

BEAN STALKING: COULD MR. BEAN BE FUNNIER THAN JIM CARREY AND PEE WEE HERMAN?

# The Coast

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## PULP ACTION

Paper is the medium and the message as the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia hosts a show of paper works by Garry Kennedy and other Halifax artists.



MUSIC TO OUR PEERS: THE AFRICAN-NOVA SCOTIAN MUSIC ASSOCIATION GETS IT TOGETHER



# Writing on the wall

by Mimi Fautley

Paper may be the most consistently ubiquitous material in our culture. It is language's material companion, the physical support for our endeavors to communicate with one another. It can be as sublime as it can be banal, and is most certainly taken for granted in virtually every realm of its use. This is perhaps least often true in artmaking, where an awareness of the ways in which materials inform ideas is vital to the creative process. Sometimes this awareness takes the form

he explains, "and they're not that banal any more." The wallpaper acts both as a backdrop and a point of reference for the other works which Kennedy is presenting. "The room carries related work and it is a good room. I mean, that wallpaper—the work's all related to the wallpaper. So it's not made to look like anything apart from carrying these different levels of information." In fact, the room functions as a kind of directory, a book turned inside out to create an architectural space, where every element represents an idea relating to a common theme.

On one wall hangs a group of 10 framed doodles of cars and sailboats, executed on the backs of memos and financial tables. The artist, Ron Hobbs, is the director of finance for NSCAD,

where Kennedy served as president from 1967 to 1989. Over a three-year period, during an arduous series of negotiations between college administration and its staff, Kennedy collected Hobbs' boardroom drawings. "It's an interesting idea to me because it is where commerce and administration and the executive world and art meet. And that's in these naïve little fantasies. These (drawings) are from the point of intersection...But the other thing is, (the AGNS) is like the bastion of folk art, and so it fits into the space. I think they're funny and quite beautiful in a way..."

A small shelf by

the door of Kennedy's room holds a number of photocopied artist's books which accompany the installation. This combination of installation and ephemera is another signature of Garry Kennedy's work, and one which, not surprisingly, runs counter to the way in which most art is made and sold. His installations exist only for the duration of their exhibition and cannot be purchased...they become part of the gallery itself, but the works continue to circulate in book form. The book-works also provide keys to the various levels of meaning, "If people take the time to read the books, digest it, the different layers...It works at a sensational level, and I think it works at other levels as well." ■

## ART

### Working Papers

at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia until Nov. 16.

#### Featuring works by:

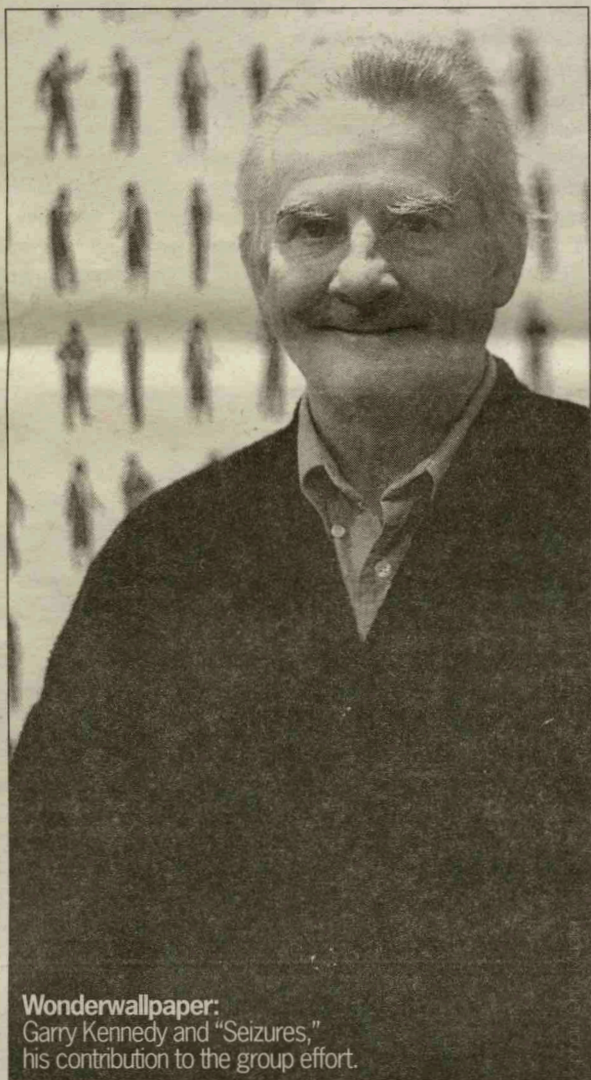
Liz Bolton, Amy Baker, Stephen Ellwood, Moritz Gaede, Garry Kennedy, Ted McInnes, Detta Morrison, Terry Piercey, Lucy Pullen, Marina Roy, Mitchell Wiebe, Ward Williamson, Susan Wood

of reverence, sometimes of dismissal.

It's difficult to hear Garry Kennedy over the din of the hydraulic scaffold from which lights are being directed at his contributions to *Working Papers*, a group show at the AGNS. "How's this," asks John Murchie, the show's curator. "Do you want it as bright as possible?" "Yes please," answers Kennedy. "I'm not worried about paper."

This casual veto of the archival concerns usually of great importance to institutions such as the AGNS provides an important insight into Kennedy's way of working. Using materials and methods more commonly associated with offices than with artists' studios, and with a minimum direct involvement in his art, Kennedy has produced a body of work both disarmingly straightforward and conceptually complex. His contributions to *Working Papers*, an exhibition of works by 14 artists involving or related to paper, are no exception.

In one of two rooms constructed especially for the show (the other contains a work by recent NSCAD graduate Stephen Ellwood), Kennedy has lined the walls with wallpaper, entitled "Seizures," depicting row upon row of small silhouetted figures of business people in heated discussion. The figures themselves are familiar, they are the type of generic illustrations used in cheap brochures and reports, but to find them here, like this, is both funny and unnerving. "You just shift them a bit,"



**Wonderwallpaper:**  
Garry Kennedy and "Seizures,"  
his contribution to the group effort.

of Christmas my bleak life gave me two nervous fits and my schedule for the next twelve weeks/ On the third week