

## ***Transcript of Conversation with Marianela, October 13, 2024***

### ***Polvo de Luz / Stardust***

STARDUST

It has been very difficult to create this new series of paintings when the current environment appears so dark and tangled, between wars, weapons, death, extremist polarization, absolutist discourses, deterministic visions.

Faced with this uncertain panorama, looking for an alternative to not be paralyzed by anxiety and fear; my spirit led me to an essential, conciliatory conclusion, in which following the train of thoughts of philosophers, thinkers, artists, scientists; I was inclined to create works in which in some way there is an exchange, a language in which human beings and the stars, the cosmos, converse in a space of daydreaming, desires, fantasies and at the same time certainties with provenance and purpose.

With these works, I hope to overcome the homocentrism that has made us selfish and narcissistic. We humans are immersed in a small sphere of concerns and situations, which bring us dangerously close to the pessimistic conclusion that we are the only and solitary form of wisdom that exists in the infinite universe.

This myopia is contradicted by the discoveries of our most advanced telescopes, which have revealed that the cosmos is the kitchen where the entire universe is kneaded with the same ingredients.

Everything living and non-living is composed of structurally identical elements: stardust.

The result from these chemical reactions produces light, but this light is inherently ambivalent: it can both reveal and blind. Clarity and obscurity thus emanate from the same source. We live in the light of this paradox, where the brighter the bonfires of knowledge rage, the darker the darkness that is revealed before our surprised eyes.

Philosophy insists that our individual spiritual development depends on the cultivation of an inner light. This light of knowledge illuminates our path, illuminates our conscience, ignites our intellect. Through its radiance it helps us try to clarify doubts and existential questions. Fills us with seeds of immensity.

But as we learn new things, we are surprised by the distance between what we know and what we hope to know. Discerning between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, good and evil, what is real and what is illusory is an infinite and precarious task.

In this exercise we can also lose our way. The same light that guides us can lead us astray and illuminate the dark alley of a dead end; It can obstruct our vision, it can deceive us, leaving us in ignorance, polarizing our opinions, sowing resentment, suppressing our capacity for empathy,

annihilating our capacity for critical thinking and, in extreme cases, forcing us to turn off the light of thought. With a myopic vision, we lose our sense of location, our moral compass and we lose the point of view from which, as living beings, we share an intimate affinity between us who belong to the same planet Earth and this same planet, to the Universe.

From my pictorial vision between my light and my shadow, I invite every viewer to question what it means and could mean for each of us to be “human”; to be a spark of life in the cosmos that flickers and vibrates brightly and extinguishes coldly.

To quote the words of Carl Sagan: “We are a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.”

In my creative process I usually work by series following a common thread, a topic that I can develop by painting it from different angles.

For this particular series I begun with a thread and ended up entangled with several others, I had to look for the way to find the exit from the labyrinth.

### ***The first touch of inspiration***

Some time ago I remember feeling mesmerized when I saw the images taken by the James Webb telescope. Unknown universes opened my eyes, I found impossible to imagine the infinite cosmos containing between 100 billion and 2 trillion, galaxies . I felt like a microbe, too small to appear in the vast universe.

What to do then with all these feelings of awe? Since I was little, I have tried to explain the things that surround me through images, stories, literature, nature. This time I tried to do the same imagining that we humans could have a dialog with the stars, our friends.

I fantasized about thinking that some kind of conversation was absolutely possible as all the living and nonliving share the same building blocks in different proportions and configurations, but the same elements.

I imagined how the stars know us from the beginning of life on earth, they are family. They know our secrets, our ups and downs, our light and dark places. we wish upon them, we dream, admire their brightness, they guide us.

I visioned little birds as winged messengers delivering back and forth ciphered messages in a common language for us humans and stars, searching for answers to the primordial questions, why, when, how,

It came as a necessity to paint those fantasy stories in order to cope with all the chaos that I saw everyday in the news and the social media. Wars, political turmoil, hatred, lies, death.

Suddenly the telescope used to observe the cosmos turned into a microscope considering human beings as a complete universe within themselves

The idea that our own bodies are made of trillions of cells, gave me another insight about how many ways are there to consider the meaning of a universe.

As I was reflecting about this idea, I remembered that years ago I read a book by the German author Hermann Broch titled the death of Virgil, I remembered it as a transcendental lecture but could not recall details, I read it again, first in English and afterwards in Spanish. It is a difficult book, but once you find the key on how to follow the text you enter into this world of a musical poetic vocabulary.

This time I was ready to be touched to the core by the ideas of the author describing how the great and laureate poet Virgil is about to die, he joins a procession and celebrations in honor of Octavian Augustus the roman emperor who respects Virgil and also wants to be part of his artistic aura.

The Aeneid, Virgil's master piece in which he tells the story of the Trojan hero Aeneas, survivor from the Trojan war and founding father of the roman people. The poem is a legacy for the roman empire and the whole humanity, but Virgil thinks it is a worthless piece because in his opinion he could not achieve perfection and fears that his poem might be misinterpreted or used for other purposes such as indoctrination, lies, conspiracy theories.

He decides to burn the Aeneid, but the emperor and his closest friends convince him not to do it.

