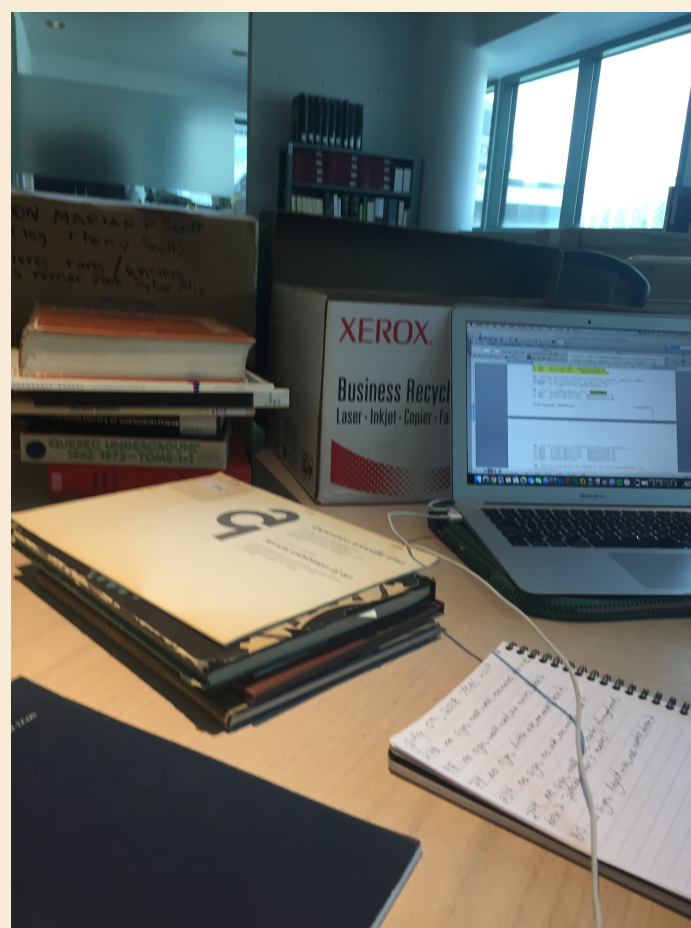


Reading Marian Dale Scott, Reading Hannah Deskin, Art History Supervised by Gwendolyn Owens, Director, McGill Visual Arts Collection

Abstract:

To understand what sparked Montreal artist Marian Dale Scott's (1906-1993) creative imagination as she sought to express her worldview through her diverse artworks, it is important to look at the influences that shaped her style throughout her career. Trained at the Slade school in London, and active in Montreal throughout much of the twentieth century, Dale Scott became a prolific modernist painter. In my research project, my objective was to study and inventory the artist's book collection, held at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. This research into the artist's personal collection sheds light on the works by Marian Dale Scott that are apart of McGill's Visual Arts Collection.

(bottom, left) Georgia O'Keeffe,
*Radiator Building – Night, New
York, 1927*
(bottom, centre) Charles
Sheeler, *Criss-Crossed
Conveyors, 1927*
(bottom, right) Marian Dale
Scott, *Cement, 1939*



(far left) Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
mediatech, where the
research was conducted.
(left) an open box with
books ready to be searched
and inventoried.

Introduction:

Before the emergence of the Internet as a site for exposure to different ideas, books were one of the primary ways that artists gained knowledge of different techniques and styles. Marian Dale Scott's book collection held titles that ranged from American Precisionism to Australian Indigenous art, with exhibition catalogues spanning several continents and decades. These discoveries help us to position the artist as an individual who looked far beyond local encounters, as she displayed continuous interest in the global nature of philosophy and art.

