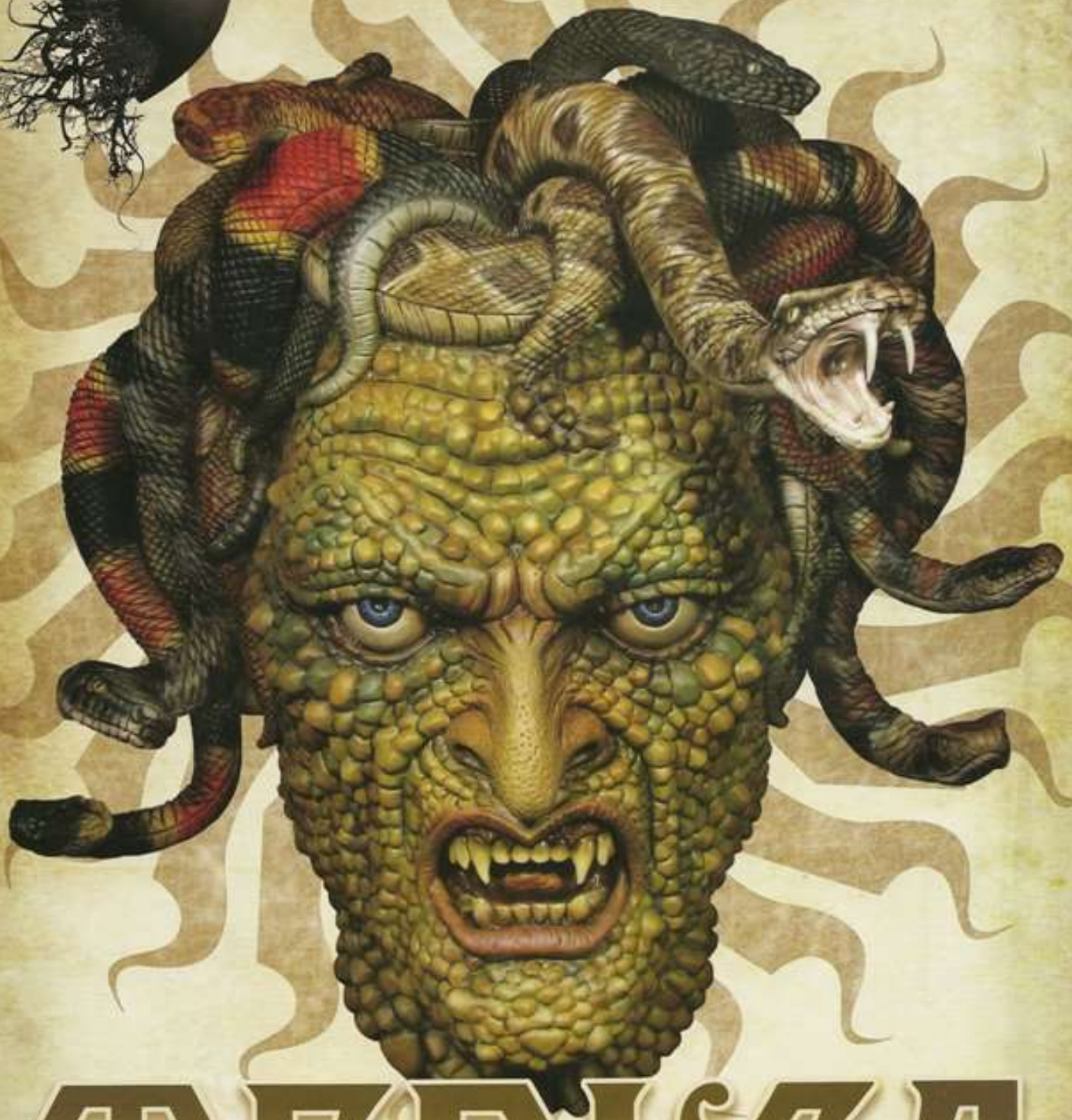


Black Heart Enterprises



MEDUSA

Medusa sculpture by Joe Simon; molding and casting by Earthbound Studios; Black Heart Enterprises™ logo by Steve Parke; profile layout by David Fisher; Medusa buildup by Steve Riojas.

MEDUSA PROFILE



The graphic novel
Medusa's Daughter, by Steve Parke.



2nd Century Mosaic at Madrid's
Nat'l Arch. Museum



Cellini's Perseus with
the Head of Medusa

Michelangelo Caravaggio's
Medusa (1597).



The mythological monster, Medusa, has been featured in art and culture from the days of ancient Greece to modern times. She has been variously portrayed as a monster, a protective symbol, a rallying symbol for liberty and a sympathetic rape victim. Medusa appears in media ranging from bronze and stone sculpture to paint on canvass to mosaic tile to feature film to graphic novel to model kits to Italian fashion designer logo.

The Medusa myth, related by the Roman poet Ovid who lived from 43 BC to about AD 17, described her as a beautiful woman, the aspiration of many suitors, and a priestess in the temple of the Goddess Athena. Ovid, who was noted for accuracy regarding Greek myths, wrote that Medusa was one of three gorgon sisters but the only one who had serpents in her hair. This was because Athena had cursed her for making love with Poseidon, God of the Sea, in one of Athena's temples. Athena became enraged at the defiling of her temple and, because Poseidon had been aroused by Medusa's hair, which had once been her most glorified attribute, Athena changed the enticing locks into serpents and made her face so terrible to behold that the mere sight of it would turn a man to stone.

The mythological hero, Perseus, killed Medusa by cutting off her head but even bodiless, it still had the power to turn onlookers to stone. Perseus then used it as a weapon, according to various myths, to save his mother, his wife, and to defeat other mythological monsters and villains.

In the ancient world, and particularly among ancient Greeks, Medusa's image became a protective symbol to ward off evil, just as it had for Perseus. The Medusa or gorgon head or "gorgoneion" was often placed at the entrance of a building. But by the Renaissance, the world saw artists' depictions of Medusa's severed head held aloft by the realistic human form of the triumphant hero Perseus. Perhaps the most famous such depiction is Benvenuto Cellini's 1554 bronze statute, Perseus with the Head of Medusa.

Her likeness has been immortalized by numerous artists including Leonardo da Vinci (allegedly), Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, Auguste Rodin and Paul Rubens.

But most people today are aware of the story of Perseus and Medusa because of the 1981 film *Clash of the Titans*. This incarnation of Medusa, with snakes wound in her coarse hair and a snake-like lower body, was designed by special effects creator Ray Harryhausen; if her looks didn't kill you, her arrows did!

Medusa is an ancient icon that remains one of the most popular and enduring figures of Greek mythology and continues to live on in the popular imagination when other mythological figures are forgotten.



Tête de Méduse, by
Peter Paul Rubens
(1618)



Medusa from *The Clash of the Titans* (1981)



Black Heart Enterprises
P.O. Box 2011
St. Paul, MN 55102
Phone: (651) 324 8302
Email: goblackheart@comcast.net