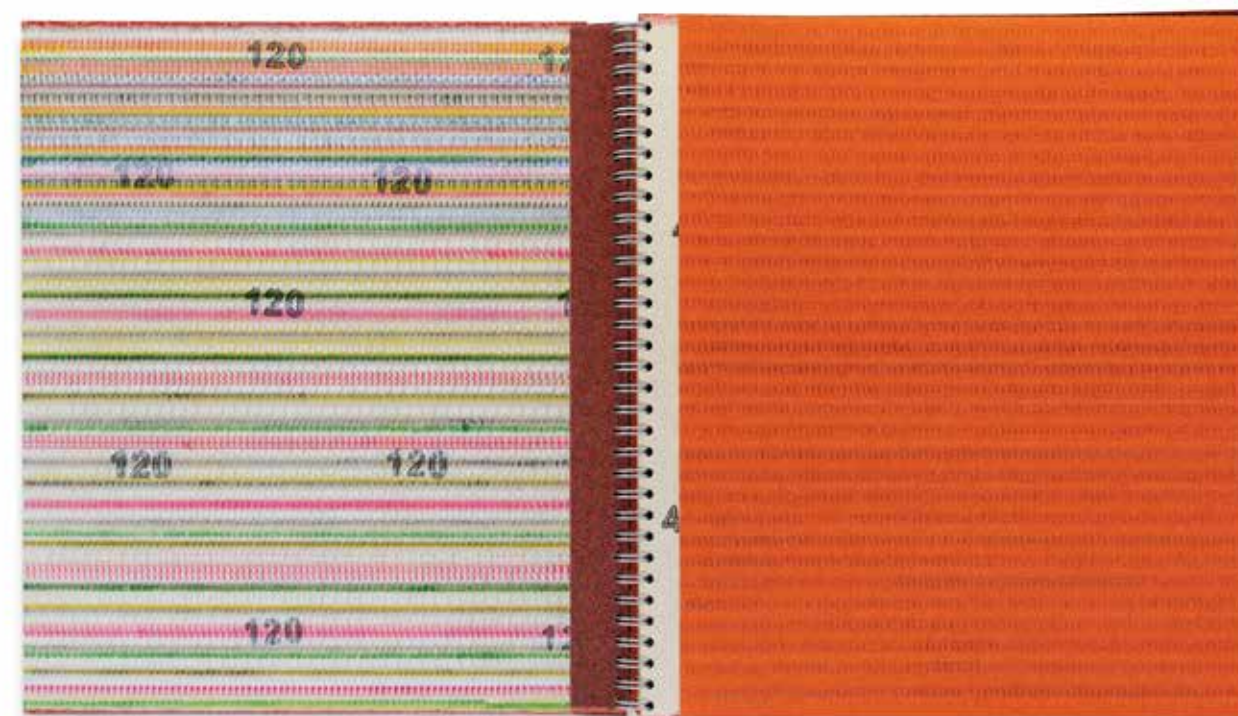
T44

2023

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on sandpaper

Della Olga typed this book on sheets of sandpaper, front and back. The only text is numbers—80, 120, 40, 150—indicating the grit levels, or coarseness, of each sheet's reverse side. Horizontal bands suggest vibrant textile patterns on smoother surfaces, while rougher ones show only faint lines. The process is auto-destructive, as the sandpaper further wears down the typewriter's characters.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



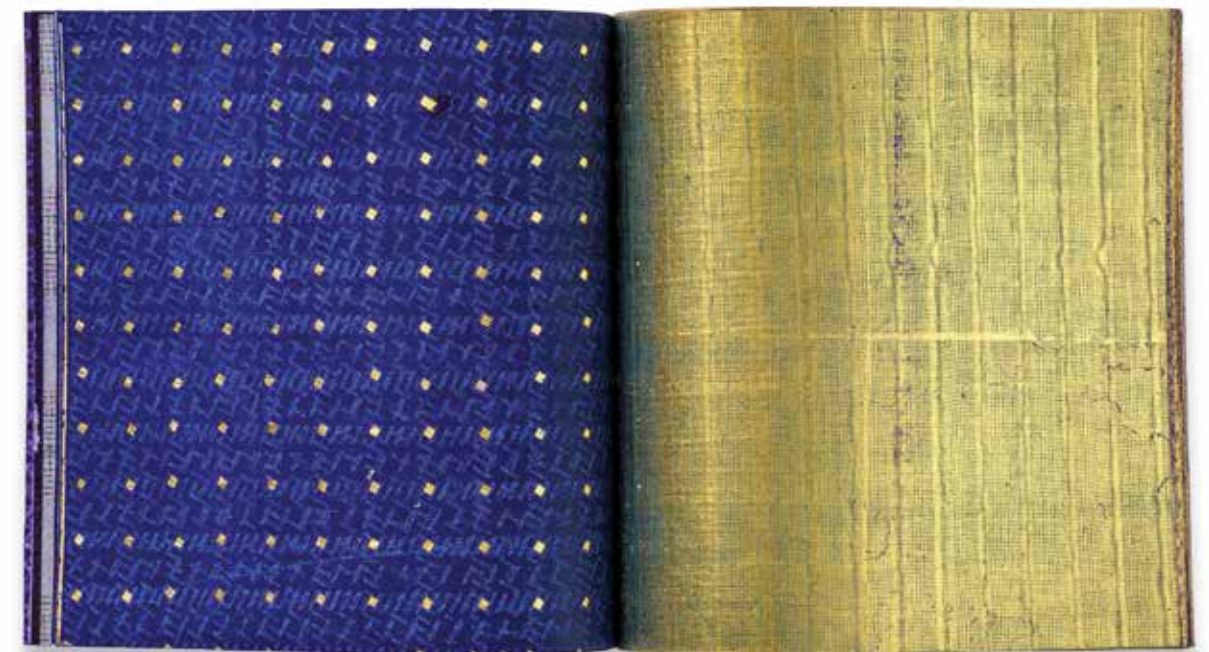
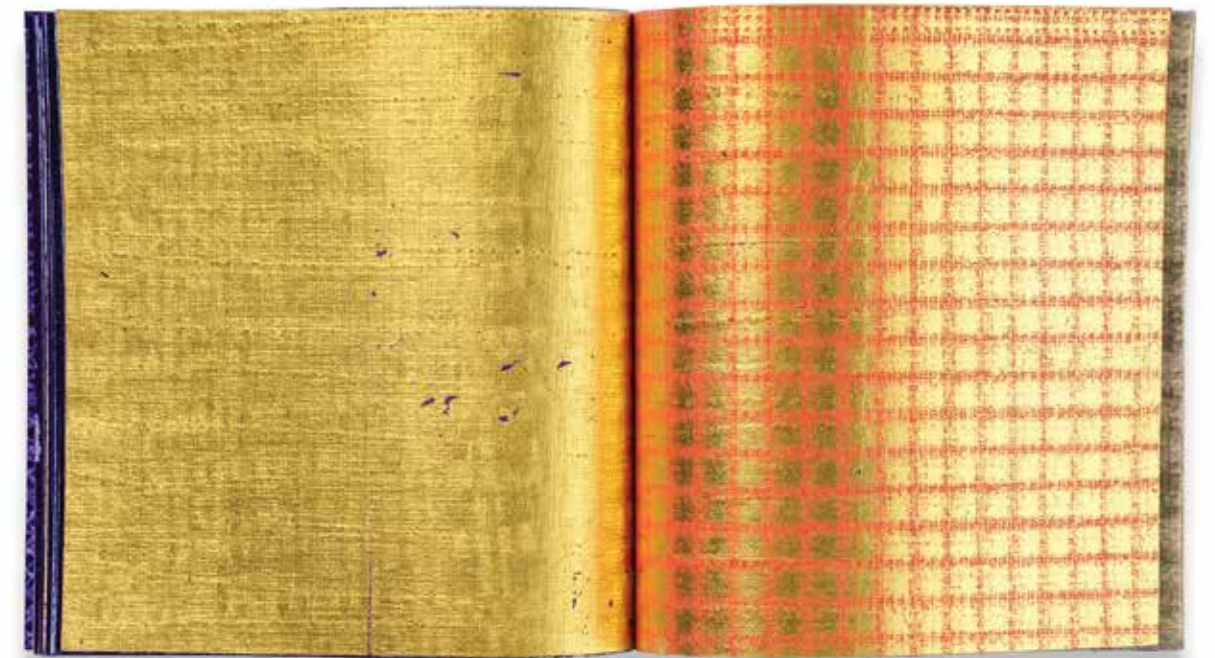
T25

2020

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on gold leaf, carbon paper, and tracing paper

The gilded panel paintings of Byzantine and Gothic art, created to evoke divine light, inspired della Olga's materials for this book. In some cases she creates subtle grid formations, while in others, the typewriter matrix works as a punch, piercing dark blue carbon paper to reveal flashes of gold leaf beneath, like stars in a night sky.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



