

Drawings and a small text from my memory

Memory of a place

A small place created by a family of farmers
Buildings made from the dirt of the land
Created for the purpose of utility and beauty

Rooms for the family, spaces for work and rest
Shelter for the animals
Spaces where light was absent
Changes in temperature and humidity

A home in the eastern part of the Sahara in Egypt, not far from the
river Nile

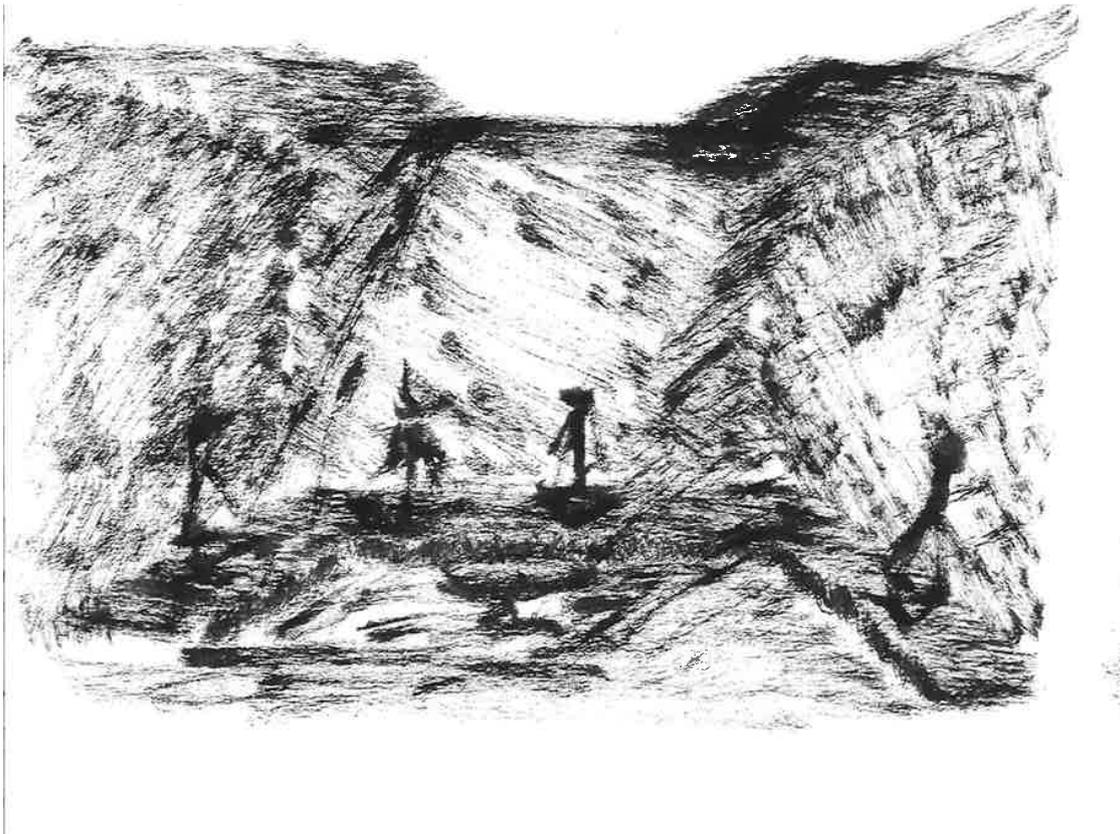
1. Dark hallway with a small window



I remember the drive to the village being extremely warm due to the lack of air-conditioning in our car. When my father and I arrived at the village where a significant part of my family lived, we stepped out of the car and met an older woman in tears of joy. She threw herself around my fathers' neck, and then mine. Though I had never met her before, I immediately knew she was family. A short moment later the rest of the family excitedly showed up and invited us in.

When we stepped into the hallway, through an old wooden door I struggled to see anything at first – My eyes needed some time adjust to the darkness of this space. There was no light – only a small window high up on the wall behind me. The contrasting feeling of stepping in from a hot and bright outside to this cold and dark room - I remember being amazing.

