



Impact Statement

Vicky Ding, Grade 10

A Light in the Dark, 2026

Acrylic, marker, pen on canvas board, 20 x 14 inches

Shin Studio, Bellevue, WA

Unsung Hero: Curt Lowens

My Unsung Hero was Curt Lowens, a Holocaust survivor, resistance member, and later an actor. I chose him because though his story is not widely known, his actions had a powerful impact on others during one of the darkest times in history. He acted with courage and compassion when it mattered the most. I find his bravery and selflessness incredibly inspiring, especially since he risked his own life to join a resistance network and saved approximately 150 Jewish children from being captured and killed during the Holocaust. I also greatly admire his resilience. Despite losing his mother during the war and experiencing persecution, he continued to move forward and build a life for himself. After the war, he immigrated to the US and became a successful actor, appearing in over 100 films and television shows.

Curt Lowens made a significant impact during World War II through his actions in the resistance. While in hiding, he worked with a network of rescuers to secretly place Jewish children with safe families. Through these efforts, those 150 children were saved from deportation and likely death. In addition to helping children, Lowens also assisted two downed American pilots, helping them avoid capture. His actions contributed not only to saving individuals, but also to the broader effort against Nazi forces. After the war, Lowens continued to make an impact by educating others. He spoke about his experiences as a Holocaust survivor, helping future generations understand the importance of remembering history and standing up against injustice. The research for this statement came from sources such as historical biographies such as the USC Shoah Foundation, and news articles that document his life and contributions.

My creation was based on the story from his past and his successes in the future, and how he passed on his knowledge through education and films. In my painting, he is looking forwards and slightly up, symbolizing his want to reach for a better future. In front of him and wrapping to the back is a film tape, symbolizing his years as an actor. On the tape, shows moments captured in time of the Holocaust and rescues performed by brave resistance workers such as Lowens. It connects his past and present, and all the impacts and successes he made throughout his life. I used acrylic paint for most of the painting, a solid and familiar medium that I felt was good for capturing Lowens' determined expression. For the film tape in front of him, I used mixed media on a paper to illustrate the rescues, which I created using paint, pen, and markers on. I glued this paper onto the canvas, and this helped create a physical effect of a film tape with the main subject. It wraps around him, creating a frame and a dynamic composition that makes you look from the portrait to the stills captured in the frames of the film tape. My use of composition and mixed media helps to tell his story and emphasize his impacts.

The different mediums also help to create a unique and dynamic look to the overall creation, making it interesting for the viewer and drawing them in.

The story of Curt Lowens has shown me how fame or power doesn't and shouldn't impact your ability to help others, and all you need is to be willing to take a stand. Because of this, I feel more motivated to speak up when something is wrong, support those who are struggling, and to take action where I can make a positive impact. Curt Lowens' experiences have also changed my outlook on resilience. Even after facing extreme hardship and loss during the Holocaust, he continued to build a meaningful life and share his story to educate others. It made me realize the importance of perseverance and using difficult experiences as a way to grow instead of giving up. Through my artwork, I hope to bring more attention to his story since Lowens is not as widely recognized as other more well-known historical figures. I want people who view my project to understand the importance of empathy, courage, and standing up for others. I plan to share my artwork in school and social media to broaden the impact of the work. I hope his story continues to inspire others the same way it inspired me, encouraging people to make thoughtful choices in their own lives to make a difference in our world.