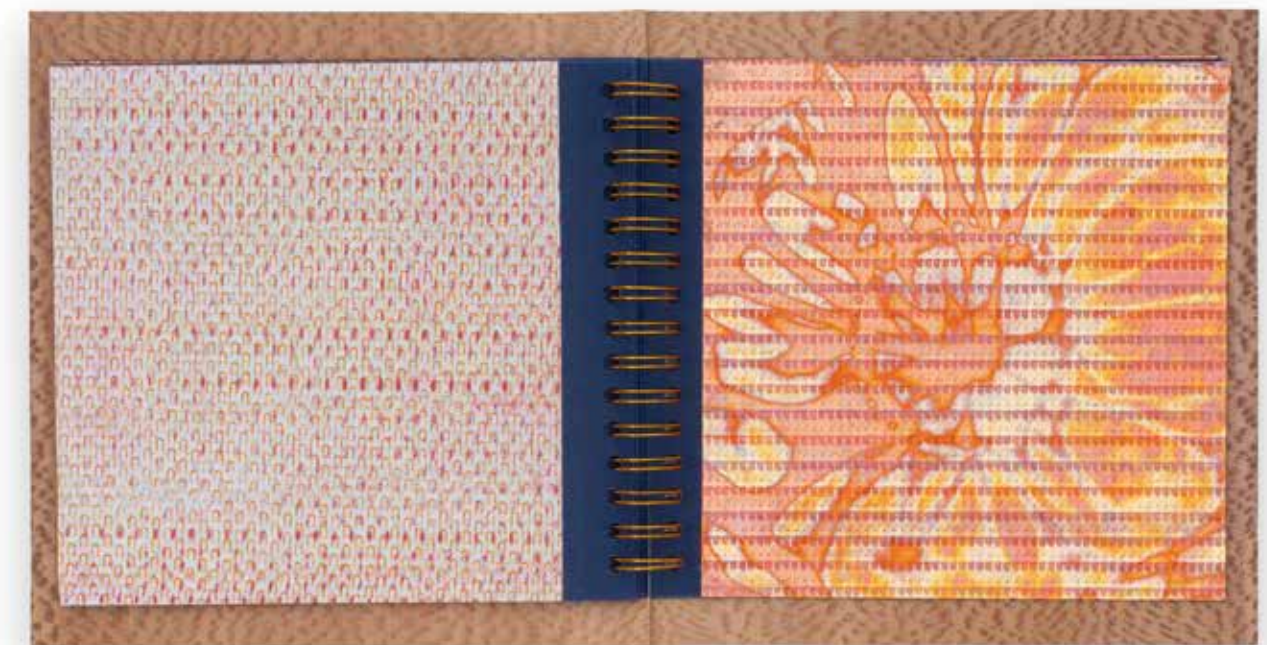
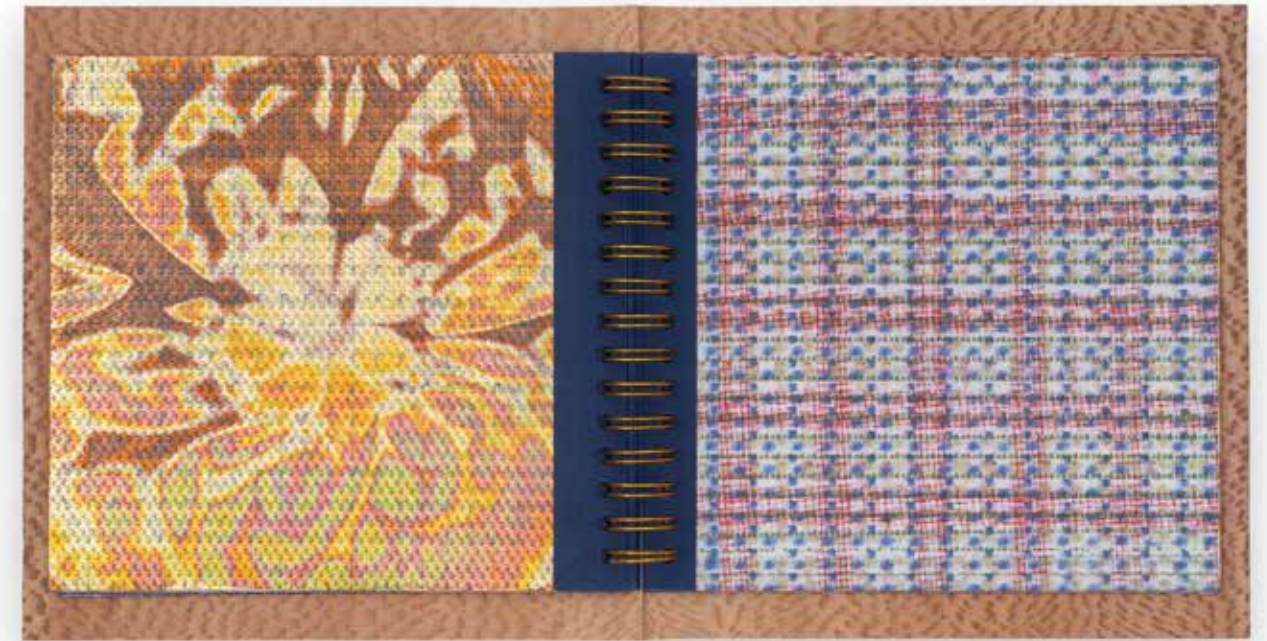
T53

2024

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on copper leaf, carbon paper, Japanese paper, and tissue paper, with sycamore veneer cover

Here, della Olga contrasts layered grids of typewritten marks with the organic patterns of oxidized copper leaf, which appear to bloom across the surface like flowers.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



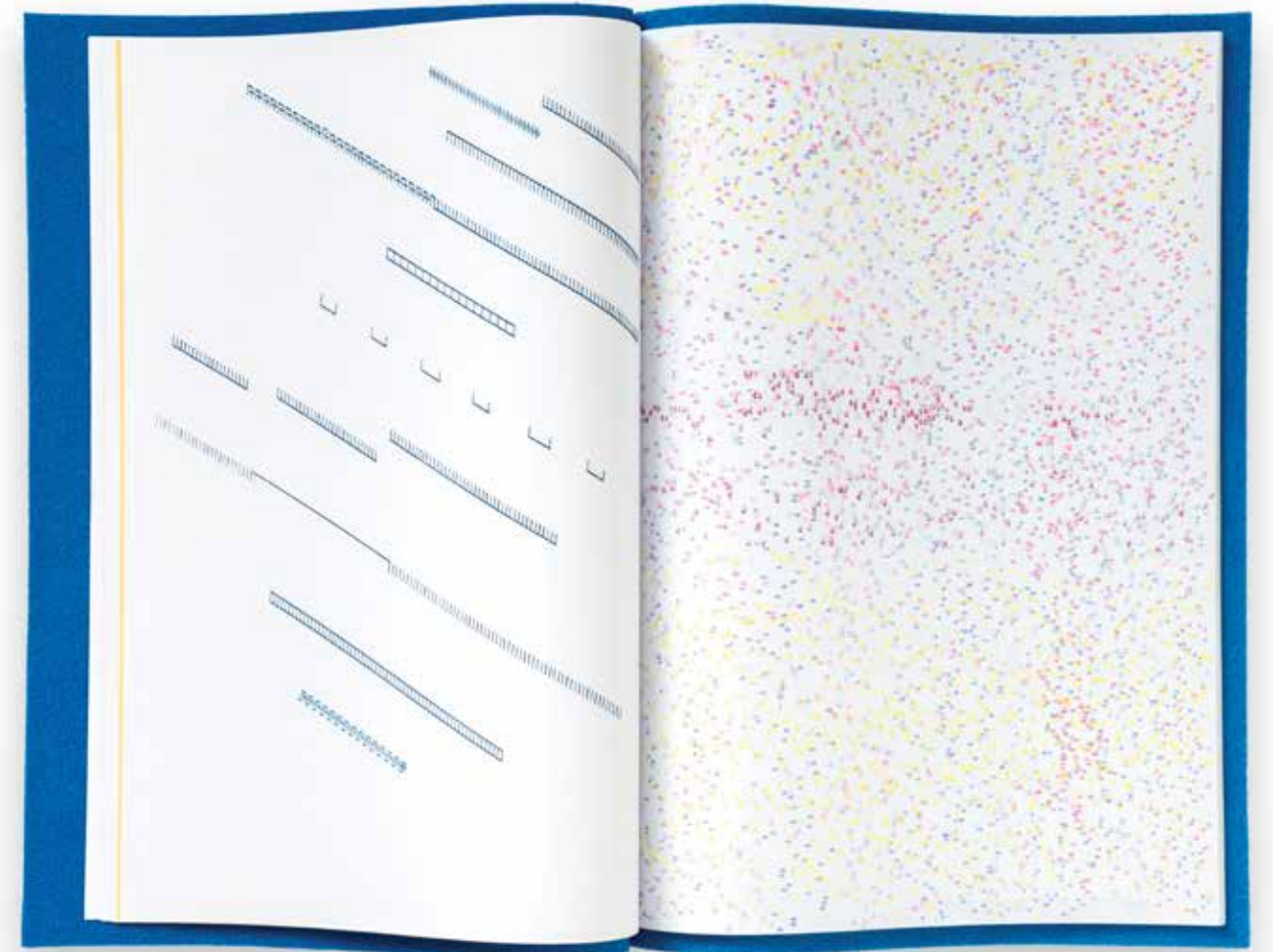
T38

2022

Typewritten with ink ribbon and carbon paper on copy paper, with cork and foam cover

This book juxtaposes clouds of pointillist marks with what appears to be a mysterious language (sometimes called “asemic writing,” or the appearance of text without fixed meaning).

