Fathoming the Unfathomable: Gertrude Kearns and the Visual Representation of the Genocide in Rwanda

Claudia Oliveira

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By: Claudia Oliveira

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_____ Chair

_____ Examiner

Dr. Johanne Sloan

_____ Examiner

Dr. Loren Lerner

_____ Supervisor

Dr. Catherine Mackenzie

Approved by _____

Dr. Johanne Sloan

Graduate Program Director

_____ 2011 _____

Catherine Wild

Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts

ABSTRACT

Fathoming the Unfathomable:

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The visual representation of genocide demands a response to many thought-provoking questions. For instance, how should one consider the use of mass murder as the subject for a work of art? How does one confront the ethical dilemma of aestheticism in artworks that depict human suffering? How can an artist avoid exploiting its human subject or sensationalizing genocide?

The following text aims to consider the ethics of visual representation of genocide and apply this theoretical framework in the consideration of a series of works, *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* by artist Gertrude Kearns, which concerns the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Through her use of camouflage-patterned nylon canvas, Kearns has produced a powerful yet subdued depiction of the atrocities committed by the *génocidaires*. This text suggests that the artist has incorporated former Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire in her work in order to, in part bypass the challenges of secondary witnessing and encourage viewer identification and projection; a notion based on Marianne Hirsch's theory of 'Postmemory'.[1] Drawing from various email exchanges, an extensive interview with the artist and research material (Holocaust and Rwanda-related), the following text will consider the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series as a defiant example of contemporary

[1] Marianne Hirsch, "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy," in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, eds. Mieke Bal, Jonathan V. Crewe and Leo Spitzer (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 15.

art; one which serves as a testament to our common humanity and the horrors of our complicity.

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I must also thank Dr. Loren Lerner, whose encouraging words and thorough reading greatly contributed to the quality of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude towards the Canadian War Museum which granted me access to archival material and allowed me to view artworks by Gertrude Kearns that were not on display.

Dedication

To an incredible artist, Gertrude Kearns. The depth and complexity of your art invites scholarship. Your enthusiasm surrounding this project and your understanding of my intent to regard and situate your work in a new way is very much appreciated.

To my family; your encouraging words sustained me throughout this challenging and rewarding process. Thank you for supporting me in my passion for the arts.

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Introduction

In the fall of 2002, Toronto artist Gertrude Kearns held an exhibition at the Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts entitled *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda*, which featured nine works; six portraits of former Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire and three large figurative works of victims of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. All nine works were painted on purchased camouflage-patterned nylon canvas, creating a visually captivating and pulsating three-dimensional effect.

In order to grasp fully the implications of using the genocide in Rwanda as the focus of a work of art, it is imperative that one examines the history behind the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Starting in colonial times, continuing through the hundred days of bloodshed and ending with the current state of Rwandan politics, the first chapter of this thesis is titled "The 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and Roméo Dallaire." Its aim is to educate the reader about the many complexities and controversies surrounding the causes and effects of the genocide in Rwanda and the manner in which it was ignored by the international community. Furthermore, the role of Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire, the now famous Canadian who led the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), will also be considered. Discussing Dallaire's experiences in Rwanda is essential in introducing one of the subsequent sections which explores, in part, Kearns' portraits of the General.

The *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* works could have been considered in a number of ways. However, the following thesis approaches the analysis of the series in a theoretical manner, by placing it within a framework of writings concerning Holocaust

representation.[2] Why use the Holocaust, a term used here in relation to the specific genocide of Jews during World War II, as a basis for understanding the visual representation of another genocide? As the genocide in Rwanda happened in the recent past, theoretical writings on this particular genocide are still very much in development.[3] On the other hand, there is a vast amount of literature concerning Holocaust art which confronts many issues and concerns that are relevant to the discussion of the visual representation of the genocide in Rwanda. This is by no means an effort to diminish the tragic events that took place in the summer of 1994 in Rwanda or an attempt at 'Westernizing' the genocide. Rather, this text discusses Gertrude Kearns' Rwanda-related works in relation to the landscape of issues which have been raised and thoroughly debated concerning Holocaust art, most especially the conflict between the moral obligation to remember and the impossibility of representing an incomprehensible past. The second chapter, "Visual Representation of Genocide: Barbaric?" will discuss the ethical dilemmas facing artists who tackle the challenging subject of genocide.

The third section of this study titled "Gertrude Kearns and the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series" explores, in detail, the nine works that constitute the series. Particular focus will be placed on the use of camouflage fabric not only as a unifying tool for the entire series of works, but also as a method for the artist to use restraint in her depictions of mass murder. The camouflage fabric will also be considered in metaphoric terms, as a representation of the disequilibrium of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

[2] Elaine Martin, "Re-reading Adorno: The 'after-Auschwitz' Aporia," *Forum* 2 (2006): 4, accessed May 30, 2011, http://www.forumjournal.org/site/issue/02/elaine-martin.

[3] Though theoretical writings surrounding the representation of the genocide in Rwanda are limited, recent publications have emerged which suggest that this field of studies is expanding. See Alexandre Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda: Dismembering and Remembering Traumatic History* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), for a study of literary representations and cinematic attempts in representing the genocide of the Tutsis.

and as a reference to the manner in which Rwandans and Dallaire were deceived by the United Nations (UN).

I believe that Kearns' focus on the trials of Roméo Dallaire acts as a strategy to confront the challenges of portraying a horrific event that one did not witness. The final chapter "Dallaire UNdone – The Canadianization of the Genocide in Rwanda," reflects on this bridging of the African-specific nature and Canadian (global) nature of the genocide in Rwanda.

The 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and Roméo Dallaire

> We will recommend to our government not to intervene as the risks are high and all that is here are humans.[4]
>
> - *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* by Romeo Dallaire

Between April and July 1994, unimaginable atrocities took place in the small central African country of Rwanda. Over the span of one hundred days, a meticulous and well-planned attack, executed by Hutu extremists, resulted in the death of over 800,000 Rwandans.[5] The victims were primarily members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group, although significant numbers of moderate Hutus who were against the genocide of their fellow countrymen were also murdered. Rape was also widespread, and as a result of the atrocities that took place in Rwanda, the UN later designated rape as an act of genocide in recognition of its strategic use as a tool to destroy a particular group.[6]

Though the events were publicized in the international community by means of modern communications technology, most nations did little to intervene and stood by

[4] This quote refers to an assessment given by an unnamed group of bureaucrats who went to Rwanda during the first weeks of the genocide. See Romeo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 6.

[5] It is nearly impossible to determine the exact number of people who were killed during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, as the mass killings left thousands of dead bodies floating in lakes, covering streets or thrown into mass burial sites. Most sources agree that approximately 800,000 people were killed, though some experts believe that as many as one million Tutsis may have been murdered, along with between ten and fifty thousand Hutus. See Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 5.

[6] On September 2, 1998, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (a court established by the United Nations) issued the world's first conviction for the defined crime of genocide to Jean-Paul Akayesu. See United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Rwanda: The First Conviction for Genocide," *Holocaust Encyclopaedia*, accessed on July 30, 2011, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007157. The court also declared that rape may constitute genocide if committed with intent to destroy a particular group, as was done during the genocide in Rwanda when Tutsi women were raped in order to increase their suffering before they were killed. See "When Rape Becomes Genocide," *The New York Times*, September 5, 1998, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/05/opinion/when-rape-becomes-genocide.html?ref=jeanpaulakayesu.

while hundreds of thousands were murdered, raped and mutilated.[7] Western news reports of the genocide represented it predominantly as "an archaic rhetoric of pre-modern tribalism or as an event that traumatized the United Nations (UN) peacekeepers and white civilians left in the country."[8] The fact that the genocide in Rwanda was viewed by many as a case of tribal warfare allowed for the avoidance of even a minimal discussion of the role of Western forces in creating and sustaining hatred between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, and therefore denied any notion of Western accountability. In fact, the seeds of genocide can be traced to Rwanda's pre-colonial and post-colonial past; two histories which have been highly debated, while remaining essential in exploring the many facets of the genocide in Rwanda.

There are varying points of view regarding Rwanda's pre-colonial history and the introduction of the terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi'. Historically, cultural differences in Rwanda were associated with productive forms, such as cattle culture and agriculture. Each mode of production was associated with an ethnicity; Hutu with agriculture and Tutsi with cattle. Furthermore, historically, the practice of cattle rearing was associated with the ruling elite.[9] Thus, in this particular historical model, ethnicity in pre-colonial Rwanda was contextually rather than racially defined. In contrast, the popular history of Rwanda has treated the ethnicities of Hutu and Tutsi as separate racial groups which are biologically distinct.[10] However, in Rwandan culture, ethnicity is passed on through the

[7] Carol Rittner, John K. Roth and Wendy Whitworth, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 2004), xi.
[8] Heike Harting, "Global Humanitarianism, Race and the Spectacle of the African Corpse in Current Western Representations of the Rwandan Genocide," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28.1 (2008): 62.
[9] David Newbury, "Precolonial Burundi and Rwanda: Local Loyalties, Regional Loyalties," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 34.2 (2001): 268.
[10] Ibid.

male line; a fact which does not adequately account for the reality of biology. As scholar David Newbury observed, "[...] even if there were such a thing as a 'pure' race with a single point of origin [...] race and ethnicity cannot be seen as equivalent."[11] Thus, when faced with the fluid nature of ethnicity and the fact that it may have, in reality, been determined by one's social status, one cannot help but make a similar conclusion to that of Newbury's: "[...] Ethnic labels did not apply to internally homogeneous corporate groups, but to broad collective identities that emerged in a given context, based on concepts drawing on descent, occupation, class, and personal characteristics in various combinations."[12]

In 1899, Germany colonized the Rwandan kingdom. The small number of colonial authorities who ran the colony relied heavily on the Tutsi leaders who were already in place within the territories, as a means of enforcing their rule and ensuring compliance.[13] In time, the fluid relationship that had developed between the Hutus and the Tutsis was rendered more rigid with the introduction of identity cards which classified the holder by ethnic origin; each individual was given the ethnicity of his or her father.[14] By exploiting the pre-colonial leadership structures in place and using Tutsi leaders to enforce colonial rule, the German colonialists increased tensions between the two ethnic groups. Those tensions would be worsened by the Belgians who were given the colony from the Germans after World War I. In the late 1920s, Belgian colonial authorities formally replaced Hutu chiefs with Tutsi leaders throughout the nation, giving

[11] Ibid, 272-273.
[12] Ibid, 275.
[13] Linda Kirschke, *Broadcasting Genocide: Censorship, Propaganda and State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda, 1990-1994* (London: Article 19, 1996), 8.
[14] Ibid, 9.

Tutsis a monopoly on leadership positions in the country.[15] Using European race science, the Belgians determined that the Tutsi were the dominant race and the natural rulers. The colonizers regarded the Tutsi as more intelligent, with a greater political acumen which would serve well to dominate what they regarded as the Hutu peasants.[16] Before long, these distinctions and the preferential treatment given to Tutsis created hostility that would contribute to the Social Revolution that took place between 1959 and 1961. Following this revolution, the monarchy was abolished.[17] The uprising resulted in the murder or forced exile of the majority of Tutsi chiefs; as a result, the Belgian colonial authorities responded to these events by replacing the missing or murdered leaders with Hutu chiefs.[18] During this Social Revolution, approximately 20,000 Tutsis were killed, while many others fled the country, primarily into neighbouring Uganda.[19] At this time, political parties began to form which centered on ethnicity, such as the *Mouvement Démocratique Républicain* (MDR) party which represented mostly Hutu constituents and enjoyed a landslide victory in Rwanda's first municipal elections in 1960. On July 1 1962, Rwanda gained formal independence. That same year, Grégoire Kayibanda of the MDR party was made President of Rwanda.

In 1973, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana took power in a coup d'état and established the *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND) political party. Habyarimana purged Tutsis from universities, imposed a quota on Tutsi

[15] Ibid, 10.
[16] Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," *Africa Today* 45.1 (1998): 11.
[17] Ibid, 20.
[18] Linda Kirschke, *Broadcasting Genocide: Censorship, Propaganda and State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda, 1990-1994* (London: Article 19, 1996), 11.
[19] Carol Rittner, John K. Roth and Wendy Whitworth, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 2004), 6.

employment in public service jobs as well as in educational institutions.[20] Habyarimana was still in power in 1990 when the Uganda-based *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF), a group of Tutsi exiles, invaded Rwanda. The RPF wanted political reform and the right to re-settle thousands of Tutsi refugees.[21] A civil war ensued between the *Rwandese Government Forces* (RGF) and the RPF. After three years of casualties and displacements, the Habyarimana government and the RPF finally negotiated and signed a peace accord in Arusha, Tanzania in August of 1993 that would be known as the Arusha Accords. As part of the agreement, both parties agreed to a transitional government, which would include the RPF and a United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping force.[22] In response to this peace agreement, the UN Security Council created the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), led by Canadian Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire.[23]

UNAMIR's objective of monitoring the peace agreement reflected a classic Chapter Six peacekeeping mission, in which peacekeepers could only use force in self-defence or in defence of their mandate; in other words, they would have to be impartial throughout the operation.[24] After a brief visit to Rwanda in August 1993, Dallaire

[20] Ibid, 7.
[21] Ibid, 8.
[22] Ibid, 11.
[23] UNAMIR's principal responsibilities were to "provide a neutral international force to assist in the implementation of that [Arusha Accords] agreement, which would end the war, to establish a broad based transitional government, to conduct a complete demobilization of the military and police forces of the parties, to end human rights abuses and to create a new national army and gendarmerie. Finally, it was to conduct a national election, which, it was hoped, would establish a multi-party and multi-ethnic liberal democracy in Rwanda." See Brent Beardsley, "Learning from the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 to stop the Genocide in Darfur – Part 1," *Canadian Military Journal* (Spring 2005): 45, accessed July 28, 2011, http://www.journal.dnd.ca/vo6/no1/human-humain-eng.asp.
[24] Part of the reason why the international community chose a Chapter Six mission which required light equipment, defensive rules of engagement and no intelligence gathering capability was that many resources and efforts were being used in the Balkans and in Somalia. Few nations had the appetite for

returned to the capital of Kigali on October 8 as force commander of UNAMIR. Shortly after, on December 3, Dallaire received a letter signed by a group of senior RGF and Gendarmerie officers warning that those around President Habyarimana were planning to kill Tutsis to undermine the peace agreement.[25] Furthermore, in January of 1994, one of the top leaders of the Rwandan civilian militia known as the *Interahamwe*, revealed that the militia was rehearsing and planning for genocide (at a planned rate of one thousand Tutsis killed every twenty minutes);[26] he also revealed locations of arms depots and plans to attack the Belgian contingent of the UN mission.[27] Dallaire immediately sent a coded-cable to General Maurice Baril, head of the Military Division of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of the UN in New York, warning of the danger of impending ethnic conflict and informing headquarters of his intent to raid arms caches. Soon thereafter, Dallaire received a code cable from Kofi Annan (then the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping), signed by Iqbal Riza (the Chief of Staff for the

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another dangerous mission. See Brent Beardsley, "Learning from the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 to stop the Genocide in Darfur – Part 1," *Canadian Military Journal* (Spring 2005): 46, accessed July 28, 2011, http://www.journal.dnd.ca/vo6/no1/human-humain-eng.asp. The decision to implement a restricted mandate was also certainly influenced by the then-recent bloodshed in Somalia. In fact, it was "two days after the deaths of the US soldiers in the battle of Mogadishu that the council was due to vote on whether or not to create a mission for Rwanda." See Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: the Rwandan Genocide* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), 71.

