

SOURCE DERIVATIONS IX / UNIVERSITY of WATERLOO ART GALLERY / KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ONTARIO / 2004 ALLAN HARDING MACKAY

**Source Derivation IX:
Allan Harding MacKay**

The UWAG is pleased to present number 9 in the continuing series of Source/Derivations by Canadian artist, Allan Harding MacKay.

Born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 1944, MacKay studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. He has lived and worked as an artist, actor, and arts administrator in Halifax, LeBlondville, Saskatoon, Bern (Switzerland), Toronto and Calgary. He currently lives and works in Kitchener, Ontario.

September 10 - October 28, 2004
Opening Reception: Thursday September 16
Artist's Talk - October 14th, 2:30 pm
ECH Gallery II / University of Waterloo



Allan Harding MacKay, preparatory image for Source Derivations IX, 2004
oil, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004

"No viewer looks at art more closely than artists do. And no artist creates without heavy dependence on other artists' work. The literature often refers to this interlinked chain of artmaking as "influences." The word, however, hides as much as it explicates. It is not simply that an artist sees something in another's work which moves him or her; it is that the best artists are always pushing the limits that have been established by artists before them. If you like, each artist sees in the work of his predecessors a challenge, an accomplishment that begs to be examined, reworked and pushed to a new level. But unlike the work of scientists which challenges and, if successful, rejects earlier work, the best artists challenges and yet honours the earlier work by the challenge.

"The Source Derivation series by Allan Harding MacKay is at heart such a challenge. In [six of the seven] exhibitions of the series, MacKay has been invited by a gallery to choose a work from a collection and develop an exhibition of his work based on the piece selected (the only exception being Source Derivation I in which the exhibition at the Ottawa School of Art was based on a painting from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada). MacKay has chosen a variety of works both in subject matter and in time, but each, I think, is a searching out of works which force him to see anew and sketch as an artist. He is responding to the works but also using them as a measure of his own work."
(Excerpt from the catalogue, Source Derivation VII, Terrace House, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 2002)

MacKay's Source Derivation at the UWAG, varies from his earlier experiments with the concept in that the source from which his own installation develops is a newspaper photograph - an image created by a photo-journalist - rather than a painter, printmaker or sculptor.

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**Allan Harding MacKay
Source / Derivation IX
[Vasily Fedosenko]**

Vasily Fedosenko's photograph of citizens in the streets following the ousting of president Shevardnadze from Georgia in 2003, is a breathtaking image.



Work by Allan Harding MacKay, chalk, pastel, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.

Source image: Vasily Fedosenko photograph World Section of the Toronto Star, November 30, 2003.

For artists, curators and art historians, it immediately conjures up references to 19th century History Painting - that grand oeuvre which marked the period of the nationalization of the Nation in the modern era. Moreover, the theme of political unrest and the colour palette of olives, ochres, and russets, amidst dramatic chiaroscuro, further enhance the ambience of history. Closer inspection reveals that the compositional structure of the image is also classic: throughout the photograph, groupings of figures recall standard art historical placement in triangular clusters, engagingly located across the picture plane in order to lead our eye as well as our investigation through the painting. Moreover, "characters" from history abound: the right-hand foreground figure, bent forward sweeping with her twig broom, bespeaks a medieval origin; the central stack of black leather jacketed men, features a "Jan-like" figure, while the extreme left-hand, foreground figural grouping features both a primal image of a man warming his hands over a fire, as well as, a figure whose face observes the entire scene despite dramatic cropping. This figure's "crown and beard" of leaves recalls a visage like those found in the fetsa and fauna portraits of Renaissance artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo.



Allan Harding MacKay, oil, reproduction on paper, 2004.

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Allan Harding MacKay, chalk, pastel, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.



Perhaps it is this nod to history, this obvious aestheticism, that inspired Allan Harding MacKay (AHM) to select a photo-journalist's image as the "source" for his ninth derivation, rather than a work of art. AHM began the Source/Derivation (SID) series in 1989. Since then the artist has developed a significant body of work which finds its initial inspiration in the work of other artists. The inspiration is so direct, in fact, that the "source" image is always a part of the finished AHM work. The derivations have variably addressed the artistic, historic and social significance of artists such as: Tom Thomson, Laverne Harris, Ron Bennier, Rodin, Edwin Hodge, Walter J. Phillips, Edith Smith, and Alico Hagen, as well as, the icons they have created. Fundamental to reading any of the earlier SIDs has been the importance of the potency of the image - an element in the overall series which AHM confirms in SID IX in that the narrative content of the image - which is highly charged with political and human drama - did not play a role in the artist's selection of the image. Rather, he states that it is solely the visual aspects of the chosen image which provides he the artist with the material source from which to make new images that are his own.



Allan Harding MacKay, chalk, pastel, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.



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Allan Harding MacKay, chalk, pastel, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.



Allan Harding MacKay, oil, reproduction on paper, 2004.



Allan Harding MacKay, chalk, pastel, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.

