



*Bodies in Greece, Beheren, Captain David Alex Colville (oil on canvas, 76.2 x 101.3 cm) © 1997 by the artist.*

### *The Somalia Project*

Allan Harding MacKay

**DESCANT** 108  
A Museum of War

Holland  
East Africa  
India  
Chile  
Canada  
The Balkans  
East Timor  
Iraq  
Palestine  
Gaza ...

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Somalia Project cont...

In March 1993 the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist Program commissioned Allan Harding MacKay to document, through works of art, Operation Deliberance and Cordon, humanitarian aid missions carried out by the Canadian Forces under United Nation direction.

During his travels in Somalia with the Canadian Forces, the artist's time was spent primarily in the operating environment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. His overall, resounding impression is expressed as a motif throughout most of his work: high tech military machinery juxtaposed against scenes of everyday life in Somalia. The timing of his assignment coincided with the events that led to the Somalia Inquiry, the torture and death of a Somali teenager, Shidane Abukar Arose, and the attempted suicide of Master Cpl. Clayton Matchee in the Canadian compound in Belet Huen. In addition to creating images alluding to this unfortunate incident, his art also captures images of Somalia's intense struggle for survival in a harsh environment amid the violence of civil war.

Since 1993, the Somalia experience has been featured prominently in MacKay's art practice, and his "Somalia Yellow" series has produced videos, drawings, collages, magazine projects, and prints, in addition to a theatre collaboration with the One Yellow Rabbit ensemble and images contributed to the Atom Egozoo and Rodney Sharman's opera, Elsewhereless. In 1996 a CBC documentary on MacKay's Somali experience, Changing Perspectives, aired on national television.

MacKay bases his professional career in Banff and is currently an artist-in-residence at The Banff Centre for the Arts.

The book "Source/Derivations: Allan Harding MacKay" an extensive monograph on the artist authored by Robert Stacey, has recently been published by the Art Gallery of Windsor, printed by Coach House Press, and distributed through Archives of Canadian Art and Design; fax: 416-595-0031

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Canada At War, 1999  
Allan Harding MacKay

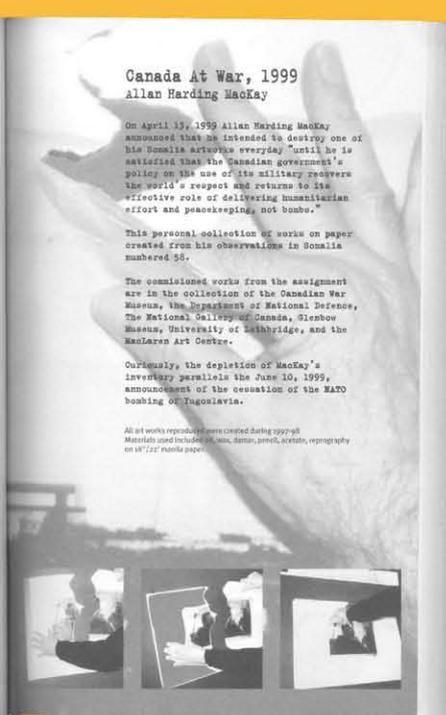
On April 19, 1999 Allan Harding MacKay announced that he intended to destroy one of his Somalia artworks everyday "until he is satisfied that the Canadian government's policy on the use of its military recovers the world's respect and returns to its effective role of delivering humanitarian effort and peacekeeping, not bombs."

This personal collection of works on paper created from his observations in Somalia numbered 95.

The commissioned works from the assignment are in the collection of the Canadian War Museum, the Department of National Defense, The National Gallery of Canada, Glenbow Museum, University of Edinburgh, and the MacLaren Art Centre.

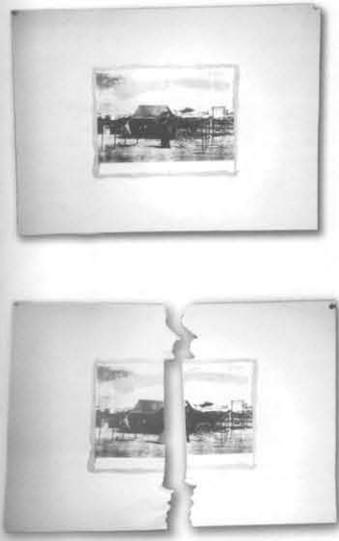
Curiously, the depletion of MacKay's inventory parallels the June 10, 1999, announcement of the cessation of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.

All art works reproduced were created during 1997-98. Materials used include oil, wax, damson, pencil, acetate, reprography on 48" x 72" double paper.



woman  
military  
dust  
land-air  
machines

A Somali woman carries on with the domestic chores of hanging the wash of the western military personnel amidst the dust and roar of the land-air machines



Destroyed: May/09/1999