Special Collections, Center for Curatorial Studies
Library & Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY



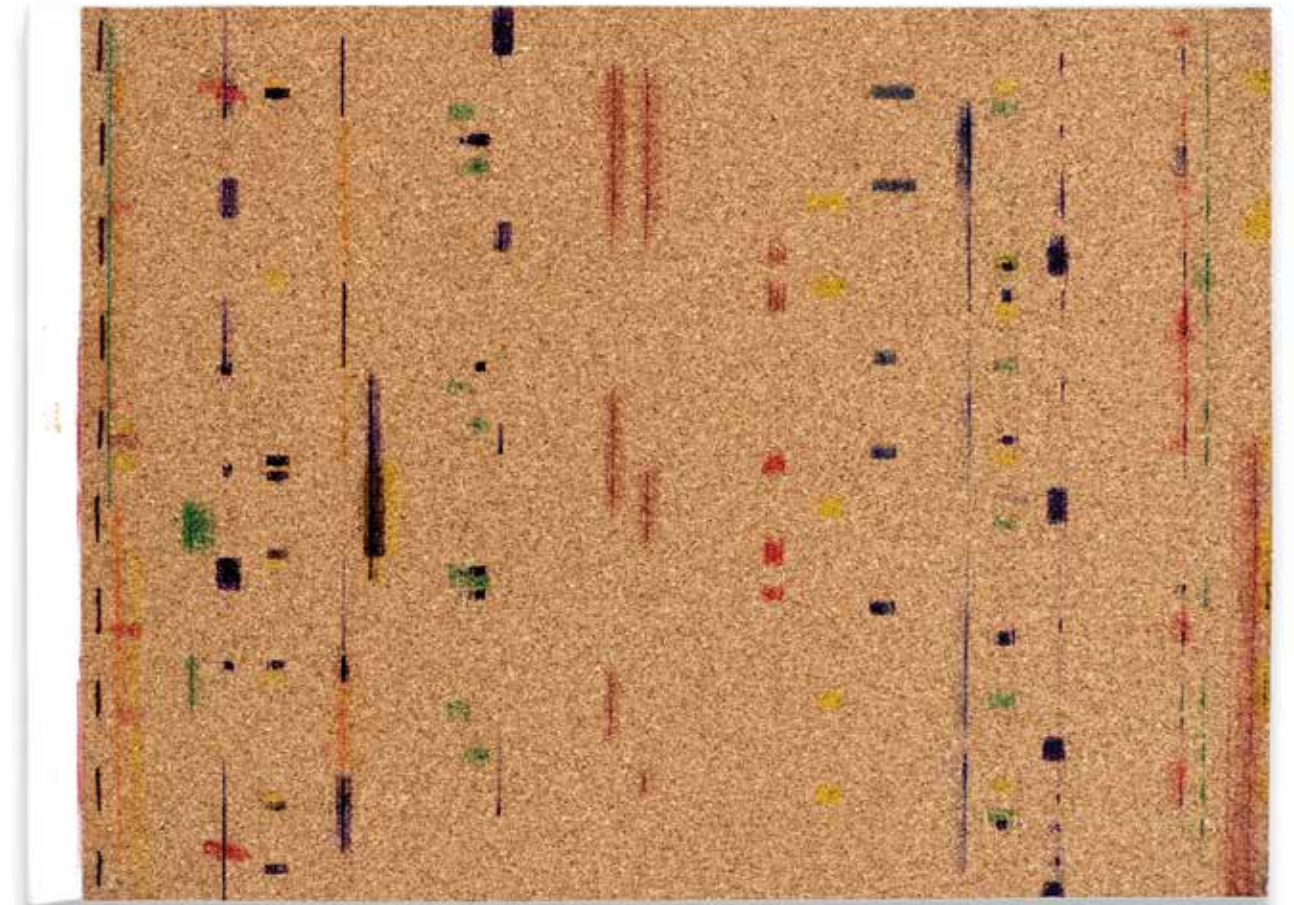
T50

2024

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on drawing paper and tracing paper, with cork cover

Della Olga adores birds and, in this work, attempts to graphically notate their songs. The results resemble a spectrogram—a visual representation of sound frequency and volume. Her technique varies from page to page: in addition to striking the typewriter keys, she drags the paper across the machine's typebars and inserts textiles and carbon paper into the carriage.

Special Collections, Center for Curatorial Studies
Library & Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY



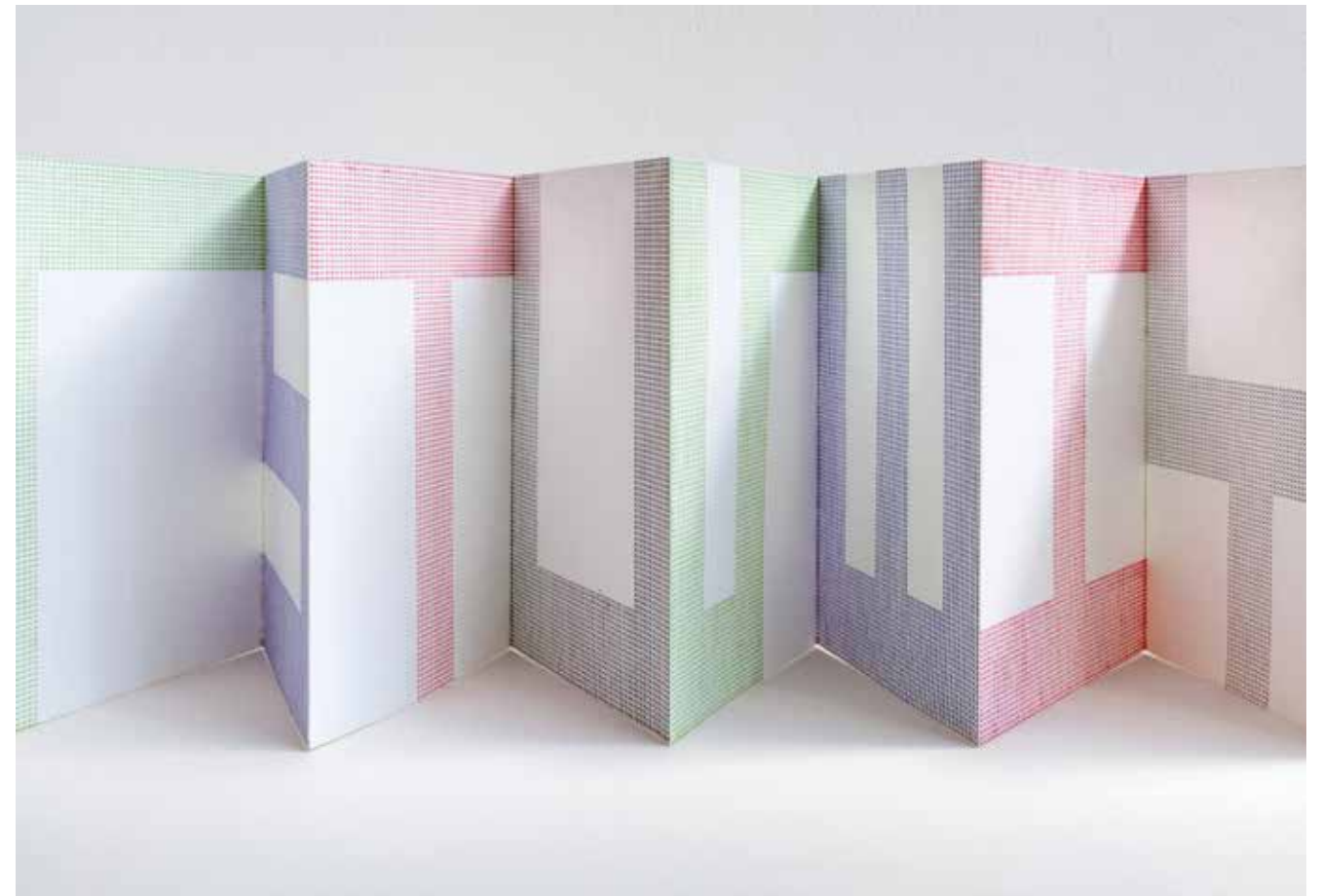
T47

2025

Typewritten with ink ribbon and carbon paper on wallpaper with paperboard cover

Della Olga departs here from both the codex—the familiar folded, stacked, and bound book form—and her usual resistance to conventional language. T47 is a leporello (accordion-fold) alphabet book, typed on a single sheet of wallpaper more than twenty-two feet long. It employs a 1960s typeface based on a five-by-five grid and designed for cathode-ray monitors (boxy, early computer and television screens). The displays of these devices use relatively large pixels and are therefore, like typewriters, constrained by the grid.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



