



Born into Darkness

2013, mixed media, wall construction, collage, and plexiglas
23" w x 23" h x 5.5" d

Collaborative Team: Survivor Sarah Chaouat and her son, Bruno Chaouat; V2V team leads David Feinberg and Beth Andrews with artists Rowan Pope, Emily Weber, Dylan Hansen, Antony Lakey, Michele Coppin, Rachel Quast, Sabine Darling, and writer Carissa Hansen.

Sarah Chaouat was born in 1940 in German-occupied France. Her father and mother posed as Catholics while being members of the French underground. During the war, Sarah's mother sewed Resistance armbands, which is why an image of a French underground armband is pictured on the right side of the artwork with a sewing machine underneath. Oddly, the mayor of the town knew that her parents were part of the Resistance, but he didn't report what he knew even though his wife was working voluntarily as a Nazi official.

In the center of the piece, Sarah placed a fraction of her mother's picture juxtaposed next to an almost full picture of her father, making one image. Sarah felt compelled to make this artistic move because, as she says, "My father thought he was in charge but it was really my mother in charge."

When Sarah was 4 years old a German soldier kicked open the door of her home while her mother was inside sewing French Resistance armbands. Sarah approached the soldier and said, "boots, rifle, helmet, you must be a soldier." Taken with the young girl the soldier decided not to proceed with the investigation and left. Unbeknownst to her, Sarah innocently saved her entire family from torture and death. Sarah chose the WWII German soldier figurine because its pose is exactly how she remembers the real soldier.

Sarah frequently goes back to visit the town she grew up in, in an attempt to get a better understanding of what transpired there during the war.