

"Sudan: A Village Was Once Here"

2009. Bronze Relief Sculpture. 12" w x 16" h.

David Feinberg. Drawing contributions from genocide survivor Augustino Ting Mayai and artists David Harris, Ryan Rasmussen, Nicole Rodriguez, Adam Streeter, and Evelyn Lennon.

Augustino Ting Mayai was one of thousands of "Lost Boys" who were displaced during the Second Sudanese Civil War, one of the bloodiest wars the world has seen since the end of World War II. The fighting raged between the Arab-dominated North, who controlled the central government and the South whose residents are considered largely Black-African. Whole villages were often wiped from the face of the earth during the fighting. Ting Mayai represented this tragedy in "Sudan a Village Was Once Here."

When soldiers came to his village Ting was tending cattle, a common responsibility for young boys in [his culture.] He immediately became separated from his family, who had been occupied with different tasks. There is a field for cattle and goats in the lower right quadrant of the piece. The terrain of the livestock pasture is cracked; there was hardship in this village even before the War came. A path separates this area from a cornfield in the lower left quadrant; on the path a child's ball lays solitary and motionless. The ball serves as a reminder that the children were once there before they fled and were lost and of their lost childhood; its isolation also references the isolation of communities within Sudan from the Arab ruling classes. The footsteps on the path were left by the feet of the villagers escaping from the attacks.

There are three disturbances upon the earth where homes once stood. The structure left standing, in this piece, is only there in reference to what used to be there, Ting explains. In reality, the entire village was razed to the ground. Around the destroyed homes are crops that have been set aflame. For Ting, the flames also represent The Fire Within; psychological consequences of violence that can consume the survivor if that person avoids dealing with the trauma of the past. "Life is Struggle", the LIS on the top of the piece has become a motto in Ting's life. During the making of the piece those participating decided that it was an important addition and a necessity.

Now, Ting is finishing grad school and speaks to communities about his experience.