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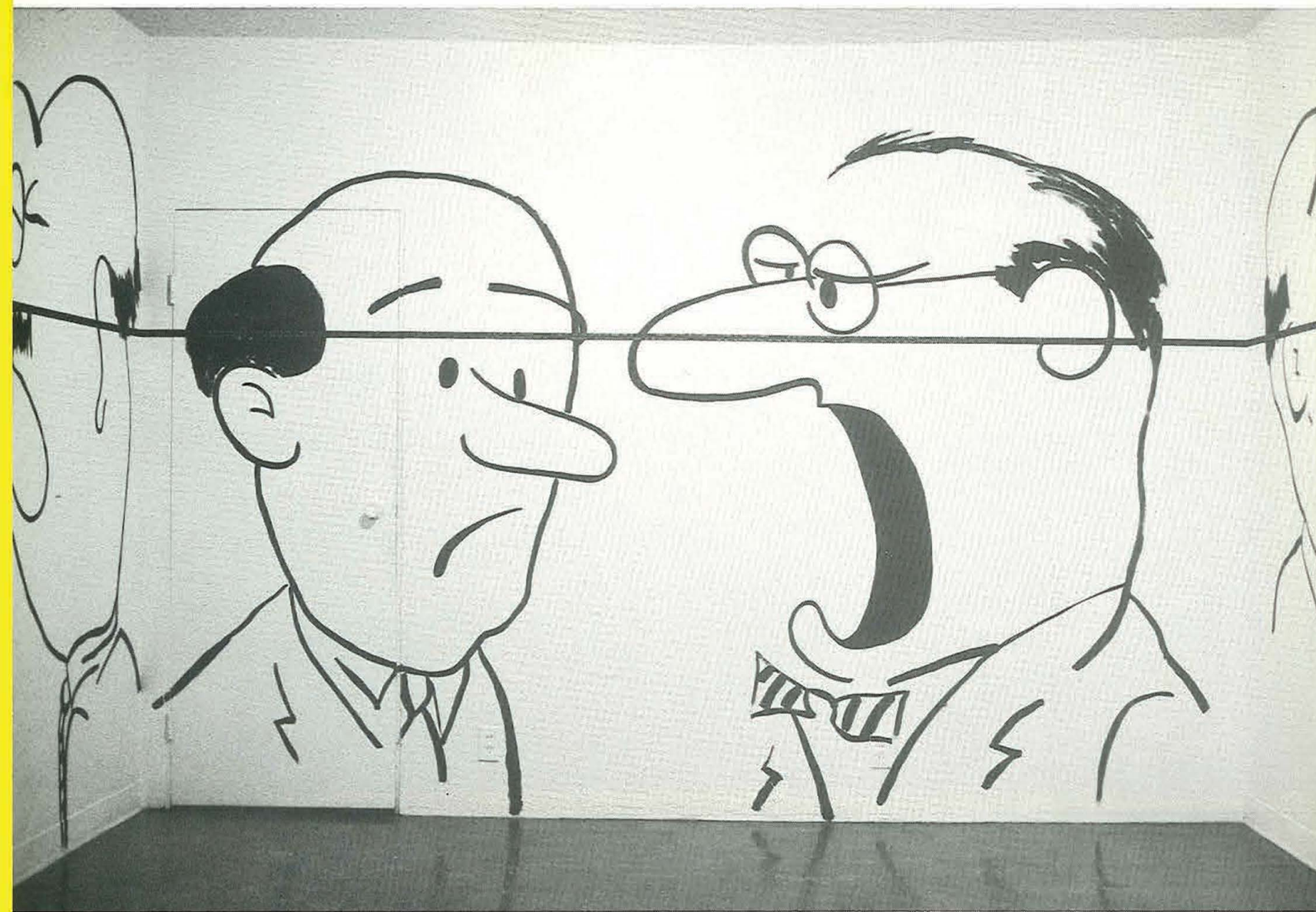
