

## **The Myth of Reality**

Virginia Lavado was born in Caracas, Venezuela. He studied drawing, painting and engraving at the “Cristóbal Rojas” School of Fine Arts. In 1982, he won a scholarship to study fine arts at the Pratt Institute in New York where he graduated with honors. His drawings are represented at the Museum of National Art in Caracas, The Granary, and private collections in Latin America and the United States, at the same time his work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Virginia draws on paper with ink and pen. The technique is traditional however its theme is contemporary. His drawings evoke worlds where the imagination of the spectator is provoked to find answers to their own dilemmas about the existence and complexity of thinking when encountering alleys full of myths, stories where we find our roots no matter where we come from.

Virginia on the Web: <https://virginialavadoworks.tumblr.com> / <http://matacan1.wix.com/virginialavado>

### **1. When and where did you start your career in the visual arts?**

I started very young, drew constantly, and created creatures in clay with colors that defined space. I register in the school of plastic arts "Cristóbal Rojas" in Caracas where I study drawing, engraving, and painting. At an early age, I began to participate in groups of avant-garde art and expose my work in the galleries and museums of the country (Venezuela). The drawing took my attention and defined my way of seeing the world. Folk sayings, myths, and folktales from different parts of the world detailed my conception of art. I think the sayings of the people have a didactic definition and a visual richness that have marked my form of expression in drawing. They have a touch of surreal, defined by the Spanish language that allows us to express ideas in a poetic way. My work is delineated by the mythological tales of different parts of the world, where we always find similar principles despite coming from cultures from

different continents. My drawings reflect my interest in universal mythology regardless of its origin, whether indigenous communities in Venezuela (Yanomamö, Makiritare, or Guajiros), the Popol Vuh of the Central American Mayas, African tales and rites (Yorubas, Maasai or Pygmies), Asians (Japan's Shinto, or China's long list of stories), to the classic Greek mythology that defines Western culture. As all cultures and civilizations of the world are defined by the observations of human relations. Also, my interest is projected in my drawings. At the beginning of the 80's, we emigrated to New York with my husband Camilo Rojas and two children. Study a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts at Pratt Institute.

2. Do your roots in Venezuela influence your work of art?

Caracas was a city, when we lived there, very cosmopolitan intoxicated by the Caribbean culture. I would say more than the roots of the country, it is the language and mischief of the Caribbean that defines my work. I drew when the drawing was not fashionable. The drawing has always been characterized by a minor art because of its temporality, the ephemeral of the paper which attracts me since it has nothing pretentious like painting and sculpture. My drawings try to carry that fleeting part of the story told in whispers at the end of the day and reinvented when recounted, but always keeping that cool tone of the joker.

3. Tell me about the theme of your work and the means you use to achieve it?

As mythology told you, tales of folklore, popular sayings, rites, fairy tales play an important role in my work. Starting a new drawing or series of drawings means an extensive investigation of the subject or the preliminary idea. Reading about where the characters that occupy my imagination come from becomes an arduous task to clarify what it means for me, once having clear that I want to tell begins the task of drawing and blurring again and again until you find the imagined plotted on the paper. Many times, after the ink dries and is absorbed by the paper I start with the blade to try to find that it is being hidden that allows me to discover the true reality of the myth. A drawing can take months of work. I go to my studio every day.

#### 4. How is your work pace in your study?

The studio, which we built in Millerton surrounded by trees, is a space that was created around our way of working. An extensive library on the third floor, a carpentry, and engraving workshop on the first floor and on the second-floor ample tables where I can create my drawings, which are long, from eight to ten feet. After researching I draw every day. It may take me months to finish each drawing.

#### 5. What projects do you have in the near future? (It can be a sample, an art project or simply the realization of a new serious)

At this moment, I am developing a series on death and its representations in different mythological profiles. The relation of the ephemeral of the paper and the human temporality. Death as the center of life and evolution.

### **Photographer: Camilo Rojas**

*Elisa Pritzker is a visual artist and an independent curator. Her column "La Esquina de las Artes" [The Corner of the Arts] is actually published in La Voz-Bard College and ABClatino Bilingual Magazine / [www.elisapritzker.com](http://www.elisapritzker.com)*