Nonetheless, what the SIDs also very dramatically do is cause one to think about the nature of image-making. Source/Derivation IX - in its choice of a populist/media photograph rather than a rarified work of "fine art" - reveals something about AHM's derivations that has been at the root of each and every one of them - but which perhaps has not been quite so clear until now. On the one hand, it is the story of the "history of looking" and on the other hand, it is about the nature of "truth." AHM creates his images out of the layering of charcoal, chalk, wax, pastel and wax over - in this case - a digital video still of the original newspaper photograph. What results are many different works whose "under-painting" is always the original photo-image seen through the various layers of art-making - both material and historical. There is confusion due to the numerous perspectives offered, and doubly so because of the lack of a hierarchy for those images. Any one perspective is presented as just as significant as any other. Subsequently, not only do we see here the construction of images (the artist's practice) but, the artifice of images as well. The introduction of the candle light, as well as the layers and the variety of perspectives from which the original image is manipulated by the artist and the camera in order to create the numerous derivations, results in a meditation on what the "true" interpretation of an image might be. Whether pondering the "correct" interpretation of a work of art or, the "correct" ideological perspective of a societal "truth," AHM's SID installations, offer a place from which to reconsider the power and verity of the visual image.

Carol Pededacomy
UWAG, 2004



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Allan Harding MacKay, preparatory image for
Source Derivations IX, 2004

photo credit: AHM

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Georges de la Tour



Allan Harding MacKay **Source / Derivation IX** [Vasily Fedosenko]

Vasily Fedosenko's photograph of citizens in the streets following the ousting of president Shevardnadze from Georgia in 2003, is a breathtaking image.



Work by Allan Harding MacKay: chalk, pastel, oil pastel, charcoal, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.

Source image: Vasily Fedosenko photograph: World Section of the Toronto Star, November 30, 2003.

Jacob Jordeans



Allan Harding MacKay: oil, reprography on paper, 2004.

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Allan Harding MacKay: chalk, pastel, oil pastel, charcoal, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.

Giovanni di Paolo



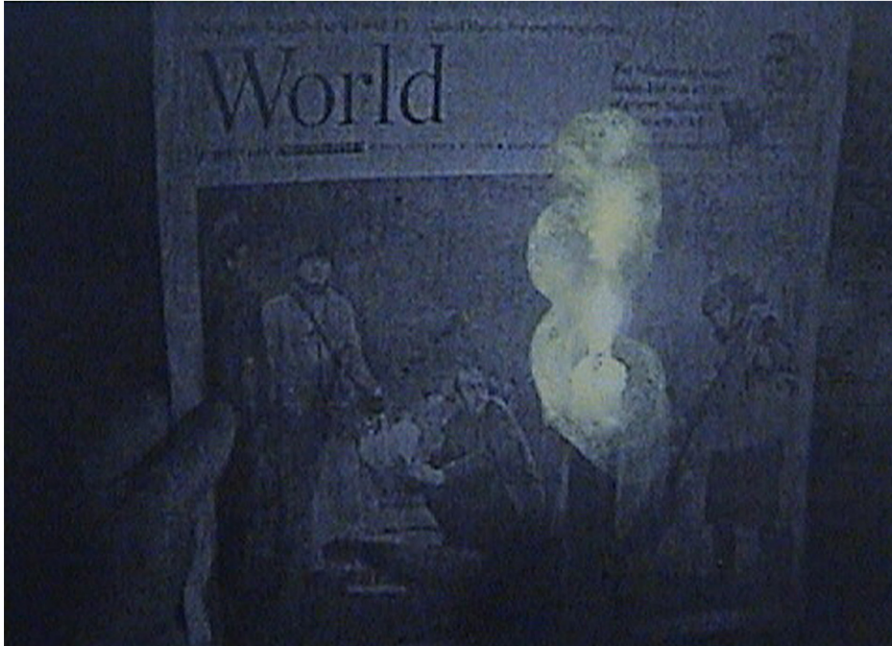
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"Old Market Woman", 11c.B.C.



Robert Koehler

Allan Harding MacKay: chalk, pastel, oil pastel, charcoal, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.



Allan Harding MacKay: chalk, pastel, oil pastel, charcoal, oil, wax, damar varnish, ink jet on paper, 2004.



Allan Harding MacKay: oil, reprography on paper, 2004.



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*Carol Podedworny
UWAG, 2004*



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University of Waterloo
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario
Canada N2L 3G1



Source/Derivation IX
Allan Harding MacKay



University of Waterloo
ECH Gallery II
September 18-October 28, 2004

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of *Source Derivations*
by Canadian artist,
Allan Harding MacKay.



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Allan Harding MacKay
Source/Derivation IX
[Vasily Fedosenko]



September 16 - October 28, 2004

OPENING
Thursday, September 16, 2004
7 - 9 pm

University of Waterloo Art Gallery
ECH Gallery II
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G1




Allan Harding MacKay
Source/Derivation #IX:
Vasily Fedosenko

SEPT 16 - OCT 28, 2004

OPENING RECEPTION
Thursday, September 16, 7-9 pm

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
art gallery



263 Phillip St., East Campus Hall, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1
Tel. (519)888.4567, ext. 3575 www.artgallery.uwaterloo.ca

GALLERY HOURS Tues, Wed, Fri 12-4 pm / Thurs 12-7 pm / Sat 1-4 pm

Turn off of University Ave. W. at Phillip Street. Parking is available in Lot B or at the meters at the west end of ECH.