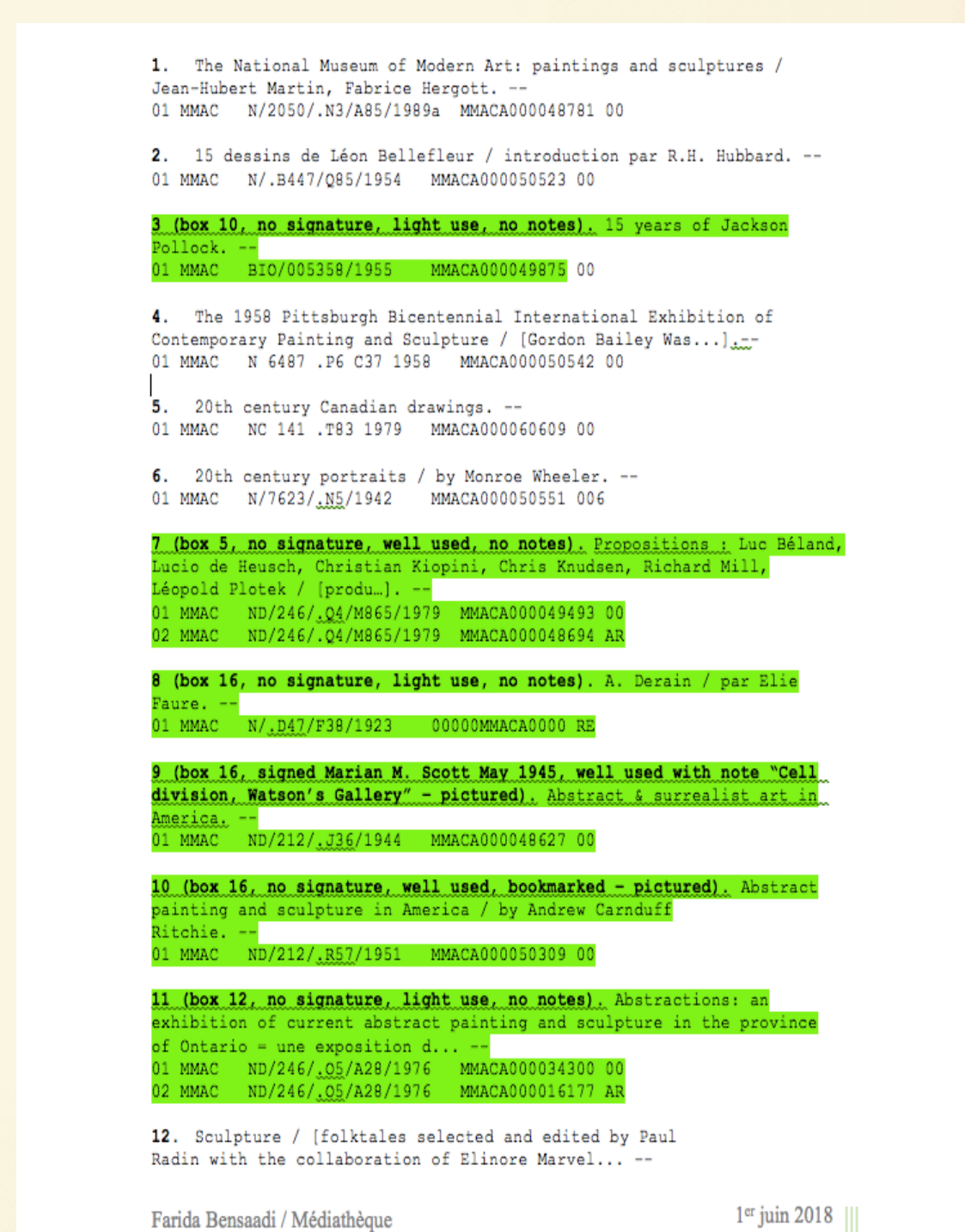


Research Methods:

While these influences can be observed in her artistic style, it can be helpful to pinpoint exactly how and when the artist became exposed to ground-breaking movements, like American Precisionism, demonstrated above by the works of Charles Sheeler and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Over the course of several weeks, I searched 18 boxes of books, while cross-referencing an itemized inventory list of over 300 records. This is what I looked for:

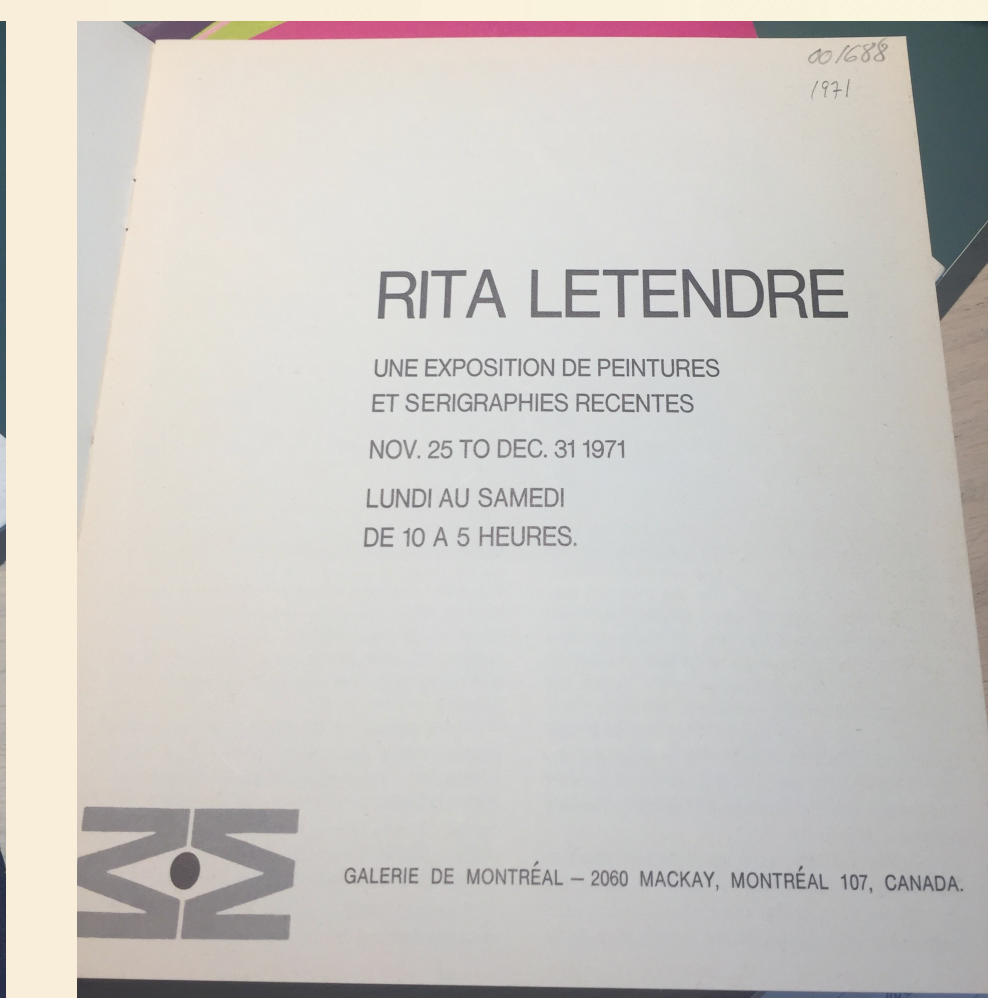
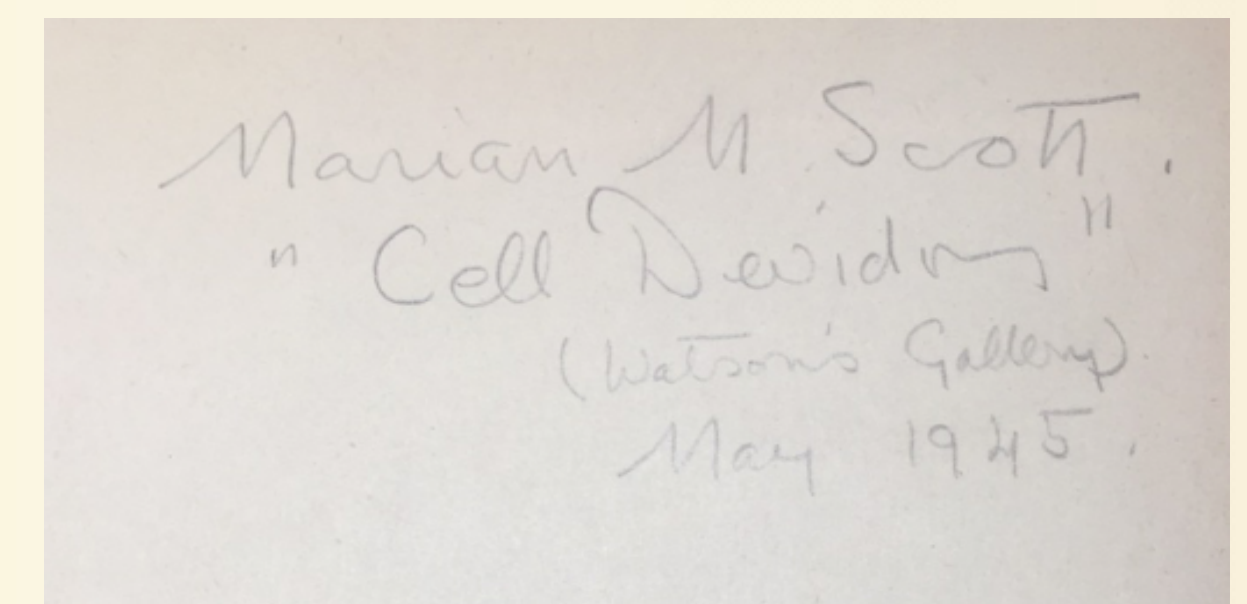