[25] Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 121.

[26] The *Interahamwe* began as a youth organization in 1990 and consisted of members from several junior soccer clubs. See Samuel Totten and Paul R. Bartrop, *Dictionary of Genocide* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 215. It soon became the youth wing of Habyarimana's MRND political party and received military training in 1992. See Alexander Laban Hinton and Kevin Lewis O'Neill, *Genocide: truth, memory and representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 102. From 1992-1994, the *Interahamwe* engaged in street fights, in an effort to disrupt social order and prevent peace negotiations. Though initially Rwanda's political leaders monitored the group and periodically purged its most extreme members, the *Interahamwe* was left to its own devices and allowed to kill whomever they wished once the genocide was under way (Totten, *Dictionary of Genocide*, 215). Another anti-Tutsi extremist militia known as the *Impuzamugambi*, the youth wing of the extremist Hutu political party *Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (CDR) also worked closely with the *Interahamwe* and participated in the killings. Both militias manned roadblocks in Kigali and led many massacres (Hinton, *Genocide*, 102).

[27] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "On the Edge of Horror," *The CBC Digital Archives Website*, last modified November 12, 2010, http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/peacekeeping/topics/1686-11595/.

DPKO).[28] Essentially, the cable ordered Dallaire to suspend the operation immediately. The DPKO also advised Dallaire to take the information to the very same presidential palace where the plans for genocide were said to be taking place.[29]

On the evening of April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana, Burundian President Cyprien Ntariyamira and other government officials, was shot out of the sky as it approached the Kigali airport. The assassination of all on board became the catalyst for murder as widespread massacres of Tutsis, opposition leaders and moderate Hutus took place.[30] Though there has never been a conclusive

[28] Copy of the January 11, 1994 cable response from Kofi Annan to Roméo Dallaire: "1. We have carefully reviewed the situation in the light of your MIR-79. We cannot agree to the operation contemplated in paragraph 7 of your cable, as it clearly goes beyond the mandate entrusted to UNAMIR under resolution 872 (1993). 2. However, on the assumption that you are convinced that the information provided by the informant is absolutely reliable, we request you to undertake the initiatives described in the following paragraphs. 3. SRSG and FC should request urgent meeting with the President. At that meeting you should inform the President that you have received apparently reliable information concerning the activities of the *Interahamwe* militia which represents a clear threat to the peace process. You should inform him that these activities include the training and deployment of subversive groups in Kigali as well as the storage and distribution of weapons to these groups. 4. You should inform him that these activities constitute a clear violation of the provisions of the Arusha peace agreement and of the Kigali weapons-secure area. You should assume that he is not aware of these activities, but insist that he must ensure that these subversive activities are immediately discontinued and inform you within 48 hours of the measures taken in this regard, including the recovery of the arms which have been distributed. 5. You should advise the President that, if any violence occurs in Kigali, you would have to immediately bring to the attention of the Security Council the information you have received on the activities of the militia, undertake investigations to determine who is responsible and make appropriate recommendations to the Security Council. 6. Before meeting with the President you should inform the Ambassadors of Belgium, France and the United States of your intentions and suggest to them that they may wish to consider making a similar démarche. 7. For security considerations, we leave it to your discretion to decide whether to inform the PM(D) of your plans before or after the meeting with the President. When you meet with the PM(D), you should explain to him the limits of your mandate. You should also assure him that, while the mandate of UNAMIR does not allow you to extend protection to the informant, his identity and your contacts with him will not be repeated nor be revealed. 8. If you have major problems with the guidance provided above, you may consult us further. We wish to stress, however, that the overriding consideration is the need to avoid entering into a course of action that might lead to the use of force and unanticipated repercussions. Regards." See "The Triumph of Evil. How the West ignored warnings of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide and turned its back on the victims," PBS Online and WGBH/Frontline, accessed July 28, 2011, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/warning/unresponse.html.

[29] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "On the Edge of Horror," *The CBC Digital Archives Website*, last modified November 12, 2010, http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/peacekeeping/topics/1686-11595/.

[30] Carol Rittner, John K. Roth and Wendy Whitworth, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 2004), 12.

investigation into the crash, it is widely believed that the aircraft was shot down by Hutu extremists who opposed the implementation of the Arusha Accords and who used the occasion to carry out their genocidal plans.[31] However, when the airplane was shot down, both the *Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) radio station and the interim government officially declared that the culprits were the Tutsi-led RPF, who were assisted by the Belgian contingent of UNAMIR.[32]

In the early morning of April 7, as chaos continued to reign in Kigali, UNAMIR troops were sent to protect the home of Prime Minister of the interim government, the moderate Hutu Agathe Uwillingiyimana. With the President having been killed in the crash, Madame Agathe was legally next in line as the executive authority of Rwanda.[33] Ten Belgian UNAMIR troops guarding the Prime Minister's home were disarmed by Rwandan security forces and taken to Camp Kigali, a military camp. Left unprotected, Madame Agathe and her husband were killed by members of the Presidential Guard and the army. On his way to a meeting with the senior leadership of the RGF and Gendarmerie, Dallaire passed one of the gates to Camp Kigali and caught a glimpse of what looked like two Belgian soldiers lying on the ground.[34] He decided against using force to rescue the soldiers because he felt that it would be an irresponsible decision that would undoubtedly put the rest of his troops and the mission itself at risk.[35] Instead, he tried to maintain pressure on the RGF leaders to go in and retrieve the Belgians. That night, Dallaire was informed that the soldiers had been found in a Kigali hospital nearby.

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[31] Linda Kirschke, *Broadcasting Genocide: Censorship, Propaganda and State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda, 1990-1994* (London: Article 19, 1996), 110.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 221.
[34] Ibid, 236.
[35] Ibid, 239.

To his horror, when he arrived, he discovered the ten soldiers were dead, stacked on top of one another just outside of the hospital morgue.[36]

The decisions made by Dallaire on that fateful day of April 7, 1994 would cause some to criticize him, particularly for his decision not to storm Camp Kigali and rescue the Belgian soldiers. On April 6, 2004, during a genocide conference in Kigali, Dallaire participated in a panel discussion in which Belgian Senator Alain Destexhe openly attacked Dallaire's decisions as force commander in Rwanda. In Destexhe's words, Dallaire "obeyed a criminal order to do nothing. He had a duty to disobey that order or at least to resign."[37] To further reinforce his point about Dallaire's lack of action, Destexhe highlighted the fact that in the moment when Dallaire caught a glimpse of two of the Belgian soldiers dead in Camp Kigali, six others were still alive.[38]

Dallaire also received much public criticism about his views on military leadership expressed during a 1997 speaking engagement at the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College in Toronto, in which he stated that a leader's priority should always be his mission, followed by the soldiers, then himself.[39] This view contrasted with that of retired Major-General Lewis Mackenzie, who had also been a speaker at the College earlier that year, and who believed that the priority of the mission over the lives of soldiers must be reconsidered when faced with exceptional circumstances.[40] In his book, *Soldiers Made Me Look Good; a Life in the Shadow of War*, Mackenzie argues: "I

[36] Ibid, 255.
[37] Allan Thompson, "Dallaire confronts his critics; Some in West 'criminally responsible' but Belgian delegates criticize general," *Toronto Star*, April 7, 2004, A12.
[38] *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Journey of Romeo Dallaire*, directed by Peter Raymont and Lindalee Tracey (Montreal: White Pine Pictures, 2004), DVD.
[39] Lewis Mackenzie, *Soldiers Made Me Look Good; a Life in the Shadow of War* (Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2008), 214.
[40] Ibid, 214-215.

hold to my opinion that in some circumstances, ill-conceived and impossible-to-execute orders must be evaluated by the leader, and if warranted, they should be ignored or disobeyed."[41] Furthermore, Mackenzie contests Dallaire's claim that storming Camp Kigali would have been a suicide mission, when he writes: "With over four hundred tough Belgian paracommandos dispersed around the city, the potential existed for a UN show of force that would have been more than a little intimidating to the unruly mobs doing the killing."[42] Interestingly, in response to criticisms such as the ones expressed by Destexhe and Mackenzie, Dallaire explained what he believes to be the real motivation behind the reaction by some to the loss of the Belgian peacekeepers. In a documentary about his return to Rwanda ten years after the genocide, he explained:

> Part of the argument or what some people find difficult is: Why am I not mourning more the ten Belgians than I am the rest of the whole mission? And I just can't do that [...]. There are millions of Rwandans who are still suffering [...]. So it's the proportionality of all that.[43]

Thus, it is the loss of all human life, be it those of the Belgian peacekeepers or of Rwandans, which weighs heavily on Dallaire. Due in part to the loss of the Belgian soldiers and the failures of the mission, Belgium withdrew the last of its troops on April 20, 1994.[44] The following day, UN Security Council Resolution Number 912 reduced the UNAMIR peacekeeping force from 2,500 to approximately 250.[45] In time the RPF began to gain control of more territories; by May 22 it had captured Kigali airport and extended

[41] Ibid, 216.
[42] Ibid, 224.
[43] *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Journey of Romeo Dallaire*, directed by Peter Raymont and Lindalee Tracey (Montreal: White Pine Pictures, 2004), DVD.
[44] Carol Rittner, John K. Roth and Wendy Whitworth, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 2004), 13.
[45] Ibid.

its control in the northern and eastern regions of the country.[46] The battle for control of Kigali and the massacres continued throughout the month of June. On July 4, the RPF won control of Kigali.[47] The following day, a French-led military operation named *Opération Turquoise* under the mandate of the UN was implemented, which would establish a safe zone in the western part of Rwanda and would allow people to flee the conflict.[48] Finally, on July 17, after weeks of fighting and mass murder, the RPF took the last government stronghold in Gisenyi and declared an end to the war.[49] On July 19, the RPF installed the new Broad-Based Government of National Unity with a Hutu President (Pastor Bizimungu) and Tutsi Prime Minister (Faustin Twagiramungu).[50]

The atrocities that took place in the hundred days of genocide in Rwanda have undoubtedly had an effect on its people. Those who witnessed the events were forever marked by the scenes of mass murder, mutilation and rape;[51] Dallaire was no exception to this. While still in Rwanda, in mid-July 1994, Dallaire began to show signs of extreme fatigue. His written orders were incoherent and he was becoming aggressive and even publically dared extremist Hutus to kill him.[52] Evidently, he was putting the mission at risk and had to be relieved. On August 19, 1994 General Guy Tousignant succeeded

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[46] Ibid, 14.
[47] Ibid, 15.
[48] Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 422.
[49] Carol Rittner, John K. Roth and Wendy Whitworth, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 2004), 15.
[50] Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 475.
[51] For survivor testimonies, one small way of ascertaining the impact of what happened, visit the Genocide Archive Rwanda website (a collaborative project of the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, Aegis Trust, and Rwanda's National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, meant to document the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi): http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Category:Survivor_ Testimonies, accessed July 28, 2011.
[52] *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Journey of Romeo Dallaire*, directed by Peter Raymont and Lindalee Tracey (Montreal: White Pine Pictures, 2004), DVD.

Dallaire as force commander of UNAMIR.[53] Within months of arriving back in Canada, Dallaire began to suffer from what was diagnosed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and even attempted to take his own life on two occasions.[54] As a result of his harrowing experiences in Rwanda, Dallaire has become the familiar face of PTSD in Canada. Dallaire also sits in the Canadian Senate and has received numerous honours and rewards. More recently, he has also become an advocate for child soldiers, writing the book *They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children*.[55]

Although the victory of the RPF in Rwanda brought about an end to the genocide, there still remained (and remains) a long road to recovery. How would people live together again, knowing that they could potentially be living next to people who had murdered their family members? Could Hutus and Tutsis live together in peace after so many years of hate ideology as part of everyday life? On April 22, 2000, Paul Kagame, former leader of the RPF, was elected President of the Republic of Rwanda and was re-elected for a second term in August 2010. In his purpose of attaining reconciliation and nation-building, Kagame revived and institutionalized the *gacaca* court system; an informal and traditional justice system of community trials that gives importance to truth-telling, compensation and reintegration of the person accused.[56] Rwanda has been considered by some to be Africa's biggest success story (due in part to its relative stability, economic growth and rising education levels),[57] but its administration has still

[53]Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 505.
[54] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "The ghosts of Rwanda," *The CBC Digital Archives Website*, last modified November 15, 2010, http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/peacekeeping/topics/1686-11622/.
[55] Roméo Dallaire, *They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children* (London: Hutchinson, 2010).
[56] Jacqueline Lewis, "Mass Graves and a Thousand Hills: University Student Perspectives on the Gacaca Courts in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Inquiry, University of New Hampshire* (Spring 2010): 35.
[57] "Zakaria: Africa's biggest success story," *CNN.com*, July 17, 2009, accessed June 5, 2011,

seen its share of controversies. After the genocide in Rwanda, laws were put into place concerning genocide ideology. For instance, any politician or citizen making a statement encouraging ethnic animosity risks imprisonment for the crime of 'divisionism'.[58] Furthermore, the words 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' have now become taboo.[59] Organizations such as Amnesty International allege that these laws are so broad that they are often used to limit free speech and prevent criticism of the government.[60] Moreover, Kagame's critics see this as a strategy to keep Hutus from organising politically against his small and predominantly Tutsi elite government. Yet many of Kagame's supporters believe that the results that he has achieved in post-genocide Rwanda compensate for his poor human rights record.[61] Are these restrictions protecting Rwandans from the dangers of revisionism or are they endangering freedom of speech? Only time will tell whether the preventative measures taken by the Kagame regime will prove to be beneficial for the country.

