



From
Makarenko's
Miniature
Apiary series.

PERSONAL WORK

Adam Makarenko

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Adam Makarenko is obsessed with bees. And he's the first to admit it. "I'm fascinated first by the collective intelligence of bees," the Toronto-based photographer explains. "They live in this seemingly chaotic environment, but there's really so much order."

Beyond Makarenko's long-standing interest in nature and science, his *Miniature Apiary* series also addresses his interest in humanity's exploitation and destruction of the natural world. (In case you missed the news, bee populations have declined precipitously in recent years, which threatens crops and food supplies around the world.) In this project, Makarenko created a detailed imaginary world—a "pseudo garden of Eden" he calls Langstroth Range, located in Canada's Yukon Territory. The range is home to rare flora and fauna—including giant bees—that are endangered when a man named William Bjorn moves in.

Although Makarenko, 34, visited many apiaries for his research and photographed real bees along the way, he created this series, as the name suggests, by photographing intricate miniature sets. A background in filmmaking proved essential: He relied on the use of forced perspective and other trickery (such as a translucent gel called Hampshire Frost) to create the illusion of vast distances. At first he made the miniatures in several scales himself; now he works with a film miniature-maker who creates the impressively intricate 12-inch beekeepers.

Makarenko, who works during the day at a film equipment rental firm, does much of his photography late at night in the company's large storage spaces (his landscapes can be up to six feet long). The job also gives him access to the various cameras he uses for the project, from a medium format to a point-and-shoot. "When I take a picture I'm trying to express something more like a painter does," he says. "It's more expressionistic or impressionistic."