

# The more tongues you silence, the more they talk

by Amila Puzić

Lala Raščić's solo exhibition, *The more tongues you silence, the more they talk*, includes works created in the period 2015–2021. The exhibition presents *Evil Earth*, *EE-0*, *GORGO*, and *Poppaea's Pans*; projects that along with their time-based components are augmented by satellites of objects, drawings, prints, and installations. The site-specific installation *Poppaea's Pans* is a product of collaboration between Lala Raščić and the early music ensemble Göteborg Baroque, made purposely for this exhibition and commissioned by the Röda Sten Konsthall.

Each of the art projects is accompanied by a print that physically connects and encapsulates different thematic segments of the exhibition.

*The more tongues you silence, the more they talk* takes place at the intersection of history, ideology, contemporary feminist and literary theories, and artistic practice. The common thread of the exhibition weaves around the issue of gender division of society and the relationship between gender and power, as well as the issue of the art field in the context of production relations and the function of art.

In her work, Raščić analyzes the representation of women in classical literature, pointing to the fact that the tense and complex relationship between gender and power allows for the understanding of both the socio-historical context in which cultural content is produced, and the position and role of women in socio-political hierarchy. By re-interpreting and re-enacting selected ancient myths the artist examines the limited rights of women to speak and act in the public sphere. In this respect, she observes the mechanisms of silencing women embedded in the Western cultural matrix operating on the principle of excluding women from centers of power.

Cultural anthropology and contemporary archeology offer theoretical foundation for exploring these issues and for understanding Raščić's exhibition as a counter-cultural narrative constructed around the issues of production, exposure, and reception of art.

In the exhibition, the issue of artistic production is further split into the study of the relationship between production of art during the time of cognitive capitalism and traditional craft production, on the one hand, and the questioning of women's work in relation to characteristic political and socio-economic conditions, on the other.

Raščić connects the matter of exposure and reception of art with a critical analysis of the canon of art history from the feminist perspective. In this regard, the artist raises the question of the way women are represented in art history, insisting on the fact that women are historical subjects, and that it is necessary to break with deep-seated patterns of their representation as mythological beings or timeless muses whose appearance is based on a transhistorical paradigm.

All these phenomena are connected by the issue of temporality – in the mythological and historical experience of the time – which is crucial for comprehension of exhibited works whose function outcome reflects in the participatory-collective experience in reception of art, as well as in democratization of the artistic field.

### Gender and power: *Poppaea's Pans*

The nature of power is the question that is at the heart of the newly produced installation *Poppaea's Pans*. The work combines the round, handmade copper baking pans (*tepsija*)<sup>1</sup> with kinetic mechanisms and a spatialized audio installation that includes a performance of sections from Monteverdi's opera *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (*The Coronation of Poppea*).

The thematic frame of the work was determined by the collaboration with Göteborg Baroque started in 2019. The departure point of the research process was analysis of the content of the libretto *L'incoronazione di Poppea* by Giovanni Francesco Busenello, which Monteverdi used as a basis for composing his opera, which premiered in 1642.<sup>2</sup> The reason for taking such a research direction lies primarily in the features of the text itself, which deals with historical, not mythological, ancient characters. Consequently, they were a foundation on which the first historical opera was created. At the heart of the libretto are historical figures: the Roman emperor Nero, his mistress – the future wife and Roman empress Sabina Poppaea, Claudia Octavia – the empress of Rome and Nero's wife, and Stoic philosopher Seneca, among others.