Interestingly, part of the government's strategy for preventing the genocide from happening again is to memorialize it. In fact, "Rwandan artistic practice in the first years after the genocide seemed to be striving toward a performative practice of visibility by

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http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/africa/07/17/zakaria.rwanda/.

[58] Richard Grant, "Paul Kagame: Rwanda's redeemer or ruthless dictator?" *The Telegraph*, July 22, 2010, accessed July 28, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/rwanda/7900680/Paul-Kagame-Rwandas-redeemer-or-ruthless-dictator.html.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Amnesty Urges Rwanda Ease Restrictions on Freedom of Expression," *Voice of America*, June 4, 2011, accessed June 5, 2011, http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Amnesty-Urges-Rwanda-Ease-Restrictions-on-Freedom-of-Expression-123156253.html.

[61] Richard Grant, "Paul Kagame: Rwanda's redeemer or ruthless dictator?" *The Telegraph*, July 22, 2010, accessed July 28, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/rwanda/7900680/Paul-Kagame-Rwandas-redeemer-or-ruthless-dictator.html.

creating a network of memorials."[62] There are typically two different kinds of memorials: one in which coffins containing the bodies of victims are placed in mass graves and another in which bodies or bones are displayed *in situ*.[63] Obviously, this form of artistic practice cannot be transplanted to the West, as these memorialized sites can only exist in Rwanda.[64] How then can western artists tackle the difficult subject of genocide in Rwanda? What forms of visual representation can be deemed appropriate and what difficulties will the artist encounter? The following section will draw upon the

[62] Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Invisible Again; Rwanda and Representation after Genocide," *African Arts* 38.3 (Autumn 2005): 36.

[63] Pat Caplan, "'Never Again': Genocide Memorials in Rwanda," *Anthropology Today* 23.1 (February 2007): 20.

[64] Though there are well-known African artists who have addressed the genocide in Rwanda in their artworks, such as Ghanaian sculptor Kofi Setordji and Senegalese performance and installation artist Viyé Diba, I have found little evidence of Rwandan responses to the genocide other than the construction of memorials. For a discussion of Kofi Setordji's work, see Rhoda Woets, "Comprehend the Incomprehensible: Kofi Setordji's Travelling Memorial of the Rwanda Genocide," *African Arts* 43.3 (Autumn 2010): 52-63. For a discussion of Viyé Diba's work, see Éliane Burnet, "Viyé Diba, Messe-Nue," *Art Press* 339 (November 2007): 52-56. However, there have been some recent attempts to encourage and create exposure for Rwandan artists. For instance, Uganda-born artist Collin Sekajugo established the Ivuka Arts Center in Kigali in 2007, in order to raise awareness of Rwandan modern art, develop young Rwandan artists, and grant them a platform for exposure. See Madelaine Hron, "Interview with Artists Collin Sekajugo," *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 21.3 (July-September 2009): 354-358. In an interview, Sekajugo explained that he chose to settle in Rwanda because he had encountered talented artists with no means or no space to pursue their arts. Also, Rwanda's only major art school *L'École d'Art de Nyundo* was destroyed during the genocide (Hron, "Interview," 354). This lack of resources and exposure may explain why it is challenging to find any research material about Rwandan artists. Furthermore, Sekajugo also explained that Rwandan artists are often reluctant to address genocide in their works: "Some of our artists address genocide in some works. Most of them don't though. Some of our artists are genocide survivors, you see. Developing art about the genocide is very hard for them. It's difficult for viewers too. It elicits bad feelings, feelings of pain, grief, or guilt. Who were the culprits? Or the victims? It creates division. Rather than representing genocide, the artists here would rather paint about reconciliation. I suppose, if you wanted to, you could read genocide themes into their works. For instance, you could read genocide into this painting of people fleeing. Or you could relate the red color in this abstract painting to blood. Painting directly about genocide is delicate, however. It discourages people from coming to terms with the genocide, from reconciling. People here are sensitive to these issues and emotions are very raw, especially during commemoration time. I have a lot of ideas about genocide that I'd like to put on canvas, but then I think of the repercussions, of how people are going to view it, of how it's going to affect them. Some people might respond well to it, but others might become emotional, bitter, or angry. Genocide is still a very sensitive subject here, perhaps too sensitive" (Hron, "Interview," 355-356). Thus, it appears that Rwandan artists remain reluctant to directly represent the 1994 genocide in their artworks, as this strategy could be viewed as a tool causing division and evoking negative sentiments. Evidently, a Rwandan artistic response to the genocide could be perceived as an act of divisionism and would conflict with the Kagame government's adherence to notions of forgiveness and reconciliation.

vast amount of literature concerning Holocaust art, with the intention of exploring the many challenges faced by artists who undertake the unfathomable subject matter of genocide.

Visual Representation of Genocide: Barbaric?

Ever since the atrocities committed by the Nazis were revealed, scholars have debated the role of visual arts in the representation and memorialisation of the Holocaust. Artists who tackle genocide as a subject matter must face issues such as the danger of exploiting its victims or the risk of sensationalizing traumatic events through their artistic expressions. Regarding the ethical dilemma of visual representation of genocide, philosopher Theodor Adorno wrote in 1949 and later published in 1951 the now-famous words "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric."[65] Though some have interpreted this statement as a call for silence,[66] Adorno's dictum can be better understood when read in its original context:

> Even the most extreme consciousness of doom threatens to degenerate into idle chatter. Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.[67]

Hence, Adorno's statement ponders the perils of even the most conscientious of representations. Rather than condemning the artist to silence and despair, Adorno's writings serve as an incentive for philosophical investigation and critical exploration.[68] In an in-depth analysis of Adorno's writings, Elaine Martin of the University of Ireland,

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[65] Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* (London: Spearman, 1967), 34.

[66] In his book *Traumatic Realism: the Demands of Holocaust Representation*, Michael Rothberg states that "Adorno's phrase (not even a full sentence in the original German) has been quoted, and just as often misquoted, by writers working in a variety of contexts and disciplines, including philosophy, theology, aesthetics, and literary criticism." See Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: the Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000): 25. Klaus Hofmann suggests that some authors, who would normally insist on textual fidelity, disregard what Adorno actually wrote because the "mere production of poetry is sufficient to refute the impossibility thesis, whereas it is difficult to contest the barbarity of writing a poem." See Klaus Hofmann, "Poetry After Auschwitz – Adorno's Dictum," *German Life and Letters* 58.2 (April 2005): 193.

[67] Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* (London: Spearman, 1967), 34.

[68] Klaus Hofmann, "Poetry After Auschwitz – Adorno's Dictum," *German Life and Letters* 58.2 (April 2005): 191.

stresses that the very destruction of the autonomous subject in the death camps is at the root of Adorno's argument.[69] In other words, the Nazis' complete disregard for an individual's life (seen clearly through the use of gas chambers and mass graves, among other atrocities) renders artistic subjectivism, or individual taste, inappropriate.[70] Furthermore, Adorno's dictum must also be considered within the context of his thoughts on the failure of culture during the Holocaust. In a subsequent 1966 text, he noted:

> Millions of innocent people [...] were systematically murdered. That cannot be dismissed by any living person as a superficial phenomenon, as an aberration of the course of history to be disregarded when compared to the great dynamic of progress, enlightenment, of the supposed growth of humanitarianism.[71]

In other words, the Holocaust cannot be seen as a mere interruption in an otherwise progressive culture;[72] thus the very notion of art seems inappropriate when one considers that the Holocaust sprang from what many would consider to be an enlightened culture. In his 1966 book titled *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno did not retract his statement about the barbarity of poetry after Auschwitz. However, he did clarify that his dictum involved more than simply questioning the possibility of art in the wake of the Holocaust; he was in fact going beyond that and questioning the right of existence itself.[73] Acknowledging the indispensability of Holocaust art, in 1966 he also wrote: "Whoever pleads for the preservation of a radically guilty and shabby culture becomes its accomplice, while anyone who resists culture directly promotes the barbarism which culture revealed itself

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[69] Elaine Martin, "Re-reading Adorno: The 'after-Auschwitz' Aporia," *Forum* 2 (2006): 4, accessed May 30, 2011, http://www.forumjournal.org/site/issue/02/elaine-martin.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Theodor W. Adorno, "Education After Auschwitz," in *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 20.
[72] Elaine Martin, "Re-reading Adorno: The 'after-Auschwitz' Aporia," *Forum* 2 (2006): 6, accessed May 30, 2011, http://www.forumjournal.org/site/issue/02/elaine-martin.
[73] Ibid, 10.

to be."[74] This theoretical reflection reveals the artist's predicament; while the portrayal of the horror of mass extermination is seemingly impossible, art nevertheless remains a crucial act of witnessing, a crucial refusal of barbarism. The aporia of culture lies in the fact that it cannot go on after Auschwitz and yet must go on.[75] Adorno also explored the need for suffering to find its voice within the arts when he wrote:

> I do not want to soften my statement that it is barbaric to continue to write poetry. [...] Suffering also demands the continued existence of the very art it forbids; hardly anywhere else does suffering still finds its own voice, a consolation that does not immediately betray it. The most significant artists of the period have followed this course.[76]

Thus, Adorno's statement, in pondering the morality of art after Auschwitz, simultaneously acts as a warning to all artists of the peril involved in the artistic rendering of mass extermination. He posited such art as essential but fraught with difficulties, a task entailing what might be described as the fathoming of an unfathomable event. However daunting the task, with its complex moral obligations and potential snares, large numbers of artists have engaged with the subject of the Holocaust, opening their work to the closest of scrutiny.

One celebrated individual involved in such work is German artist Anselm Kiefer, who made explicit references to the Holocaust in several of his works between 1981 and 1990.[77] Kiefer produced these works at a time when "West German politics was rocked by intense debates having to do with a citizen's relationship to the collective past, [which] evoked considerable critical response both for and against his ability to

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[74] Theodor W. Adorno, *Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), xvi.
[75] Gene Ray, "Conditioning Adorno: 'After Auschwitz' Now," *Third Text* 18.4 (July 2004): 225.
[76] Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature, Volume 2* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 87-88.
[77] Matthew Biro, "Representation and Event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the memory of the Holocaust", *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16.1 (2003): 113.

authentically represent his country's history."[78] In Kiefer's early attempts at representing the Holocaust, he features a Jewish woman from poet Paul Celan's "Death Fugue" [*Todesfuge*], first published in 1948. Borrowing a phrase from Celan's poem to name his work, Kiefer's oil painting on canvas *Your Ashen Hair, Shulamith* from 1981 [figure 1], depicts a naked woman with a mane of black hair. Along her back and head, Kiefer has written "your ashen hair Shulamith." Scholar Matthew Biro views Kiefer's depiction of the Jewish victim as problematic. He explains that the result is "an image that sexualizes her [...]. Shulamith is depicted seated, with her ankles crossed and her arms held rigidly by her side in a captive position. [...] By representing Shulamith bound and naked, Kiefer also reinforces the stereotype of Jews as defenceless and easy to kill."[79] Thus, in Biro's opinion, this particular work seems to fail its subject because of its sexualized and victimizing nature. However, Biro also goes on to express how Kiefer avoids these same problems in his later works. In fact, in most of Kiefer's subsequent Holocaust-related art, he refuses to depict the suffering of particular individuals.[80] Instead, Kiefer uses a more nuanced approach, as in works such as *Iron Path* [figure 2], in which the artist concretizes "the horror of annihilation in the form of empty tracks."[81] According to Biro, "Kiefer manages to depict an event that could be trivialized or exploited by a more literal presentation,"[82] by showing us foreshortened train tracks, an image often associated with the victims' voyage to their last destination, the death camps. Kiefer also involves the viewer by placing them in the position of perpetrator, namely the railroad engineer.[83]

[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid, 128.
[80] Ibid, 133.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid, 134.
[83] Ibid.