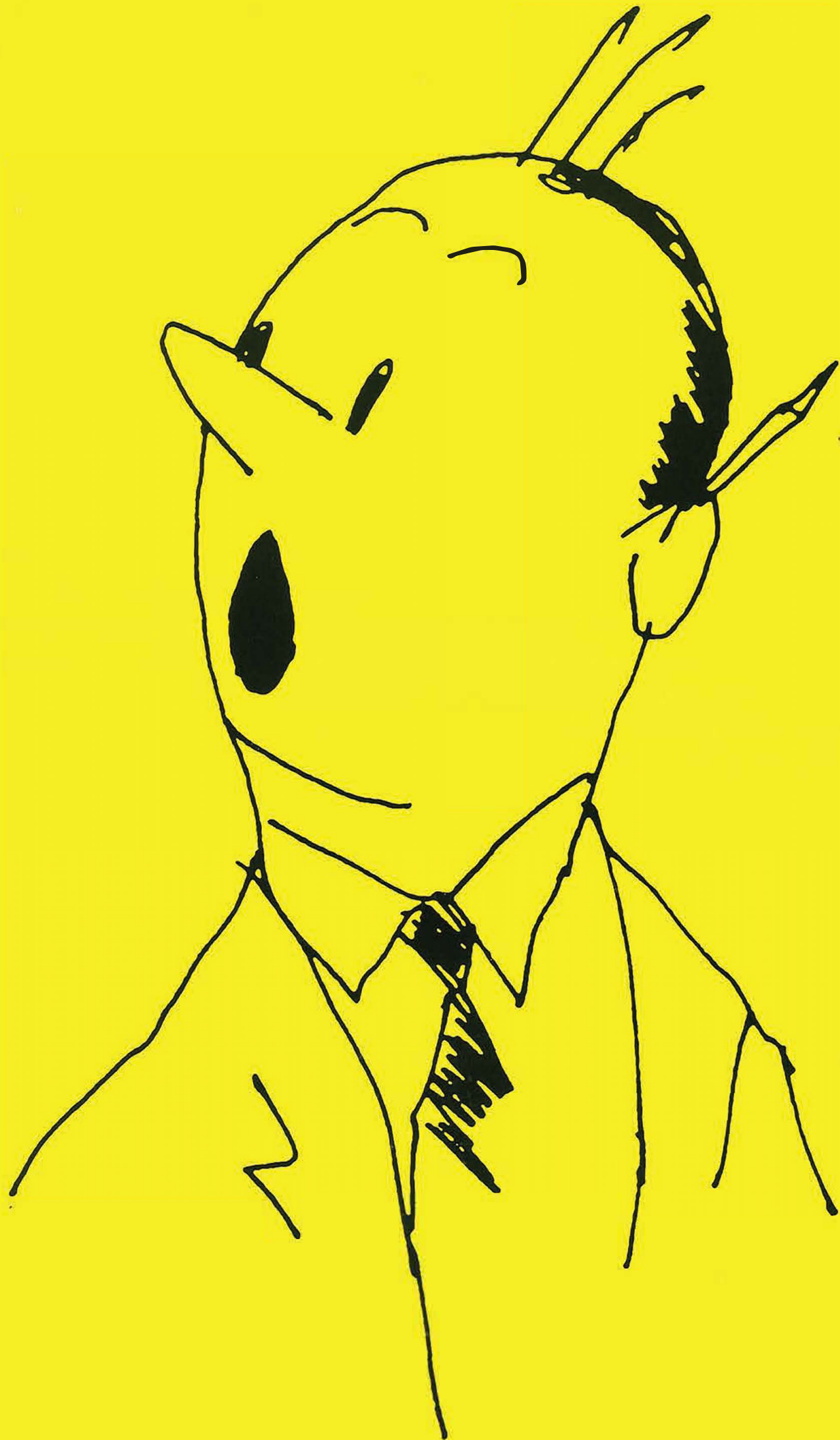
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FINCHWELL CONTINUED

