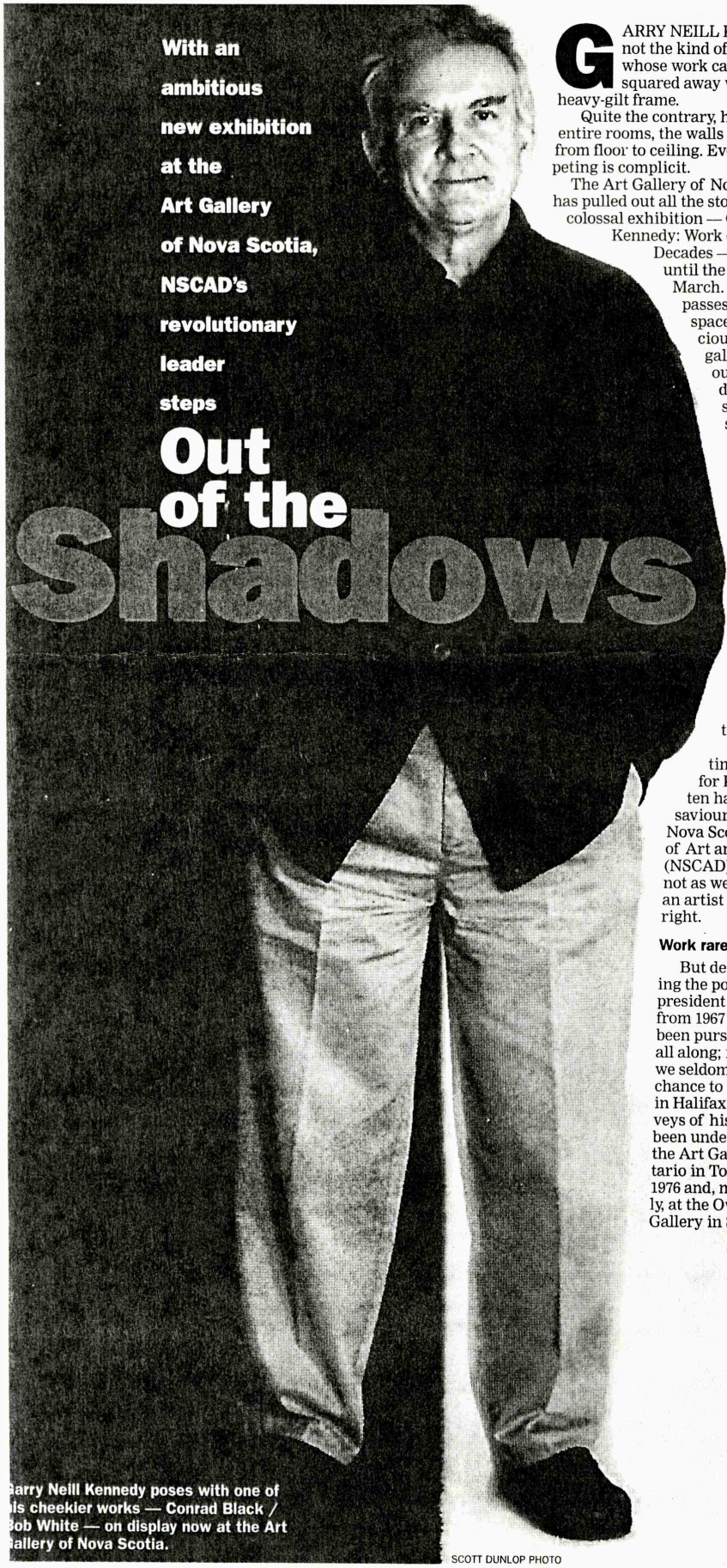
The Daily News,
Thursday, February 10, 2000
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Speed Read



With an ambitious new exhibition at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, NSCAD's revolutionary leader steps

Out of the shadows

Garry Neill Kennedy poses with one of his cheekier works — Conrad Black / Bob White — on display now at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

SCOTT DUNLOP PHOTO

GARRY NEILL Kennedy is not the kind of artist whose work can be neatly squared away within a heavy-gilt frame.