However, this image of railroad tracks, though visually striking, does not come without pitfalls. For instance, one may question whether this image allows the viewer to ponder their own particular relationship to the Holocaust or allow it to shape their ethical life.[84] Also, what is the purpose of placing the viewer in the role of the perpetrator? Does this tactic reduce the work to a game of blame or will it allow the viewer to reflect on the tragic outcome of these voyages? Kiefer appears to follow a particular line of thinking, which represents the Holocaust as an anonymous journey into death, which steers clear of exploitation but is also devoid of individual victims.[85]

Other artists, such as Chilean-born and New York-based Alfredo Jaar, have decided to include victims in their works, albeit reluctantly at times. In August of 1994, four weeks after an estimated one million Rwandans (mainly Tutsi) had been murdered, Jaar arrived in Kigali. He arrived in Rwanda as an artist and as a witness of the aftermath of genocide. Most of the artist's Rwanda-related works would later be known as the *Rwanda Project 1994-2000*. Jaar's first project consisted of a set of two hundred touristic postcards of Rwanda which depicted varying landscapes and wildlife, which he mailed to various friends [figure 3]. On the postcards he would send a euphoric message of survival, such as "Justine Munararungu is still alive!" (Featuring the name of one of the survivors he had met while in Rwanda).[86] In dealing with the reality of those who perished in the genocide, Jaar also created a work entitled *Real Pictures* [figure 4]. The work consisted of 372 linen photographic archival boxes, each containing a photograph

[84] Rachel Nahmmacher, "Ethics in the face of Auschwitz: the emotional and pedagogical responsibility of Holocaust remembrance" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2008), 167.
[85] Matthew Biro, "Representation and Event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the memory of the Holocaust", *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16.1 (2003): 133.
[86] Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Lament of the Images: Alfredo Jaar and the Ethics of Representation," *Aperture* 181 (Winter 2005): 39.

of the aftermath of the genocide sealed within. A written description of the photograph was attached at the top of each box and each container was arranged in geometric configurations in a darkened room.[87] The viewer was obliged to interact with the piece, physically moving around the boxes and reading the labels.[88] Being in the midst of the unrepresentable stories of genocide which Jaar had decided to seal far from sight, the viewer had to question suddenly their own place in relation to the genocide.[89]

French photojournalist Gilles Peress was also in Rwanda, but was present when the massacres began. As a result, Peress was a witness to both the atrocities themselves and the horrific aftermath. The artist published a graphic book in 1995 titled *The Silence* that contained some of the images he had captured. The largely uncaptioned black and white photographs vary in content from machetes and human bones to classrooms full of bodies.[90] In a review of Peress' book, Mark Durden made the following observation: "Near the book's end, the pictures show us corpses like so much waste matter, dangling out of the jaws of a bulldozer, and bodies being burnt, the ash white on their bodies – long shots and details which become doubly painful, as such pictures are not without a certain appalling beauty."[91] In this observation, Durden highlights another major point of

[87] Ibid, 40.
[88] One of the narratives reads as follows: "Gutete Emerita, 30 years old, is standing in front of the church. Dressed in modest, worn clothing, her hair is hidden in a faded pink cotton kerchief. She was attending mass in the church when the massacre began. Killed with machetes, in front of her eyes, were her husband Tito Kahinamura (40) and her two sons Muhoza (10) and Matirigari (7). Somehow, she managed to escape with her daughter Marie-Louise Unamararunga (12), and hid in a swamp for three weeks, only coming out at night for food. When she speaks about her lost family, she gestures to corpses on the ground, rotting in the African sun." See Olivier Chow, "Alfredo Jaar and the Post-Traumatic Gaze," *Tate Papers* (Spring 2008), accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/08spring/chow.shtm.
[89] Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Lament of the Images: Alfredo Jaar and the Ethics of Representation," *Aperture* 181 (Winter 2005): 40.
[90] Mark Durden, "Eye-to-Eye," *Art History* 23.1 (March 2000): 125.
[91] Ibid.

debate in the consideration of artistic portrayal of genocide; that of aestheticism. The notion of beauty in the visual representation of genocide may seem disturbing as most would consider finding aesthetic pleasure in these types of artworks to be inappropriate. Yet, what does the term beauty really represent? Scholar Brett Ashley Kaplan argues that beauty is not simply something that is attractive, but that it can also "designate texts [or artworks] that offer ambiguous, diverse, complicated, open-ended reflections on the Holocaust" or other traumatic events.[92] Thus, it is through the image's complexity and ability to encourage genocide remembrance that it becomes beautiful.[93] Furthermore, Kaplan argues that the artworks that effectively succeed in representing the Holocaust do so because they combine fragmentation, disruption and beauty, which encourages the viewer to grapple with various debates and issues regarding genocide.[94] Consequently, Peress' photographs, though disturbingly attractive in their aesthetic composition, may be considered acceptably beautiful if the viewer is moved to action. Do Peress' works allow the viewer to come to grips with their own relationship with the genocide in Rwanda? Do the works allow the viewer to contemplate issues relating to the genocide, including notions of accountability and complicity? It is perhaps in relation to these questions that

[92] Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: aesthetic pleasure in Holocaust representation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 2.

[93] Kaplan explains why he chose to employ the word 'beauty' over the word 'sublime' in the introduction of his book. Drawing on 18th century treatises on the sublime and the beautiful by Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant, Kaplan points out that the 'sublime' is traditionally associated with terror or pain and 'beauty' with love. He also mentions that Kant links the sublime with formlessness, thereby associating it with the unrepresentable (Kaplan, *Unwanted*, 7). In both Burke and Kant's writings, the categories of the 'sublime' and 'beauty' often blur into one another. Nevertheless, because the 'sublime' is more often associated with the terrifying or unrepresentable, Kaplan has chosen to employ the word 'beauty' in order to avoid the notion that the Holocaust is too terrible to be represented (Kaplan, *Unwanted*, 9).

[94] Ibid, 5.

Peress' at times explicit and often uncaptioned visual records may prove to be effective [figure 5].[95]

In considering the work of Anselm Kiefer, Alfredo Jaar and Gilles Peress, one realizes the various ways in which artists choose to depict genocide. Although Kiefer's earlier works did include depictions of victims of genocide, his approach later shifted to a nuanced interpretation of the Holocaust, which included scenes associated with the death camps (train tracks) rather than portrayals of the victims themselves. One the other hand, Jaar did photograph explicit scenes of the aftermath of genocide in Rwanda but chose to hide these images in an attempt to further involve the viewer and avoid exploiting the victims. Unlike Jaar, photojournalist Gilles Peress found it necessary to display all that he had seen in Rwanda, including very graphic scenes of dead bodies and mutilated victims. Thus, many questions remain: Can one portray victims of genocide without sensationalizing their suffering? How can an artist avoid sexualizing or re-victimizing its

[95] With reference to Peress' photojournalistic work, it is important to acknowledge the vast amount of scholarship surrounding the authenticity and persuasiveness of photography. For instance, in an article concerning the visual representation of the Holocaust, author Inga Clendinnen argues that the realness of a photograph makes the viewer relate to the victim and that photographs of the after-effects of genocide (such as those taken by soldiers who liberated concentration camps) can persuade its viewers of the reality and tragic consequences of the Holocaust (or any other traumatic event). See Inga Clendinnen, "Representing the Holocaust: The Case for History," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 37 (Winter 1998): 89-90. Yet, the privileged position given to photography is problematic considering that some photographs are in fact staged, as in the Nazis' use of photography in the Theresienstadt camp-ghetto. Although Theresienstadt was a collection center for deportations to ghettos and death camps, it was used by the Nazis as a tool of deception. In June of 1944, members of the International Red Cross visited the camp and attended elaborately staged social and cultural events. The camp was also beautified; gardens were planted, houses were painted and barracks were renovated in an attempt to achieve an atmosphere of normalcy. Several photographs taken during this visit depict groups of Jews enjoying a soccer match or playing instruments, among other activities. Evidently, these pictures cannot be considered testaments to the real conditions in the camp. In fact, soon after the visit, most of the 'cast' was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. See United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Theresienstadt: Red Cross Visit," *Holocaust Encyclopaedia*, accessed on May 31, 2011, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007463. Furthermore, for a discussion of photography's anesthetising effect and its potential to deaden conscience, see Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Allen Lane, 1977), 20-21. In summary, as is the case for any medium, photography has its strengths and its limitations and should not be privileged over other forms of art, such as painting, when depicting genocide.

subject? The consideration of Gertrude Kearns' *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series may prove to be useful in considering the complexities of this debate.

Gertrude Kearns and the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series

From October 30 to November 16 2002, Toronto-based and self-taught painter Gertrude Kearns exhibited a series entitled *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda*. The nine large works were painted on camouflage fabric and consisted of six portraits of former General Roméo Dallaire and three depictions of victims of the genocide in Rwanda.[96] In the artist's statement published in October 2002, Kearns explained that the title of the exhibition *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* is a play on words which suggests three different aspects of her inspiration and intention in creating the works. Firstly, by naming the series UNdone, the artist was referencing the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the genocide; in other words what was *done* by the *UN*. Secondly, the work of the UNAMIR mandate was left *undone*. Thirdly, the title refers to Roméo Dallaire who was psychologically *undone* by the failure of his mission and his restrictive mandate. The manner in which the works were hung was also significant for the artist. All fabric works were hung on a stainless steel flat bar, which alluded, the artist stated, "to the highly designed and menacing aspect of the genocidal environment."[97]

Earlier in her career, from 1995 to 1996, Gertrude Kearns painted a series of canvases that dealt with the notorious events in Somalia that led to the disbanding of

[96] Although the topic of genocide was new to Kearns, the genre of portraiture was not. Before completing the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series, Kearns had already done a variety of portraits. During an extended stay in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in the early 1980s, Kearns painted commissioned portraits (mostly large watercolours) and continued this work in Toronto upon her return in 1982. According to Kearns, she always felt drawn to heavier subject matters and this interest was intensified after the death of her artist father Frederic Steiger in 1990 and the 1991 Gulf Crisis. From thereon, Kearns turned to darker material and developed an interest in the psychology of people connected to power (Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, September 8, 2011). Among the collections of portraits completed by Kearns is a 1994 series entitled *Portraits of Toronto People*, which consisted of images of artists, architects and writers from Toronto. For a detailed chronicle of Kearns' work, see the Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art's "The Canadian Art Database," http://www.ccca.ca/artists/artist_info.html?languagePref=en&link_id=6262&artist=Gertrude+Kearns, accessed September 6, 2011.

[97] Gertrude Kearns, Artist Statement for *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* exhibition, October, 2002.

Canada's airborne unit in 1995. Dr. Laura Brandon, a curator at the Canadian War Museum (CWM), wrote of the controversy that later arose from the display of these works at the CWM:

> In 1993, during Operation Deliverance in Somalia, two aboriginal Canadian members of the airborne regiment had tortured and killed a Somali teenager named Shidane Arone. Kearns based her paintings on media accounts in Toronto. The pieces created no problems until two of the three that the Canadian War Museum had acquired went on display when its new facility opened in May 2005. Former members of the airborne unit and aboriginal veterans launched a public campaign to remove the paintings as unrepresentative of either the airborne unit or aboriginal soldiers. The debate raised important issues about the ownership of remembrance.[98]

Around the same time that Kearns was producing her Somalia works, she began to research the genocide in Rwanda.

It was a fascination with Roméo Dallaire that led Kearns to develop an interest in what had transpired in Rwanda.[99] Though she had tackled other conflicts in her earlier works, she had never used genocide as a subject matter. During our February 18, 2011 interview, Kearns explained that she was fascinated by two aspects of Dallaire's experience; the first was the manner in which the UN mandate prevented him from intervening to save the lives of Rwandans. Secondly, she was interested in exploring his

[98] Laura Brandon, *Art and War* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 104.

[99] At first, Kearns hoped to have Dallaire sit for the portraits. After sending Dallaire two letters asking him to sit for her and not receiving a response to either request, Kearns decided to proceed with the series in a different manner. Kearns has expressed that she understood the General's position and was relieved that her research had prepared her for a different route, in which she would base the portraits upon a number of photographs that she had collected since the mid-nineties while researching the genocide in Rwanda. She informed Dallaire of her decision to continue with the series in a third letter. Sometime after the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series was completed, she sent Dallaire a press pack which contained a large image of *Dallaire #4*. Dallaire responded with what the artist described as "a very kind, favourable and congratulatory email [...] concerning the works." (Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, September 8, 2011). Kearns and Dallaire have since exchanged several emails and have also met in person, at "The Media and the Rwanda Genocide" symposium held at Carleton University in 2004 and at a military dinner several years later.

battle with PTSD.[100] In fact, the six portraits of Dallaire which depict the General unravelling psychologically are said by one observer to coincide with the six stages of PTSD.[101] However, the choice of six portraits was not based on the clinical aspect of PTSD. Rather, Kearns simply chose six photographs that she had found in her research and painted works based on these images; she believed that six portraits were sufficient in representing the different stages that led to the 'undoing' of the General.[102] In a May 2005 interview for the Canadian War Museum's Oral History Program, Kearns elaborated on the intent of each portrait.[103] *Dallaire #1* [figure 6] shows the General very much in control; he views his mission with great optimism and is looking forward to the challenges that will come of it. He wears the blue UN beret proudly. The UN circular badge on his beret seems abstracted; it is lacking any recognizable insignia. *Dallaire #2* [figure 7] shows Dallaire in a slightly different light. Dallaire's finger is raised; he appears to be acting out his role as commander in charge. Yet, he is also suddenly aware that there may be more to the mission than he may have initially expected. On his beret, the circled UN badge seems to glow blood red. *Dallaire #3*

[100] When considering how soldiers have been depicted in the wars of the twentieth century, one can detect a shift in thinking about the psychological trauma that affects many soldiers in combat. For instance, there was a great focus on war heroes during the First and Second World War; their bravery was used to rally support for the wars. See Damien Cave, "Where Are the War Heroes?", *New York Times*, August 7, 2005, accessed September 11, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/07/weekinreview/07cave.html. However, some artists such as Otto Dix inserted the harsh realities of WWI into their art by depicting victims suffering from what was then known as 'shell shock.' See Paul Fox, "Confronting Postwar Shame in Weimar Germany: Trauma, Heroism and the War Art of Otto Dix," *Oxford Art Journal* 29.2 (2006): 247-267. The theme of PTSD has become more pronounced in the discussions of present day soldiers and continues to be a topic of interest for Gertrude Kearns. She is currently working on a series entitled *War Posters: Canadian Forces/Security/Defense*, based on larger than life size drawings and paintings of soldiers from life sittings. Kearns described this series as showing "the wear and tear of war" (Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, September 8, 2011).

[101] Vivian Tors, "Camouflage and Exposure," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 168.9 (April 29, 2003): 1165.

[102] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, June 3, 2011.

[103] Gertrude Kearns, interview by Mai-Yun Chan, *Canadian War Museum Oral History Program*, May 6, 2005.