As musicologist and critic Ellen Rosand writes, the opera *L'incoronazione di Poppea* is most often interpreted as a triumph of passion and a defeat of reason. While warning that this triumph is illusory and the defeat temporary, Rosand believes the opera assumes a special significance and responsibility that goes beyond the boundaries of a fictional plot.<sup>3</sup> This fact served as a key motivation in envisaging a central theme of *Poppaea's Pans*: the relationship between gender and power. In the libretto, that relationship is built around Seneca's personality that symbolizes the embodiment of morality and ontological power. Seneca appears only twice in the libretto, in two separate scenes: in the middle of the First Act and at the beginning of the Second Act.<sup>4</sup>

Although he dies at the beginning of Act Two, his death is, as Rosand remarks, crucial to triggering the climax of the plot. While alive, Seneca influences other characters by suppressing their immoral actions. After his death, the entire “moral fabric” of this world surfaces: all actors plan to carry out their design, or attain the desired goal, or reach the object of desire.<sup>5</sup>

The line that Seneca utters in the middle of the Act One: “The more tongues you make silent, the more they will talk”,<sup>6</sup> was used for the title of the exhibition, while the scene at the beginning of the Act Two – before his suicide – was used as one of the key elements in the sound content of the work *Poppaea's Pans*. In Raščić's work, the emphasis in the latter scene is placed on the text itself, which is sung by Seneca's family and friends, but equally on the melodic aspect of one of the most dramatic moments of the opera.

In the words of Rosand, Monteverdi's musical interpretation of Busenello's refrain, uttered pleadingly by Seneca's followers: "Non morir, Seneca, no" ("Do not die Seneca, no")<sup>7</sup>, gives the verse an unexpected gravity through repetition and performance in three-part polyphony. By repeating the single-line refrain, Monteverdi emphasizes Seneca's positive attitude towards death, thus reaching a climax in the plot.<sup>8</sup> This moment encapsulates (in terms of content and performance) the complete downfall and moral perversion that will ensue and serves as one of the foundational aspects in the conception of the installation *Poppaea's Pans*. In addition to putting emphasis on the relationship between realpolitik and symbolic power, a number of other questions are opened, like the one related to the nature of the power of wealth and love, and, connected to that, the question of the apparent acquisition of power appropriated by Sabina Poppaea at the end of the libretto. As she acquires a desired social position and power of the Empress, both in the opera and according to historical fact, Poppaea becomes Nero's victim while in the late stage of pregnancy, just a few years after her actual coronation. As a result, her emancipation – in real, historical time – becomes annulled by the escalation of domestic violence.

In connection to this historical fact, Raščić points out that fiction represents only a fracture between history and literature, allowing temporarily the gap to be filled, i.e. the emancipatory potential that repositions a woman from the marginal to the semi-central position to be activated. Consequently, the artist reflects on how power excludes and includes the woman, her word, and her body.

The second segment of *Poppaea's Pans* artistic concept rests on that issue. It manifests in the translation of one cultural practice – opera as a civilizational epitome into a low cultural form – the folklore artistic practice *tepsijanje* (singing along with the pan). Apart from the historical and cultural sense, Raščić expands her research in the geopolitical sense, taking as an example a simple and insufficiently researched folklore practice that appeared in the South Slavic cultural context. While focusing on the legacy of this practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been passed down from generation to generation as part of the oral tradition, the artist analyzes the female narrative through singing along with the pan.

The very practice of singing along with the pan originated within a patriarchal society in which the role of women was limited to the sphere of the home and domestic work. Since women were forbidden to play a musical instrument (and generally engage in music and art in public) they turned their daily chores in the home into a creative practice: after baking a pie – a traditional Bosnian dish – they would use an empty round pan as an idiophone instrument to sing along with.

According to musicologist Jasmina Talam, women's practice within the musical tradition in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be perceived as a reflection of the life circumstances of women in a patriarchal society. Strict moral and religious standards, isolation, and inferiority imposed by tradition did not take into account musical creativity, nor the value of their artistic expression.<sup>9</sup> Pronounced gender and generational ambivalence was crucial for the development of a specific, so-called, lyrical female repertoire.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the repertoire of married women was notably related to their new familial and social function.<sup>11</sup> Women's difficult economic situation and their social position resulted in an

engaged struggle for emancipation, “a room of their own”,<sup>12</sup> in which they had the opportunity to unleash their creativity and develop their own vocal practice.

