



Impact Statement

Kristen (Siqi) Cheng, Grade 8

Reflection, 2026

Acrylic, marker on canvas board, 15.5 x 11.5 inches

Real Fine Art Studio, Walnut, CA

Unsung Hero: Hedy Lamarr

"Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid." This was a famous quote from the Hollywood star Hedy Lamarr. Being considered the most beautiful woman, she faced countless challenges throughout her life. In her era, sexism was not only just a thing but was defining. It limited and defined women as there was an unspoken rule or expectation for them to follow. As for her, the stereotype was even worse. She was treated like a trophy or a doll, as men believed she was useless except for her looks. However, she was destined to prove them wrong. My Unsung Hero is Hedy Lamarr, a famous Hollywood actress who was also an inspiring scientist. I chose her because she was rarely recognized for her contributions to technology. She was mostly remembered for her film career. Like women in her era, she was being labeled for only her beauty, but she did not let that limit her abilities. Instead, she pursued her passion for science and made contributions that continue to impact the world today.

During World War II, she co-invented a frequency-hopping communication system that prevented enemy forces from jamming radio. People at that time might have thought this was insignificant, but it later became the foundation for modern technologies like Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and GPS. Beyond her technical contributions, Hedy Lamarr also had a social impact. At the time, actresses were not taken seriously in the technical field. However, she changed stereotypes and proved everyone wrong with her invention. Her story shows a person's idea could be significant even if recognition wasn't immediately made.

My artwork represented the diversity of her identity. On one side, we see a well-polished Hollywood star staring into her makeup mirror. In contrast to that, on the other side, she is working on her invention in a laboratory. In the laboratory, she looks invested and interested as the glamorous side of her looks inside the mirror longingly. This shows that science might have been her real passion if not shackled by her Hollywood film career.

Hedy Lamarr's story inspires me to look beyond appearances and value someone for their full potential. It also reminds me that you can be diverse and expand your passion or all your interests. Her story shows that someone can think outside the box and do something no one has expected. Through my artwork, I hope people realize that looks may not be what defines a person's identity. Her story shows that innovations in technology should not be limited by gender or profession, and she was one of the pioneers who promoted women's rights despite her profession. On the surface, people may not discover her true abilities, but her curiosity, intelligence, and determination made a lasting impact on the technology we still rely on today.

By telling her story through my artwork, I want to accentuate her hidden contribution, and I hope this gives her the credit she deserves. Her story will forever inspire me to break expectations and pursue my passion no matter what.