[figure 8] depicts the General with his hand on the side of his face, his forehead creased in concern. He is suddenly realizing the danger that surrounds him and that there is no cavalry coming over the hill, including that which he might want to mount himself. Again, the badge is glowing in red, but there is also a diagonal line that cuts the circle; a reference to a 'do not enter' sign. Here, Kearns is using symbolism as a play on her message. Could the abstracted UN badge that is referencing the dangers of trespassing, be in fact alluding to the imminent danger of genocide? Or is it a reference to the UN's reluctance to 'enter' Rwanda? Both interpretations seem plausible. *Dallaire #4* [figure 9] depicts the General in a state of anger. His hand is cutting through the air and he seems to have been captured in mid-sentence, saying something like "Enough is enough!" He has clearly run out of patience. *Dallaire #5* [figure 10] is intended to show his horror. It is a macabre portrait of Dallaire, whose eyes seem to be bulging at the horrendous sights of genocide. Finally, *Dallaire #6* [figure 11] is perhaps the most poignant of the portraits. The work shows Dallaire, who is recognizable despite the fact that he has both hands covering his face. He is in total despair. His sense of shame and guilt at the loss of life around him and his incapacity to intervene is evident. Thus, the Dallaire portraits are as much about "his loss of face as a failed commander as his slide into PTSD".[104]

The other three paintings in the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series are depictions of victims of the genocide. Through her research at the CBC and a confidential source in the Canadian Forces, Kearns acquired two photographic images of the genocide on which

[104] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, June 3, 2011.

she would later base two of the works: *Umuganda: Bush Clearing* [figure 12][105] and *Disarmed* [figure 13].[106] *Umuganda: Bush Clearing* is painted over three pieces of camouflage fabric of varying lengths and depicts a father and daughter who have been murdered.[107] The daughter lies face down; her skull has been cut open, presumably by a machete. Her father lies on his back, while a painted blue pool appears to connect the two bodies together. The title of the piece is sardonic as it is referencing *Umuganda*, which translates as community service. In Rwanda, on the last Saturday morning of each month, there is a mandatory community service day. The practice, which goes back to colonial times, is a day of contribution which allows citizens to improve their communities. On the day of *Umuganda*, business activity halts and public transportation is limited. Citizens could be doing various jobs, such as cleaning streets, cutting grass, trimming bushes, repairing public facilities or even building houses for disadvantaged people.[108] Yet, the 'community service' being accomplished in *Umuganda: Bush Clearing* is one of mass murder. Here, the killers have cleared people instead of bushes.[109]

Though *Disarmed* depicts a living man who has been mutilated rather than slaughtered, he is nevertheless a victim of the genocide in Rwanda as he has been forever marked by it; its presence in his life marked by an absence in his body. The man has

[105] Though Kearns did not show me the pictures she acquired, I believe that in some instances these images acted as a direct inspiration for Kearns' paintings. For instance, when viewing the documentary *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Journey of Romeo Dallaire*, I instantly recognized the two victims in Kearns' *Umuganda: Bush Clearing*, as the image was featured in the film. See *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Journey of Romeo Dallaire*, directed by Peter Raymont and Lindalee Tracey (Montreal: White Pine Pictures, 2004), DVD.
[106] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, June 3, 2011.
[107] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.
[108] "Umuganda," Rwanda Governance Advisory Council, accessed June 4, 2011, http://www.rwanda-gac.org/main-menu/innovation/umuganda.html
[109] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, March 15, 2011.

painted gashes that run across the side of his face and the top of his head. He is looking at the left side of his body, where a section of the canvas has been cut, alluding to the man's missing limb. Kearns cleanly cut the canvas and then glued a narrow panel of reversed camouflage fabric to replace the man's arm. According to the artist, the action of precisely cutting the canvas (in this case around the man's stump and his hand) alludes to the genocide's calculated and planned nature.[110] His right arm is raised and his hand seems to be searching for the arm that was once there: This victim is no longer the same man he once was. Kearns shows the psychological effects of trauma through the portraits of Dallaire and in this work she also demonstrates the physical trauma inflicted upon those who survived but whose lives would never be the same.

Mission: Camouflage [figure 14] is a work that was inspired by a composite of photographic images. Through various sources, such as a journalist who shared his personal photos of Rwanda and images photographed by doctors who worked with *Doctors Without Borders* in Rwanda, Kearns was able to create a monumental 120" x 180" image of tangled dead bodies and limbs which lie beneath the wheels of a white UN truck.[111] Kearns has painted this image on three connecting suspended panels of camouflage fabric. It is the scene of a massacre, except for one lone figure; a woman reaches out and up to the UN vehicle.[112] She is nearly impossible to detect, due to the veiling effect of the camouflage and her own entanglement with dead bodies. Yet, once one detects this sole survivor, one suddenly realizes that her symbolic gesture can be read in a variety of ways. If one considers that her left arm has been mutilated, is she pointing

[110] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, August 10, 2011.
[111] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, June 3, 2011.
[112] Gertrude Kearns, Artist Statement for *Mission: Camouflage*, 2004.

at the UN truck so that someone may stop and assist her? Or is it instead an accusatory gesture, one that blames the UN for her pain and perhaps even her imminent death? Both interpretations seem plausible.

Kearns' use of camouflage in both the title of the work and the patterned fabric seems to allude to several layers of meaning.[113] If one considers that camouflage is meant to hide something, then one may ask "What is behind this camouflage?" The answer is a disturbing one, for upon closer inspection one begins to make out the circumstances surrounding the death of these victims. Missing limbs refer to the use of mutilation, while rape is also insinuated through the inclusion of a woman whose legs are spread and whose skirt has been lifted.[114] There is also another subtle reference to the controversial role of the Catholic Church in the genocide in Rwanda.[115] In the artist's

[113] One can consider Kearns' use of camouflage fabric to be in sharp contrast with traditionally prepared and framed canvas. Kearns' material is patterned instead of plain and its selvage edge gives it a torn look (Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, August 11, 2011). This choice could be viewed as a strategy to remove art from the context of aesthetics, thereby avoiding the trap of beautifying violence. This shift away from 'beautiful' art making is also apparent in the works of other artists who depict scenes of violence or mass murder. Although the use of raw material in art goes beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that artists such as Leon Golub and Anselm Kiefer (mentioned in the second section of this thesis) have also incorporated non-conventional material into their works when portraying scenes of violence or mass murder.

[114] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, August 11, 2011.

[115] Ironically, Rwanda is known as the most 'Christian' country in Africa; 89.8 percent of the population claims membership in a Christian Church. See Carol Rittner, John K. Roth and Wendy Whitworth, eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, Minn.: Paragon House, 2004), xi. The role of the Catholic Church in the genocide in Rwanda is a controversial one. Many of the large scale massacres took place in churches, predominantly Roman Catholic ones (Rittner, *Genocide*, xi). Dr. Timothy Longman, the former Rwanda Research Director for the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, made the following observations after having visited Rwanda before and after the genocide: "According to my findings, church personnel and institutions were actively involved in the program of resistance to popular pressures for political reform that culminated in the 1994 genocide, and numerous priests, pastors, nuns, brothers, catechists, and Catholic and Protestant lay leaders supported, participated in, or helped to organize the killings. [...] The culpability of the churches lies not only in their historic role in teaching obedience to state authority and in constructing ethnic identities but also in their modern role as centers of social, political, and economic power, allied with the state, actively practicing ethnic discrimination, and working to preserve the status quo." See Timothy Longman, "Christian Churches and Genocide in Rwanda," (revision of a paper originally prepared for the Conference on

statement for *Mission: Camouflage*, Kearns writes that she has highlighted "the rampant use of rape and mutilation as a genocidal weapon in a predominantly Roman Catholic country [see the black crucifix made of tape on the truck]."[116]

Elaborating on her initial focus on the military intervention led by Dallaire, Kearns explained: "The war aspect was through the face of the General. The other pieces [artworks of the victims] were a result, basically, of what the [UN] policy was. But I was driven initially by what he was going through and his responsibilities."[117] In other words, Kearns saw a direct relationship between the victims she portrayed in the three victim scenes and the Dallaire portraits. The disastrous outcome of events was a result of Dallaire's restrictive UN mandate; thus, the victim paintings were in a sense born of the Dallaire portraits.

In viewing the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series, one may question why Kearns chose to use camouflage fabric, which is often associated with warfare, as a material for the entire series (particularly in the depictions of the victims of genocide, as they were typically civilians and not military personnel). The inspiration for this particular aspect of the series came in November 2001; while completing the preparatory drawings of Dallaire, Kearns visited an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). The "Canvas of War" exhibition featured the work of war artists who produced visual records of the First and Second World Wars. There she saw A.Y. Jackson's *Screened Road* [figure 15] from WWI, which showed a large piece of camouflage netting being held up along a

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Genocide, Religion, and Modernity, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, May 11-13, 1997), accessed June 4, 2011, http://faculty.vassar.edu/tilongma/Church&Genocide.html.

[116] Gertrude Kearns, Artist Statement for *Mission: Camouflage*, 2004.

[117] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.

road. As Kearns explained during our conversation: "I remember thinking to myself: 'That's it! I've got to use camouflage.' That was a turning point."[118] She then began a tedious search and finally found a camouflage fabric that had a width of five feet and was made of heavy nylon. Kearns was captivated by the pattern and found that it was able to engage the viewer through its meditative and mesmerizing characteristics.[119] The aim of the artist was to conjure up associations of deception or a puzzle and to create a link between the works, while still suggesting a barrier of sorts.[120] Apart from the psychological implications, Kearns found that the visual effect created by a combination of the camouflage pattern (both the right and at times the reverse side of the pattern were used), the use of linear elements and washes of pigment were interesting; the arrangements seemed to pulsate and give each piece a three-dimensional aspect.[121] This optical illusion is clearly seen in *Dallaire #6*; Dallaire's detached and amputated hands seem to rise from the picture, creating a throbbing effect.

I believe that the use of camouflage in Kearns' work acts as strategy which allows the artist to confront many of the difficulties associated with the visual representation of genocide.[122] For instance, the camouflage succeeds in achieving a more restrained

[118] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Gertrude Kearns, Artist Statement for *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* exhibition, October, 2002.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Although the *Undone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series was what initially inspired Kearns to use camouflage fabric, it was by no means the only project that featured the patterned canvas. Kearns continued to experiment with the fabric for some works in the *John Bentley Mays* series in 2003 as well as for a 2005 self-portrait of the artist dressed in military uniform. The use of this patterned fabric within the context of the *Undone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series (in portraying victims of genocide) functions differently than her use of the material in her self-portrait as a war artist. One might question whether Kearns' use of camouflage was appropriate in her self-portrait, given that one could read it as linking her own situation to that of Dallaire and the Rwandan victims. However, this portrayal is in fact suitable considering that in January 2006, Kearns visited Afghanistan under contract as an official war artist with Joint Task Force Afghanistan. See "War Artist Seeks Photos from Soldiers," *The Maple Leaf: The DND/CF Weekly News*

depiction of mass murder. As previously discussed, one of the debates surrounding Holocaust art (which applies to the depiction of any genocide), concerns the use of graphic images in art. Some scholars argue that there is a genuine risk in trying to recreate violent episodes; if the image is excessively gruesome, the artist may only succeed in sensationalizing, thereby desensitizing the viewer and exploiting the human subject.[123] On the other hand, if the image is too restrained, then the magnitude of violence that occurred is not communicated and the viewer may walk away with a false perception of what actually took place.[124] Kearns' use of camouflage has allowed her to find a middle ground of sorts. Though the imagery is undoubtedly disturbing, such as *Umuganda: Bush Clearing* in which the victims' wounds are evident and unsettling, the camouflage pattern allows for the goriness of the scene to be somewhat obscured. As Dr. Anna Hudson, former associate curator of Canadian art at the AGO, said: "We all find ways – as individuals and as a society – of dealing with terror. Camouflage, as Kearns adroitly reveals, is a screen we lift to shield us from actuality."[125] During our discussion, I asked Kearns if her subdued and camouflaged depiction of violence was in fact deliberate. She explained that her restraint was indeed intentional and she was very much

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12.32 (September 30, 2009): 13, accessed September 12, 2011, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/commun/ml-fe/article-eng.asp?id=5656. Kearns is by no means equating her experience to the suffering of the individuals featured in the *Undone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series when using the pattern. Rather, she is portraying herself as a member of a military team. Here, the camouflage pattern is considered within a military perspective and is devoid of any references to genocide. This shift in meaning suggests that the same artistic device can be used within different contexts and can develop different connotations or meanings.

[123] Matthew Biro, "Representation and Event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the memory of the Holocaust", *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16.1 (2003): 116.

[124] See Ronit Lentin, ed., *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the 21st Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 131, for a discussion about the 'Schindler Syndrome' which involves masking the atrocities by using themes relating to heroism, liberation and survival.

[125] Anna Hudson, "UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda" (Invitation to UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda Exhibition, Toronto, September 11, 2002), 1.

aware of the danger of sensationalizing the events or depicting them as gratuitous. Kearns made the following observations about the largest work *Mission: Camouflage*:

> The painting refers to the methods of killing: fire, machete, rape, mutilation, gunshot and suggests all ages from baby to adult. The intent was to use restraint, that is not to be gratuitous in terms of violent images, yet in that restraint to maybe move the viewer even more deeply via that suggestion.[126]

Thus, it is through a restrained depiction that Kearns attempts to move her audience. Furthermore, there is no prerequisite knowledge about the genocide in Rwanda needed to grasp the significance of the scene; as Kearns explains, "the viewer searches for completion of images in order to see them, and in doing so becomes part of the meaning of the scene."[127] Kearns' restraint is also evident in the work *Disarmed*, which Kearns described as a minimal and low key artwork.[128] The slashes on the victim's head could have been bloody, but she depicted them more as scars than actual gaping wounds. The artist does not mutilate the victim; rather Kearns cuts the fabric in a conscious effort to simply allude to the man's mutilation.