T19

2019

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on copy paper, tracing paper, and tissue paper, with wallpaper cover

The typewritten columns of this book evoke strips of film and recall della Olga's early studies in photography. T19 pays homage to artist Paul Sharits (1943–1993), who created collages from colorful filmstrips encased in plexiglass. Sharits is considered a structural filmmaker for his focus on the material and technical foundations of his medium. Della Olga might likewise be described as a structural bookmaker.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



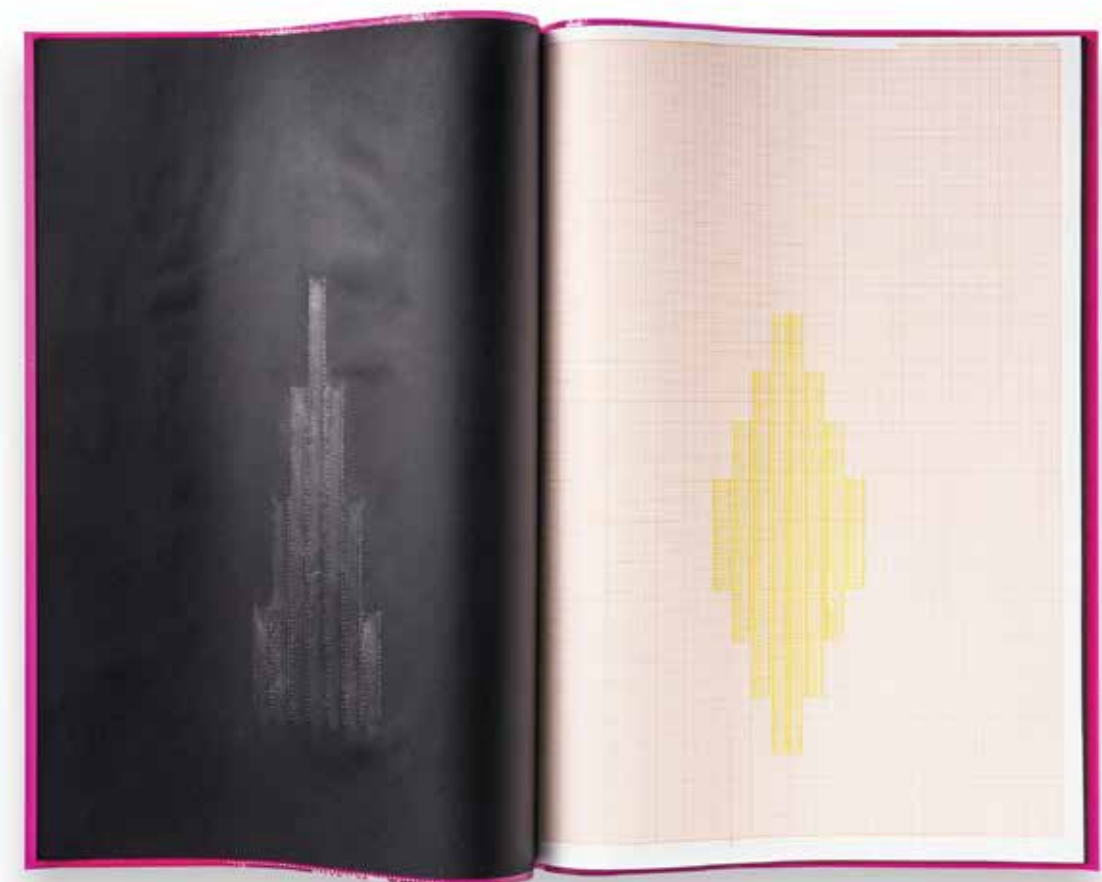
T32

2021

Typewritten with carbon paper on tracing paper and graph paper, with polyester lighting gel cover

In this book, della Olga depicts the fluorescent light sculptures of Minimalist artist Dan Flavin (1933–1966) at the size printed in a major catalogue of his work. Using carbon papers of various colors, she mimics the glow of Flavin's lights on one side of the page while creating a ghostly embossment on the other. Both artists treat the line as simultaneously ordinary and ethereal and use commercially available materials for their work.

Special Collections, Center for Curatorial Studies
Library & Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY



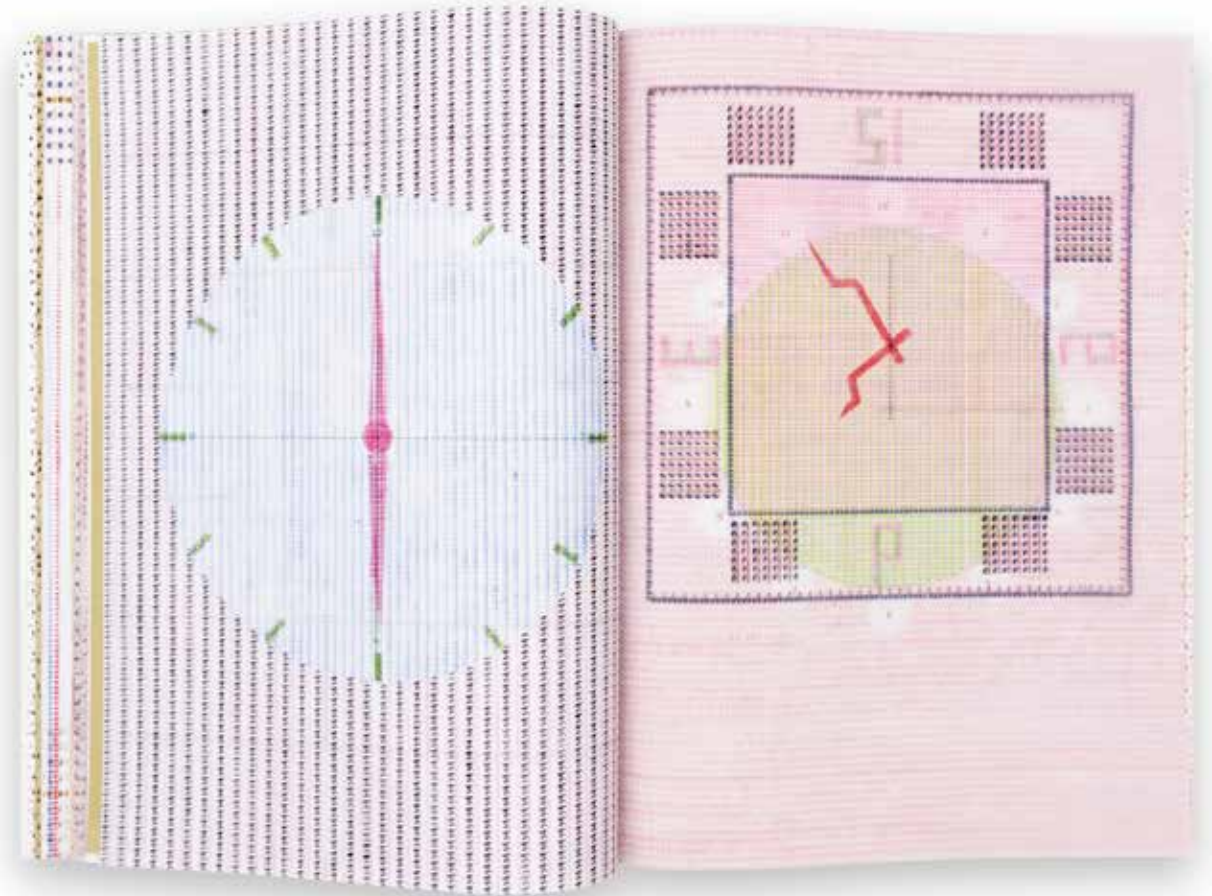
T56

2020

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on copy paper, tracing paper, Japanese paper, and kraft paper, with photographic paper cover

This book is an exploration of time and its measurement through the depiction of different analog clock faces. Della Olga is interested in recording time through her labor-intensive process (typing one page can take more than a day) and in the reader's temporal experience as they turn the pages. Counteracting the rigidity of the grid, she achieved the circular forms here by using a stencil. The front and back covers feature photograms, or cameraless photographs—another medium that captures the passage of time.