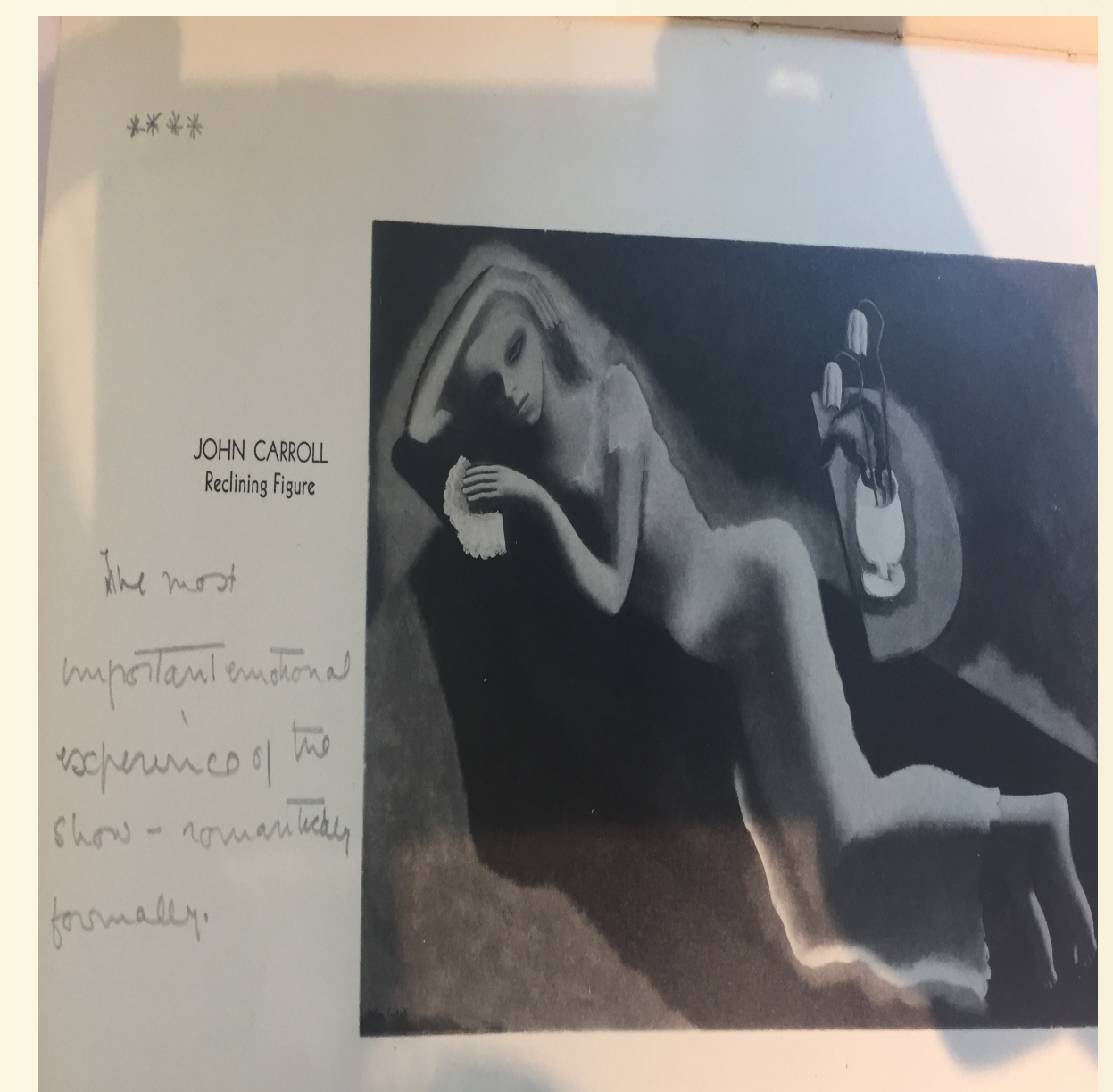
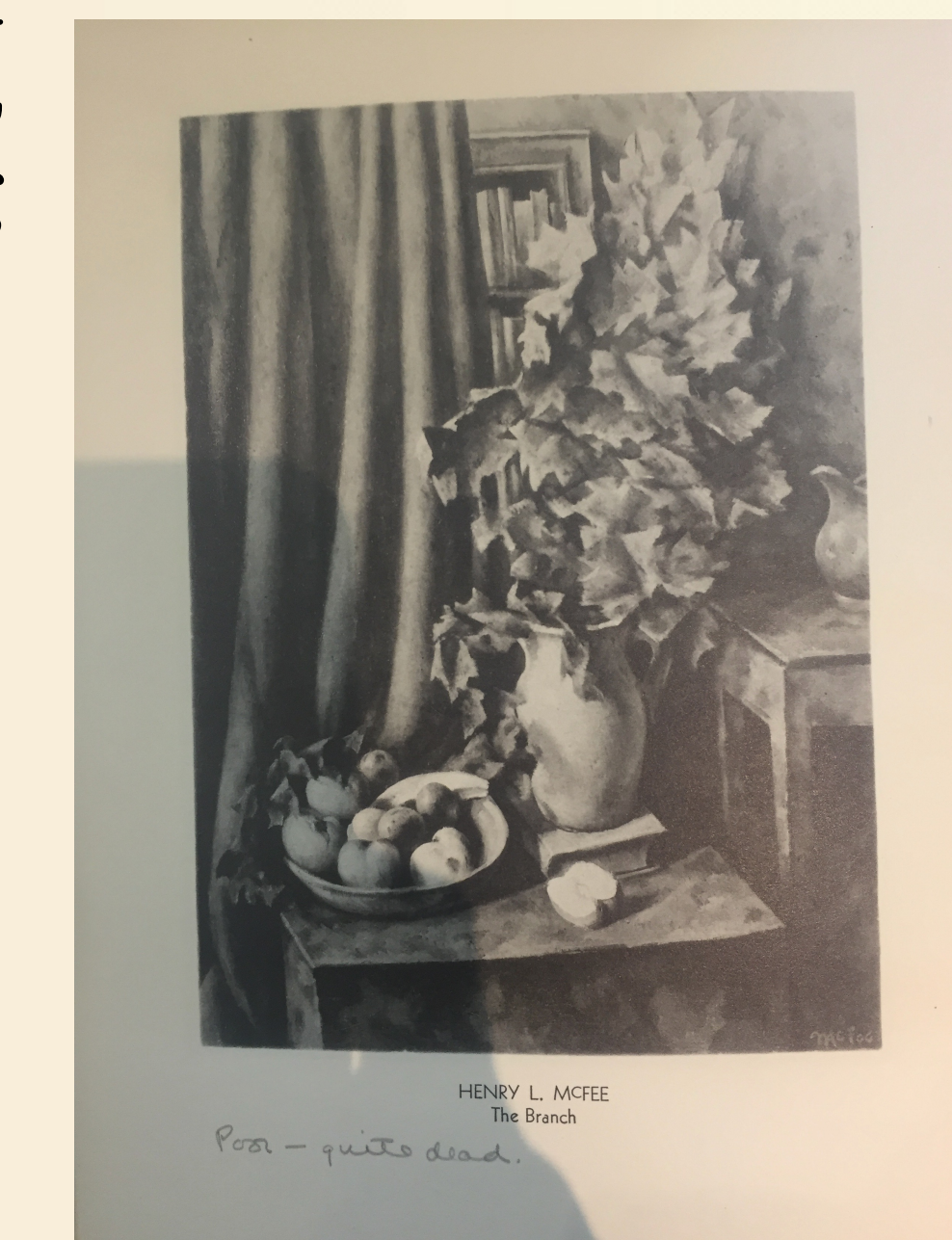
