



Impact Statement

Riu Kang, Grade 9

Freedom or Death, 2026

Colored pencil, graphite, watercolor on paper, 22 x 16 inches

Korea International School, Seongnam, South Korea

Unsung Hero: Emmeline Pankhurst

Emmeline Pankhurst had the type of courage that is extremely rare, especially when it feels like the whole world is working against you. She was willing to be seen as "too much", too loud, too radical, too disruptive, if it meant that she could push forward the women's suffrage movement. Pankhurst led the Women's Social and Political Union, and unlike any other groups at the time, they didn't simply ask for a change; they demanded it. Whether it was through protests, hunger strikes, or arrests, she made women's suffrage an impossible topic to ignore. My research found that her methods were thought to be controversial, but I believe that is exactly why she got so much done in the time she had. While she argued for "deeds not words", both her deeds and words reached the hearts and minds of women across the world, encouraging them to take initiative and protest, ensuring women's suffrage became a global standard. Again, I believe it is her "controversial" methods of protesting that made her movement so distinguishable and impactful, as her philosophy of civil disobedience and turning arrests into media opportunities established a blueprint for modern activists as well.

In my artwork, Pankhurst stands in front while a hand casting a vote appears behind her. I wanted to show that the vote is not separate from her; In fact, it likely exists because of her. I wanted to use a pencil, a dull yet staple material for her, and the voting box, while using watercolor for the hand voting to suggest that while Pankhurst's fight belongs to history, its impacts and outcomes are not yet finished. To put it simply, while she may be an unsung hero, her mission continues within all of us, especially young girls and women. As for the scroll in her hand, I intended it to represent the voice and power of her words. This includes her speeches, demands, and the ideas that she stood for. The newspaper in the background represents how she utilized the media to turn her own fight into a worldwide one, one that is visible and impossible to ignore. She often used public protests and arrests to end up on the news, using it as a tactic to get media coverage, knowing that garnering public interest was the best way to kickstart an even stronger movement. Sources said that she was imprisoned 7 to 12 times, frequently released, and re-arrested. To me, this was the core of her movement. Her ability to stay persistent and grounded even when it meant that she had to sacrifice a lot of what she had, including time and strength.

The small number of people who know her see her as a figure of defiance, but I think the better word is powerful. She's one of those women who just makes you feel so proud to be a woman yourself, and to be extremely grateful for the rights you have. It feels just a tad bit ridiculous that these rights had to be fought for in the first place, but I look up to the fact that she was

extremely brave and bold in her actions, enough to make real change and movement. I am currently in NAHS, and we have an Instagram account where members can upload photos of their work. I am hoping to upload this one in hopes that more people will remember this legend and appreciate her, because not enough people do.

References:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/womens-blog/2016/mar/03/my-great-grandmother-emmeline-pankhurst-would-still-be-fighting-for-equality-today>

<https://www.theserendipityperiodical.it/2019/01/15/the-power-of-the-people/>

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/explore-the-collection/stories/emmeline-pankhurst/>