

Rasa Vaisvilaite

Confessional Portrayals-Drawings on Recycled Paper 2018-2024

On view September 6–29, 2024

Opening reception: Friday,  
September 6, 4-9 PM

SLA Art Space

307 W 30th Street, New York



NEW YORK—Confessional Portrayals: Drawings on Recycled Paper, 2018-2024, a solo exhibition by Lithuanian artist Rasa Vaisvilaite, will be on view at SLA Art Space from September 6–29, 2024. The exhibition presents over a hundred works from Vaisvilaite’s latest series of drawings, created over the past six years.

Composed on recycled paper, these hauntingly beautiful images span the years 2018 to 2024, forming a narrative that is both personal and biographical, as well as imaginary. The drawings, deeply influenced by various events from the artist’s life, explore themes of loneliness, alienation, terror, and vulnerability. In her work, Vaisvilaite portrays herself as both the artist and the subject; her face is often visible but frequently disguised, altered, or enveloped by symbolic objects, animals, and plants.

On the back of one of her drawings, she writes: *“Mysterium tremendum et fascinans,”* a phrase from philosopher and theologian Rudolf Otto that translates to *“a fearful and fascinating mystery.”* She adds, *“thank God there is something to color tomorrow.”*

The works featured in this exhibition offer a glimpse into universal human experiences, balancing misery and sublime joy, often with a touch of humor.

### About the artist

Rasa Vaisvilaite was born in Vilnius, Lithuania, and studied art at the Vilnius Art Academy. Her work spans various media, including animation, video editing, graphic design, and street art.

Currently residing in Bergen, Norway, Vaisvilaite captures life's fleeting moments through a personal landscape that blends human, natural, and built imagery. She prefers working with pen and pencils on recycled paper, old school notebooks, and cardboard boxes. As she explains, *“Expensive paper scares me; I’m afraid of ruining it.”*

In 2021, she collaborated closely with poet and performer Faith Hylingaer on the book *Love Letters*, published in New York.

RASA VAISVILAITE: Confessional Portrayals-Drawings on Recycled Paper , 2018-2024, is open Fridays and Saturdays from 4 to 8 pm and by appointment. Drawings are available for purchase.

## About SLA Art Space

SLA Art Space, a multi-purpose events venue, established in 2014 by the Lithuanian Alliance of America, a not-for-profit organization.

SLA Art Space is dedicated to creating and offering a wide range of cultural events including live performances, film screenings, panel discussions, and gallery exhibitions that explore the evolving diversity and richness of Lithuanian culture.

SLA Art Space strives to strengthen the identity and community of individuals of Lithuanian descent by generating new ideas and promoting cross-cultural dialogues through partnerships and cultural projects that provide mutual value and new perspectives, inviting audiences of all ages and backgrounds to engage and share culture and art.

## Artist's Statement

For me, drawing is a way of listening. It's like listening to music, and in some ways, it's also a form of thinking—though it's when I draw that I realize I'm not thinking anymore.

When I draw, I listen to the dialogue in my mind, a conversation where both speakers are me. The saying "each person is two" is particularly true in my case.

If I listen to music while drawing, the internal dialogue becomes gentler, perhaps because the music softens the clarity of my thoughts.

In general, drawing relaxes me, especially the processes of coloring and hatching. I start with sketches, finalize them, and then hatch or color them. In this way, I am listening—almost like filling in a childhood coloring book, except these are my own listening sketches.

As for color, I don't have a strong preference, particularly not for red. Perhaps it's because the Soviet Union flag was red—a color that feels brave, even insolent. In contrast, I'm timid, often afraid of many things, and filled with worry. Drawing and listening are the only things I'm not timid about.

I see images in my head and doodle them into a notebook, or I jot down a key word to recreate the idea later. I'm often stunned by scientific discoveries or something new that I've learned. However, not

every drawing turns out the way I envisioned. More often than not, they don't. Even when something does turn out, compared to my original vision, one might say it didn't turn out at all.

That's why this exhibit could be called "Something That Didn't Turn Out" or "Beautiful Attempts." As the saying goes, the road to hell is paved with good intentions—and a credit card. I have both.

Rasa Vaisvilaite