

Mieke Marple
Bad Feminist

November 9 – December 21, 2019
Reception: November 9, 5-8 pm



Ever Gold [Projects] presents *Bad Feminist*, a solo exhibition by Mieke Marple. *Bad Feminist* reflects on the ancient Greek myth of Medusa in the era of #MeToo. Taking its title from Roxane Gay's book *Bad Feminist: Essays* (2014), in which the author describes a sexual assault she experienced as a child, Marple reflects on historical depictions of women and rape in light of today's changing understanding of the power dynamics at play within society at large.

While the details of the myth of Medusa have evolved over time, in Ovid's canonical telling, Medusa, the most beautiful of her three Gorgon sisters, is raped by Poseidon, god of the Sea, in the Temple of his wife, Athena. Enraged, Athena, god of Wisdom and War, punishes the mortal Medusa, instead of her husband, turning Medusa into a half woman-half serpent with snakes for hair and eyes that turn anyone she looks at to stone. In Ovid's telling, Athena is justified in her punishment and it is Medusa's beauty, not Poseidon's lust or cruelty, that is blamed for both the rape and the subsequent violence acted against her.

Marple's paintings of Medusa are based on three canonical Italian sculptures. The first is Benvenuto Cellini's "Perseus with Head of Medusa" (1550), which features the Greek hero holding up Medusa's decapitated head as a sign of victory. The second is Gian Lorenzo Bernini's "Medusa" (1640), considered conceptually avant-garde for its time in rendering the moment Medusa is turned into a monster with pathos and humanity. The third is Antonio Canova's "Perseus with Head of Medusa" (1804), thematically similar to Cellini's though less gruesome in its details. In Marple's paintings, images of Medusa's head are layered upon backgrounds of delicate lace, floral wallpaper, and luxury brand logos in garish colors. These signifiers highlight the status of these works as decorative objects and allude to the metamorphosis of Medusa into a symbol of luxury and excess with the adoption of her severed head as the logo for the fashion house Versace. This conflation of contemporary and classical narratives serves to reinforce the importance of the myth of Medusa as an allegory still relevant today, though greatly in need of #MeToo revision.

Mieke Marple (b. 1986, Mountain View, CA) received her B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2008. She was co-owner of Night Gallery, Los Angeles, from 2011 until 2016, and has been written about by *The New York Times* and *W Magazine*, among other publications. In 2012, Marple produced the web series *Feast of Burden*, directed by filmmaker Eugene Kotlyarenko and distributed by MOCAtv. In 2014, she also co-founded the "Sexy Beast Benefit for Planned Parenthood LA," and remains on the organization's advisory board. Recent exhibitions include *[On Approval] Beta Launch* at Ever Gold [Projects] (San Francisco, 2019); *God is an Audiobook* at 1301PE (Los Angeles, 2019); *Gold Standard* at Ever Gold [Projects] (San Francisco, 2019); *The Internet Archive's 2018 Artist In Residence Exhibition* at Ever Gold [Projects] (San Francisco); and *Relocation Tarot* (2018) at Ever Gold [Projects] (San Francisco). Marple lives and works in San Francisco.