

# Gordon Matta-Clark: The Artist in His Own Words

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Supervised by Gwendolyn Owens, Professor of Art History and director of the Visual Arts Collection of McGill University.

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## The Project

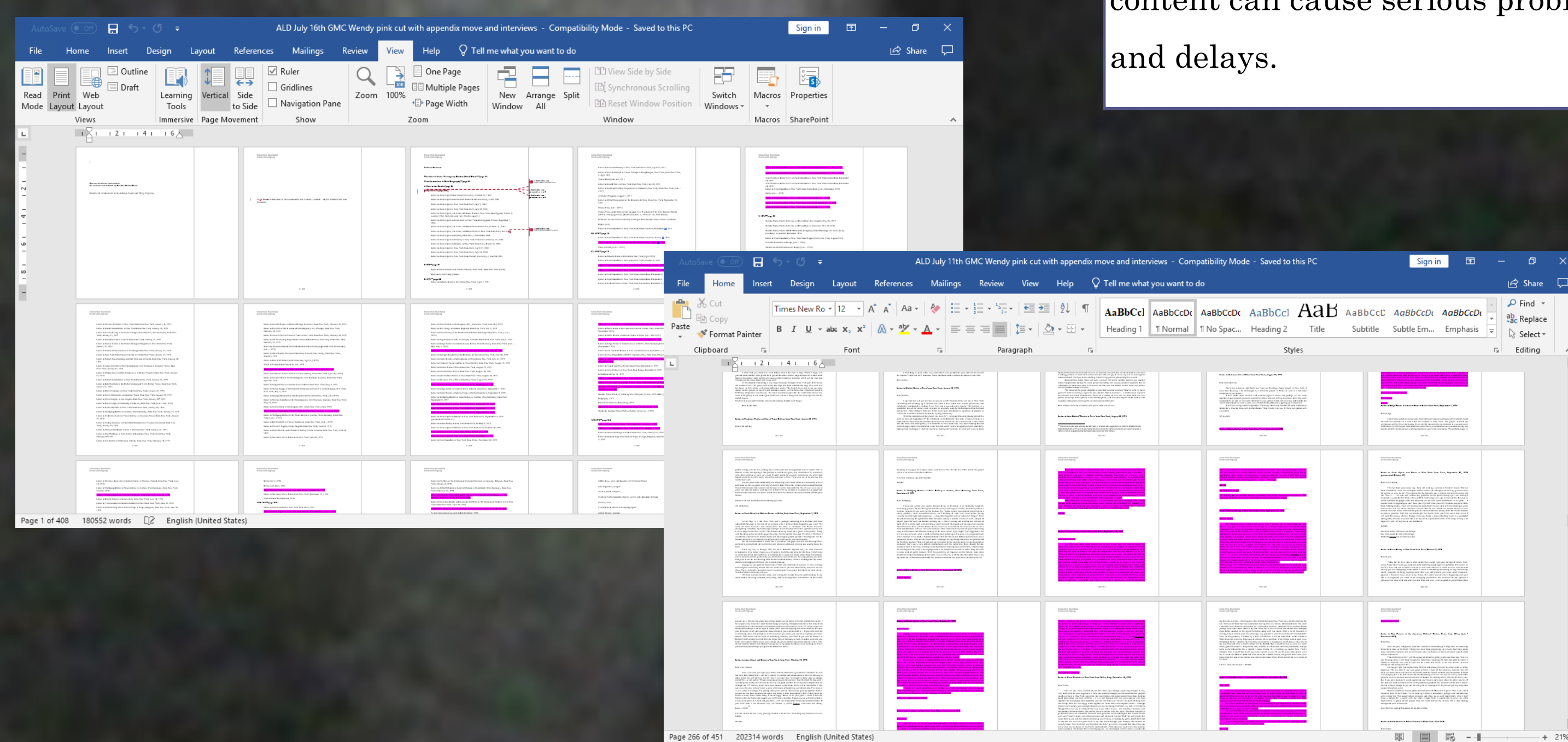
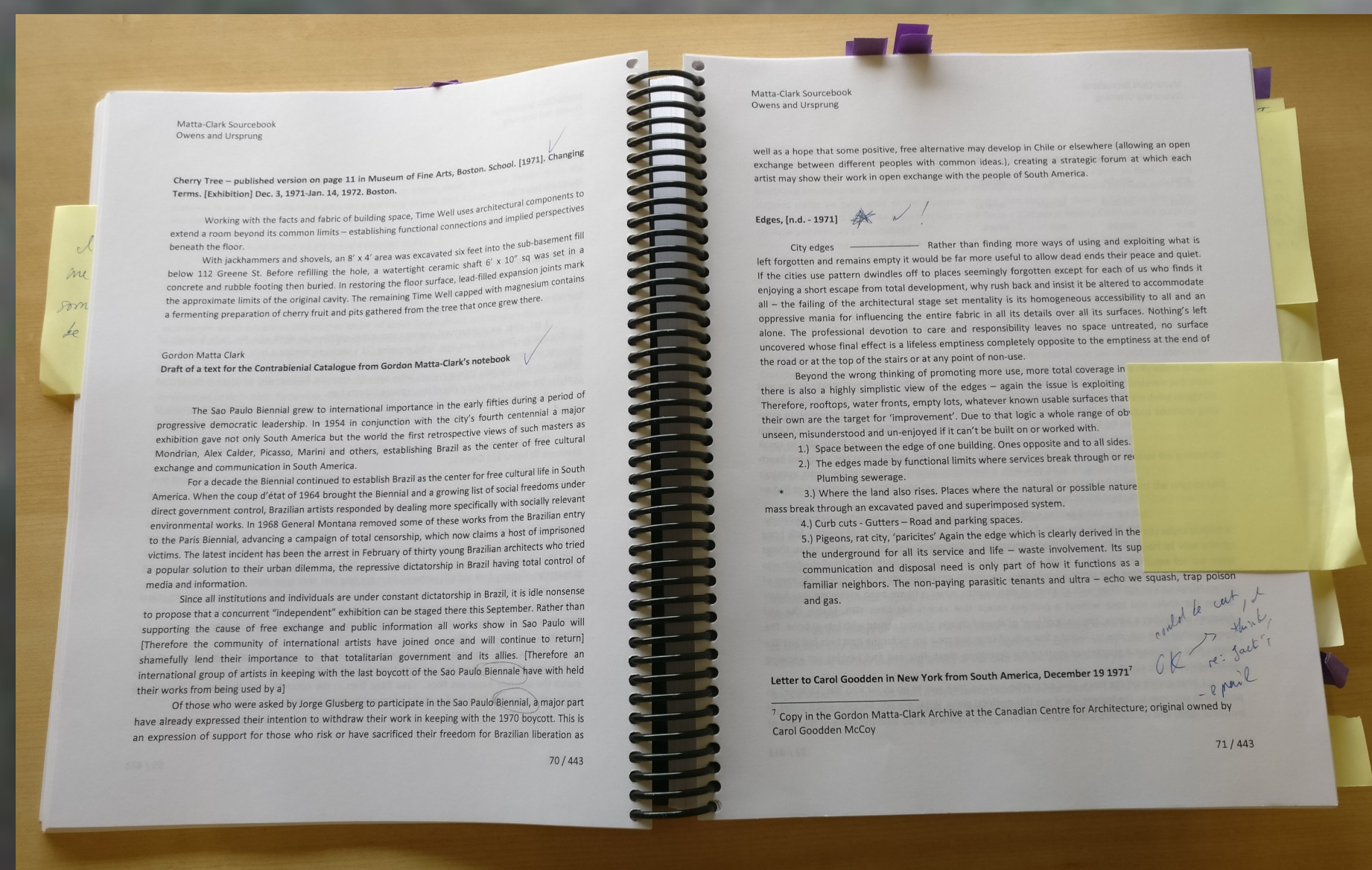
Forthcoming from the University of California Press, Professor Gwendolyn Owens and Philip Ursprung have created a sourcebook for the American artist Gordon Matta-Clark. With the aim of letting the artists own words speak for him, Owens and Ursprung have examined archival material, currently published information on Gordon Matta-Clark, and their own wealth's of knowledge to compile a sourcebook, which for the first time creates an image of the artist in his own words through letters, photos, films, and drawings.