2. Family room, centrally lit from above



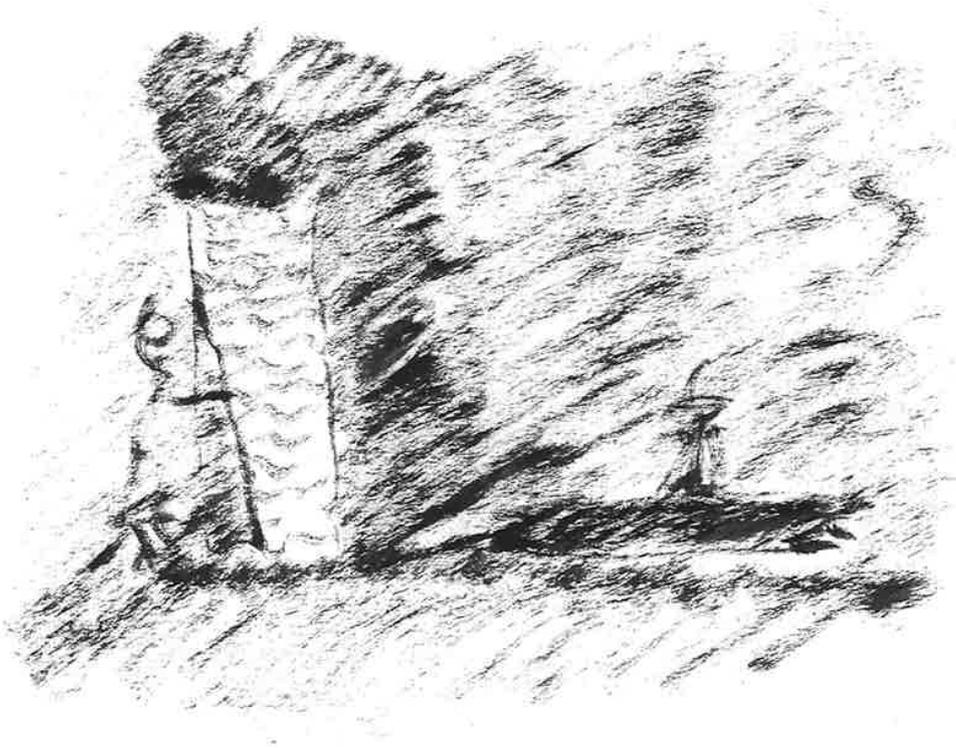
Before dinner everyone gathered in one of the family rooms – a roof terrace surrounded by walls and a canopy with a central opening where light could enter. Along the walls I remember a beautiful thick carpet on which we sat. The ambient temperature was warm, but the clay walls and the shadow created by the roof made this an enjoyable experience.

3. Tall walls for shade



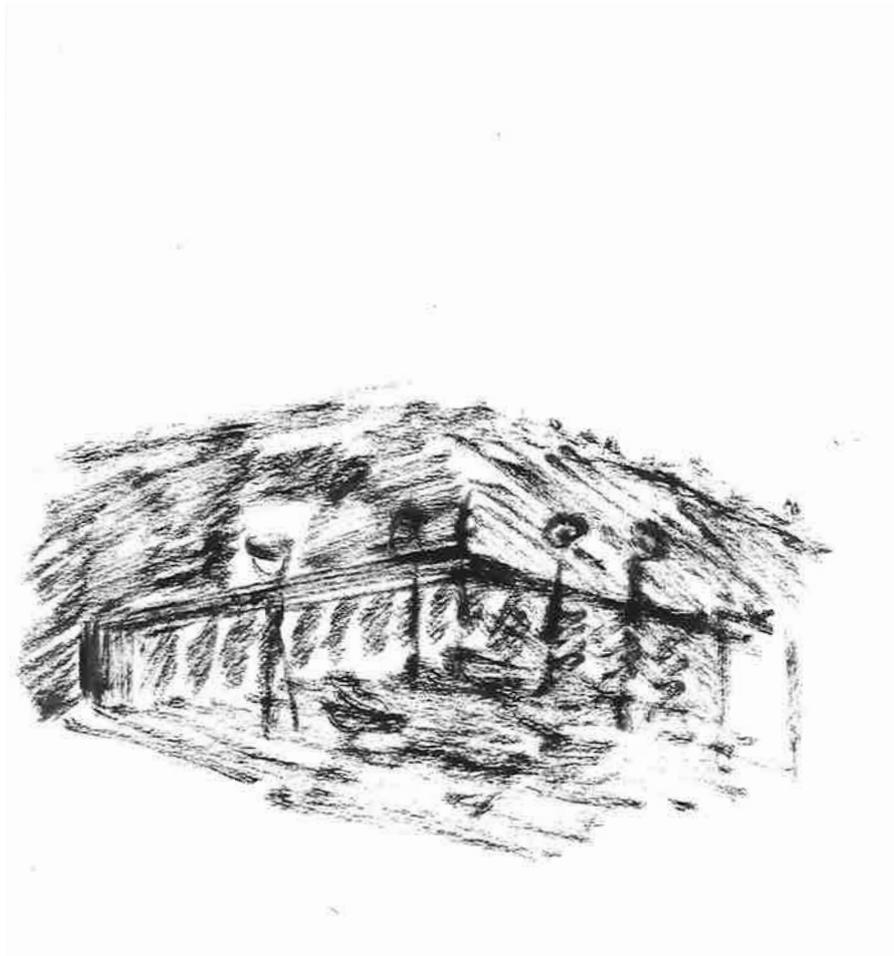
After dinner I went outside to explore the surroundings. I met some local children in the tall and narrow alleys that were cooled by a gentle breeze and covered in shade by the surrounding walls. On one of the walls someone had scribed a large rectangle as a goal. I decided to stay and play for a while.

