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## Camille Serisier's 'Ovid's Medusa'.

'In the performative spectacle everybody is a potential performer, from movie stars to next-door neighbours' – Sven Lutticken, 2009

Borrowing classic tales and characters from Greek mythology, Serisier's *Ovid's Medusa*, a one-night event at InHouse ARI on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, playfully engages with culturally and historically encoded gender narratives.

Upon entering the exhibition, the artist statement confronts the viewer, not on a piece of paper attached to the wall, but in the form of a filmed performance, looped on a DVD player. Reminiscent of Andrea Fraser's performance *Art Must Hang* (2001) in which the artist re-enacted, word for word, slurs and all, a drunken speech by the macho German artist, Martin Kippenberger—Serisier's statement is almost a reversal, her own words performed by a young, slightly bemused male. Serisier's explanation of political and feminist concerns within her work—including feminist revisions of historical art—are echoed by the young, stubble-chinned man. The subtle, yet at times overt, contrast of gendered language and physicality, are highlighted for the viewer, before entering the carnivalesque experience of the exhibition.

A playful cardboard set; childish, yet sleek cut outs creating simple, colourful costumes, greets the viewer in the first room. Standing in a paper sea, with cardboard fish and boats, a young woman stands wearing a headdress of snakes, (Medusa). A half-moon is worn by a young, tattooed man, who stands, beer in hand, casually conversing with his fellow cast-members—a cardboard speech bubble propped up beside him reading 'Shake it, shake it!'. At this point, both the Moon and Medusa don large cardboard penises, while another young woman walks around with a set of giant paper breasts.

While *Ovid's Medusa* also features stop-motion films, and photographs, of various altered narratives, rewritten histories where women are more than mere victims, it is the performative and interactive quality of the exhibition that is most engaging. Throughout the night, the cast on the cardboard set invite the viewers into the playful stage, swapping headdresses and cardboard genitals. The fluidity of the narrative, and interchangeability of the costumes and characters, highlights the instability of identity in both a contemporary setting, and a historical perspective. Audience members become caricatures of sex, with the cardboard genitals and speech bubbles reading gendered, pop-culture references, playing into prescribed stereotypes and tropes, while the viewers (now performers) simultaneously (unwittingly) carrying out their own, reflective or otherwise, social roles.

By Tara Heffernan.

Image courtesy of InHouse ARI.

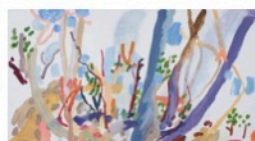
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