## My Work

Working on the long term project of the sourcebook, I worked to assist getting the manuscript to its final pre-published form. This involved research on the individuals mentioned in the book and completion of the list of biographical sketches for the appendix, research on obtaining copyright permissions for the interviews and images used in the book, copyediting, and the final stage of interview transcriptions which were to be included in the book. I was also responsible for formatting the manuscript in accordance with the University of California Press' standards, and creating new copies of edits and organizational documents for the publishing house and for the authors. As well, I had to become familiar with Gordon Matta-Clark's art as well as his personal life to best assist with revisions to the work. This process included examining scholarly works on the artist, watching videos, and reading the draft manuscript many times over. As well, I had the opportunity to attend the CCA exhibition on the artist, which showed me more about the artist and his place in the art world. Today, all of this resulted in my ability to give real input on the book and its editing process.

## The Manuscript Process

While working with the text which will become the final published edition of the work, I used both a hard copy bound edition of the manuscript, as well as myriad Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint slides to organize our work. I learned that organization and appropriate labels are the key to success when engaging in a large scale publication process like this, as any mis-labelled or misplaced content can cause serious problems and delays.



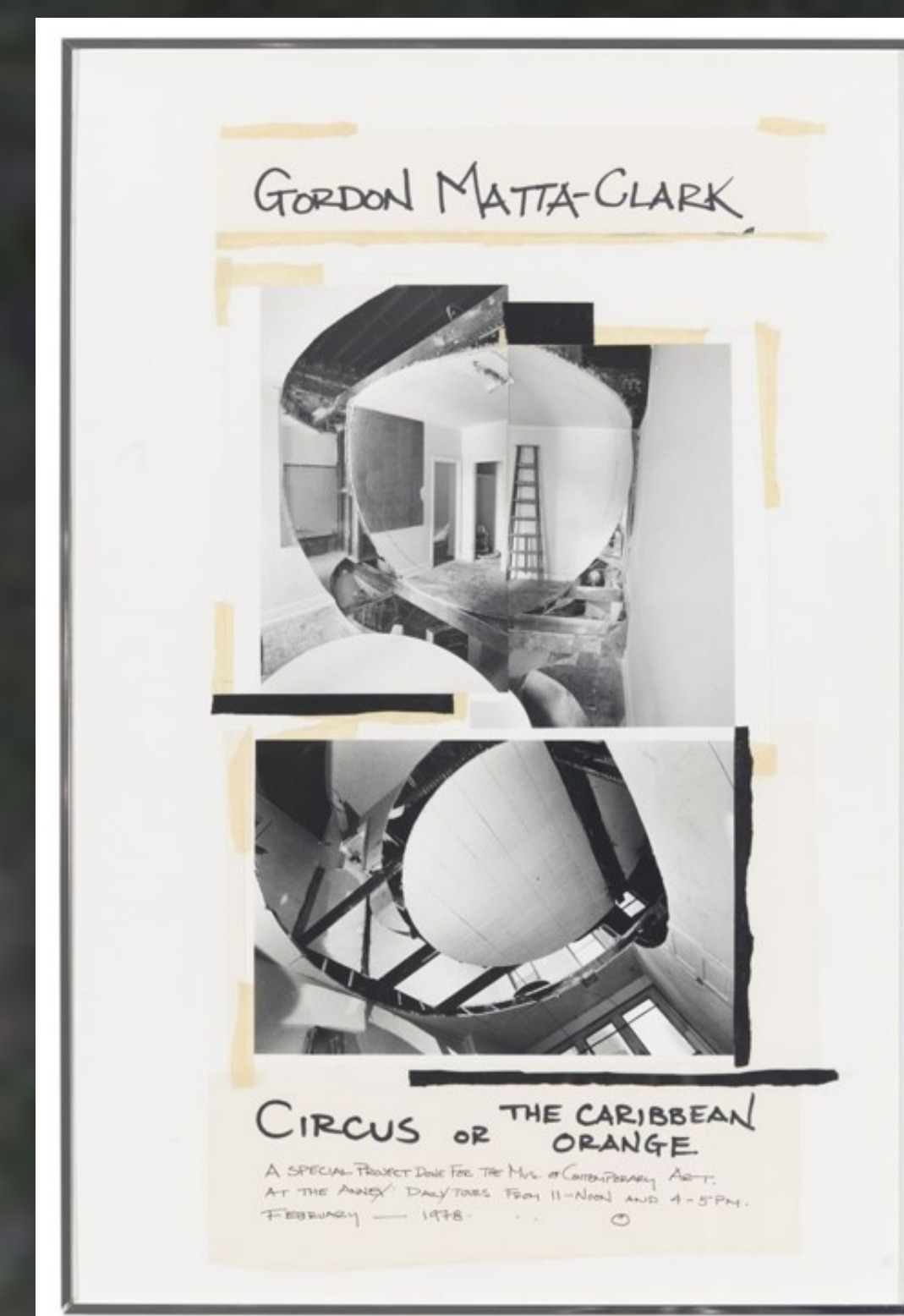
The manuscript process, in paper and digitally.



