

# **"Cambodia: My Brothers"**

2009. Bronze Relief Sculpture. 14"w x 9'h.

**David Feinberg. Drawing contributions of genocide survivor Bounna Chhun, and artists Ali Abdulkadir, Bonnie Brabson, Mary George, Rachel Mosey, Rowan Pope, Ryan Rasmussen, Nicole Rodriguez, Adam Streeter, Stephanie Thompson.**

Bounna Chhun was one of the millions caught up in the murderous chaos that engulfed Cambodia in the 1970s. She and her family were forced to labor in the rice fields by the Khmer Rouge, hard-line Communist-Nationalists that controlled Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. It was the goal of this government to create an agrarian based Communist society, Bounna was taken out of the city and lead to the fields where she and thousands of other people would work.

The central image of the piece is Cambodia's largest lake, Tonle Sap. Coming out of the lake is the river followed by some in efforts to escape the fields and head back towards the city. Once they were set free people and cows alike ran, here it is depicted by the hurried footsteps that adorn all the negative space of the piece. At one point, because they were let go, Bounna's brother was able to catch a cow, which they then sold for funds to pay for transportations out of the fields. The eight figures on the top left represent Bounna's family, her mom and dad with six children. Out of those six children four brothers died during their time in the fields. Two of them were shot by some soldiers while they were on their way to the hospital since one brother had stepped on something sharp in the water. The other brother was accompanying him. The third brother was fed to the crocodiles because he was educated. Their tombs lie below the lake accompanied by their father. A rifle pointed at the two brothers who were shot. Above the lake is a crocodile and third Bounna's brother.

Bounna tells of her mother and her advice to her: "...my mother kept telling me that, don't die, don't die, I have to live." In representation of this hope of survival even after they were safe we see a tree. Its abounding foliage symbolizes life. As a last touch Bounna added the heart to portray what still connects her to her family then, even though a painful past, and that of her family now.