Raščić recognizes the emancipatory potential of this artistic practice of singing along with the pan. By bringing it to the surface and juxtaposing it with the high cultural practice of opera, she emphasizes the existential need of women to speak about the problems that plagued them, and points out the urgency to express their creative potential. With the example of the practice of singing along with the pan, the artist shows that throughout history women have faced the same problems in patriarchy: social and economic exploitation, sexual discrimination, domestic violence, among many other problems.

The artist connects the issue of oppression of women, especially in the context of domestic/reproductive work, with the process of artistic production that determines the value and meaning of her work. One can say that Raščić, relying on the reflections of Silvia Federici who believes that the roots of oppression of women cannot be considered within transhistorical cultural structures independent of the production process and class,<sup>13</sup> links the democratization of opera to socio-productive relations and the manufacturing function of art. In other words, her work points to an unbreakable relationship between the problem of oppression of women and the problem of (artistic) production in historical continuity.

*Poppaea's Pans* opens up the questions of reproduction of the labor force, unpaid domestic labor, and domestic violence in different historical and cultural practices in Monteverdi's opera and singing along with the pan. It also draws attention to the issue of artistic production as a creative practice: the production of objects which are the authentic craftwork of coppersmith Nermina Beba Alić.<sup>14</sup>

In this regard, one of the main questions addressed in this exhibition is the following: does it make sense to produce even more art at the time of cognitive capitalism, and if so, what are the possible ways of production which are not based on additional exploitation but rather on participation, and which do not exclusively intellectualize but democratize artistic production?

When Raščić's highly aesthetic and media-rich practice is laid bare, the basis of her work process and work ethic – founded in collective-collaborative “bottom-up” work and participation – emerges. In the absence of space to go into all individual segments of her working procedure, it is important to reflect on the collaborative aspect of the production the artist developed with Alić in previous years, while working on *GORGO*, and which she continued as part of the production of *Poppaea's Pans*. Apart from being the only woman coppersmith who puts focus on the female function in production, Alić's coppersmithing is one of the last pillars of support in the survival of this ancient craft in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By including the art of coppersmithing in her artistic procedure, Raščić shows that she does not count only on the (self)satisfaction of the aesthetic function of an art object used for exhibiting, but also on the return of artistic production to its source: to the heart of traditional craft production based on creative participation of female artisans in the production process. The artist thus confirms

one of the most convincing theses in art history, stated by William Morris, which says that art, including crafts and not only high art, should be an expression of one's joy in labor.<sup>15</sup>

Morris' words, of course, cannot be literally applied to today's production system. However, their universal meaning remains relevant, and it is directly related to the basic principle of Raščić's practice which sees the function of art in return to the source of artistic production, to the pleasure of workmanship as such, and, ultimately, to the enjoyment in its final product. It is important to emphasize that this is not about an imposed aestheticization of craftwork, nor it is about its exoticization or commercialization, which is often seen in the field of contemporary art, but it is about the organic consolidation of artistic and craft production. In this way, social and class issues, equally relevant in the past and the present, are consolidated with feminism.

#### First-person speech: *GORGO* and *EE-0*

Art projects *GORGO* and *EE-0* build on the issue of democratization of art and exhibiting policy that does not see art just as machinery for the reproduction of things but as a space for a different interpretation of established cultural narratives. Although different in terms of content and performance, these works are connected by a common theme of re-interpretation and re-enactment of ancient myths from the feminist perspective. In these works, the artist tackled one of the first recorded examples of oppression of women in the history of European culture. By focusing on two prominent ancient myths: the myth of Medusa<sup>16</sup> and the myth of Arachne,<sup>17</sup> Raščić deals with ways of silencing women, which culminated in women's exclusion from power, as a normative practice in Western history.

