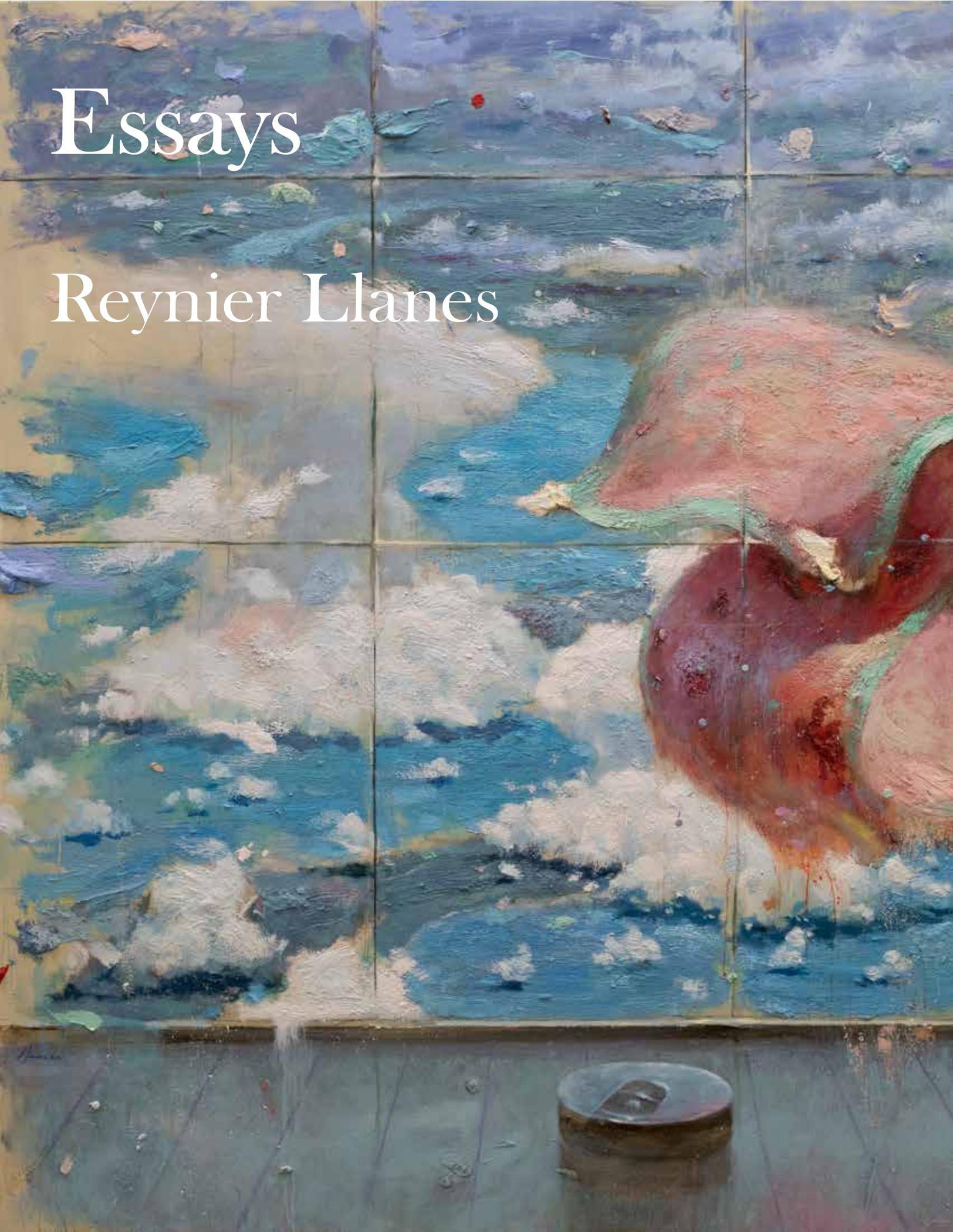


Essays

Reynier Llanes





When There Are No Words

I find myself at a loss of words to properly express how taken I am with this important body of work by Reynier Llanes. I've followed Llanes for some time, and during the last five or six years, I've noticed a distinct shift in the direction and style of his work. It seems to me that during this period of growth and transition, the artist has hit the mark – and made his mark. Stylistically, his mark-making process has evolved into a carefully composed, jazz-like symphony of juicy and perfectly placed swashes of pigment. And his seemingly effortless ability to convey his clever points of view in oil, watercolor and coffee, while maintaining a visual language that is mindful of others' perspectives and allows a safe space for viewers' minds to roam free, is profound.

Llanes is a seeker of knowledge, beauty and that which is beyond our grasp – the mystical – all of which are inherently sewn into the makings of his paintings. In his large oils, he creates sweeping, majestic spaces into which viewers are welcomed to enter, explore and get lost in contemplation. In *Mom (study)*, – a detail of which is pictured to the right – Llanes depicts a white bunny staring out into the distance at a giant, puffy cloud shaped like the head of a rabbit. The perspective the artist has bestowed upon the viewer – just behind the bunny in the foreground – all but beckons us to step right in and get a closer look at what has the motionless bunny's attention. Surely, we can all relate to looking at cumulus clouds to conjure images for our enjoyment or comfort, and many of us find ourselves looking upward to the sky or out across the vast horizon to seek answers that seem beyond earthly confines. Llanes has provided us with this luscious, green-and-blue landscape through which our imaginations may run wild. It is up to us – the viewers – to incorporate our own experiences and states-of-mind into the unfolding narrative.

Beyond mastery of composition and color is Llanes' expert employment of symbolism and keen sense of irony. I hope you enjoy deconstructing the imagery of his paintings as much as I do. I often find myself chuckling out loud when something clicks in my brain about the possible interpretation of the artist's evocative compositions, like his watercolor of an old-fashioned typewriter, whose keys' alphabet have been replaced with emojis. To me, this is a clever commentary on writing becoming a lost art form replaced by modern technology and kitschy icons in lieu of a traditional alphabet. I don't think, however, that the painting leans one way or another toward whether this change in the way we communicate is good or bad – that point of view is left to the viewer to decide.

What an incredible and special journey it has been for me to work with such a remarkable artist and dear friend to curate this exhibition. It is arranged in a way that is meant to gradually pull back the curtains on these exceptional windows revealing magical views that will first steal your attention, then your imagination and finally your heart.

**Liz Miller,
Curator**