The camouflage fabric also allows Kearns to link two very different subject matters: a named individual (Dallaire) and anonymous victims dead and alive. By using the same patterned fabric, Kearns creates a thematic device that allows for the series to appear coherent and fluid. Thus, Kearns creates a bridge between these works, without having to produce paintings that have a similar background or are of a similar size to create harmony in the series. Furthermore, Kearns also develops a link between the portraits of Dallaire and the anonymous 'bodies' by making a statement about the different types of victims who emerged from the genocide in Rwanda. Without

[126] Gertrude Kearns, Artist Statement for *Mission: Camouflage*, 2004.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.

trivializing the fate of the Tutsis, Kearns demonstrates, through her choice of subject matter, that all of the people she has chosen to depict are victims of the genocide. Some have been murdered (*Umuganda: Bush Clearing*), some have been mutilated (*Disarmed*) and others have been traumatized psychologically (*Dallaire* portraits).[129]

Conversely, though the use of restraint may avoid the dangers of exploitation, it can subsequently go so far as to mask the seriousness of the atrocities. In discussing the dangers of Holocaust representation (which may also be applied to the portrayal of other traumatic events), Brett Ashley Kaplan explains that "some narratives are unethical because they *encourage forgetting* by seducing us into the cozy idea that these narratives are sufficient to engender Holocaust memory."[130] Consequently, one may question whether the camouflaged depiction of mass murder found in Kearns' work actually *encourages forgetting*. Has Kearns fallen into the trap of masking the atrocities and thereby suppressing the seriousness of the events? Clearly there are some scenes that may appear somewhat obscured by the camouflage pattern. However, if one closely examines the three works that depict Rwandan victims, certain details in the paintings are anything but subdued. Dr. Anna Hudson, in discussing the effect of the camouflage

[129] For the purpose of this thesis, when discussing the psychological effects of genocide, I will mainly be discussing Dallaire's battle with PTSD. However, it is imperative that one realises the devastating effects that the genocide has had on the people of Rwanda who survived the massacres. For instance, if one considers that at least 10% of the 7.7 million inhabitants of Rwanda were killed, that much of the country's infrastructure was destroyed, and that nearly 4 million people were displaced, one can begin to imagine the trauma that afflicted Rwanda's inhabitants. In February 2002, a random survey of 2091 adults in selected households in 4 communes of Rwanda was conducted. The results of this survey showed that 75.4% of those selected were forced to flee their homes, 73% had a close member of their family killed, 70.9% had property destroyed or lost and 24.8% met symptom criteria for PTSD. See Phuong N. Pham, Harvey M. Weinstein and Timothy Longman, "Trauma and PTSD Symptoms in Rwanda: Implications for Attitudes Toward Justice and Reconciliation," *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association* 292.5 (August 4 2004): 602-603.

[130] Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: aesthetic pleasure in Holocaust representation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 5.

fabric, mentioned that stories seem to "advance and recede in the fabric of Kearns' canvases."[131] That is in fact what happens when one faces these scenes of mass murder; though some of the graphic nature of the scene recedes into the pattern and may seem obscured at first, once certain elements are detected, it becomes difficult to lose sight of the details that allude to violence. I personally experienced this when I saw the monumental painting *Mission: Camouflage* in December 2010, which was included in the special exhibition *A Brush with War: Military Art from Korea to Afghanistan* at the Canadian War Museum. I stood in front of Kearns' work for several minutes, trying to decipher what elements she had included in the painting and how she had accomplished the three dimensional effect that was evident in the work. It took some effort to locate each victim, yet each time I discovered one, they were impossible to lose sight of. For instance, in *Mission: Camouflage*, a woman lies just under the front wheel of a white UN truck. The victim's skirt has been pulled up and her legs are spread. In including this particular victim, Kearns alludes to one of the *génocidaires*' most brutal tactics: rape.[132] Interestingly, Kearns also avoids gratuitous imagery in her use of colour and by the moment she chooses to depict (the aftermath rather than the actual rape). In fact, in all of the works of the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series, Kearns avoids what could be looked upon as an excessive use of the colour red, as the colour can easily create a senseless and bloody scene.[133] Instead, she uses red sparingly and purposely, often to convey a message. Kearns uses the colour red between the woman's legs to imply rape, rather than

[131] Anna Hudson, "UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda" (Invitation to UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda Exhibition, Toronto, September 11, 2002), 1.
[132] As mentioned earlier, as a result of the atrocities that took place in Rwanda, the UN designated rape as an act of genocide in recognition of its strategic use by the Interahamwe during the genocide. See "When Rape Becomes Genocide," *The New York Times*, September 5, 1998, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/05/opinion/when-rape-becomes-genocide.html?ref=jeanpaulakayesu.
[133] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.

to depict the act itself which would have been unnecessarily gruesome. Kearns' refusal to depict the act of rape concurs with theorist Mieke Bal's views on the impossibility of representing this heinous act:

> [...] rape itself cannot be visualized. It cannot be visualized, not because a 'decent' culture would not tolerate such representations of the act, but because rape makes the victim invisible. It does that literally – first the perpetrator covers her – and figuratively – then the rape destroys her self-image, her subjectivity, which is temporarily narcotized, definitively changed, and often destroyed. Finally, rape cannot be visualized because the experience is, physically as well as psychologically, *inner*. Rape takes place inside. In this sense, rape is by definition imagined; it can only exist as experience and as memory, as *image* translated into signs, never adequately objectifiable.[134]

Furthermore, a portion of the woman's arm is missing, alluding to the mutilation that took place as extremists wielded their machetes and mercilessly cut off their victims' limbs. Thus, Kearns uses a nuanced approach to explore themes of rape, murder and mutilation, in order to avoid the danger of glorifying them. They are simply there as a testament to the plight of the Tutsis. Hence, through the use of camouflage pattern, a restrained colour palette and a careful choice of scenes, Kearns veils the events' barbaric nature while still developing a mechanism that confronts the viewer with the necessity of dealing with the enormity of genocide.

Another interpretation of the use of camouflage has been proposed by Vivian Tors, an Ottawa visual artist, who reviewed the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series in a brief article for the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Focusing on Dallaire's battle with PTSD, Tors observed that "the figures and forms in the paintings emerge and recede in and out of the camouflage pattern, creating visual confusion to suggest the

[134] Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, *Looking in: the art of viewing* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2000), 99-100.

disequilibrium induced by PTSD and the random and insidious way it alters the sufferer's perceptions."[135] Tors also suggests that the camouflage fabric may be seen as a metaphor for the enormous deception perpetrated by the UN on the Rwandan people and on Roméo Dallaire and his men,[136] who were placed in a "paradoxical role as a trained, but unarmed 'quasi-military' force."[137]

Jacques Derrida once observed that we do "not count the dead in the same way from one corner of the globe to the other."[138] This is particularly significant in the case of the genocide in Rwanda, as several nations refused to intervene because the life of their soldiers was not worth putting at risk for the lives of Rwandans. Thus, it appears that the legacy of colonialism persists, as the value given to each human life is different; the actions of the international community demonstrate that the lives of non-Africans in peril or lost during the genocide were given more importance than the lives of the

[135] Vivian Tors, "Camouflage and Exposure," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 168.9 (April 29, 2003): 1164.

[136] Interestingly, Roméo Dallaire shared a similar analysis to Tors' in his memoir *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*. In contemplating the failures of his mission, Dallaire made the following observation: "[...] I couldn't help but feel that we were a sort of diversion, even sacrificial lambs, that permitted statesmen to say that the world was doing something to stop the killing. *In fact we were nothing more than camouflage*. When I hit my personal rock bottom in the late nineties, [...] it was because I had finally realized the extent to which I had been duped." See Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 414 (my emphasis). Thus, Dallaire views the presence of UNAMIR in Rwanda as a form of camouflage which gave a false sense of reassurance to the world that there was actually something being done about the killings. Dallaire and his men had been duped. Though they did in fact save some Rwandans from being slaughtered, their efforts were in fact just that; an attempt to save a small number of individuals, not to try and solve the crisis as they initially believed was their mission (Dallaire, *Shake Hands*, 414).

[137] Vivian Tors, "Camouflage and Exposure," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 168.9 (April 29, 2003): 1165.

[138] Jacques Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides – a Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, ed. Giovanna Borradori (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 92.

Tutsis.[139] As Roméo Dallaire observed in the concluding remarks of his memoir, "we are in desperate need of a transfusion of humanity."[140] How does Kearns combat this tendency to disregard the value of a human life and more specifically, an African life? It is once again the camouflage fabric that allows Kearns to draw a parallel of common humanity between Dallaire and the Rwandan victims.

The inclusion of victims in Kearns' artworks may seem problematic to some. As previously discussed, many artists who depict genocide, such as Anselm Kiefer in most of his Holocaust works or Alfredo Jaar in his *Rwanda Project 1994-2000*, have refused to depict the suffering of individuals and have opted for more nuanced portrayals. Yet, Kearns has persistently (and perhaps to some, problematically) chosen to include victims in her artworks. Has Kearns fallen into the trap of exploiting the human subject? To answer that question, one must return to Adorno's theoretical reflections concerning the destruction of the autonomous subject in the death camps. In his book entitled *Negative Dialectics*, he wrote:

> Genocide is the absolute integration. It is on its way wherever men are levelled off – "polished off," as the German military called it – until one exterminates them literally, as deviations from the concept of their total nullity [...] What the sadists in the camps foretold their victims, "Tomorrow you'll be wiggling skyward as smoke from this chimney," bespeaks the indifference of each individual life that is the direction of history. Even in his formal freedom, the individual is as fungible and replaceable as he will be under the liquidator's boots.[141]

By giving importance to individual bodies, Kearns avoids what Adorno described as the 'absolute integration' of genocide, where the very concept of the autonomous subject is

[139] Consider Belgium's withdrawal from Rwanda after the murder of ten Belgian peacekeepers. See Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 522.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), 362.

obliterated and the importance of every individual life is dismissed. The 'indifference of each individual life' is refuted in the works of Gertrude Kearns through her inclusion of individual bodies. In other words, the disregard for an individual's life displayed by the *génocidaires* is rejected by the inclusion of these victims in Kearns' work. The reality of their death confronts the viewer. The artist chooses to attribute importance to each life that is taken, thus transmitting pathos through the inclusion of these dead bodies. As a result, the viewer must grapple not only with the atrocities that took place but also with the loss of these individual victims.

Another element of the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series which may seem problematic is the juxtaposition of Dallaire's close-up portraits with the depictions of the victims who appear faceless. In other words, Dallaire's distinguishable features differ greatly from the almost androgynous faces of the dead. Thus, some may interpret this contrast as an uncomfortable one, for it could suggest that Dallaire is somehow more important (due to his recognisability) than the thousands of Rwandans who perished during the genocide. Furthermore, painting the dead and wounded as anonymous figures could be likened to the perpetrators' policy in rendering the victims anonymous and degrading them to mere objects.[142] How then should an artist depict a victim who is unknown to him/her? *The Cambridge Companion to Lévinas* describes the difficulties in depicting the face of the 'other' in the following terms: "The human face is just the foyer of such bewilderments, lurking at the borderlines which separate the normal from the anomalous. The bewildering effects lose their stimulating force if the face is taken either

[142] Hans Joachim Schneider, ed., *The Victim in International Perspective: 3rd International Symposium Proceedings* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1982), 310.

as something too real or as something too sublime."[143] Thus, in order to reach the viewer, the artist must consider how real the face of the 'other' should be. In the case of Kearns's work, the victims are real but unnamed; the titles of the paintings are not used to identify the victims and their features do not seem to distinguish them very much from one another. Yet, if Kearns had chosen to identify her victims, her approach would have surely been considered problematic as well. She was not, after all, a witness to the genocide. She based her paintings on photographs she had seen of the events but did not know the victims personally. Thus, rather than appropriating their identity, Kearns depicted the victims as they were photographed, without emphasizing their facial features. Whether the ambiguity of the victims' identity was deliberate or not on the part of the artist does not seem to matter; the importance of the inclusion of the victims (both dead and alive) alongside the portraits of Dallaire demonstrate that the artist was attempting to provide a comprehensive picture of what had taken place in Rwanda in 1994. Furthermore, the anonymity of the faces speaks to the very nature of genocide; many of the victims were never identified and thrown into mass graves. Thus, Kearns' victims represent, in a sense, all of the victims of the genocide in Rwanda.

Kearns' approach at depicting the victims of the genocide seems to have resonated with many Rwandans residing in Toronto. According to Kearns, many victims present at the opening of the exhibition at the Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts, shared their appreciation of the works with the artist and felt that she had treated the genocide in Rwanda and its victims with dignity.[144] After the exhibition, Kearns continued to attend

[143] Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi, *The Cambridge Companion to Lévinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 63.
[144] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.

many Rwanda-related functions, such as the symposium held at Carleton University on March 13, 2004 titled "The Media and the Rwanda Genocide," in which Roméo Dallaire also participated as a keynote speaker. She became increasingly connected to the Rwandan community and felt much more emotionally involved as she got to know survivors of the genocide. In fact, she became so traumatized by the imagery and barbarity she had come across in her research that she began to have nightmares.[145] Exposure to documentaries, books and photographs and the firsthand account of a soldier she met through the Department of National Defence caused her to develop an emotional connection to the tragedy.

This emotional connection to the events in Rwanda may explain why the artist could not quite detach herself from the subject matter, even after the completion of the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series. In fact, Kearns planned for another large victim scene soon after the exhibition, one that would move away from the role of the UN to directly implicate the Catholic Church. Unfortunately the work was never realized. However, the artist did retain preliminary studies for what was to have been *MASS: Information* [figure 16]. The work would have explored the complicity of Christian clergymen in the murder of Tutsis. Two of the victims in the paper study appear to be lying on a cross. The manner in which these victims have been crucified can be read as a clear reference to the failure of the church to appeal to its members and prevent them from committing mass murder. Kearns believes that this intended painting would have explored the notion of accountability further. Had the painting been completed, its statement on the role of the

[145] Ibid.

church would have represented a more balanced presentation about the complex factors that contributed to the genocide in Rwanda.[146]

[146] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, August 11, 2011.

Dallaire *UNdone* – The Canadianization of the Genocide in Rwanda

Though a thorough analysis of the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series as a whole is crucial in understanding the artist's intent, one may also choose to examine Kearns' focus on Roméo Dallaire and its effect upon a predominantly Canadian audience. In order to grasp the artist's purpose in including Roméo Dallaire in her series, one must go beyond the six portraits of Dallaire, which were part of the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series. Two other bodies of work are also crucial in examining the role of Dallaire in Kearns' work: the artist's preparatory sketches of Dallaire (later known as the *UNintentional* series) and *The Scream* [figure 17], a work featuring Dallaire that Kearns produced after the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* exhibition.