Clark Art Institute Library, acquired by the Clark with support from Michael Alper and Bruce Moore



T57

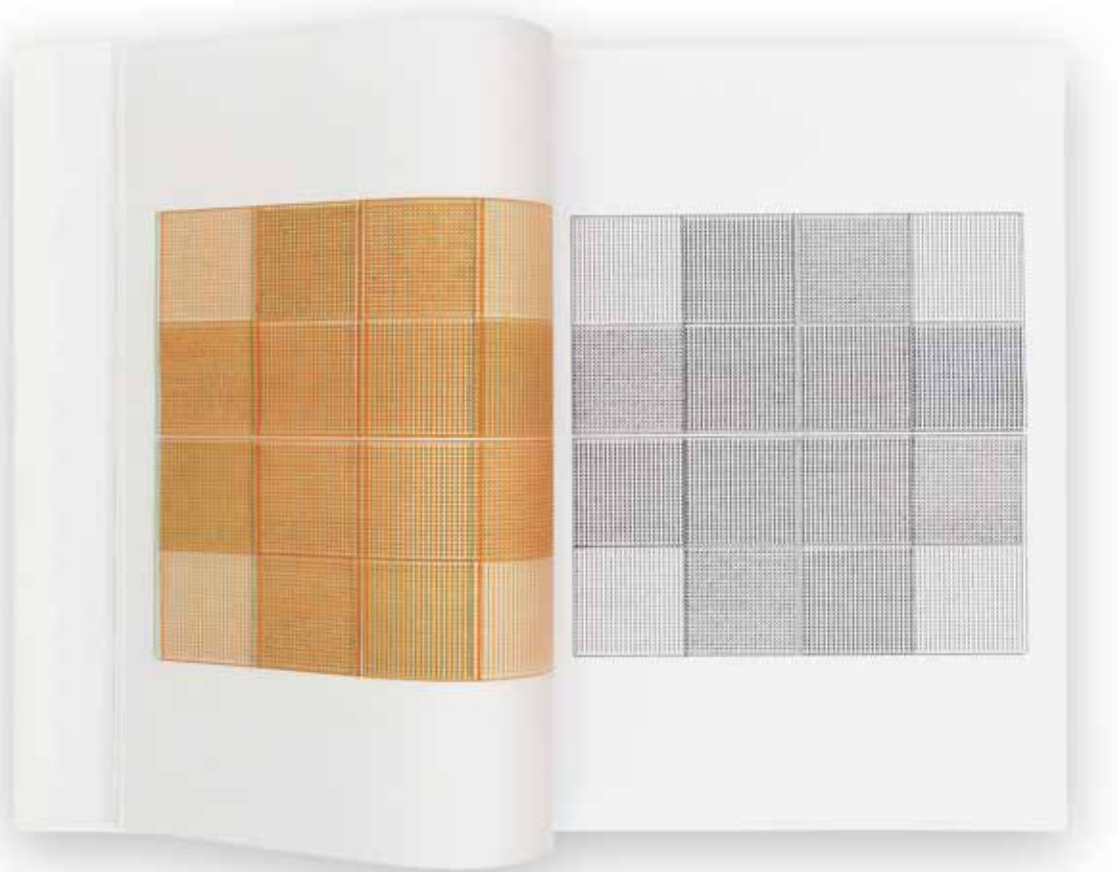
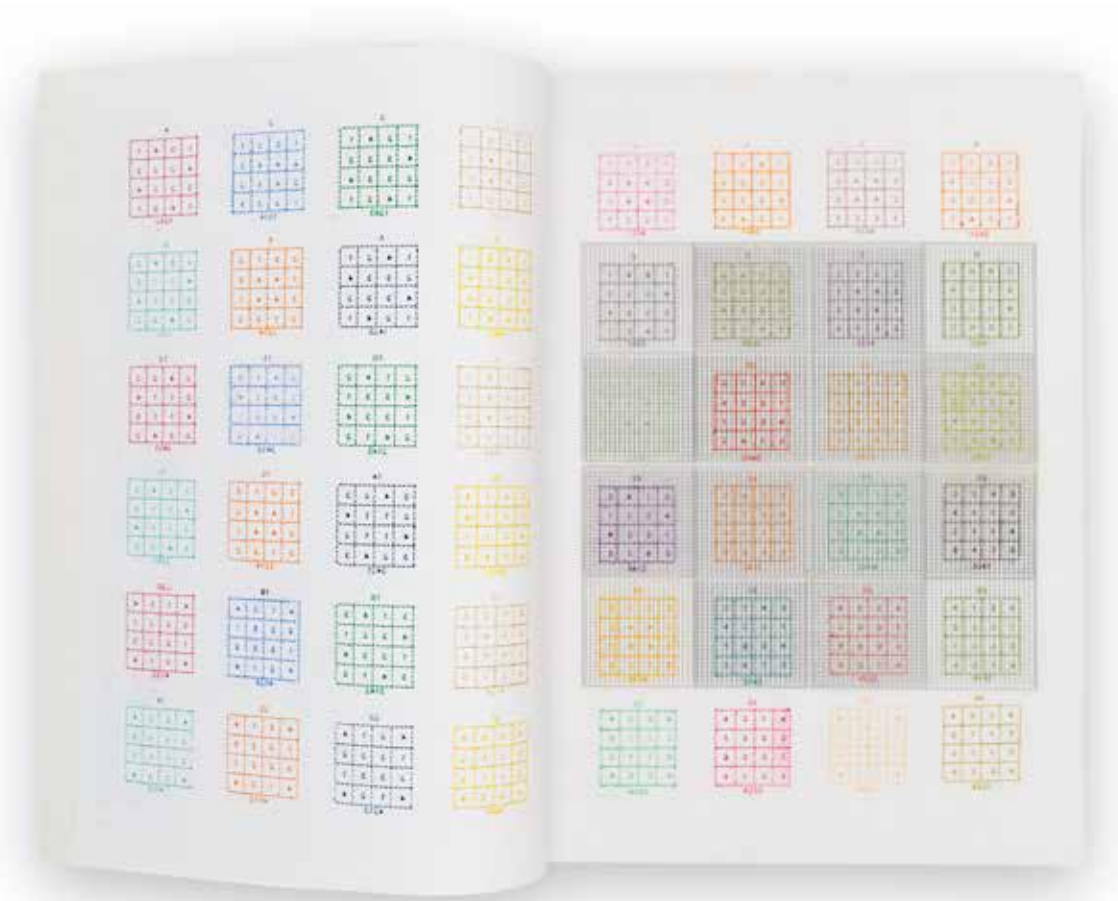
601

2025

Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on copy paper and tracing paper, with wallpaper cover

With this book, della Olga returns to one of her formative influences, Conceptual and Minimalist artist Sol LeWitt (1928–2007). It contains twenty-four permutations of a four-by-four grid, rendered in eight colors, with each square composed of the numbers 1 through 4. Precisely registered on both sides of the page, these permutations progress in two directions, their colors and number-textures intermingling with the turn of each page. With T57, della Olga studies, embodies, and extends the logic of LeWitt, an artist who once described himself “merely as a clerk cataloging the results of the premise.”

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



T54

2025

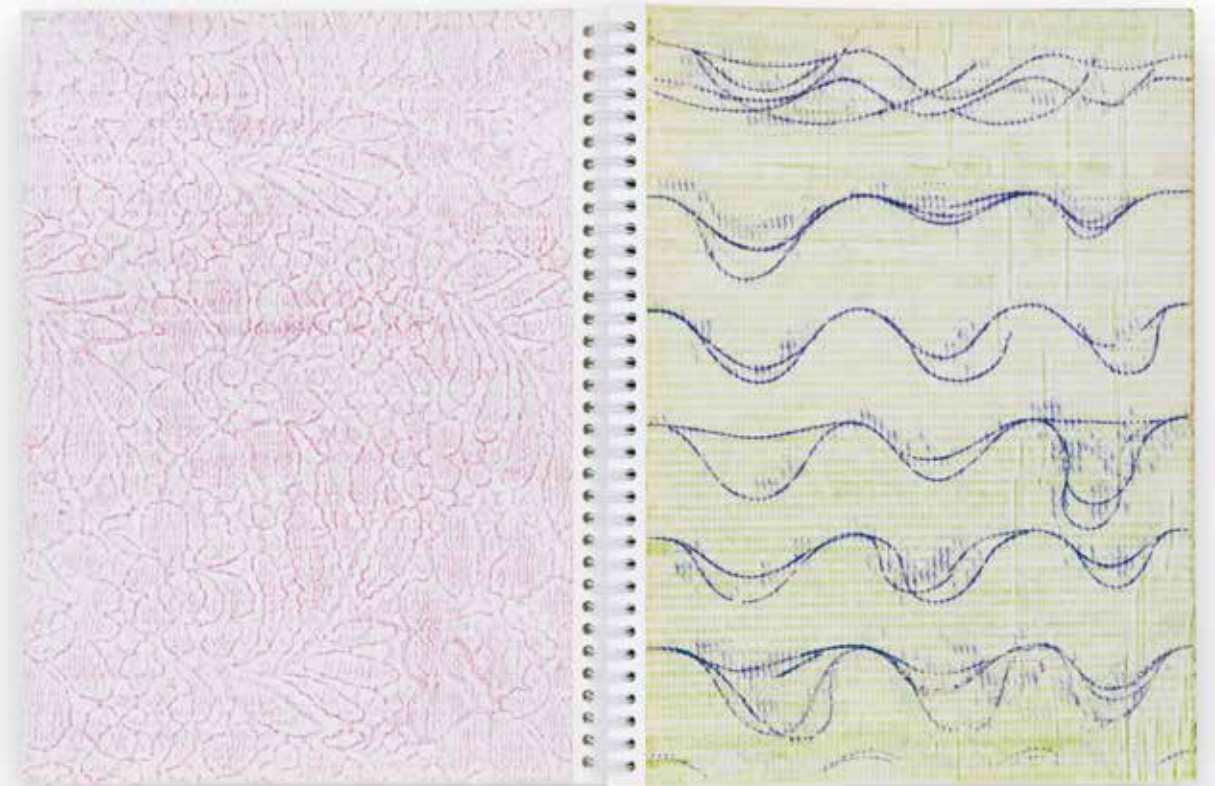
Typewritten with carbon paper and ink ribbon on drawing paper