A photo from Bronx Floors (1972-73). New York Times, Estate of the artist, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; David Zwirner.



Bingo (also called Bingo X Ninths, Bingone X Ninths, Bin gone, Bingone by Ninths and Days, and Been Gone by Ninths), 349 Erie Avenue, Niagara Falls, New York, USA. Estate of the artist.



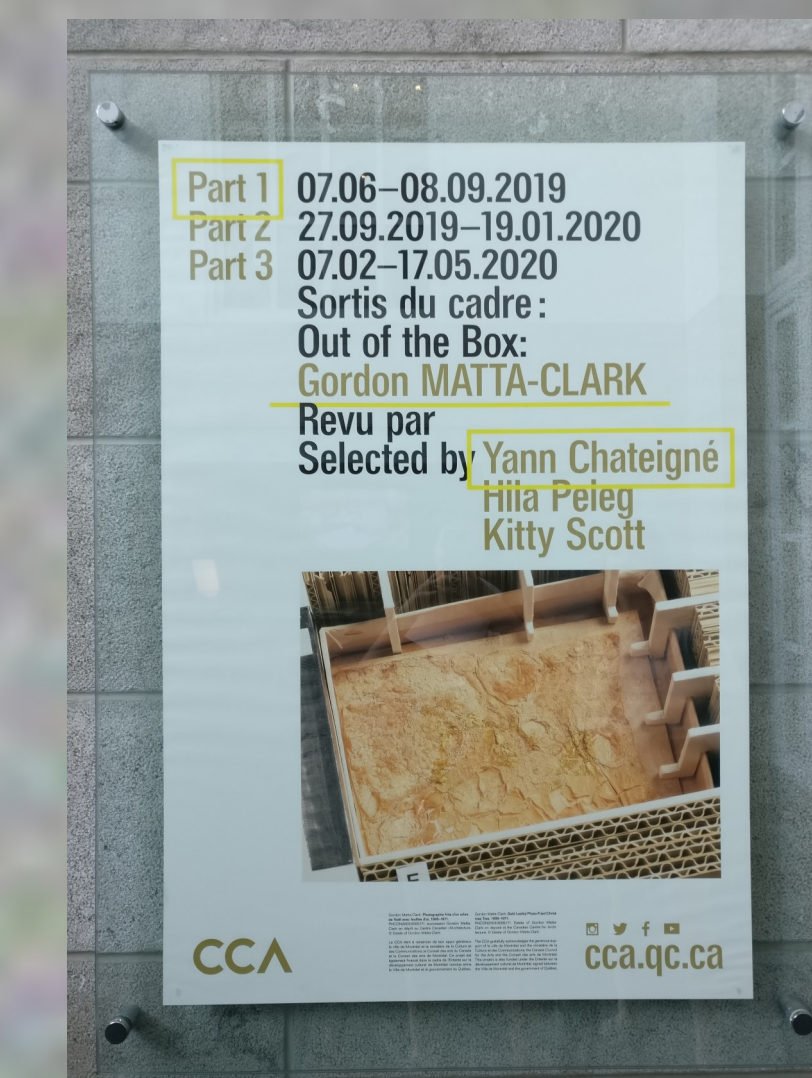
Circus, or The Caribbean Orange, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago Illinois, 1978.



Matta-Clark working on Conical Intersect, 1975. Also known as Etant d'art pour locataire, at 27-29 rue Beaubourg, Paris, France. Estate of the artist.