The book is divided in 4 parts, water, Fire, earth and Ether corresponding to the last days of Virgil's life, he experiments the fine line between life and death, little by little he enters a space where his body and mind begin to disperse into a different dimension, he becomes part of the earth's creation, the surge of life, the animals, plants, human life and their evolution, the planets, galaxies, the whole Cosmos. Being a poet, Virgil describes with words what he is witnessing with all his senses and his consciousness while his body is disintegrating. He reaches the ultimate light and he cannot find more words to express himself as he becomes part of the whole, of the universe

This master piece of literature, moved me deeply, making me rethink my conceptions about art, about my useless pursue of perfection, perfection does not exist at least we know that *errare humanum est*.

***The second thread for this series.***

Is AI going to be perfect?

I really don't know what to think, I feel fear, I feel doubtful, I am trying to be more objective and reevaluate the artificiality of this intelligence its pros and cons.

In 2014 I had already these concerns about what was coming with this new technology, I painted rEvolution and wrote this text.

Modern Technology advances at such a speed that it is impossible for the vast majority to reach out towards it, digest it, understand it and use it properly. When we think we have grasped the use of one of these very sophisticated electronic devices, another one is produced making the first one obsolete in a blink of an eye.

Artificial intelligence is a theme widely discussed nowadays, not many years ago it was considered Science Fiction.

Today we are learning that the possibility of creating artificial intelligence is a fact. Scientists all over the world are creating robots, computers, and cyborgs that are able to "think" by themselves. With these scientific advances come along ethical issues, what would happen if these machines could make decisions of their own, if they could choose freely, if they could have a life different from us humans and even what would happen if they could have feelings?

There are already discussions about the ethical, religious, social consequences if those artifacts with artificial intelligence could do everything we do and maybe surpass our skills.

I ask myself what would happen if on the other side of the mirror we could encounter a being artificially created, intelligent enough to be equal or even smarter than us humans, could this situation be the detonator of a revolution, the time for a big step in evolution or the opportunity to live in a new world. It is hard just to imagine the possibility but there are signs already happening in front of us, we just have to take a step forward through the looking glass that offers glimpses of a coexisting reality. So maybe we even fantasize with the possibility of going through within our boundaries and dive into a parallel world.

***2024, 10 years later, the revolution is here.***

The Industrial revolution that begun in the XVIII century changed the whole world economy, it substituted the manual work for efficient and stable manufacturing processes.

I try to remember when my grandparents talked about the changes they experimented in their lives, the automobile for the horse cart, the possibility to fly in an airplane, the telephone, the telegraph ,electricity, et etc.

My grandchildren cannot imagine that when I was a child internet, iPhones, social media did not exist

With Artificial Intelligence, this revolution is very different, are our intellects been replaced?

I live immerse in the arts, images, music, literature and when I have been confronted with the re-creations made with AI, I get angry, I reject them absolutely, I cannot conceive that Artificial intelligence (AI) is a set of technologies that enable machines to mimic human intelligence. AI uses algorithms, data, and computational power to simulate human intelligence.

Movies like 2001 Space odyssey, Blade runner, Ghost in the shell, books by Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury make me wonder by imagining AI getting out of our hands, I have nightmares

Art is a human activity that expresses ideas and emotions. Painting, sculpture, film, dance, writing, photography, cinema or theater. It can be a visual object or an experience that is consciously created through an expression of skill and imagination.

How can a technology create art when it lacks emotions, can AI feel sadness, joy, can it dream, can it create based on its unique and individual experiences in life?

I often imagine this thing being fed with all the knowledge that has been created by HUMANS, AI can offer a mixture, a smoothie, a shake with rehashed collages.

Some days ago, my friend Patty Mooney showed me how she was experimenting with the aid of ChatGPT for her lyrics, songs, I told her I was reluctant to try it. She typed my name to show me how it worked and just as in a typical google search my name and biography came up, ok but when she asked the chat gpt to create an art work in my style I was horrified because a grotesque image that had nothing to do with my aesthetics came up

I almost felt the necessity to bring a crucifix, garlic and holy water in order to perform an exorcism

Just to think that what I consider a precious gift, my imagination, can be stolen by this AI made me sick, I thought about Virgil, I'd rather die.

### ***My depiction of how Artificial intelligence has arrived to our society***

12 years ago, I painted the biggest miniature I have painted in my life, Heaven and Earth the determined freedom for an undetermined life, now property of SDMA. I chose Eve as the main character for the altar piece dedicated to her. I saw her as a heroic figure who decided to commit the original sin to be able to have access to knowledge, she did not want to remain ignorant living in Paradise, she rather suffer but have the ability to choose and be free.

For Polvo de Luz I return to the same issue, but this time talking about AI , I depicted a new Eve, seduced by a new snakish devise who offers her a fake apple, offers her the fast track and immediate rewards and satisfaction, she is hypnotized and agrees to commit an Artificial sin. Who knows, maybe she will have new and faster ways to learn or she will be offered new and exciting ticktocks, listen to more influencers, or follow beauty and fashion trends...

As you can see, I am absolutely worried and disturbed with this prospect of letting AI create art

I can be very stubborn and it takes time for me to open the door to analyze from other points of view my postures. I changed my totalitarian judgement about AI when I read the news about the Nobel prizes for Chemistry and for Physics, awarded to these prestigious scientists who have used AI as a marvelous tool to help them achieve results in a much short time, one of them said that he would have come to the same result but it would have taken him 10 years.

I read more, all the new advances in medicine, development of new Medicines, vaccines, cures, early detection of cancer, space travel, climate change solutions

I realize that there is an incredible bright side of AI but also another one, dangerous and obscure. What will the future bring, who knows. May the Stardust help us find the better way to use it and not let us be used

I will ask the stars to grant me the ability to continue painting my images born from my limited and original intelligence.