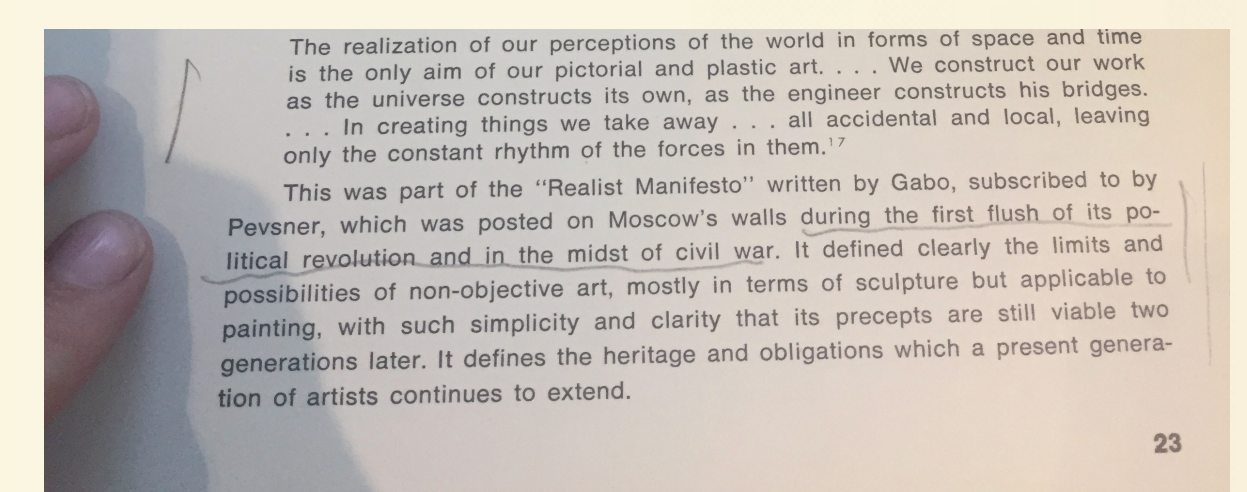
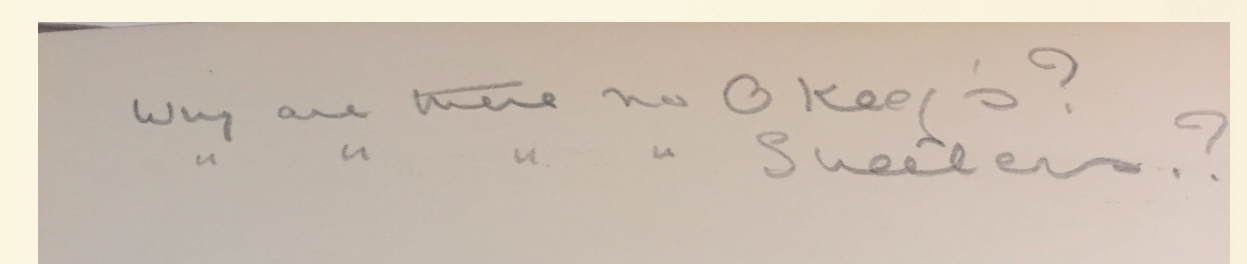