As Mary Beard writes, Western culture has a thousands of years record of silencing women. Their silencing was carried out in several ways – from verbal admonition by men warning women that them speaking in public was not appropriate, through the physical removal of their tongues, to the fact that women were simply not taken seriously. Claiming that this trend can be traced back to Antiquity, whenever male authority was threatened, Beard writes that the archetype of Medusa has emerged repeatedly to illustrate how large a danger powerful women pose to society.<sup>18</sup>

The myth of Medusa fascinated the West long after Antiquity: from the Middle Ages, through the Renaissance, the story of Perseus and Medusa has most often been presented as a Christian allegory of the victory of virtue over vice. Medusa returns with “special force” in Baroque art: her fearsome physiognomy is immortalized in the prominent works of Caravaggio (1596–1598) and Rubens (1617–1618).<sup>19</sup> It is important to point out that, before the Renaissance period, artists used the image of Medusa to ward off evil spirits – an apotropaic symbol. In the essay *Medusa and the Real*, Hal Foster writes about the role of the apotropaic transformation of Medusa, “from gaze-weapon to reflection-shield”, being at the heart of the myth itself.<sup>20</sup>

Foster interprets the first apotropaic transformation as “arresting” the gaze: “capturing” the image of Medusa in the mirror of the shield.<sup>21</sup> This transformation, Foster continues, marks the first act of mimesis: reflection as representation.<sup>22</sup> The second instance of representation also requires an

apotropaic transformation in order to “capture” the viewer in return: placing of the severed head of Medusa on the apotropaic aegis of Athena–Gorgoneion, whereby Athena inherits part of Medusa's power. Perseus, therefore, must overpower Medusa in order to realize his heroic identity, while Athena must transform Medusa into a monster in order to realize her civilizational function. According to Foster, in most prominent Western interpretations this point represents the core of reading and understanding of the function of the myth of Medusa.<sup>23</sup>

As observed by Foster, the paradox of Medusa reflects in the fact that no one can look at her, and at the same time her face is exposed everywhere in Greece: on clothes, jewelry, coins, furniture, etc.<sup>24</sup> It is equally important to note that Medusa, with her appearance, transgresses the gender division. She embodies a gender hybrid, being sometimes represented with a beard, with a stiffened tongue like a penis, or with her face depicted as genitals – both male and female – transformed into a mask, and so on.<sup>25</sup>

In *GORGO*, Raščić is critical of the said principles of representation. The artist contrasts the debasing of the role and significance of Medusa through multiplication on everyday objects and her commodification with the unique production of *GORGO'S Armor*<sup>26</sup> and fragmentation of her physiognomy in the installation *The Dig*, a series of light objects. Simultaneously, by re-interpreting and re-enacting the myth Raščić seeks to decolonize the deep-seated apotropaic representation.<sup>27</sup>

Raščić's *GORGO* offers one of the possible answers on the transformative potential of Medusa's power: by subverting the male gaze through dressing in armor and constantly playing with its parts, including undressing breastplate, putting on and removing a mask, recurring changes of pose, among other actions, Raščić makes it impossible for the spectator to set a woman in a unique and permanent identity. Therefore, the process of politicizing the female body that resists being “captured” again on the shield of the Western patriarchal canon can be interpreted in this work as a broader critique of the representation of women in the history of Western art.

The video work *EE-0* also offers a critical reading of myths from the feminist perspective, combining elements of ancient culture (the myth of Arachne) and the South Slavic folk custom (the traditional ritual make-up of a bride named Nusa, which originates from Muslim villages in Kosovo).

Raščić treats myth as a descriptive and dissectible practice. This conclusion is based on Roland Barthes' thesis that myths are by no means omitted from history and opposed to it, but instead represent a type of speech that is either filled with or depleted of ideological charge, depending on the historical moment.<sup>28</sup> From this can be distilled the essence of *EE-0*, which, through mythical discourse, questions the topic of giving a voice to women in public discourse.

The artist constructs her critical counter-narrative, more precisely the alternative myth of Arachne, on the fact that in antiquity women were allowed to speak publicly only in exceptional situations – when they were victims or martyrs or if they spoke on behalf of other women, but never on behalf of the whole society. This was also the case in the context of the patriarchal South Slavic society, where women were not allowed to speak publicly: “Nusa is to be silent”, Raščić was told during her

field research. Likewise, one of the most striking lines in the work is the narrator's struggle to gain her voice, which is manifested by an angry hiss pronouncing: "Let me speak".

