

Allan Harding MacKay RCA, ANSCA

Artistic Career Overview

Born in Prince Edward Island in 1944, Allan Harding MacKay graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art (Design) in 1967. He has lived, worked, and exhibited both nationally and internationally. His works have been acquired by private and corporate collections in Canada, Switzerland, USA, China and Australia.

Many of his works are held in principal Canadian public art museums, including The National Gallery of Canada, The McMichael Canadian Collection, The University of Lethbridge, Confederation Art Gallery and Museum, Glenbow Museum, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Beaverbrook Art Gallery and the Canadian War Museum, among others.

In 2016, a gift of 163 works was made to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, making it the most comprehensive overview of his career held in a public collection. This collection primarily consists of three distinct sets of artistic interests: portraits, nocturnal landscapes, and war art imagery relating to his artist service in Somalia and Afghanistan. In 2017, a major gift of Banff-related figurative subjects was made to the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies.

AHM has served as a resident artist and visiting artist at several Canadian universities, art colleges, and public galleries, and has been awarded numerous art grants by the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. He has also participated in four print and video co-productions with the Banff Centre. Participated in the McCain Artist Residency Ontario College of Art & Design ,November 2011/May 2012

His public art commissions include the Veterans Memorial Legislature Grounds (Ontario), Pape Subway renovation (Toronto), Speaker's Corner, (Kitchener) Activa Sports Complex (Kitchener), and the Canadian War Museum (Ottawa). His most recent portrait commission in 2023 is of Justice Elizabeth Jollimore of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court.

Since 1993, MacKay's Somalia war artist experience has featured prominently in his art practice. His Somalia Yellow Series has produced award-winning videos, drawings, paintings, collages, prints that were featured in exhibitions and collected by museums such as the Canadian War Museum which has the largest number of works , National Gallery of Canada, Glenbow Museum, Confederation Centre Art Gallery & Museum, Beaverbrook Art Gallery, and the University of Lethbridge.

Additional projects from this Somalia Yellow Series included a touring theatre collaboration with the One

Yellow Rabbit Performance ensemble that staged Somalia Yellow in Calgary, Prague, and Glasgow, as well as images contributed to Atom Egoyan's opera Elsewhereness. In 1997, Richard Wright's CBC documentary on MacKay's Somali experience, Changing Perspectives, aired on CBC national television.

The video Somali Yellow Vignettes travelled internationally to a variety of film festivals and received the following awards 1998, Rosie Award, best experimental video, Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association Nomination: best cinematography, Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association – 1999, Silver Apple Award, National Educational Media Network, Oakland California – Nomination: Best experimental video, Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association – Icon for the Independent Spirit

In July 2002, the artist participated in a pilot project of the Canadian Forces Artist Program as a war artist with Operation Apollo in Afghanistan. This experience produced a number of works on paper acquired by the Canadian Department of National Defence, the Canadian War Museum and The Beaverbrook Art Gallery. An exhibition entitled Double Bind featuring work from this assignment was shown at Wilfred Laurier University in 2007.

AHM's artist reference appears in Dennis Reid's

Concise History of Canadian Painting, 3rd Edition.

AHM currently produces a satirical online series entitled Court Painter, which features image and text postings commenting on current political, social, and celebrity affairs.

Arts Administrator Overview

AHM has had a long, multi-faceted career as a respected gallery director, curator, and arts administrator. MacKay was curator at the Centennial Art Gallery, Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts (1968–70), Director of the Anna Leonowens Gallery (NSCAD) 1970–75. He was the founding director of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge) in 1975 and throughout his career has served as Director of the Mendel Art Gallery (Saskatoon), Art Metropole (Toronto), The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery at Harbourfront (Toronto), Project Manager of the Barnes Exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and Interim Director of the Laurentian Gallery (Sudbury). He finally served for 7 years as a Curatorial Consultant at the Kitchener–Waterloo Art Gallery in Kitchener, Ontario.

AHM currently resides and maintains a studio in Halifax, Nova Scotia. 9/9/23