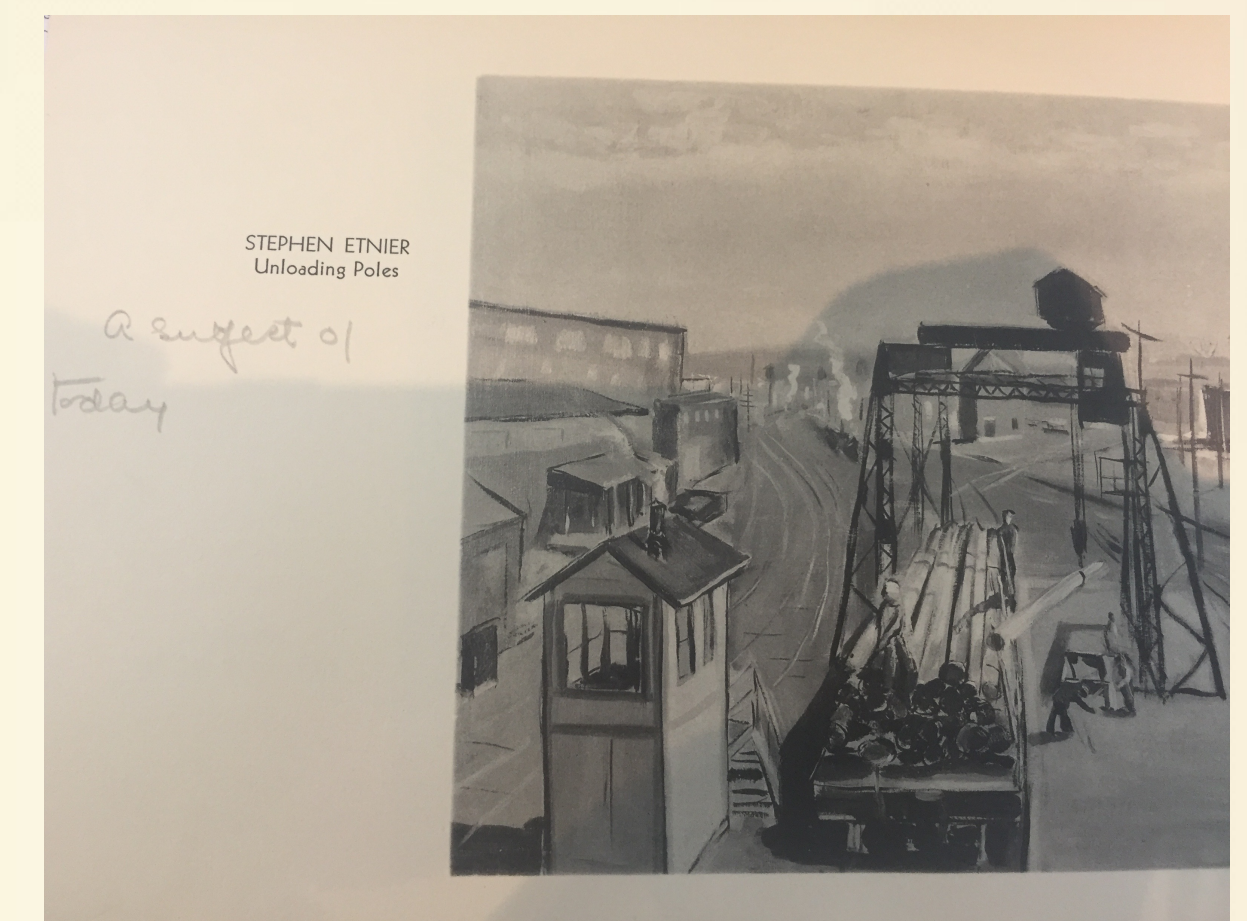