In the work, the emancipation that Arachne acquires through language is visually staged in her physical emancipation, more precisely in the transformation into a cyborg that transgresses gender-based social divisions. The category of woman here no longer fits into the oppressive categories of ancient discourse, nor into the patriarchal discriminatory matrix. Surmounting the boundaries of nature and culture, and the topic of transhumanism introduced at the end of *EE-0* opens up the space for interpretation of *Evil Earth*, the last project in the show to be discussed here.

Exposing vs. viewing: *Evil Earth*

*Seeing becomes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.  
The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.*<sup>29</sup>

The video essay *Evil Earth's Notebook* belongs to a larger project that includes a series of spatial objects/installations. By shifting focus from a global to planetary perspective, the work treats the representation of landscapes in contemporary optics.<sup>30</sup> *Evil Earth's Notebook*, broadly speaking, examines the politics of perceiving the earth using new technologies.

Through speaking of the beginning and end of the world, Raščić expands the horizon of her research beyond the artistic field, shifting the focus to phenomena that occur at the intersection of art, science, and technology. At the level of reception of the work, this fact is related to the use of new technologies (the experience of visibility and spatial factors), while in the sense of production it is related to avant-garde working procedures (the problem of constructive principles and the abandonment of perspective).

Both segments of the work are constructed around the fundamental challenge which preoccupies the artist: how to eliminate the conceited hegemony of a West-centric worldview built on the laws of linear perspective? The artist is equally preoccupied with the objective limitations of omnipresent "aerial views" which, thanks to the new technologies, replace the human with the God's-eye view.

In the study *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger addresses an ideological critique of the art history field, basing it on the study of the politics on viewing Western artistic and cultural canon.<sup>31</sup> Berger criticizes, in particular, the sexual objectification of women in European painting by emphasizing that men look at art while women – as the subjects of art – are looked at.<sup>32</sup>

By insisting on the fact that the way we see things is determined by the historical causality between the past and the present, as well as on the fact that we see only what we look at and never look at just one thing, but rather the network of relationships between things and ourselves, Berger points out that the way we see is conditioned by what we know or believe in.<sup>33</sup> He connects this fact with the rationalization of the invention of the linear perspective which arranges the visible world for the spectator as the universe was once arranged for God.<sup>34</sup>

In studying the subject, the artist somewhat relies on the essay *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective* by Hito Steyerl. Analyzing prominent Renaissance paintings, Steyerl writes that linear perspective – although empowering to the individual subject by placing it at the center of a field of vision – undermines simultaneously its individuality, subjecting it seemingly to the laws of objective representation. In Steyerl's words: “[...] linear perspective becomes a matrix for racial and religious propaganda, and related atrocities. This so-called scientific world view helped set standards for marking people as other, thus legitimizing their conquest of the domination over them”.<sup>35</sup> By justifying itself with ultimate science, this worldview was a tool in the hands of Western domination denounced by Raščić.

The second issue treated by *Evil Earth's Notebook* concerns a complete twist in our sense of temporal and spatial orientation influenced by new technologies. The twist is based on a paradox emphasizing not only the galloping sense of omnipotence over the earth, thanks to satellite imagery, Google Maps, and similar views of the earth, but also the “shakiness of the ground” under our feet in relation to the real distance from it. In Steyerl's words: “just as linear perspective established an imaginary stable observer and horizon, so does the perspective from above establish an imaginary floating observer and an imaginary stable ground”.<sup>36</sup>

“Freefall” towards cosmic, planetary space, in *Evil Earth's Notebook*, can be interpreted, in terms of production, as a reconstruction of an avant-garde working procedure by which the field of art is extended to the field of science and technology.<sup>37</sup> Thus, for example, Kazimir Malevich's Suprematist and Constructivist principles in art, especially his drawings of architectural motifs and planets, as well as the broad Suprematist vision of the development of space technology, can be linked to the abstract study of landscape in *Evil Earth*: an abstract approach in the analysis of subject phenomena such as landscapes, mountains, and other natural phenomena are evident in the corresponding series of art objects installations. The working procedure of *Evil Earth* also reveals the Constructivist principles of production: the transformation of imaginary, abstract spaces into the production of spatial objects. In other words, going beyond the border of an artistic painting/object toward architecturally modeled objects/installations.<sup>38</sup>