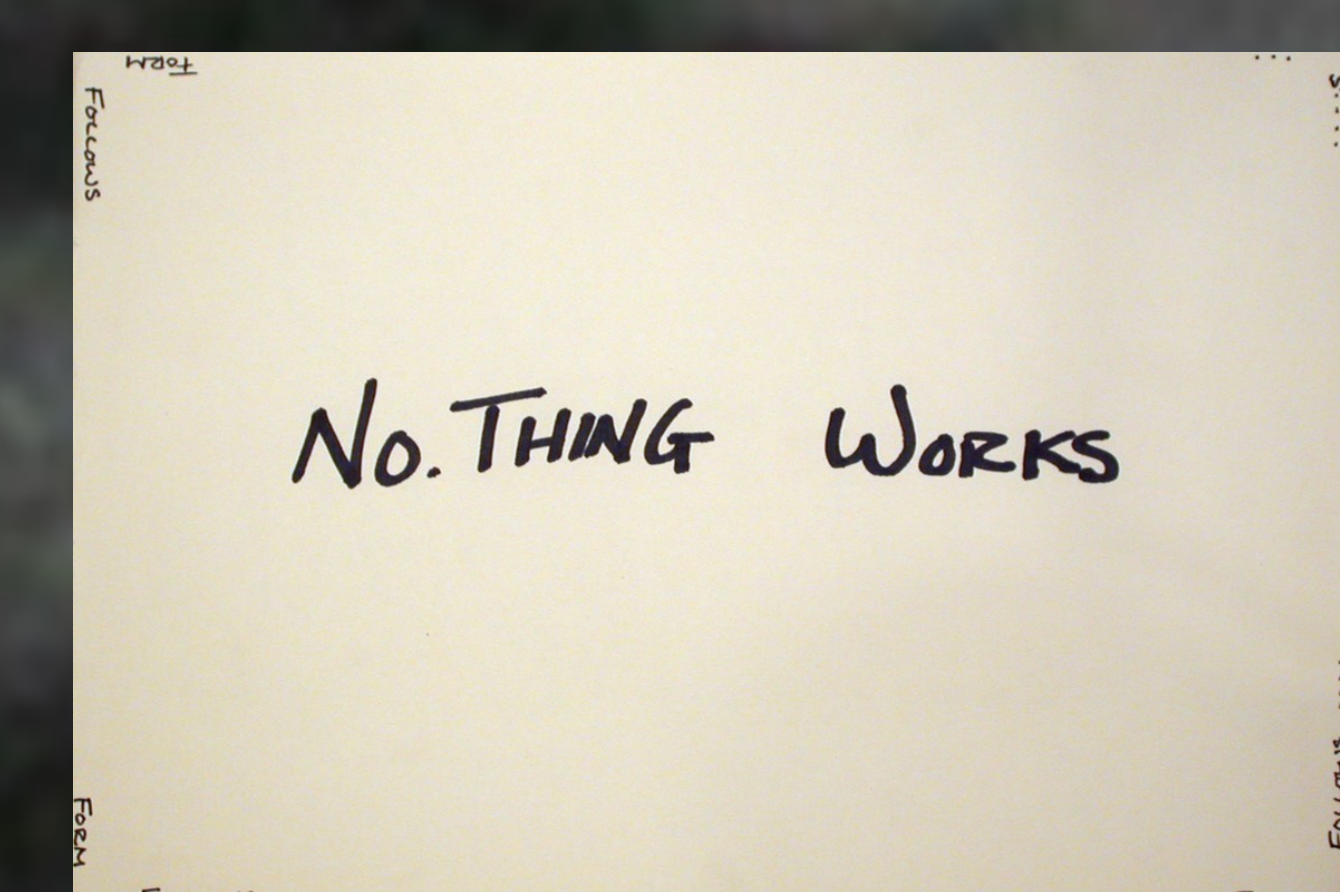
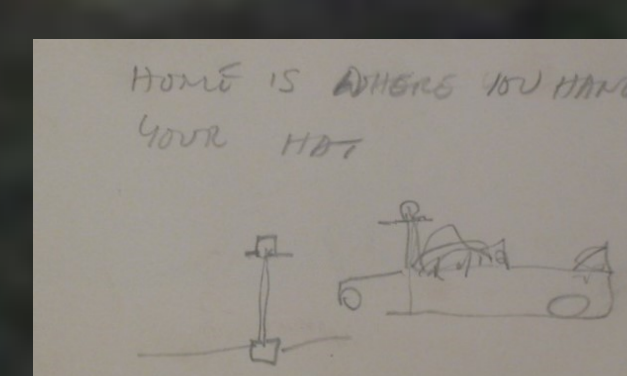
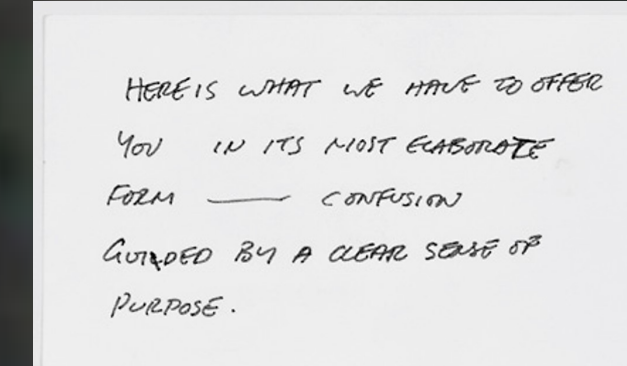
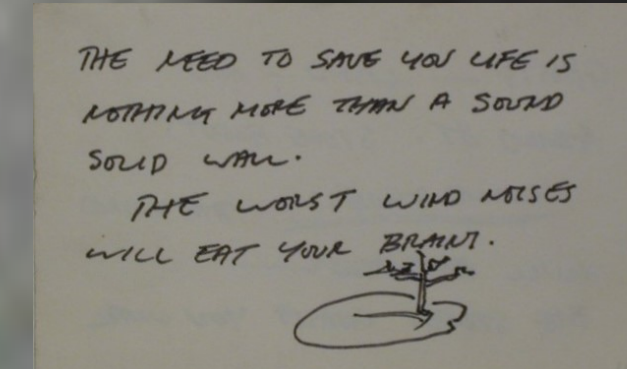
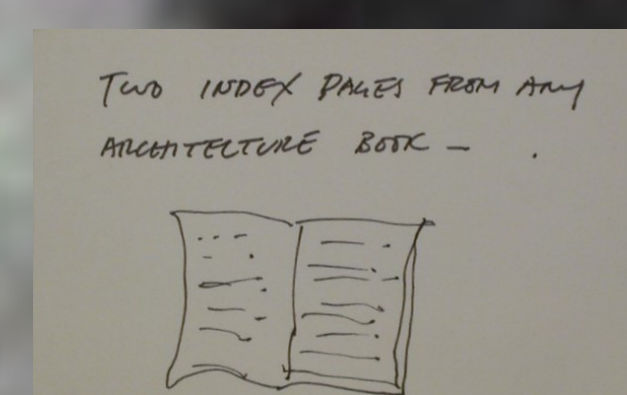
## Gordon Matta-Clark at the Canadian Centre for Architecture