One of the most revealing aspects of interviewing Kearns was a discussion about the preparatory sketches of Dallaire that eventually led to the six portraits in the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series. After researching for several years, Kearns began to sketch portraits of the former General based on photographs she had found in her research, knowing that she wanted to depict him in differing psychological states. As she contemplated the manner in which she would explore Dallaire's experiences in Rwanda, she produced four drawings. The first she named *Let's Play Cricket* [figure 18], a drawing that she described as fun and which explores the idea of leadership.[147] In a May 2005 interview for the Canadian War Museum's Oral History Program, Kearns made some interesting remarks about the piece. She said that Dallaire is

> dressed in cricket gear, the red carp for the UN holding the world up as an enormous cricket ball. In other words saying [...] his view to the mission

[147] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.

> being, 'Oh, it should be something that should be accomplished.' After all, the UN is the UN. It should be a gentleman's game.[148]

This notion of propriety is reinforced by the red carpeted white UN stairs, the choice of the game of cricket giving the piece a certain colonial overtone.[149] Thus, this first work shows Roméo Dallaire's initial hopes for the UNAMIR mission; that he would accomplish what he had set out to do, which was to oversee the implementation of the Arusha Accords.

This initial confidence and assurance in the mission is completely abolished in Kearns' second drawing entitled *Scapegoat* [figure 19]. Though the top part of the figure is evidently Roméo Dallaire whose hand is covering the side of his face (much like *Dallaire #3*), his bottom half seems to morph into a goat-like creature, creating a disturbing rendition of the former General. Dallaire's neck is made up of raw meat and also becomes a part of the slaughtered animal. A UN truck hovers in the background, a feature that the artist would later incorporate into the largest work of the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series, entitled *Mission: Camouflage*. The spare tire of the UN truck in the background seems to be in position to slice the General's neck. Kearns explained the inclusion of this spare tire by comparing Dallaire to a spare tire that never got used, as well as the verbal play of 'spare me'.[150] Dallaire is also "welded to the beast as the sacrifice to the mission...It is about total capitulation."[151] This idea of the General as an emasculated figure seems to corroborate with Dallaire's own views of his role in Rwanda, as he referred to himself and his soldiers as the 'sacrificial lambs' of the

[148] Gertrude Kearns, interview by Mai-Yun Chan, *Canadian War Museum Oral History Program*, May 6, 2005.
[149] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, March 2, 2011.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.

genocide.[152] What is also interesting about this piece is the obscure blue shape that seems to be emerging from the inside of the sacrificed animal. Kearns made a parallel between the significance of this shape and the reason why the international community turned a blind eye to the events in Rwanda:

> Maybe not clearly enough, the sacrificed goat is giving birth to a dead UN blue baby, swaddled in a blue blanket. Rather obscure, but I felt moved by its eeriness and unclear presence at the base of the piece, the goat's legs straddling the swaddled concealed infant. People who saw it would say "What is it?" They found it hard to see what I meant. But that didn't matter to me. The colour of the child is hidden. It is a black child. If it had been white would we have intervened? It was Africa….[153]

The artist provides an interesting interpretation of this 'concealed infant' as a symbol of the role of racism in the international community's failure to intervene in the genocide. Yet however fascinating of an analysis, this obscure shape at the bottom of the work does not fully communicate its message, for the viewer cannot detect the presence of this African infant under the folds of the blanket, as the artist herself admitted. From the perspective of the viewer, Kearns' attempt at developing layers of meaning in this drawing is partially accomplished; by incorporating the image of a sacrificial animal, the artist is clearly making a reference to Dallaire being used as a scapegoat for the UN's failures. However, the ambiguity of the image of the infant does not fully accomplish its purpose of calling into question the international community's motives in refusing to intervene in Rwanda. Yet it appears that this vague reference to racism remained deliberate on the part of the artist.

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[152] Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil, the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), 414.
[153] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, March 2, 2011.

The third drawing that Kearns produced was *Urgent* [figure 20], a work that depicts Dallaire wrapped in an upside down Canadian flag while his arms, appearing as frayed wires, peer out from beneath the folds of the material. In an email correspondence, Kearns explained that the frayed wires were a reference to the cable Dallaire sent to the UN requesting permission to take preventative action, which was subsequently denied.[154] One of Dallaire's large hands is open, despite it having been severed from his arm; his defeated expression suggests that he is begging someone to intervene. Both service uniform and the Canadian flag seem to imply 'For Crown and Country...and United Nations.'[155]

Lastly, Kearns features Dallaire in the work entitled *Plagued* [figure 21]. In her research, Kearns had encountered a powerful photograph of Dallaire with his hands over his face, taken by *Toronto Star* photographer Rick Madonik. She incorporated that image of an overwhelmed Dallaire in her final preparatory drawing, which would also later inspire her to complete the sixth portrait of Dallaire, entitled *Dallaire #6*. *Plagued* shows Dallaire as he is beginning to unravel; surrounded by skulls and bones, he is immersed by the killings taking place all around him. Via email correspondence, Kearns admitted that *Plagued* was the drawing she was least comfortable with. She explained: "It didn't feel comfortable to be giving any slight appearance of mocking Dallaire in any way, particularly with the image of his hands over his face. I felt rather guilty making this image of his torment. It is somewhat macabre and hallucinatory."[156] Though it is perhaps the darkest of the drawings, *Plagued* contains powerful symbols that allude to the anguish

[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.

of Dallaire's situation. There are black arms and hands behind him that appear to be taunting the General, while a skull with an anguished grimace appears to represent how Dallaire is feeling inside. The face on Dallaire's watch is also dark, similar to a black cloud.[157] Though perhaps difficult to execute and uncomfortable in its raw qualities, *Plagued* seems to work well when placed in a group with the three other pieces already discussed. A variety of emotions are represented; from confidence in the gentlemen's game of peacekeeping to complete capitulation and despair. These four preparatory drawings would be the basis and conceptual inspiration for the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series. When discussing the creation of these four works, Kearns described this time of preparation as "the process towards arriving at the camouflage. I hadn't even thought about camouflage at that point. I wanted to take my time; I wanted the series to be profound."[158] Only later in 2005 would Kearns name this series of drawings (which to date has still not been exhibited), *UNintentional*.[159]

The *UNintentional* series is significant in that it centers on Roméo Dallaire. It is a testament to his unravelling, from confident leader to broken man. After completing the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series, Kearns came to the realization that these four preparatory drawings were also a body of work in and of themselves. What began as a study of sequential events in the experiences of Roméo Dallaire, became a cohesive series that would be given the significant title of *UNintentional*. The play on words is evident; Kearns, once again, elaborates on the role of the UN in the massacres. Yet, the title of the series also leaves one with many questions. Was the UN's role in the

[157] Ibid.
[158] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.
[159] Gertrude Kearns, email message to author, March 2, 2011.

genocide in fact unintentional? Considering the UN's then-involvement in the Balkans and in Somalia, could this worldwide organization have unintentionally allowed mass murder to happen because they were simply too busy and did not have enough resources? Both the *UNdone* and the *UNintentional* titles suggest a form of action, albeit a different one. Through email correspondence, Kearns revealed the difference between the two titles: "The two titles are both emphatic and imply action, though the type of action is not indicated... Both suggest an unknown or unrecognized factor. [...] I think *UNintentional* implies something in progress as a title, whereas *UNdone* suggests a finality."[160] In terms of Dallaire's role in the genocide, *UNintentional* also presupposes the immense guilt that Dallaire would feel following the events in Rwanda.[161] It is this very sense of guilt that would propel him into the downward spiral of PTSD.

As was previously established, the *UNintentional* series led to the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series. However, even after the latter had been exhibited at the Propeller Centre for the Visual Arts, Kearns could not let go of the subject matter. Though her plan for another large figurative work *MASS: Information* was never realized, she continued her focus on Dallaire with a new project. She began to paint a seventh portrait of Dallaire, but this time across three military stretchers, rather than on camouflage fabric. Kearns had evolved from her six camouflage portraits of Dallaire and wanted to explore the General in a different manner; although the uncertainty surrounding this new approach seemed to cause her to revisit the work, time and time again, changing it repeatedly. At one point, she added a blank stretcher in between a portion of the General's face. Then she added a wrist with a watch. She painted him

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.

with a UN beret and then later removed it. In time she abandoned the project. She later painted an Afghanistan-related piece on the other side of the stretchers, ultimately disregarding the initial Dallaire portrait.[162] Though Kearns seemed hesitant about the conceptual framework of *The Scream*, the project appears to be extremely significant for two very distinct reasons. Firstly, her reluctance to let go of the subject matter strongly suggests that Kearns' emotional involvement with the genocide in Rwanda was real and that it evolved from her initial interest in the military. Secondly, these stretchers had been previously used as a backdrop for a portrait of a soldier who she painted while preparing for the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series.[163] As Kearns explained, the stretchers were used as "a metaphor for the attitude towards injury which is psychological and not physical, to the extent that there are platforms of recovery. There are stages [...] of recovery indicated by [...] a stretcher which is closed at the end – maybe one culmination of a treatment."[164] This soldier, who wished to remain anonymous, was in Rwanda and shared his experience with PTSD with Kearns. The encounter with this soldier allowed Kearns to relate to what Dallaire, who she did not meet while she was making the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series, had gone through while stationed in Rwanda. Thus, *The Scream* is very valuable to the understanding of the series for it creates a link between Dallaire and other soldiers who also suffered from PTSD. Kearns appears to have an inclusive definition of victims; she considers both the Tutsis and the soldiers who sat on the sidelines to be victims of genocide through physical and psychological trauma.

[162] Gertrude Kearns (artist) in discussion with the author, February 18, 2011.
[163] Gertrude Kearns, interview by Mai-Yun Chan, *Canadian War Museum Oral History Program*, May 6, 2005.
[164] Ibid.

Kearns' artwork is, however, relevant to a far greater audience than simply those who have suffered from PTSD. In my estimation, Kearns' inclusion of Dallaire also allows the artist's predominantly Canadian audience to relate to the genocide in Rwanda as well. How so? Scholar Marianne Hirsch's theories on postmemory may prove to be beneficial in analyzing this matter. Hirsch defines postmemory as "the response of the second generation to the trauma of the first."[165] Postmemory generally describes the relationship of children of survivors of genocide to the experiences of their parents.[166] However, Hirsch acknowledges that postmemory does not necessarily need to remain an identity position when she writes, "I prefer to see it as an intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma."[167] Thus, in this 'space of remembrance', the secondary witness (an individual who was not an eyewitness to genocide) may work through the trauma that is being presented to him/her. Furthermore, certain images allow for one to affiliate oneself to the events being displayed in the artwork. For instance, Hirsch argues that "children invite multiple projections and identifications. Their photographic images elicit an affiliative and identificatory as well as a protective spectatorial look marked by these investments."[168] Thus, just as the image of a child evokes viewer projection and identification, the image of Dallaire functions much in the same way. How so? Dallaire is generally considered to be a Canadian hero; one who tried to save as many Rwandans

[165] Marianne Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14.1 (Spring 2001): 8.
[166] Ibid, 9.
[167] Ibid, 10.
[168] Ibid, 10.

as possible and whose attempts at alerting the international community were unheard.[169] He has become a symbol for the brave and kind-hearted Canadian soldier. Just as one can identify with an image of a child (as every adult viewer was at one time a child), a Canadian audience to Kearns' work may also identify with Dallaire. As a well-known quintessential Canadian hero, Dallaire embodies all that is said to be good about Canada, thereby inspiring Kearns' audience to project their own identities onto the works. This level of understanding and affinity with Dallaire allows the viewer to reconsider the genocide in Rwanda not simply as an African problem, but rather as something closer to home. Yet just as the inclusion of Dallaire bridges the gap between Rwanda and a Western audience, it also threatens to characterize the artworks as projects born of the 'Schindler Syndrome.'[170] The tendency to tell the story of genocide as one of survival rather than destruction could reduce Kearns' work to a misrepresentation of the genocide in Rwanda. That would surely be the case if the *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series *only* featured Roméo Dallaire. However, Kearns offsets her portraits of Dallaire with three different portrayals of Rwandan victims of genocide (both dead and alive). The scale and imposing nature of the three victim works suggest that the artist has given just as much importance to the manner in which Rwandans have been impacted by the genocide as to how Dallaire was affected. By strategically balancing the portraits of Dallaire with

[169] As writer Dan Black attested in an article for *Legion Magazine*, "'hero' is exactly how many Canadians view him [Dallaire] through the media's lens, although he does not accept the label, just as there are others who would never stick that on him either." See Dan Black, "Roméo Dallaire," *Legion Magazine*, May 7, 2011, accessed July 30, 2011, http://www.legionmagazine.com/en/index.php/2011/05/romeo-dallaire/. Thus, the media's portrayal of Dallaire as a hero seems to have greatly influenced the general public's view of him. For instance, in a review of the documentary *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Roméo Dallaire* which documented his return to Rwanda ten years after the genocide, Geoff Pevere wrote: "Because he can't forget Rwanda, and because those memories haunt him still, Roméo Dallaire's single most compelling qualification for the role of hero might be his insistence that no one else be allowed to forget either." See Geoff Pevere, "Absorbing Return to Massacre Sight," *Toronto Star*, September 11, 2004, J16.

[170] Ronit Lentin, ed., *Re-Presenting the Shoah for the 21st Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 131.

images of victims, Kearns avoids westernizing the works to the point where they are no longer representing the genocide in Rwanda.

Conclusion

As was previously discussed, there are varying opinions concerning the ethics of visual representation, particularly when the subject matter is genocide. Similarly, I am certain that there will be different outlooks on the work of Gertrude Kearns and whether she adequately represented the genocide in Rwanda in her *UNdone: Dallaire/Rwanda* series. However, I believe several of the techniques used by the artist have allowed her to overcome some of the difficulties encountered when depicting genocide.