Collectivist approaches in looking at and experiencing an exhibition, created under the influence of Constructivism, find their place in contemporary artistic practices that aspire to a social function. Related to that is one of the main features of the Constructivist principle – the possibility of repeated deconstruction and construction of an artwork through the participation of spectators. The abstract artist understood the visible world as no longer exposed to a sole view, but to the totality of possible views in relation to the point of view from which the artwork is looked at. Likewise, Raščić, by activating the audience in a physical sense, counts on the variety of perspectives in relation to the total, dynamic experience of the entire exhibition.

Experiencing an exhibition can be perceived as a social act that embodies the function of mediation as a two-way street: from an exhibition to audience, and from audience to an exhibition. The basis of the mediation function – to be, to see, to hear, to experience – has changed significantly during the time of the pandemic, together with the conditions of work and production. Therefore, the

aforementioned Berger's essay is perhaps becoming, more than ever, relevant in questioning the way we perceive the presented content. During the time of the pandemic, the dissemination of art through social networks has exceeded formal-institutional and spatial-geographical boundaries. Is this fact proportional to the democratization of the artistic field or does it actually mean even greater exploitation of already diminished human resources that are burdened by the slow grind of art institutions, themselves tired and weighed down by the continuous proliferation of responsibilities and accountabilities? The exhibition in front of us will discuss this point, among many other topics, during its (presumably) predominantly online mediation.

Until then, on the road to a new and better normal, the message of this exhibition is clear: the more tongues you silence, the more they talk about the burning issues of economic and social inequalities, oppression, injustice, natural disasters, racism, xenophobia, and about all other forms of violence against nature and humans. Freedom implies one thing: a constant struggle for freedom.

*Translation by Aida Čengić*

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<sup>1</sup> In Bosnian *tepsija* means baking pan.

<sup>2</sup> The first performance of the opera took place at the Teatro Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice during the 1642 carnival season.

<sup>3</sup> Rosand, Ellen, "Seneca and the Interpretation of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*", in: *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (1985) 38 (1): 34–71, pp. 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50.

<sup>6</sup> The First Act, Scene 9.

<sup>7</sup> The Second Act, Scene 3.

<sup>8</sup> Rosand, 1985, pp. 69.

<sup>9</sup> Talam, Jasmina, "Narration through song as part of the female traditional musical expression in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Conference: *Women as bearers of Folk Music practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Volume I, Sarajevo, January 2015, not paginated.

<sup>10</sup> Philologist Vuk Karadžić made the first comprehensive undertaking in collecting and publishing oral cultural tradition of the South Slavs. Although the Orthodox Church was the only source of institutionalization and continuity of high culture in the Serbian lands for almost five centuries during Ottoman rule, folk songs remained a reservoir of mass culture of traditional language, pictorial symbols, and themes. In 1814 and 1815, Karadžić published two collections of oral poetry, with the help of Slovenian Jernej Kopitar. The first one mostly contained lyric poetry ("women's songs", as Karadžić called them), while the second one consisted mostly of some of the most exciting heroic songs that Karadžić collected. See: Wachtel, Andrew, *Making a Nation, Braking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia (Cultural Memory in the Present)*, Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Talam, 2015, not paginated.

<sup>12</sup> Paraphrase of Virginia Woolf's classic *A Room of One's Own* (1922).

<sup>13</sup> Federici, Silvia, "Preface", in: *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, Text anti-copyright@Silvia Federici, 2004, pp. 7.

<sup>14</sup> The artist collaborated with Nermina Beba Alić during the making of armor: *GORGO'S Armor* in the *GORGO* project.