Della Olga explains this work as follows:

“My aim was to deal with drapes and fabrics, inspired by those in old paintings. On the typewriter, lines appear only as straight; I sought to evoke the sense of drapery, the texture and materiality of fabric.

To achieve this, I interposed fragments of fabric between the sheet of paper and the carbon paper or ink ribbon, allowing the woven patterns to emerge. After working in this way, I was finally able, in the last sheets, to type lines that became sinuous and fluid.”

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



Left to right:

603

- TP Haute-Isle 7**
- TP Haute-Isle 4**
- TP Haute-Isle 5**
- TP Haute-Isle 6**
- TP Haute-Isle 3**
- TP Haute-Isle 1**
- TP Haute-Isle 2**

2025

Typewritten with ink ribbon and carbon paper on canvas with oil paint

In the past five years, della Olga has begun what she calls her “vertical adventure,” creating works typed on canvas or textured paper and stretched over wood panels. She often prepares the surface with oil paint before running it through her typewriter to produce pointillist images, striped patterns, or grids. This series is titled “TP” (for “typed painting”) and “Haute-Isle,” after the town outside Paris where she has her studio—near the former studios of Impressionist painter Claude Monet and Abstract Expressionist painter Joan Mitchell.

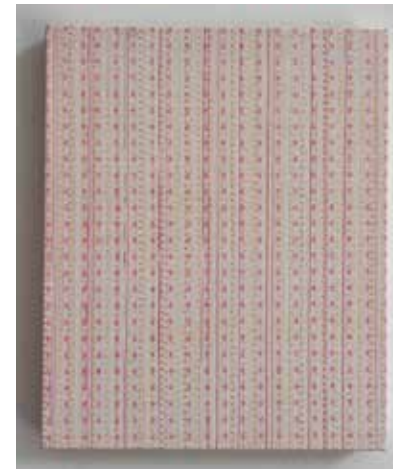
Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



7



4



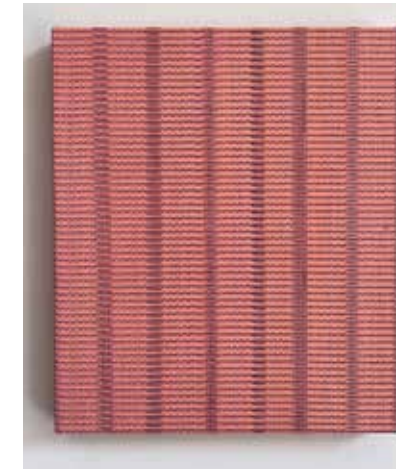
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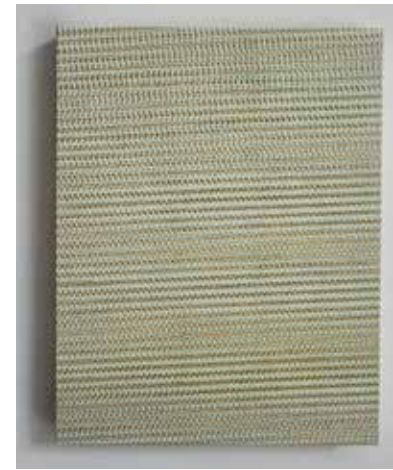
6



3



1



2

Marcel Broodthaers

**Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard:
Image**

(Antwerp: Galerie Wide White Space, 1969)

This book by poet-turned-artist Marcel Broodthaers (1924–1976) inspired della Olga's earliest artworks. It is based on a famous poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard" ("A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance," 1897/1914), in which the text is dispersed irregularly across the page, its layout contributing to its meaning. In his version, Broodthaers redacts the poem, transforming it from a foundational work of concrete poetry into, as the subtitle indicates, an image.

Clark Art Institute Library



Raffaella della Olga

602

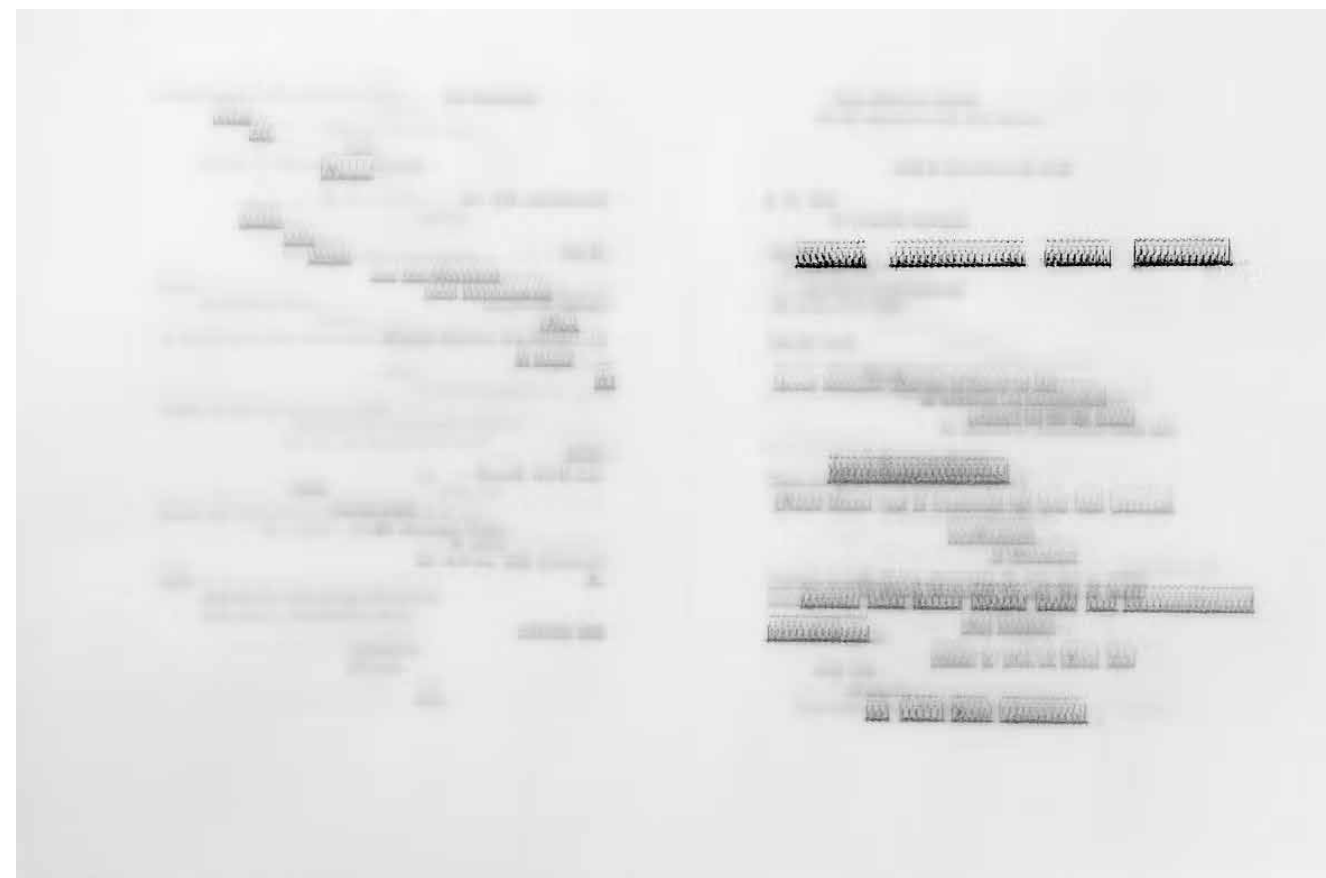
Un coup de dés: Trame

2018

Typewritten with carbon paper on tracing paper

Inspired by Broodthaers's version of Mallarmé (shown in this case), della Olga created her own. The artist inserted a piece of fabric and a sheet of carbon paper into the typewriter carriage, expressing the textile as a kind of text ("text," "texture," and "textile" all derive from the Latin *texere*, meaning "to weave or to join"). Her subtitle, Trame—in both Italian and in French—can refer to the grain of a material, the silk screen used in printing, the narrative structure of a literary work, or the weft (horizontal threads) in weaving.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