4. Bench from clay, with a colourful carpet separating the body from



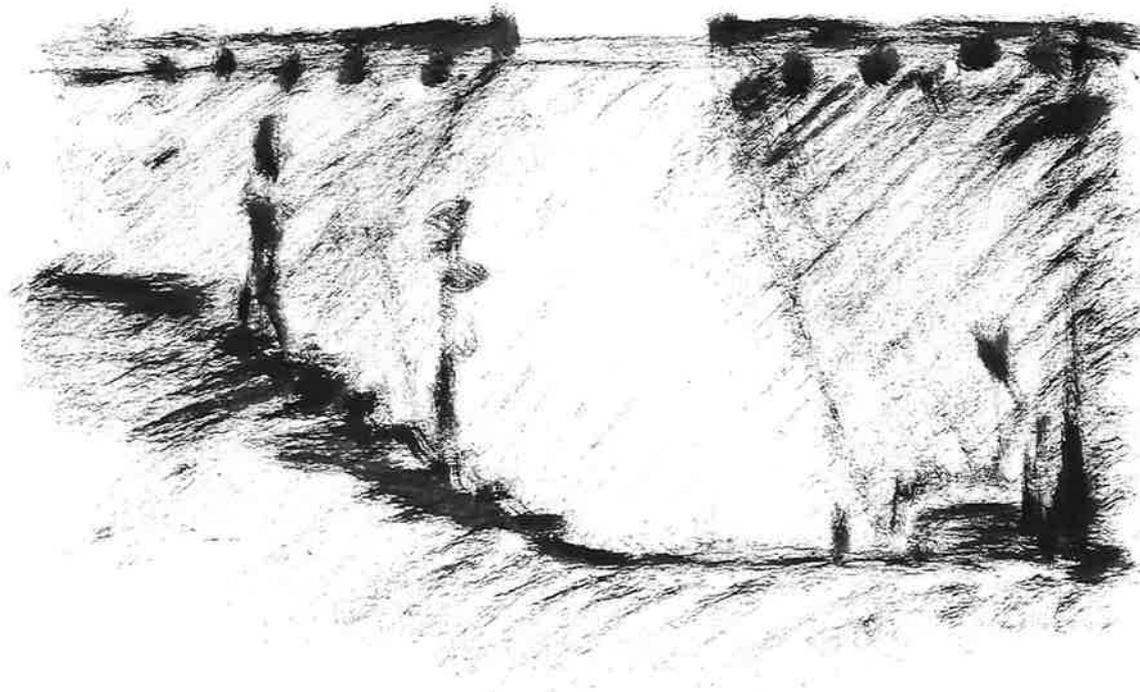
When we entered the first house, there was a dark room with a clay bench. At first, I struggled to see anything, but with some time my eyes started to get used to the darkness and adjusted. Now I could see an old man taking a nap, and between the man and the bench a thick colourful carpet.

