

Impact Statement

Arianne Hernandez, Grade 12.

Breaking Barriers (More Than Just a Pretty Face), 2016.

Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 14 Inches.

Mill Creek High School, Hoschton, GA

Unsung Hero: Hedy Lamarr

Throughout my adolescence I've had a profound fascination with "Golden Age" Hollywood, so when I became interested in participating in the Unsung Hero Art Contest it was no surprise that Hedy Lamarr, the Austrian film actress, was my subject of focus. As I further researched her life and career, I became empowered by her perseverance and determinations to not only destroy the barriers set for her, but to make a lasting and positive impact in the world. Hedy Lamarr is best known as an A-list actress who was at her prime during the 1930's and 40's. Throughout her acting career, Hedy was typically type-casted as the striking seductress due to her intense and sophisticated demeanor both on and off camera. Although Hedy had secured her spot on the Hollywood A-list and lived the life she's always dreamed of, she grew bored of playing roles that required her to stand there and look pretty, she craved a challenge, a purpose. The war continued to brew and knowing the strong anti-semitic attitudes brewing from Germany's Nazi domination, Hedy quickly sent for her parents (both of Jewish decent) to live with her in the States and away from the impending danger that was now prevalent in her home town. Hedy was soon compelled to contribute to the war effort by using her passion and knowledge in applied science and ammunitions by creating a Jam-proof radio guidance system for torpedoes. This invention not only prevented the axis powers to hack into American radio waves, but also spawned the wireless movement of today. Hedy's invention not only paved the way for wifi and Bluetooth but also for women inventors as a whole.

When I picture Hedy Lamarr, I picture power, intensity, and beauty, all of which I tried to incorporate into my piece. I also wanted to tell her story in a simplistic way without overcrowding the image. I made it a priority to make her war effort the central theme of the piece by drawing a radio tower in the background as well as the Nazi flag being torn and blown away by the impact, symbolizing the overall gravity of her invention had on the war. Underneath Hedy, there are two flags: an American flag and an Austrian flag, symbolizing her patriotism to the two countries she loved dearly. In addition to her patriotism, I wanted to incorporate her Jewish heritage by having her hold a pearl necklace with the star of David. The bright, rich colors used in the sunrise again capture the passion and intensity in the piece and are there to contrast the radio tower in the background.

With my interpretation of Hedy Lamarr, I hope to spread word of her achievements and further recognize her overall accomplishments and contribution to society as a whole.