Quite the contrary, his work fills entire rooms, the walls covered from floor to ceiling. Even the carpeting is complicit.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia has pulled out all the stops for a colossal exhibition — Garry Neill Kennedy: Work of Four Decades — on display until the end of March. It encompasses seven spaces in the gracious downtown gallery, spilling out of the auditorium-sized downstairs gallery and into stairwells and hallways. In November, Work of Four Decades will move to Ottawa's National Gallery, while a Canadian tour is also a possibility.

It's a long time coming for Kennedy, often hailed as the saviour of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), though not as well known as an artist in his own right.

Work rarely seen

But despite holding the position of president of NSCAD from 1967 to 1990, he's been pursuing his art all along; it's just that we seldom get a chance to see it here in Halifax. Major surveys of his work have been undertaken at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto in 1976 and, more recently, at the Owens Art Gallery in Sackville, N.B., an exhibition which also travelled to Germany.

But now the gift wrap has come off and what a surprise it is — the sheer scope overwhelming, the ideas and themes probed and shaped with paint worthy of many visits. There's much humour here, much to engage the mind.

"There's been a greater emphasis in recent years on contemporary art at the AGNS," says Kennedy, 64, who lives near Hubbards and continues to teach at the art college 10 years after stepping down as president. (His resume encompasses a hallway, where he's painted the school colours of every institution he's been involved with, from primary school in Shelburne to his 33 years at NSCAD.)

"So I just waited in line until it was my turn, because there have been others."

Humble reply

It's a humble reply from the man whose name is spelled out in gigantic capital letters on the AGNS's first floor. Even the font he chose speaks of a huge ego — Superstar Shadow. But as he himself points out, he's only painted the shadows of the letters.

Each work contained in the exhibition is like that — appearing rather simple and minimalist on the surface — a painting of diagonal stripes; a wall of paint swatches; an entire room, one half white, the other half black. It's in the shadows that you find depth and intellectual bite.

Power relationships is one theme that carries over from one work to the next; a discourse on painting — "painting about painting" is the way Kennedy boils it down — is another. Painting, both the act of it and the finished work, is loaded. It covers up; it creates illusions; it decorates; it delineates ownership. Even the names assigned paints carry meaning.

Unlike the room called Conrad Black and Bob White — an amusing reference to two men of influence and their opposing politics — painting is rarely a clean-cut case of black and white. It can keep you occupied and restless for more than 40 years.



Marilyn Smulders

Good girl!

Canine savior: An Irish setter named Caleigh is being credited with saving her master from freezing to death.

Mike Raworth was shovelling snow from his backyard rink last Wednesday afternoon when he realized he had a visitor.

"I turned around and she was about 15 feet away from me and just going crazy."

The dog led him to a field behind his house, Raworth said.

"I saw this thing in the snow about 150 yards away and when I stopped, she started to do the same thing again so I followed her," he said.

"As I got closer, I could see a shape in the snow and realized it was a man flat out with his face in the snow, his glasses lying about a foot from his head."

Raworth got help and Caleigh's master, Gord Lovett, 58, was listed in stable condition in St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto on Friday. — *CP*

Foolish felon

Odd (inside) job man: It wasn't fingerprints left behind at the scene of the crime that got a careless criminal caught on Tuesday — it was his resume.

The crook walked away from an auto dealership in this central Ontario city empty-handed, but he forgot his resume looking for work.

After receiving a description of a suspect, police made an arrest at a doughnut shop next to Earl Ireland Auto Sales on Highway 7.

A 37-year-old man is charged with break and enter. — CP

Leo's lust



DiCaprio

FASCINATING FACT: Leonardo DiCaprio admits he has an addiction problem — but his drug of choice is video games.

The star says Sega's Dreamcast and Sony's Playstation are just as addictive as any drug once you're hooked.

He says, "I've had every game system there is. I always like the most up to date version. I am a video game freak. I am a product of that generation." — *WENN*