For instance, Theodor Adorno wrote of the 'destruction of the autonomous subject' and the 'absolute integration of the individual,' when discussing the disregard for human life expressed by the Nazis. Kearns rejects this notion by incorporating individual victims in her artwork, thereby injecting life into these lost souls who would otherwise be disregarded or forgotten. Furthermore, she has not fallen into the trap of sexualizing her victims, something which other artists are alleged to have done in their Holocaust art, as is evident in *Mission: Camouflage*. There Kearns implies rape without showing the act itself, which allows her to preserve the victim's dignity.

Perhaps some of the most effective work about genocide is that which challenges the viewer to contemplate notions of accountability and complicity. In order to achieve this, the viewer must personally interact with the works, so that they may feel involved in the issues being explored. Alfredo Jaar was able to accomplish this feat in his work *Real Pictures*. By configuring archival boxes in varying geometric shapes, Jaar forces the viewer to move around them in order to read the descriptions placed on top of the boxes. Similarly, Kearns' use of camouflage-patterned fabric invites the viewer to move towards

the painting to take a closer look. At first, some of the details are 'camouflaged' or obscured. However, upon further inspection, one can encounter gruesome details that initially seemed to recede into the pattern, such as a victim of rape, gashes on a man's head or a dying woman reaching towards a UN truck. Nevertheless, in order to avoid sensationalizing the victims, Kearns limits her colour palette, particularly the colour red which could otherwise lead to a gratuitous depiction of death.

Scholar Brett Ashley Kaplan argued that the artworks that effectively succeed in representing the Holocaust do so because they combine fragmentation, disruption and beauty, which encourages the viewer to grapple with various debates and issues regarding genocide. In light of this, one can see how the pulsating effect of the camouflage fabric does in fact create a fragmentation or disruption in Kearns' work. She disrupts her subject matter by refusing to shy away from various controversial themes, such as the role of the UN in allowing the atrocities to happen or the responsibility of the Catholic Church in its failure to convince its members not to kill one another. Furthermore, she transforms the image of what many perceive to be the quintessential hero, Roméo Dallaire, into an image of a traumatized human. Kearns' depiction of the undoing of Dallaire stands as a testament to the world's failure to even attempt to save the Tutsis of Rwanda, one that Canadian viewers can engage in because they can 'see' through the eyes of a primary witness.

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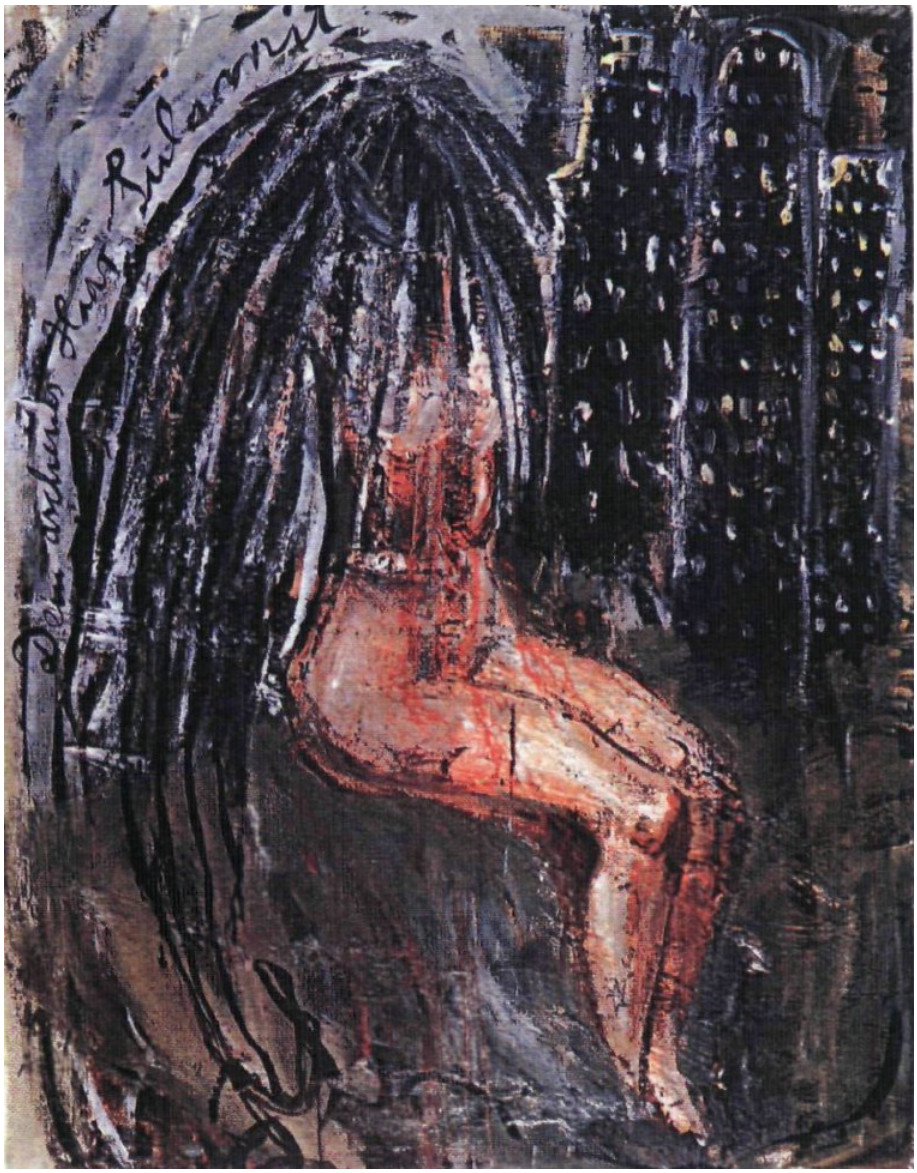

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Figure 2. Anselm Kiefer, *Iron Path* [*Eisen-Steig*], 1986. Oil, acrylic and emulsion on canvas, with olive branches, iron and lead. 86 5/8" x 149 5/8". Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Pincus, Wynnewood, PA. Biro, Matthew. "Representation and Event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the memory of the Holocaust." *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16.1 (2003): 133.

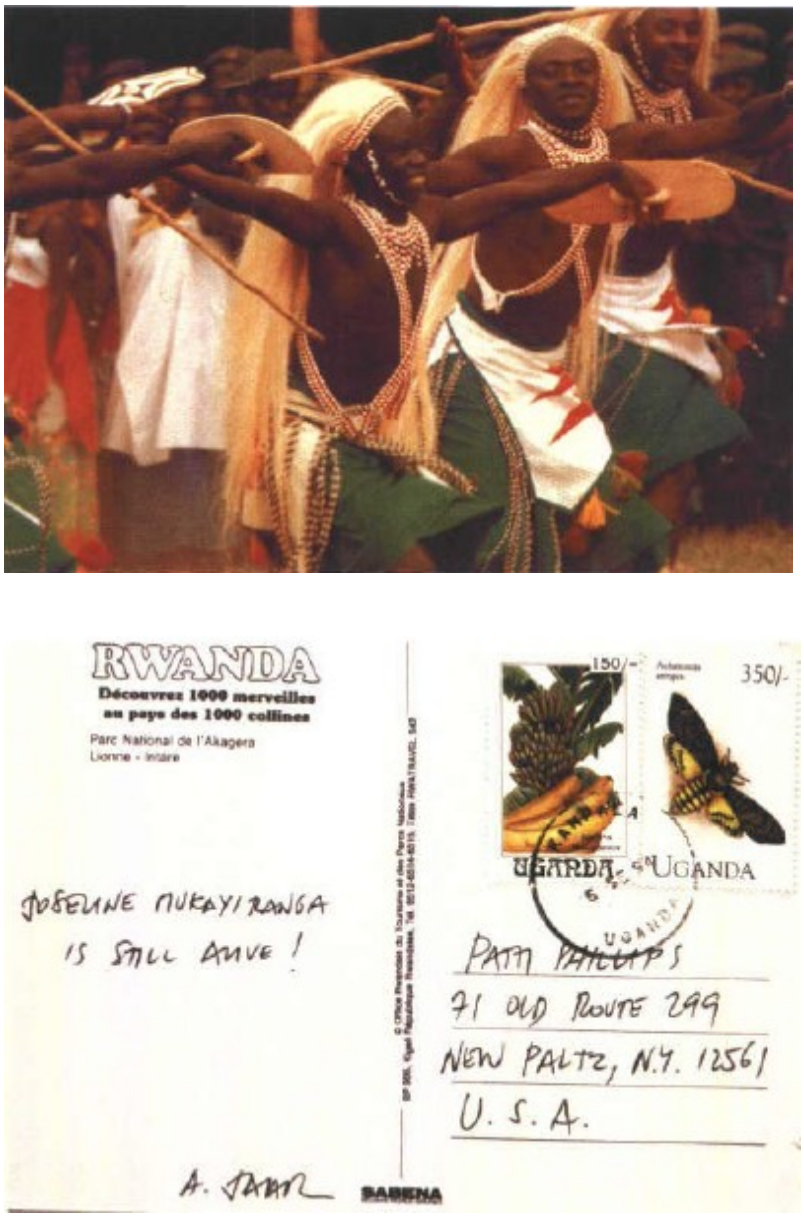

Figure 3. Alfredo Jaar, *Signs of Life* (front and back), 1994. Postcards and pen. 5 ½" x 7". Collection of the artist. Mirzoeff, Nicholas. "Invisible Again; Rwanda and Representation after Genocide." *African Arts* 38.3 (Autumn 2005): 38.

Figure 4. Alfredo Jaar, *Real Pictures*, 1995. Archival boxes, archival boxes, silkscreen, colour photographs. Variable dimensions. Installation view, Centre d'Art Santa Monica, Barcelona. Phillips, Patricia C. "The Aesthetics of Witnessing: A Conversation with Alfredo Jaar." *Art Journal* 64.3 (Fall 2005): 17.

Figure 5. Gilles Peress, *Rwanda*, 1994. Photograph, gelatine silver print. 8 13/16" x 13 1/16". Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN. (http://www.artsmia.org/viewer/detail.php?v=12&id=28691, accessed August 10, 2011)

Figure 6. Gertrude Kearns, *Dallaire #1*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 64" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 7. Gertrude Kearns, *Dallaire #2*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 72" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 8. Gertrude Kearns, *Dallaire #3*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 72" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 9. Gertrude Kearns, *Dallaire #4*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 73" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 10. Gertrude Kearns, *Dallaire #5*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 72" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 11. Gertrude Kearns, *Dallaire #6*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 84" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 12. Gertrude Kearns, *Umuganda: Bush Clearing*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 93" [max] x 180". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 13. Gertrude Kearns, *Disarmed*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 103" x 62". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 14a. Gertrude Kearns, *Mission: Camouflage*, 2002. Enamel, oil on nylon. 120" x 180". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 14b. Gertrude Kearns, *Mission: Camouflage*, 2002 [installation view]. Enamel, oil on nylon. 120" x 180". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

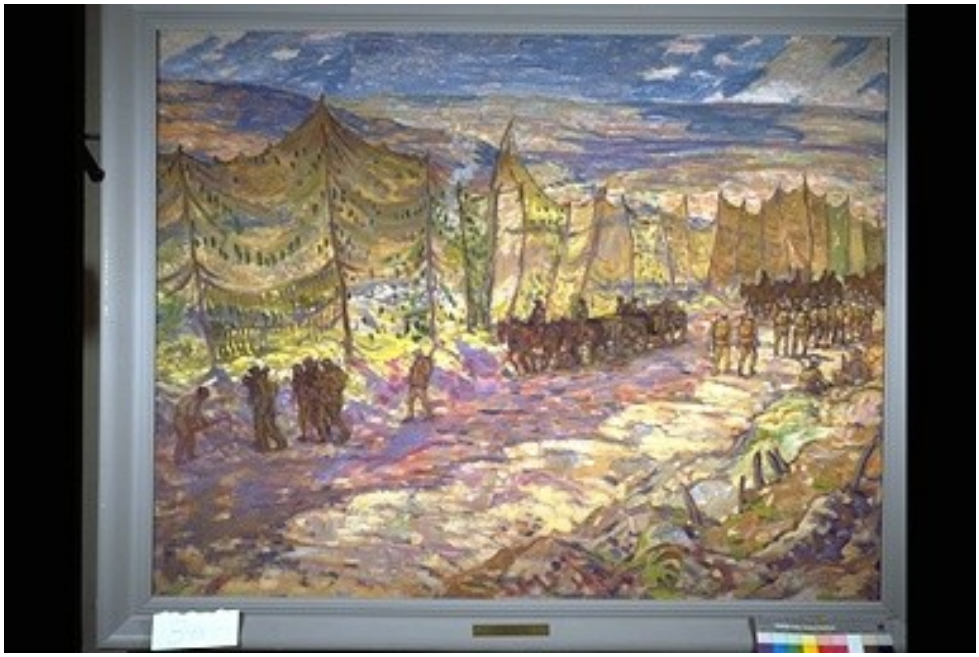

Figure 15. A.Y. Jackson, *Screened Road 'A'*, 1918. Oil on canvas. 34" x 44". Canadian War Museum, Ottawa. (http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/explore/collections/artifact-catalogue/artifact-catalogue, accessed August 10, 2011)

Figure 16. Gertrude Kearns, *MASS: Information* (preliminary study), 2001. Gouache, acrylic on paper. 86" x 52". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 17. Gertrude Kearns, *The Scream*, 2003. Enamel, oil on military stretchers. 90” x 84” x 6”. Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 18. Gertrude Kearns, *Let's Play Cricket*, 2001. Acrylic on paper. 83" x 60". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 19. Gertrude Kearns, *Scapegoat*, 2001. Acrylic on paper. 82" x 60". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 20. Gertrude Kearns, *Urgent*, 2001. Acrylic on paper. 81" x 60". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.

Figure 21. Gertrude Kearns, *Plagued*, 2001. Acrylic on paper. 79" x 60". Collection of the artist, Toronto. Gertrude Kearns.