



NORA REKADE
MASHA SILCHENKO
Vicky's Wishes
06.09.2025 – 25.09.2025

"Do you dream in black and white or in color?" asks Vicky Wall in her 1990 book *Aura-Soma: Self-Discovery through Color*, insisting that color is not an ornament but a diagnostic sign. Black-and-white dreams, she argues, point to fear, trauma, and blockages, whereas color signals vision, transformation, and the future. Her Aura-Soma system, derived from the Greek terms *aura* (breath, emanation) and *soma* (body, substance), links immaterial energy with material embodiment in bottles filled with rainbow-colored essences and oils that promise access to the soul. Circulating since the 1980s in predominantly therapeutic and esoteric contexts, this logic of color provides the point of departure for Vicky's Wishes, in which Valentina Stieger presents works by Nora Rekaide and Masha Silchenko.

Nora Rekaide shows a series of cat portraits (cat #1 to cat #8, all 2025, acrylic on canvas) alongside glass works (glass #1 to glass #7, all 2025). The cats appear frontally, their features marked by grief, anger, and melancholy. Repetition reinforces the persistence of an emotional state. In art history, the cat often appears as uncanny witness: in Balthus's *Chat au miroir* (1933), where it participates in a play of gaze, mirror, and body, or in David Hockney's *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy* (1970–71), where it becomes part of a complex family portrait. Rekaide, by contrast, isolates the animal as the sole pictorial subject, seemingly following conventions of portraiture. In this shift, the cat turns into a projection surface with autobiographical weight. Placed among the paintings are Rekaide's painted glass vessels. Translucent and functionless, they recall a history of ritual containers while also evoking Aura-Soma's equilibrium bottles. Where Wall's bottles once promised healing through color-infused essences, Rekaide's vessels remain empty. The container persists as form, yet stripped of therapeutic content, a volume that contains emptiness.

Masha Silchenko's series of drawings began with a diary-like recording of dreams. By establishing routines of notation, she seeks access to inner states. Morning and evening she captures fragments of what was dreamt or lived—sensations, memories, imagined scenes—often through automatic drawing. The result is a visual fabric in which heterogeneous elements connect as abruptly as in the dream itself. Works such as *Ouverture. autumn 2022* (2022), 28.03.2023 (*Scaris*) (2023), *Hypnosis, october 2023* (2023), 11.03.2023 (2023), *autumn 2023* (2023), 22.01.2024 (2024), *january 2024* (2024), together with several untitled sheets from 2023–24 (colored pencil on paper, 18 × 25 cm), carry systematic titles or precise dates. They do not tell a continuous story but accumulate into a growing archive. Each sheet is both note and experiment, nocturnal images appear in both chromatic shapes or in shadow forms. Silchenko's approach resonates with a tradition of artistic dream records, from Delacroix's sketches and Klee's visions to the automatic mark-making of the Surrealists and the writings of Louise Bourgeois. By translating the fleeting logic of the dream into a repeated act, she transforms spontaneous sketches into a system of self-observation that resists forgetting.

Vicky's Wishes opens a new perspective on Wall's ideas of color through the practices of Nora Rekade and Masha Silchenko. What once circulated as therapeutic promise, "a universal language through bottles of rainbow-colored oils," is here read as a reflection on image, affect, and form. Rekade's portraits and vessels, together with Silchenko's dream drawings, become "inner canvases" that reveal how color functions not as decoration but as a medium of knowledge. The exhibition shows that color and image are sites where psychic states take form and where the passage between fear and transformation is both staged and held in suspension.

Eleonora Bitterli, September 2025

