

Art imitates life and death in new show about war

Seventeen artists will attempt to give audiences an awakening experience by depicting war's many forms

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GALLERIES

There is no shortage of conflict and war around the world today, and a collection of artists are bringing that message home in the new show *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War*.

The project, which includes an exhibition of 17 international artists at the Blackwood Gallery (University of Toronto, Mississauga) and Justina M. Barnicke Gallery (Hart House, University of Toronto) confronts the issues of global warfare, how it is depicted and how it is imagined.

"It's impossible to really depict every representation of war but what this project is attempting to do is to [show] different faces of war and all which speak to a phenomenon of global war," said Séamus Kealy, Blackwood curator.

The exhibition, which runs Jan. 17 to March 2, features a 40-day film/video program, catalogue and a public symposium.

"I hope that the exhibition will enable people to re-think what it means for us to be in a conflict right now," said Kealy. "I think people in Canada have very different opinions about our current status as a nation and how we approach other nations in terms of conflict and war."

While Canada has historically fought in global conflicts and is currently fighting in the so-called War on Terror, Kealy notes there are no statements portrayed by Canadian artists regarding the conflict in Afghanistan.

"The work speaks about how war is not just about two armies gathering on a battlefield [and how] anymore.

It's a very complex network of representation.'

"There aren't any direct references to Canada and Afghanistan, but what we see I think are a few different perspectives of what war means today in terms of how it's represented or how it's experienced," he said.

Kealy hopes the exhibition will be an awakening experience for visitors.

"What does this mean in terms of Canada's role in Afghanistan or as a former peacekeeper?" We can't even say that Canada is a peacekeeping country anymore," said Kealy. "Now countries like Bangladesh are far outnumbering us in terms of peacekeepers active in the world. It's really quite extraordinary."

"It's a question that will linger I think in the background of the exhibition," he added.

All programming and events are free of admission. For more information about *Signals in the Dark: Art in the Shadow of War*, you can call 905-828-3789 or visit www.blackwoodgallery.ca