

Simon Taylor

Stick Around

I loved action movies from a very small child, the sound, the explosions, the action. I wanted to be in one. I wanted to crawl through mud and break stone. I wanted to save the world.

Mozambique in 2003 was my first real experience of art. I had just been walking in the most beautiful and decrepit of tropical cities and visited the house of Malangatana - a prominent painter and poet who had studied engraving and ceramics in Europe and fought in the Mozambique Civil War. He had this wooden sculpture that was carved from the trunk of a tree - it was full of figures and faces, eyes, teeth, pregnant women and children, knives and guns, laughter and desperation - it was too much - too psychedelic for me - I didn't get it. I went out all night with a new friend from Algeria, we had a great time drinking and exploring, but we got separated. I ended up alone at 2am wandering through the city full of green leaves and orange flower cashew trees and cracked and crumbling concrete and people sleeping in the street in the humid air. Next thing I was face first into the concrete and three people were yelling and scrambling on top of me, I struggled upright and was hit by three more people and a glass bottle was smashed next to my head with the English words "Kill you!". I instinctively relaxed, the strangest of all reactions, and remaining unharmed, I was then stripped of my shirt, my shoes, my socks and all my belongings. Everything relaxed with me too and I stared up through the sea of faces and teeth and gleaming hungry eyes that devoured my material goods and I knew I was inside the old man's sculpture.

Simon Taylor will have an improvised talking performance at Y3K gallery at 7pm as part of his exhibition 'Stick Around' on Saturday 13th February.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malangatana_Ngwenya