

Essays

Reynier Llanes



TIMELESS ORIGINS

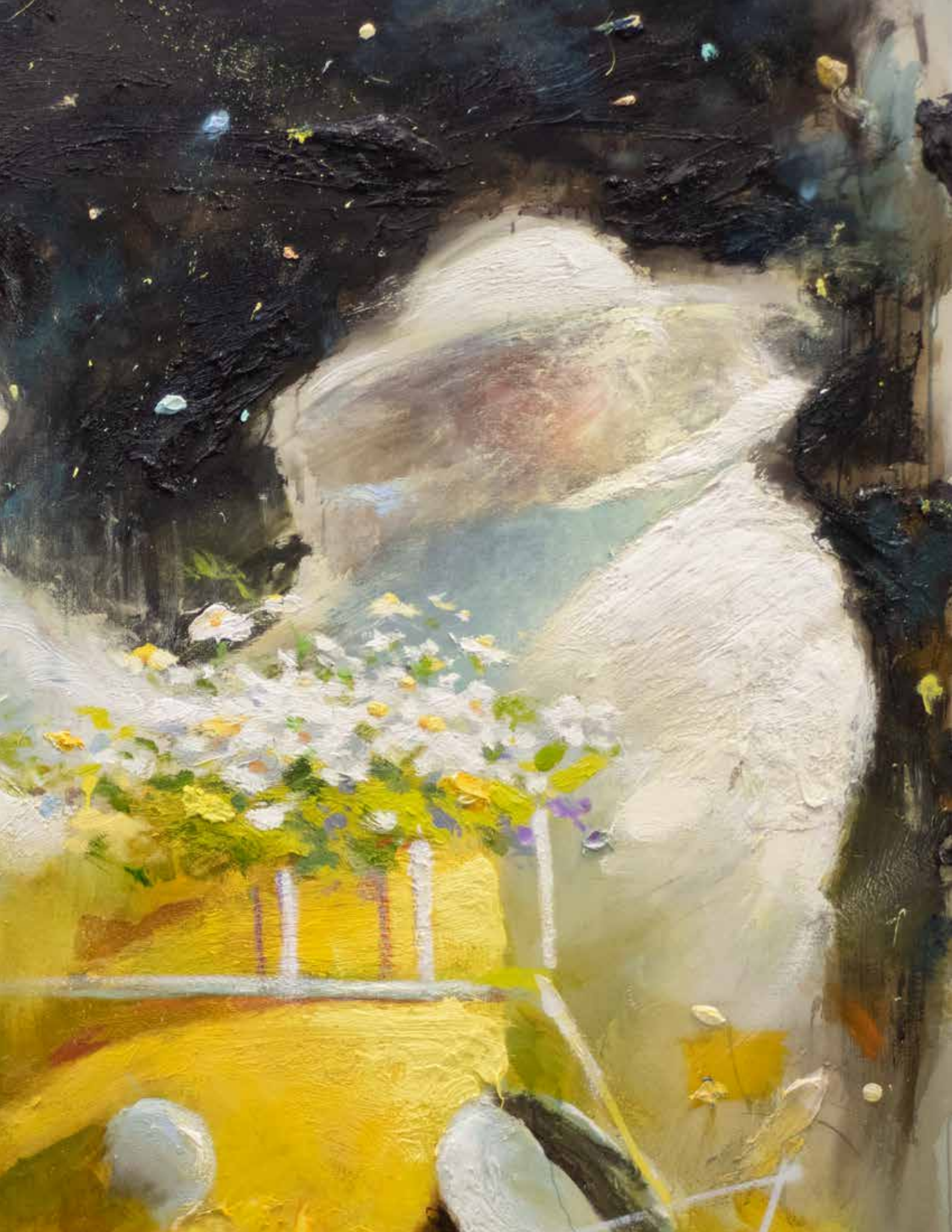
At the intersection of science and theology one can find the human experience: a constant search for meaning and understanding. Science oversees the natural world while looking for answers in the hidden mysteries of our creation, but it is a tool that can shape the future as well. Theology, on the other hand, proposes fixed visions for both our past and future. In between these notions there is the poetry of everyday life and, in that way, art has the potential to fill the gap.

A line can be drawn through the work of Reynier Llanes from wondering about the origins of our beliefs to the future of our species. This line is not straight nor definitive since it does not reference an evolutionary time. It tells a story about the human experience going back to what we have learned through time, the actions that affect our life, and the impact it has on our insides. One of his first series, “Patakis”, delves into the African ancestry that takes part on Cuban history. They are African gods, a syncretic representation of Catholic saints, or even the soul of dead slaves that come from the past to support the present. This sense of beginnings can be also tracked back to pieces like “The Guardian” where a man treasures a bitten apple, frozen in time.

Other pieces bring us directly to our present and tie us again to the issues that affect us from more recent days. “I can breathe” or “You are here” are representations of that. The first one resembles a human figure from our world, the second one begins to vanish. The disappearance of the body and the rise of vaporous, almost mystical figures is not a coincidence. In this imaginary line, the near future is in front of us. The wonders of science and technology coexist in our time. That is the reason why in some cases the main figure is an invisible character while in others is faceless: Reynier is raising a question about whether all these changes are bringing us together or driving us apart.

The more recent work of Llanes opens a window to the far future where there are ordinary human figures surrounded by the outer space. Maybe that is where our imagination will take us or maybe we are just coming back to our beginnings. Ultimately, it makes no difference because the most important thing is to preserve a positive sense of curiosity throughout this experience. The promise he upholds is that whatever our future looks like we will be part of it. Reynier uses a vibrant symbolism to send this message. In a timeless route it is difficult to establish a beginning, a middle,





and an end. However, the artist populates his work with watercolors, oils, coffee on papers and a mixed of media to comprehend our shared humanity. His proposal is simple: art can save us.

Patricia Diaz

Art historian & curator