Romany Eveleigh is a UK-born, Canadian artist who studied at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in the early 1950s, after which she moved to London to study painting at The Slade. She remained in the UK until the 1970s while also travelling extensively throughout Europe, returning to Montreal in 1977. From the 1980s until 2013 Eveleigh maintained studios in Montreal, New York, and Rome. She gave up her New York studio in 2013 and spends most of her time now in her home and studio in Rome, with frequent visits to Montreal. Since the 1970s she has exhibited consistently in solo and group exhibitions in Montreal, Paris, New York, and Rome. She was elected Member of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts in 2002. A comprehensive monograph on the artist was recently published in an edition of 200 (Montreal: Twin Press, 2017) with essays by Angela Grauerholz and Cheryl Simon, which also contains earlier essays on the artist’s work by Gilbert Reid and philosopher Giorgio Agamben, among other writers, as well as a detailed chronology of Eveleigh’s illustrious life, travels, and over 50 years of work to date.

Romany Eveleigh works decidedly (and decisively) within and against traditions of abstract painting and drawing. She gained critical attention in the 1970s for her sprawling project *Manifesto* (1976), an ambitious wall installation consisting of small drawn circles of ink, graphite and/or painting in vast, linear repetition mimicking the lines, margins, or columns on a page, text or broadsheet. The marks asserted within Eveleigh’s *Manifesto* were previously experimented with in her series of paint and printer’s ink on paper, mounted to canvas titled *Pages* (see fig. 1) created between 1973 and 1977, which again read as a form of writing or the delivery of a script without resorting to the use of words.

Eveleigh began each of these early projects in Rome where she encountered – written in a language not her own, and in a place to which she was a foreigner – newspaper leaves affixed mural-style to walls along city sidewalks for passers-by to read. It was at this time, explain Angela Grauerholz and Cheryl Simon that “the question of one’s relation to language emerges as a primary interest in Eveleigh’s work.”¹ This question has continued to preoccupy Eveleigh’s approach to mark-making, which aims to assess how meaning and understanding relate to the more rigid and orthodox parameters of language and knowledge through which we make sense of the space between self and world. As Cheryl Simon has eloquently stated, “Approaching creative expression as a problem of language struggling to give form to perception, Romany Eveleigh’s paintings and works on paper attempt to capture something of that moment of being in the world when understanding registers in advance of intellect.”² She suggests that this interest

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which has manifested throughout the artist’s practice since the 1960s, “has since become a near singular preoccupation with beginnings in themselves.”\(^3\)

Please cite in the following manner:

Jonathan Shaughnessy, Acquisition Proposal for Romany Eveleigh’s *From the Edge No.2*, accession #48486, Curatorial File, National Gallery of Canada.

\(^3\) Ibid., 41.