

Marilyn visits Halifax

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The elevator doors open and there she is. Staring at you from all angles. Black and white, colour and of course, Andy Warhol's 1967 screenprint.

All there for you to wonder at and admire: multiple Marilyn Monroes. From Dec. 15 to Feb. 17 the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS) is showcasing "Life as a Legend: Marilyn Monroe." On Jan. 16, "Marilyn: Forever Blonde, The Marilyn Monroe Story in her own Words and Music" will make its Canadian debut at the Halifax gallery. The play stars Sunny Thompson as Monroe.

The exhibit features 186 different pieces featuring Monroe from various photographers and painters. And it is breathtaking. The third floor of the AGNS assaults the eyes with photographs of the former Hollywood queen.

Some of the most stunning are the black and white photos of Monroe at the beach by photographer and long-time friend Sam Shaw. His famous shot of the big screen seductress trying to hold down her white dress as she stands over a sewer fan is also showcased at the exhibit.

The exhibit features colour photographs, such as one by Ed Feingersh – the famous "Marilyn with Chanel # 5."

The first part of the gallery is dedicated to photographs of Monroe in her early years in Hollywood. She seems giddy, and shows off a pure innocence that appears lost in her later years.

The most striking image in this portion of the gallery is a large colour photo by Milton H. Greene, entitled "Peasant Sitting," from 1954 in L.A. This picture displays Monroe sitting on a cobblestone curb, wearing a grey



Monroe: Nine times the glamour.

dress and shoddy maroon shirt. She isn't smiling and she isn't frowning, but the image evokes sadness.

Through her images, Monroe enters her viewers' minds and makes them feel as if she is looking right at them. She was famous for being able to make a person feel like they were the only one in the world to her at that moment. These pictures make it hard to believe she is dead and not about to wink or blow a kiss at you from the walls of the AGNS.

Further on in the gallery are the Warhols. The largest piece in the exhibit is his 1967 screenprint: nine images of Monroe's face in various Pop Art colours.

Other large, vibrant paintings by

Antonio de Felipe are included in the exhibit. These well-manicured, crisp illustrations of Monroe look like they belong in a comic book. They are perfect and mesmerizing.

The Tom Kelley exhibit showcases the photographer's nude images of Monroe. Her goddess-like curves melt into a red satin sheet – the embodiment of pin-up sensuality.

At the end of the gallery is a display of a chronology of Monroe's life. Near the end, photographs from the Altered Images collection by Christopher Makos accompany the timeline. Makos photographed Warhol dressed in drag as Monroe, a cheeky imitation of the woman whose image Warhol transformed.