

4 August - 17 September, 2023

In the Western world, “we have inexorably removed personal experience from our understanding of the universe... we have used a sieve of mathematical laws and equations to strain ourselves out of the stars.”

- Jo Marchant, *The Human Cosmos*, pg. 263.

Although we like to convince ourselves that we understand what is happening around us, over 80% of all matter in our universe is made up of material that cannot be perceived or detected. We call this material DARK MATTER. We believe it to exist because, without it, our current models for the behaviour of stars, planets and galaxies simply wouldn't make sense. Its gravitational effects are necessary to explain the rotation of galaxies, the motions of clusters, and the invisible structure of the entire Universe. With these concepts in mind, Michaela Gleave presents her new work, *The sky continues beneath our feet*. In this work, Gleave utilises Passage as a 'portal' to these non-ordinary states of understanding. She presents a constructed universe that glows 24/7, defying the time and space of the outside world.

In *The sky continues beneath our feet*, Gleave divides Passage into two parts, concealing 80% of the space with a polycarbonate stud wall, while 20% of the space remains visible. Behind the wall is Gleave's universe: glitter, inflated star balloons, and foam coexist in a paradoxical state—shiny and spongy, granular and continuous, opaque and transparent, reflective and matte, absorbent and repellent, fragile yet durable. Gleave's timber studded and polycarbonate wall creates a hazy 2D grid, a representation of our limited sense of dimensionality, dissecting the horizontal installation landscape and standing at odds with the rest of the space. Light filters through the wall as we peer through lenticular distortions in an attempt to glimpse, pause, rethink, and shift our assumptions on reality.

In her recent monograph titled 'The Influence of an Idea on the physical properties of the world', Michaela Gleave says, "I'm still seeking moments where I can find a schism in reality and explode that stable worldview to access other possibilities". Perhaps this rupture occurs when her constructed universe bursts from the confinement of the wall and reveals materials that defy conventional logic. Here Gleave's materials lay seemingly dormant under a focused theatre lamp, reminiscent of the properties of relativity and quantum mechanics, subtly glimmering the installation to life. Time as well seems arrested inside this space where this static assemblage continuously glows for 45 days, yet air is slowly leaking through the membrane of the stars. Over time, unattended balloons droop as they wait for Gleave to enter the space, refilling their volume with air from the outside world.

*The sky continues beneath our feet* by Michaela Gleave is a constellation of ideas, a material collection of a practice blazing with cosmic ambition, like the tail of a comet the artist has carted around with her. It is a constructed universe of party materials, air, light, timber, and reflections standing on a precipice between real and not real. Here, truth and fictions exist at a point in time where humanity seems to no longer believe in physical reality and is busy dissolving the world around us.

Words by Marco Rinaldi

Michaela Gleave, 'The sky continues beneath our feet', 2023, Pine, polycarbonate, reclaimed glitter, reclaimed foam, geotextile, theatre lamp, foil balloons, breath, lighting gels, audio, Installation dimensions variable