Clockwise from left:

604

Stoffe W, 2019

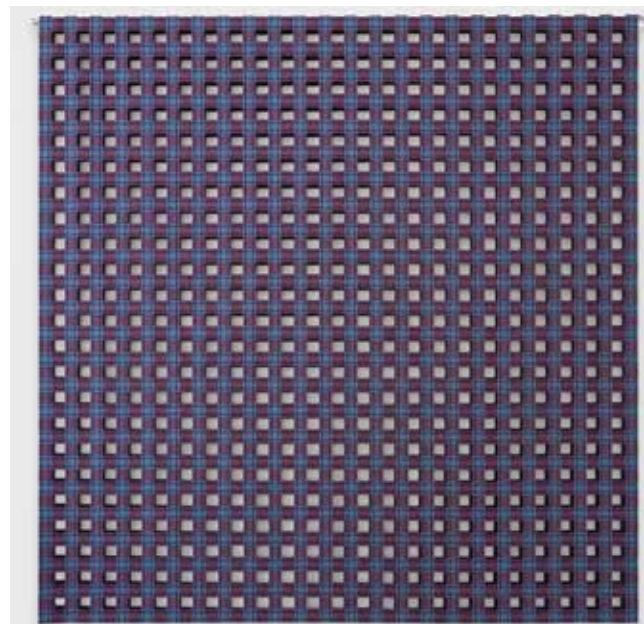
Stoffe Y, 2021

Stoffe G, 2021

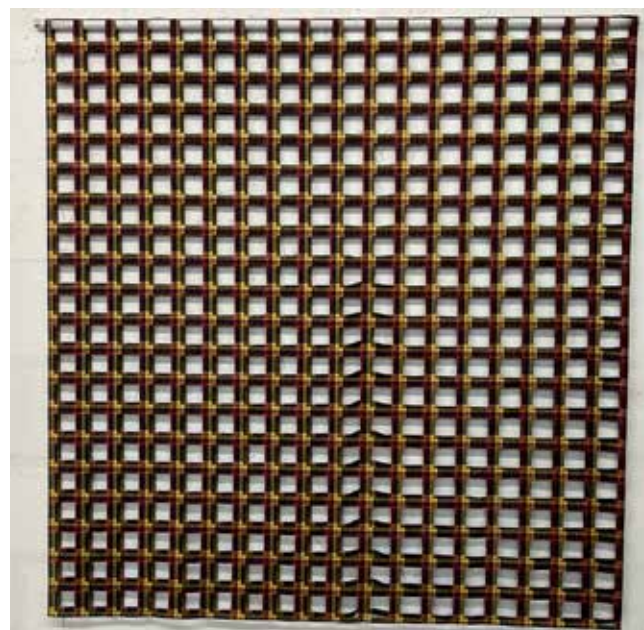
Cut wool fabric with fluorescent tube

Since 2016, della Olga has made fabric works she calls Stoffe, from the Italian word for “textiles.” Using found fabrics in tartan, plaid, or gingham patterns—usually wool suiting—she cuts out the negative spaces defined by the grid and drapes the works over a spent fluorescent tube (an homage to artist Dan Flavin; see T32 nearby). The result is a sheer surface with depth, recalling her treatment of the book page. The voids were also inspired by the sprocket holes that advance filmstrips, whose flat surfaces are projected into three-dimensional space (see T19 nearby).

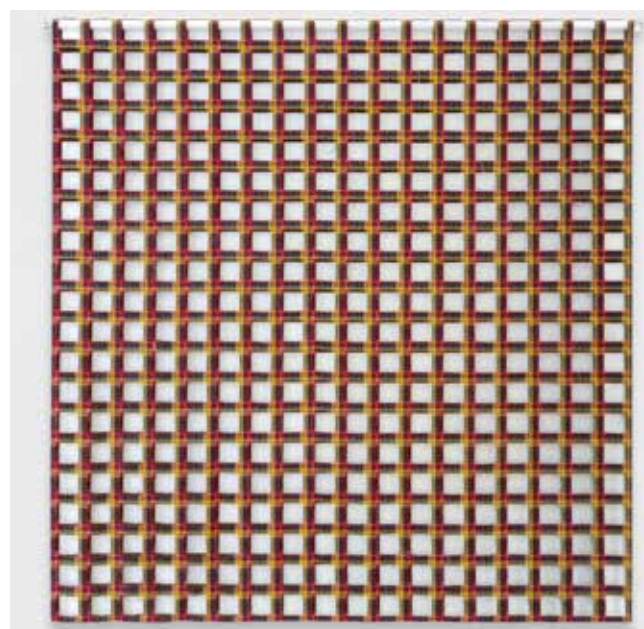
Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



Stoffe W



Stoffe Y



Stoffe G

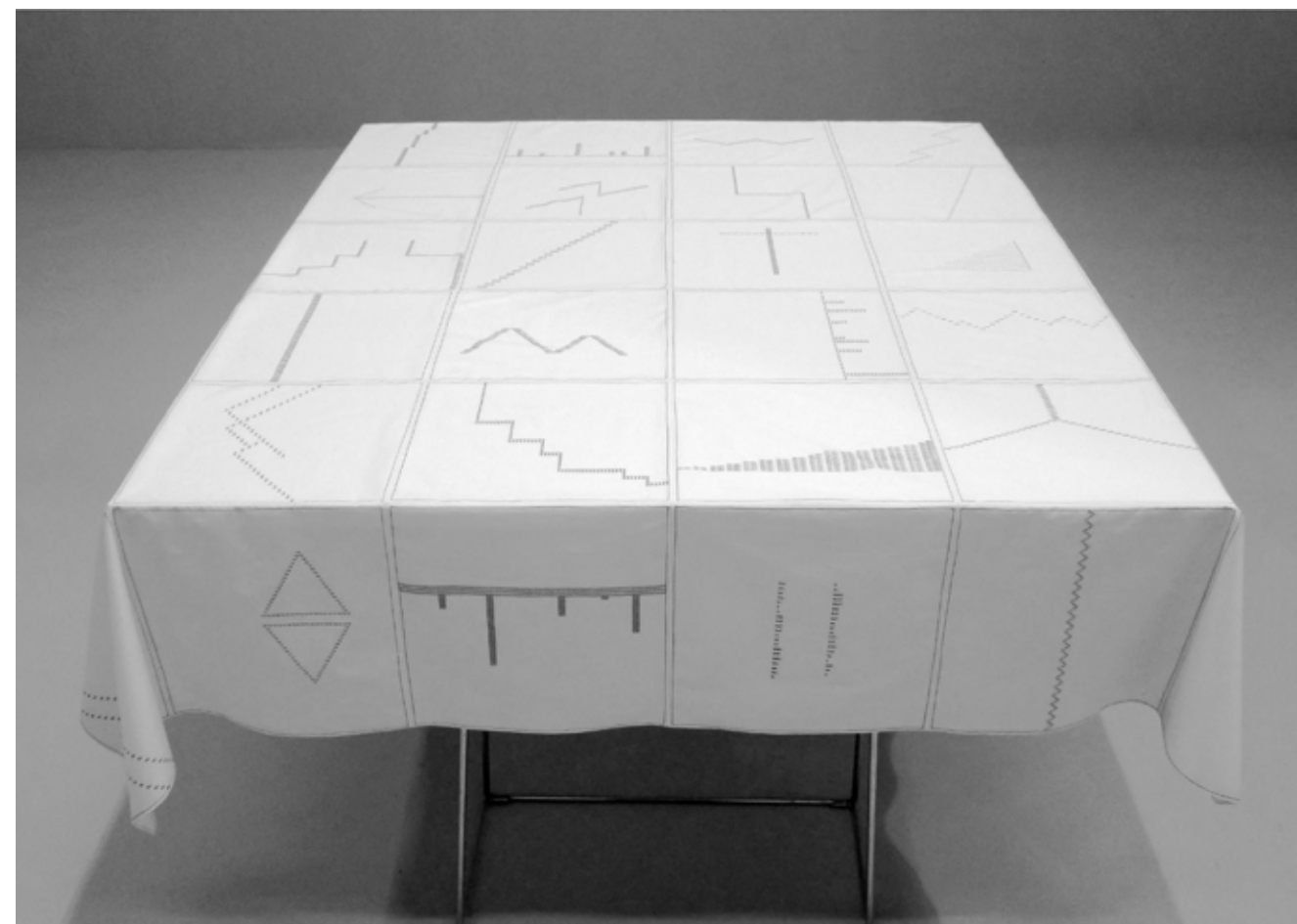
ALADDIN

2012

Typewritten on cotton fabric

Della Olga made this early typewriter work during the global financial crisis and subsequent economic recession in Europe, which produced massive debts and defaults in countries such as her native Italy. It is composed of the credit ratings assigned to various countries—abstractions legible mainly to financial industry insiders, yet with significant consequences for ordinary people. The title is borrowed from a BlackRock financial risk management software of the same name, which oversees more than \$20 trillion in global assets. Evoking the software's quasi-magical predictive powers, della Olga first exhibited this work as a tablecloth, an innocuous piece of domestic décor that also seems to float.

