

Impact Statement

Angelina Kimmins, Grade 12.

The Impact Of Hedy Lamarr, 2018.

Graphite on paper, 17 x 14 Inches.

Pocono Mountain West High School, Pocono Summit, PA

Unsung Hero: Hedy Lamarr

Hedy Lamarr was not merely a pretty face, she was also extremely intelligent. Hedy was a model, an actress, and an inventor. When referenced, she is often referred to as “the most beautiful woman in film”. I admire Hedy Lamarr because she was able to defy the expectations that people had of women during the time of her career by not only simply being an object of beauty for people to eye, but by being a woman who used her intelligence for the betterment of the world. I have always loved strong and smart women who defy the norm. Women like that help little girls blossom into strong women with ambition, women who do not surrender to society’s stereotype of who they should be.

Hedy Lamarr worked as a film actress starring in many films to which people were in awe of her beauty. She was first known for her role as Eva in the 1931 film *Ecstasy* where she earned international attention. Hedy acted in over 30 films during her career. A contrast between her and many other actresses of her era was the exercising of her intelligence. I admire her for not conforming to the institutionalized expectations of women during that era.

Hedy, though not born an American, chose to use her intellectual gifts to help her new home. She worked with co-inventor George Antheil in creating what was called a “Secret Communications System”, it was used during World War II to fight against the Nazis. The invention prevented the enemy from being able to intercept classified messages. Her invention was very useful during the digital communications boom and helped with the creation of Wi-Fi, cellular devices, and many other wireless communication services.

My vision for this artistic interpretation was to showcase Hedy’s beauty front and center because that was what she was most known for. Around her I included the diagram of her frequency-hopping spread spectrum invention and even included an image of her working on another invention in the corner of the composition, alluding to her continued experimental efforts. Finally, considering how she was not given recognition for her intelligence until late in her life, around the outer edge of the diagram is faded and old looking to symbolize how long it took to receive appreciation for all of her hard work.

I am an art activist. As a member of the National Art Honor Society, I am charged with using the arts to better my community and to draw attention to the visual arts. I am vocal about my artwork; I carry it with me everywhere I go while it is a work in progress and find myself talking about what I am creating with people I encounter. During the time span that I was drawing this Hedy Lamarr portrait, many people asked me about who she was. So, I have spent a great amount of time spreading awareness of this unsung hero before the artwork was even complete. Also, in a very millennial way of thinking and doing, I shared my work of Hedy and explained who she was and what she did through social media. The images are posted on

Facebook and Instagram. Considering she played an important role in the development of technology we use every day I believe this method of spreading her name honors her inventiveness. Even my little brother loves her now. He watched me draw her and I realize he is only three, but he seems to be really interested. Hedy has peaked his inquisitiveness with questions like “Who is she?” and “Why are you drawing her?” Having him grow up to appreciate what women have done for our world is going set him apart from other boys his age and allow him to teach others about the value of women.

To increase awareness of this unsung hero in my community, my Hedy Lamarr portrait will be featured at my high school in several manners. A excerpt of the above essay along with an image of the portrait are currently featured on the Pocono Mountain West High School Facebook page. During March, for Women’s History month, I will have her featured during our morning announcement TV broadcast. Over 1,800 students and 100 teachers will see this in my school. I will also prominently display the portrait along with my essay in my midterm Independent Study Art exhibit, and for the school art show that is approaching this spring. If I am fortunate enough to be chosen as a finalist in the Unsung Heroes Art Competition, my school will feature the artwork on the school district’s website, www.pmsd.org, which reaches over 10,000 students and their families. Hedy Lamarr will reach thousands of people in my community, spreading a enormous amount of awareness for her contributions.