<sup>15</sup> Originally, Morris took over the thesis from Ruskin. In: Morris, William, *O umjetnosti i socijalizmu*, Zagreb: BLOK, 2019, pp. 74.

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<sup>16</sup> There are several versions of the myth of Medusa. According to Greek mythology, Medusa was one of the Gorgons, a monstrous woman who turned people to stone. Around 8 BC, Ovid first records an alternative version of her origin in his *Metamorphoses*. According to him, Medusa was once a beautiful young girl, the only mortal of the three Gorgona sisters. Her beauty attracted the attention of Poseidon, god of the sea, who raped her in the temple of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and crafts. Enraged by this sacrilege, Athena turned Medusa into a monster whose gaze turns people to stone. The more popular versions of this myth focus on the events that followed, in which Perseus plays a central role. The young demi-god was sent by Polydectes, the king of Seriphos, to bring him the head of Medusa. Perseus used his bronze shield as a mirror so Medusa would not petrify him, and then beheaded her and thus freed the winged horse Pegasus. The head later ended up on the shield of goddess Athena. Through this phallogocentric heroic narrative, Medusa is immortalized as a monster.

<sup>17</sup> The script for the video *EE-0* is based on the myth of Arachne, the main heroine of the Greek, and later Roman, mythology, also known from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. In short, the myth portrays Arachne as a talented mortal, daughter of Idmon, who challenged Athena to a weaving contest. Since she was not able to find flaws in the tapestry Arachne had woven, Athena became enraged and turned Arachne into a spider condemned to weaving for eternity. The unfortunate woman gave name to 8-legged creatures – arachnids.

<sup>18</sup> See: Beard, Mary Beard, *Women and Power: A Manifesto*, London: Profile Books 2017. See also: Kelly, Joan, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?”, in: *Women in European History*, (ed.) Renate Bridenthal and Clandia Koonz, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977.

<sup>19</sup> Kayser, Wolfgang, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, Indiana University Press, 1963, pp. 188.

<sup>20</sup> Foster, Hal, “Medusa and the Real”, in: *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 44, Autumn 2003, pp. 181.

<sup>21</sup> It refers to Perseus' shield.

<sup>22</sup> Foster, 2003, pp. 181–2. See also: Vernant, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Vidal-Naquet, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Princeton: Zone books, 1988, pp. 191–192.

<sup>23</sup> Foster, 2003, pp. 182.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Vernant, 1988, pp. 190–195.

<sup>26</sup> The armor was made by Alić.

<sup>27</sup> Foster poses an important question regarding what exactly is the power of Medusa: “It seems absolutely other, but it also involves a ‘crossing of gazes’, and so this power must stem from us somehow. ‘It is your gaze that is captured in the mask’, Vernant insists; ‘what the mask of Gorgo lets you see, when you are bewitched by it, is yourself, yourself in the world beyond, the head clothed in night, the masked faced of the invisible that, in the eye of Gorgo, is revealed as the truth about your own face’”. In: Foster, 2003, pp. 182. See also: Vernant, 1988, pp. 137–138.

<sup>28</sup> Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989, pp. 109.

<sup>29</sup> Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin Books, 1972, pp. 7.

<sup>30</sup> For her conceptual and formal starting point, the artists took a landscape of New Orleans where she had lived and worked for years.

<sup>31</sup> The study was based on the BBC series of the same name produced in 1972.

<sup>32</sup> In the essay “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators” (1997) bell hooks argues that Black women are placed outside the “pleasure in looking” by being excluded as subjects of the male gaze. See: bell hooks, “The Male Gaze and the Oppositional Gaze”: [womenandmediafa2012.blogspot.ca](http://womenandmediafa2012.blogspot.ca). (January 4, 2021).

<sup>33</sup> Berger, 1972, pp. 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Hito Steyerl, *In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective*. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/> (January 4, 2021).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> The term “construction” comes from numerous associations connected to language, progress in science, technology, and industry, and from creation of the new social reality.

<sup>38</sup> See: <https://lalarascic.com/portfolio/evil-earth-2015/>