5. Generous kitchen bench, food for the whole family



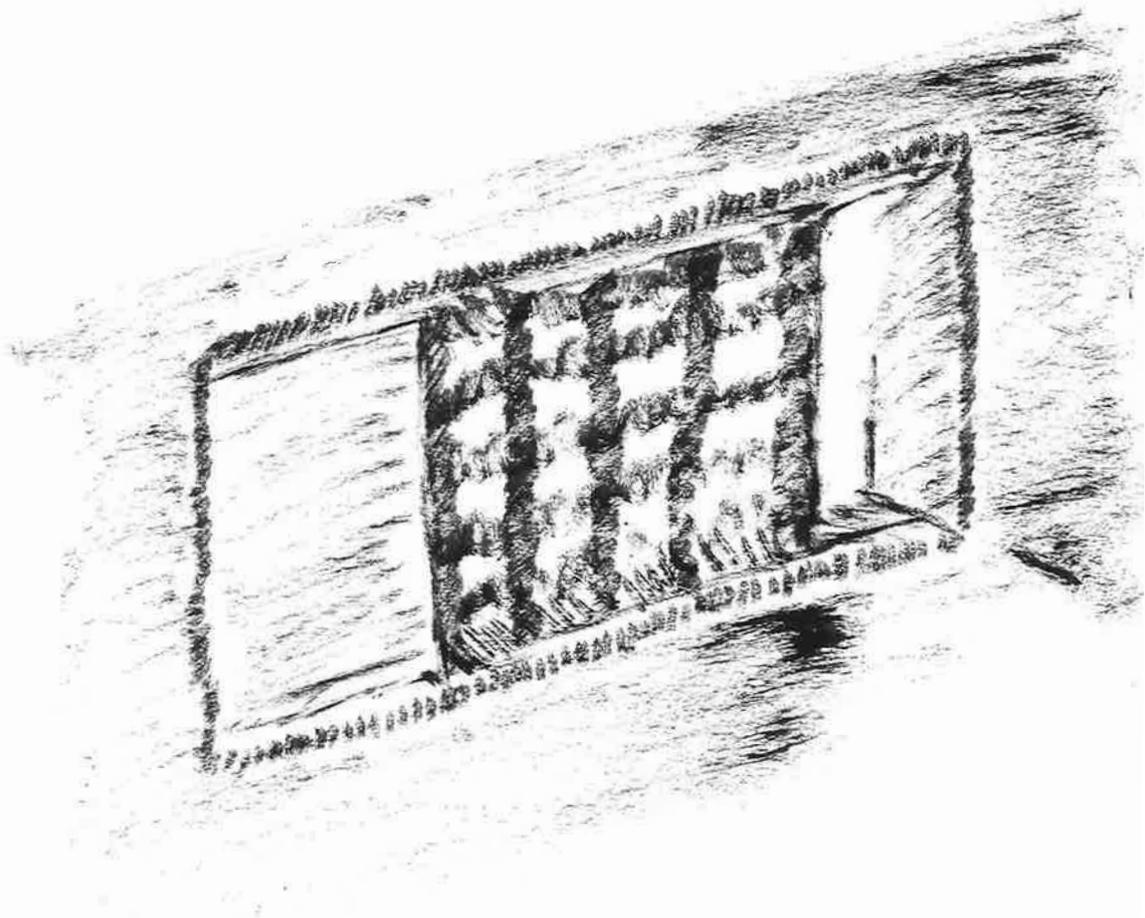
Before dinner I walked into the kitchen which was filled with a beautiful aroma of all the food that was being prepared, very outstanding was the smell of garlic – which is my favorite. The kitchen was narrow but with a disproportionately big counter filled with various vegetables and meats from the village. The women in the kitchen saw that I was curious and tried despite not speaking a word of English to explain what they were making

6. Stairs downwards – cooler atmosphere



From the roof terrace we moved downwards into a dark chamber – the only source of light was from the space we left. The feeling on the body from stepping down in to a cold and dark room after the roof terrace was an incredible feeling. And the contrast had a strong impact on my memory.