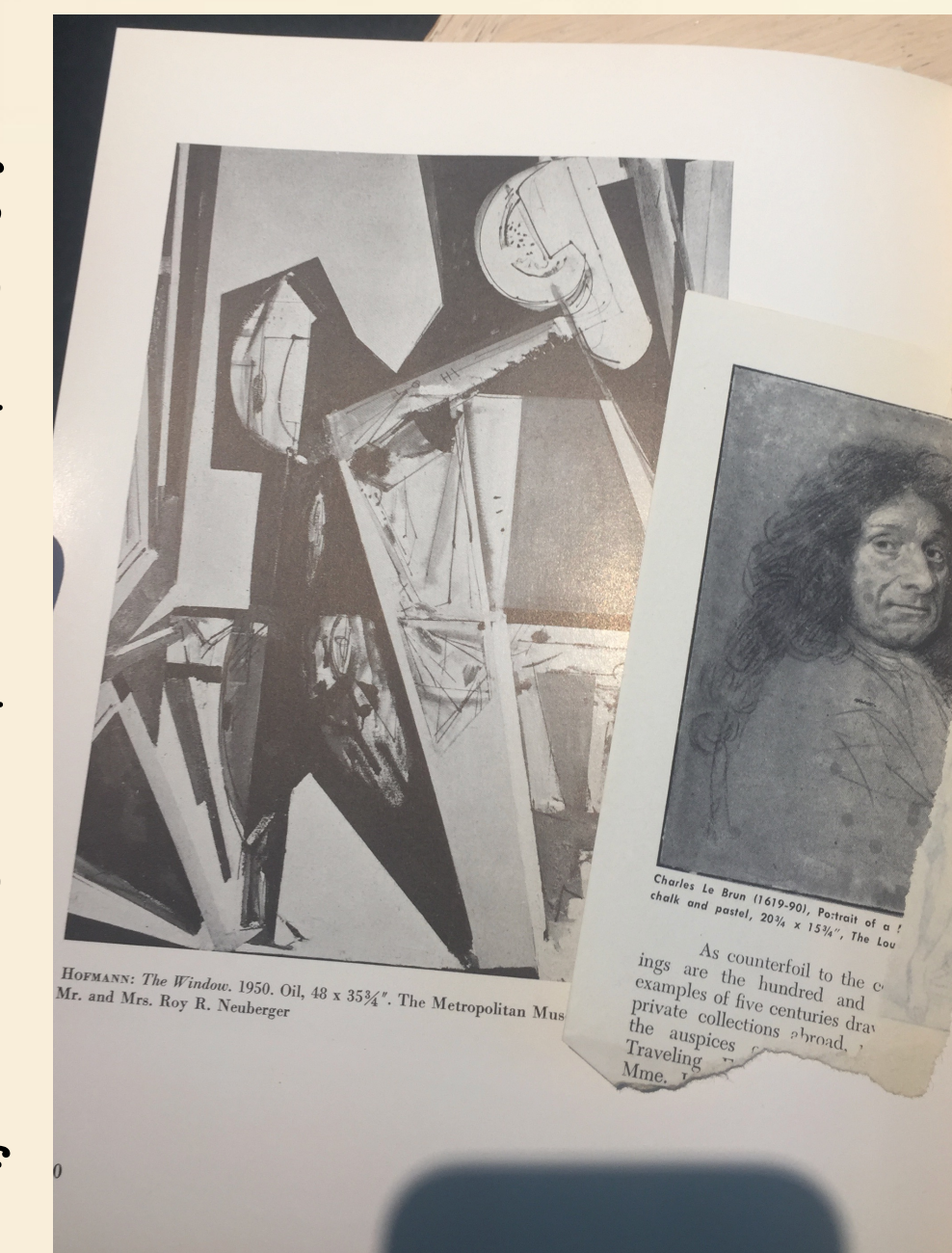
- Book condition
- Signature and dates
- Annotations



