

Galerie Sébastien Bertrand

The Art of Medusa

Well, here we are, in a crazy, mean world ruled by stupid, greedy people. It's a chronic condition, you'd think we'd be used to it by now. Clearly, it wasn't enough that we abandoned the squares completely for the special realm called "bohemia," now nourished by romantic legacies of a nickel cup of coffee nursed all night at the automat and, still further back, breaking the furniture to use as firewood in an unheated garret. It wasn't enough that we forswore society's rule-sodden morality and the bourgeois comforts that are so alluring. Our fervor costs us dearly. *"When I am ill,"* said Henri Murger, who wrote *The Bohemians* in 1848, *"I treat my illnesses with indifference and cure them by contempt."*

Today, we gather together and marshal our bohemian animus towards our corrupt overlords with overwhelming wit and ferocity. The times demand militancy. Our special weapon is comic grotesquerie and ad hominem caricature, which can demolish the awe granted to figures of authority, and raise the spirits of the community of the good. Our laughter is therapeutic and it's energizing. As George Orwell notes, *"every joke is a tiny revolution."*

Honestly, I for one am dreaming of a mythological ending to this nightmare. My avatar is Medusa, that chthonic goddess whose serpentine gaze turns her enemies to stone. She's rock hard. Think of it. An unholy vengeful visage with real power in the world. Stronger than mere parody, more than bare uplift, the face of Medusa is the political artist's ultimate fantasy, an image that strikes down the false schemers who look upon it, an image whose effect is lethal and immediate.

We are all forced to live in the insane fantasy world of the global reactionary regime, and we fight back with the supernatural powers of art - voodoo, incantations, curses, jinxes, hexes and the withering Medusa's stare. It's a political and aesthetic imperative. For our art to be free, we must all be free.

— Walter Robinson, New York City, 10/22/2020