7. Low and high wooden shutters for natural ventilation



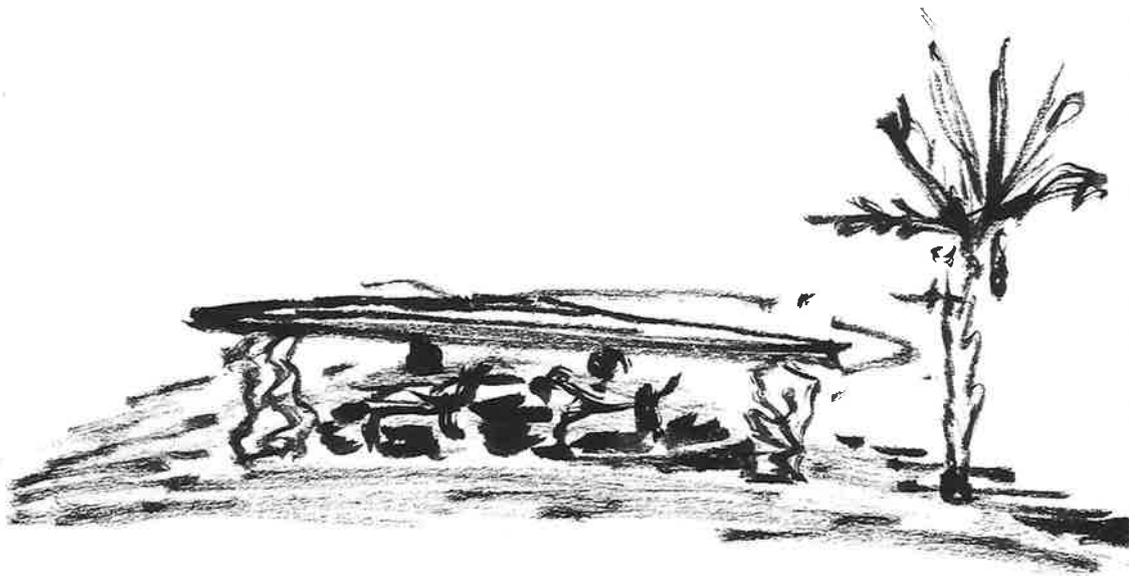
With glimpses of the outside the small shutters were used to regulate the breeze and light entering the space. Spending time in these rooms was always pleasant and at the same time different from Norway where I am used to having a nice view where there are openings in the walls.

8. Warmth by fire



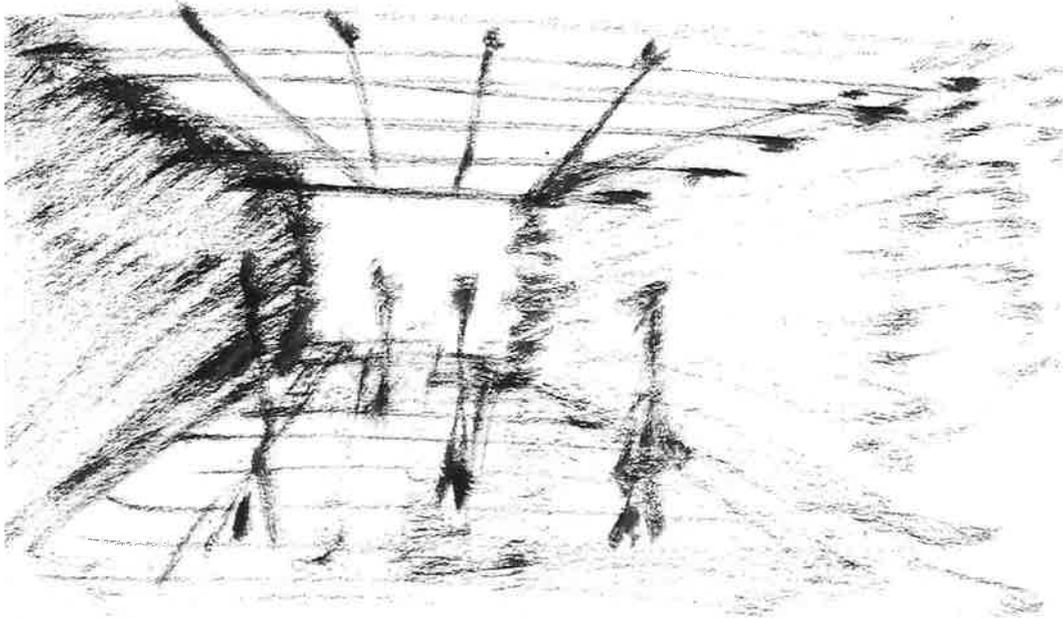
As the sun sets in the Sahara Desert the temperature drops drastically. So, we moved from the roof terrace downwards into a space for guests. Here we shared stories from our travel around Egypt and how inexpensive it was compared to Norway, while enjoying the warmth of fireplace in the corner of the room.

9. Animal shelter - stacks of rock and clay supporting a timber roof



The animal shelter was located away from the rest of the buildings, near the fields. We were showed inside by an older woman speaking Arabic. I was not able to understand what she was saying but we followed her underneath the structure. The simple yet beautiful timber roof was lifted from the ground by layers of stacked clay and stone. There were two parts underneath the roof – one part was covered by the roof only, and the other had a water buffalo enjoying the shade in a closed section.

10. Open lattice structure - shaded exterior space



At the back of the main house, we enjoyed cold drinks under a beautiful lattice structure made of wood. From here we could enjoy the view over the fields while the lattice structure provided us with shade.