Key Findings:

- Annotations specifically relating to art philosophy and the confluence of art, society and politics.
- Signed and dated volumes with pages bookmarked at specific images that may have interested the artist.
- Commentary on the status of international art in Canadian exhibitions, naming important artists, and questioning curatorial choices.

From right to left: Excerpts and annotations from
*Exhibition of contemporary paintings by artists of the
United States* held at the National Gallery (1934),
Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America (1951),
*Rita Letendre: une exposition de peintures et
sérigraphies récentes* (1971),
Marian Dale Scott, *Untitled* (1960s),
Marian Scott, *Untitled* (1948),
Bradshaw Rock Paintings, Australia,
Lascaux Cave Paintings, France.



Conclusion:

Marian Dale Scott was an artist who relentlessly explored and experienced the world around her. As an artist, she soaked up influences from around the world, while remaining firmly rooted in the vibrant artistic community here in Montreal. Through her book collection, the artist was able to travel the annals of history and to the farthest corners of the world—with titles ranging from the indigenous arts of Australia to the prehistoric Lascaux cave paintings in France—allowing her to gather diverse materials that would come to define her artwork.

Through this process, I was afforded an intimate glimpse into what the artist found important—through personalized annotations, dog eared pages, and bookmarked entries, I learned that she prioritized a global mindset towards the arts.

Acknowledgements:

This project would not have been possible without the generous donation of Katherine Smalley, a long supporter of students at McGill and the Visual Arts Collection, as well as the guidance and support of Gwendolyn Owens, director of the Visual Arts Collection.

