

Sabina from Piotrkow, Lucy from Krakow

48" x 66", 2003, Acrylic, collage on canvas.

David Feinberg. Drawing and painting contributions from Lucy Smith, survivor, Sabina Zimering, survivor, and the following artists: Laura Krueger, Katie Novak, and Diane Grace Goodman. Photographs by Aviel Goodman.

The Voice to Vision project team worked with two female survivors of the Holocaust in Poland, Sabina Zimering and Lucy Smith. This was the first artwork completed. In an exercise during one of our sessions, several antique objects were placed on a table, and Sabina and Lucy were asked to pick one each that reminded them of situations that they recalled from their years in the ghetto or in hiding.

Sabina picked a sugar bowl (at the center bottom of this painting), which reminded her of her mother's sugar bowl. Food was scarce in the ghetto, and Sabina had been undernourished for many days. One night, hungry and unable to sleep, she got up and ate half of the sugar from the bowl that was the ration for the whole family. The next morning, her mother didn't say a word.

Lucy picked an antique toy streetcar that reminded her of those that she had seen in some of the towns where she was hiding. We photographed the inside of the toy streetcar, and it appears upside down at the top left hand corner of this painting.

Sabina showed us a photograph of her home at the far end of an alley in the Piotrkow ghetto, and Lucy showed us a photograph of a synagogue in her hometown of Krakow. Large copies of both photographs, Lucy's on the right and Sabina's on the left are interpreted as exploding out of the sugar bowl. Sabina painted falling bombs, mostly in red (left side of painting), while Lucy, a professionally-trained artist, painted an image of her pet chicken facing a Nazi firing squad. As scarce as food was, the chicken eventually was cooked and served to Lucy, without her knowledge. In the painting, the chicken represents Lucy herself in front of the firing squad. She was five years old when Germany attacked Poland.