CCA in Montreal hosts the archival collection of Gordon Matta-Clark, which consists of writings, artworks, photographs, films (which include sketches and finished works), as well as notes and ephemera from the artist's life. Part of the collection first arrived at the CCA in 2002, and was almost completely acquired in 2011 by way of Jane Crawford, Matta-Clark's widow. The current CCA exhibition is split into three exhibits which will be on view until May 2020, each curated by a different person using materials from the Matta-Clark archive. The exhibit allowed me to see Matta-Clark within the larger context of art and architecture of the 20th century, and to see how scholars and the public view and interact with his work. As well, the Matta-Clark archive has been on display at the CCA many times, and is frequently accessed, which further shows the importance of this artist in 2019 and beyond, and the growing interest in his work today.



## Gordon Matta-Clark: A Small Biography

Gordon Matta-Clark and his work occupy a position at the crossroads of art and architecture. Indeed, his work negotiated the divisions between interior and exterior both literally and metaphorically. Matta-Clark's cutting pieces *Bronx Floors*, *Bingo*, *Splitting*, *Circus*, *Day's End*, and *Conical Intersect* all serve to change the boundaries between the outside world and the interior spaces of buildings, often bringing light into spaces which had not seen the day in many years. Matta-Clark's work also extended into the subterranean, with his 1976 film *Substrait*, his 1977 works *Underground Paris* and *Descending Steps for Batan*, as well as his early work in the basement at 112 Greene Street in New York (*Cherry Tree*, *Time Well*, 1971). Beyond his body of 3D work, Matta-Clark's writings — in notebooks, loose paper, and his art cards, provide a window into his artistic process as well as his personal philosophies about the meaning(s) of built and (un)built spaces.



Courtesy of the Estate of the artist and David Zwirner. All art cards courtesy of the Gordon Matta-Clark Archive, CCA. Nos. 1183, 1191 verso, 1388, 1216, and unnumbered large art card.