by Garry Neill Kennedy

I've come to ask for the increase in wages which has made it necessary for the company to raise the price of its products. \* A raise, eh, Ferguson? Gad, I wish I had your sense of humour. \* Sorry to see you go, Jenkins - you'll be hard to replace at the salary I've been paying you. \* Why, yes, Hardiman, your work has been satisfactory - what there has been of it. \* Oh, I can get along all right on what you're paying me, sir, but it's tough on the wife and kids. \* No need for that Trunbo - you had the raise coming. \* A raise? - Good heavens, Dooley, I thought I fired you long ago. \* He's definitely vice-president material . . . I like the way he butters me up. \* I want my son to start at the bottom, so I'm putting him in charge of this department. \* We're making a few minor changes, Wattesman. Do you have overalls? \* There's no rush on this, Handricks, take all night if necessary. \* Matter of fact, Brayton, I've inaugurated a little wage-control laws of my own. \* It's refreshing, Tilson, to have a member of the board who has the courage to stand up and disagree with me. Good-bye and good luck. \* Tell me, Hooper, were you by any chance wearing that suit when you lost the Clayborn account? \* Sir, the office staff has selected me to present certain demands. \* I've worked diligently and honestly. I've given this company the best weeks of my life and I think I'm entitled to a raise, Dad. \* Venson, I'm going to make a few changes around here. Do you know anything about elevators? \* I'd like a lousy two-dollar raise. \* The place won't be the same without you, that's one consolation. \* I'm giving you a five-dollar increase, Biddle - but wipe that smile off your face before you leave my office. \* I'd say it's foolproof if we can keep your brother-in-law out of it. \* I want a raise and I refuse to Indian wrestle for it. \* I realize you are doing the work of three men. I hope you see what a serious thing it is when you're late. \* Apparently you haven't been reading the bulletin board lately, Briggs. Today, for your information, happens to be the last day of your vacation. \* When do you start your vacation, Everts, officially, I mean. \* Will you step into my office for a moment, Canfield? \* Oh yes, Hilliard, when you get a chance, this afternoon, clean out your desk and come into my office. \* When you finish that, Travers, I'd like to have a word with you. \* May I propose a farewell toast, gentlemen. \* While you were on vacation a question came up about you - what do you do here? \* Sorry I can't pay you, old man - all my money is tied up in debts. \* Wonderful view, eh, Harper . . . on a clear day you can see the unemployment office. \* Need a little money, eh? Well, let's see what we can figure out . . . ever consider hocking your overcoat? \* Hmmm . . . I suppose if I were in your shoes, heaven forbid, I'd want a raise too. \* If I may say so, Sir, and with all due respect to you Sir, I think you're full of bull. \* But how's the job otherwise? \* That's quite a suggestion, Holloway. Your last, of course. \* Would you mind cutting my salary a dollar or two so I'll be eligible for relief? \* If I gave you a raise, Murdock would want one too, then Jones, of course . . . then Kelly'd want one. Then I'd want one - and I don't deserve a raise; I'm getting plenty now. \* It's not that I think I'm worth more money . . . it's just that my sister is your wife. \* Oh, come now Kanig, the cost of living hasn't gone up that much. \* A salary increase isn't the only way out, mané Put on a raffle, take up an office collection, play a little poker at noon. \* No, we're not paying you what you're worth, Ledby - musn't violate the Minimum Wage Law, you know. \* You needn't stand at attention, Pearson . . . parade rest will do \* . . . Those opposed will signify by clearing out their desks, putting on their hats and saying, 'I resign!' \* I've had my eye on you for some time, Richards. Aren't you about due for a haircut? \* Was that all you wanted to see me about, chief? \* Planning on asking for a raise, Jones? \* The man I want for this job must be smart enough not to take at the salary we're offering. \* Who hired that birdbrain? \* Let's see, I've had one week's experience at Hagley and Company, two days at Farson Brothers, half an hour at Beglo Company. . . \* I'm sure you left your card; oh, yes, here's part of it. \* Fred? Finally got one for ya! Yeah, had just about given up hope for someone for that job! \* Now you understand - you're not being laid off. You're being fired completely. \* We pay every two weeks because you can't buy anything with one week's pay. \* Morrison, show Mr. Fosdick, here, the ropes - he's replacing you in the morning!



Garry Neill Kennedy: installation at OR Gallery, Vancouver, 1986. Photo: courtesy the artist.

# BOSS SYMBOLISM

**GARRY NEILL KENNEDY -  
OR Gallery  
Vancouver**

In Garry Kennedy's *Finchwell Continued* the OR Gallery becomes the abandoned crypt of the office place, and the invisibility of the workers, their aversion for reflections, indicates their antipathy to the Boss; one of the more interesting theoretical beings created by the bourgeois imagination.

The Boss is neither alive nor dead, but exists in an accursed state of irremediable tension and anxiety. Although his symbolic identity is complex and goes beyond its function in *Finchwell Continued*, the Boss embodies a certain sense of cosmic grief which is a diffracted image of concrete historical uneasiness. The most relevant aspect of his symbolism for our purposes is that from the point of view of liberal Romanticism, the Boss signifies not simply the unwillingness of the old regime to die, but the fear that the new order has unwittingly inherited something corrupted and evil

from the old, and is in the process of unconsciously engineering itself around an evil centre. The presence of the phantom of the Boss in the consciousness of modern, liberal men signifies the presence of an unresolved crisis in the creation of the modern era itself. Thus Boss symbolism persists as a codified form of expression of unease regarding the inner structure of the modern social order and rationality. The role of Boss symbolism in the expression of uneasiness about the effects of calculation brings it always very close to the symbolism of the robot, the spellbound automaton, which the victims of the Boss's curse often resemble. Boss symbolism is a disturbance in the historical process of construction of theoretical beings — abstract citizens — through technique, planning, contracts, and 'value-free' calculation. The crisis of the office place is the crisis of self-consciousness of such beings. The Boss is thus the 'inner speech' of that being — the ruler, the caesar, the prince — whose theoretical invisibility is constructed as the great task of this work, an

undead art. With the *Finchwell* works Kennedy begins from the failure of conceptualism's critique of art. But his intention is not the celebrate that failure and to throw away the lessons of the radical art of the 1960s in a theatricalized revival of the myth of authenticity. Rather, he intends with the office place project to build a critical memorial to that failure. And, in the spirit of the movement he memorializes, he builds it as a counter-monument

In developing the *Finchwell* cartoons project, Kennedy begins from a distressed recognition of conceptualism's failure to rebuild art from its core outward, which was its aim. He reflects upon the forces unleashed in art by that failure, and his artistic language as a whole emerges from his struggle within the crisis of radical modernism exemplified for his generation by conceptual art. Robin Peck