

SOMALIA PROJECT cont ...

In March 1993 the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist Program commissioned Allan Harding MacKay to document, through works of art, Operation Deliverance 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 Arone, 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 Egoyan and Rodney Sharman's opera, *Elsewhereless*. In 1996 a CBC documentary on MacKay's Somalian 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

Acknowledgements; Art Director: Allan Harding MacKay, Designer: Hans Moonen Developed with the support of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Artist-in-Residence Program, 1999.



Canada At War, 1999

Allan Harding MacKay

On April 13, 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 effective role of delivering humanitarian effort and peacekeeping not bombs."

This personal collection of works on paper created from his observations in Somalia numbered 58.

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