

## **A Perilous Journey Chasing Dreams**

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This piece reflects the story of one African immigrant family. It shows a woman carrying a child and holding the hand of another child. She has dreams for her family and herself. This woman reflects the reality of most mothers setting themselves up for this grueling endeavor to make a better future for themselves and their families.

I share the migration background of my community and choose to focus on migration in this piece to highlight the arduous experience that so many endure, particularly women and children. There are several difficulties beneath the surface that are underemphasized, in addition to the cultural shifts, and perhaps personal chaos that one might encounter. There are different itineraries, involving various people from diverse backgrounds, often in dangerous and clandestine means of travel. It is a grinding experience. However, whatever the predicament, people still choose to migrate because migrating to a place with a better opportunity is one way to secure a better future.

There are several causes shared by community members as pushing people to migrate. The first is economic or self-reliance; moving to find work or follow a particular career path. Most developing countries have scarce job opportunities for their citizens. It is not uncommon to see students with degrees from reputable universities failing to secure employment for long periods of time. Often, the search for basic livelihood results in jobs unrelated to their field of expertise. As a result, people move to the (U.S.A) in search of job opportunities. Other reasons that cause many to migrate(is) are social issues, including the search for a better quality of life. Many people speak about lacking access to basic needs in their countries of origin in Africa. People move with the hope of finding better opportunities elsewhere. The most common factor influencing migration is escape from political oppression or war. In non-democratic countries restrictions on basic freedoms can cause significant narrowing of the public sphere. People escape from their countries

due to well-founded fear of persecution. They do so to survive, migrating in search of peace and the hope for a better future. There is also migration in pursuit of better educational opportunities. As a migrant myself, I came to the U.S.A to pursue higher education. My creative work aims to reflect and honor the many journeys African migrants make.

Hiwot Zegeye is a MArch student at Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). She is originally from Ethiopia. Her research interests include exploring the intersection of art and architecture and its effect on the social structure. Her intellectual development and practice are influenced by her country's cultural diversity. Ethiopia has over 80 different ethnicities and nationalities, each having their own language, art, and architectural style. Many of Ethiopia's buildings and monuments in its classic architectural style are recognized as world heritage sites. Notable examples include the Obelisk of Axum, Gonder Castles, and the Rock-hewn Churches of Lalibela. These architectural forms are more than just a representation of art and architecture produced in a particular era but are living proof of how different cultures survived time in a pristine, unadulterated manner. Hiwot loves painting, travel, meeting new people, and learning about different cultures.