Courtesy of the artist and Three Star Books, Paris



OTHER TYPESCRIPTS

The cases in this gallery feature the work of artists and writers, past and present, who draw inspiration from the typewritten mark. Whether producing abstract pictures or poetic texts, each explores the typewriter's expressive potential as a creative tool.

This section of the exhibition is organized by Natalie Ginsberg, graduate student intern in the Williams College/Clark Graduate Program in the History of Art.

All works are from the collection of the Clark Art Institute Library.

Flora Stacey (British, 1845–1909)

“Typewriter drawing (butterfly)” in *Phonetic Journal* 57 (1898)

Flora Stacey's “butterfly” is considered the first known and surviving example of typewriter art. A stenographer, Stacey was among the many women whose professional opportunities expanded with the advent of this technology. Her work appears in a publication devoted to shorthand, which, like the typewriter, exemplifies the era's demand for bureaucratic efficiency. She subtly resists that logic, however, through her painstaking composition, every element of which is typed.

H. N. Werkman (Dutch, 1882–1945) and unidentified Bauhaus student

“Typeprint” (1923–29) and “Construction exercise” (mid-1920s) in *Typewriter Art*, ed. Alan Riddell (London: Magazine Editions, 1975)

Printer, publisher, and artist H. N. Werkman became known for his abstract typewriter drawings, which he called tiksels (from the Dutch tikken, “to tap”). Around the same time, a student at the Bauhaus school in Germany used the typewriter to evoke a sense of volume in space. In both cases, the machine allowed its users to build images piece by piece, with a directness and immediacy not possible using most traditional printmaking techniques.

Pietro Saga (Stefi Kiesler)
(American, 1897–1963)

“Typo-Plastique VII,” in *De Stijl* 6, no. 12 (1924–25)

The editor of this avant-garde journal, artist Theo van Doesburg, believed that paintings should be made in a mechanical, depersonalized way. In response, Stefi Kiesler—working under a male pseudonym to avoid a biased response to her work—demonstrated that one could also use a machine to make pictures.

Anni Albers (American, 1899–1994)

On Weaving

(Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1965)

As an artist, teacher, and theoretician, Anni Albers explored the connections between “text,” “texture,” and “textile.” Best known for her pictorial weavings, Albers described the typewriter studies shown here as “tactile-textile illusions” that “are to be understood not as an end in themselves, but merely as a help to us in gaining new terms in the vocabulary of tactile language.”

Seichii Niikuni (Japanese, 1925–1977) and Pierre Garnier (French, 1928–2014)

“Poèmes franco-japonais” in An Anthology of Concrete Poetry, ed. Emmett Williams

(New York: Something Else, 1967)

Concrete poetry, an experimental movement that emerged in the mid-twentieth century in South America and Europe, focuses on the materiality and visual structure of language. For this collaborative poem, Pierre Garnier “filed down” letters—much as Raffaella della Olga does on her typewriters—to merge them with Japanese Kanji and Hiragana characters in “a new linguistic reality.” Fragmented waves of French type reading mer (sea) submerge the Japanese for “sinking temple.” As the French washes over the Japanese, it transforms the character-based Kanji into the phonetic Hiragana.

Dom Sylvester Houédard (British, 1924–1992)

ceolfrith 15

(Sunderland, UK: Ceolfrith Arts Centre, 1972)

For the concrete poet and Benedictine monk Dom Sylvester Houédard (also known as dsh), the typewriter served more as a tool of inward reflection than outward expression. His so-called typestracts sought to strip language of semantic meaning, creating instead an immediate experience of the ineffable—that which cannot be expressed in words.

Willard S. Bain (American, 1938–2000) and Raymond Federman (1928–2009)

“Informed Sources” and “Double or Nothing” in Typewriter Art, ed. Alan Riddell

(London: Magazine Editions, 1975)

The page on the left, excerpted from a novel by Willard Bain, mimics a teletype — a device once widely used to transmit messages over telephone lines or radio to a remote printer. In Bain’s story, a group of San Francisco revolutionaries hijacks a local newswire channel, changing its message from “Support Your Local Police” to “Suffer Your Local Police.” The page on the right, from a “concrete novel” by Raymond Federman, presents typewritten text that captures the narrator’s frenzied planning of his own unfinished novel.

Jackson Mac Low (American, 1922–2004)

An Anthology of Chance Operations,
ed. La Monte Young
(New York: Heiner Friedrich, 1970)

This book was a foundational document of the Fluxus movement, which embraced “chance operations” in artistic production, inspired by composer John Cage. On this spread, the poet and performance artist Jackson Mac Low invites readers to interpret typewritten marks as a score. Arranged to guide action—or inaction—Mac Low’s composition shifts language into the realm of the moving, sensing body.

Steve McCaffery (Canadian, b. 1947)

Carnival: The First Panel, 1967–70
(Toronto: Coach House, 1973)

Experimental poet Steve McCaffery describes Carnival as “ground plans for a speaking city” and invites readers to tear out its pages and tile them together into a larger composition. The dense textures of the poems are not only visual but also suggest sound, and McCaffery has performed them aloud. References to silence, deafness, and the Tower of Babel reflect his fascination with the breakdown of language-as-communication—a concern shared by many concrete poets. Also shown here are a promotional postcard and a tongue-in-cheek slip listing “errors.”

Victoria Burge (American, b. 1976)

Galaxie and Underwood

2022

Victoria Burge's artworks are derived from instructional textile patterns and initially appear regular and formulaic—bound to the grid much like the typewriter model and brand named in the book's title. With her hand-drawn additions, however, Burge embraces imperfection and intuition. The small typewritten drawing shown here, an original artwork, recalls the fabric swatches often pasted into instructional textile guides.

JJJJerome Ellis (American, b. 1989)

The Clearing, second edition

(Brooklyn: Wendy's Subway, 2023)

JJJJerome Ellis created this work as a songbook to accompany his album of the same name. The digitally composed pages, which evoke typewritten marks, transform the author's verbal stutter into cascades of language and imagery. Typing over the album's time-stamped score, Ellis explores Blackness and dysfluent speech as “forces that open time.” He calls the pauses of his stutter “clearings,” positioning them as sites of possibility. Like the album's listeners, The Clearing's readers inhabit Ellis's own tempo.

Sébastien Hildebrand (French, b. 1980)

Clouds

(Rostock, Germany: PSW, 2022)

Using only the ampersand on his typewriter, Sébastien Hildebrand creates many skies, no two alike. The accumulation of marks here—“and and and [...]”—forms an ever-changing atmosphere of continuity and expansion.

Mary Lum (American, b. 1951)

Moving Parts (&)

(Cambridge: Harvard-Radcliffe Institute, 2023)

Mary Lum’s practice of collecting and disassembling found language parallels that of Corita Kent, the Pop artist and activist nun whose archives supplied the source material for this artist’s book. Lum’s collages suggest possible connections within found language, but—in keeping with her tendency to do and then undo—they remain intentionally open-ended.

sadé powell (b. 1993)

wordtomydead

(Brooklyn: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2023)

Poet sadé powell approaches legibility and illegibility as coexisting conditions of language. Here powell uses concrete poetry to convey the historical weight, multiplicity, and lived experience of Blackness. The challenge of reading this work mirrors the experience of making it: the author describes operating the heavy keys of her 1930s Royal typewriter as both demanding and inspiring.

Egidija Čiricaitė (Lithuanian, b. 1974)

More Weaving Patterns for Poetry

(London: Natrix Natrix, 2024)

Egidija Čiricaitė types the letters of English and Lithuanian words—in this instance, “audible” and audinys (for “cloth” or “fabric”)—in the patterns of traditional Lithuanian bedspreads. Joining textile and narrative crafts, she references the tradition of nighttime storytelling at the loom in her native country while also experimenting with poetic bilingual phrases. In “audinys/audible,” she discovered the translation “felted story.” The artist aligns the verbal and auditory dimensions of language with the tactile, rhythmic labor of weaving and typewriting.

Ege Berensel (Turkish, b. 1968)

“vazgeçme: never give up” in **ToCall**, no. 20 1/2,
2024

This work, created in homage to artist Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt (1932–2024), adopts her distinctive style. Wolf-Rehfeldt distributed her typed art by mail, overcoming the constraints on mobility in the former East Germany. With its inclusion in ToCall, a magazine dedicated to typewriter art, Berensel’s work circulates to an international audience through a chain of translations—both mechanical and digital—as described on the page.



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