

~~GAO is so t pleased sorry to announce that~~

Ultimately, it's on you. Don't feel pressured to relax, but try not to worry too much about the overbearing absence of meaning in your world. It has no meaning apart from its style, which, just like in any artwork worth its salt, is also its content. Strictly speaking, this isn't debatable. Like love or sexism, style exists whether you believe in it or not. And if you believe anything, believe that *everything* has style, even predatory capitalism. Here: a plane lifts off from the international DHL sort facility in Brussels, Belgium, at ten to one in the morning, having received an anonymously paid-for express shipment request the previous day. As ever, the parcel contains precisely six hundred and sixty six grams of a substance senselessly prohibited in the country of destination (Scotland), but is nevertheless undetected by customs scanners while being processed through the Edinburgh sort facility, exactly six hundred and ninety six miles away, before six o'clock the very same morning, and now it's sitting at the back of GAO gallery, (London). The assonance is not the point. Distance is not really the point, either. The DHL SPRINTLINE is an emergency dedicated vehicle, capable of going even farther, faster, with no discrimination in regards to the type of personal emergency. It is a beautifully bright Spanish-yellow and red Boeing 767-300ERF, capable of transporting cargo around the world in hilariously urgent timeframes, irrespective of global holidays, all year long, just so long as (liquid) capital changes (metaphorical) hands.

What's going on: some supercilious intergalactic space-daemon has found herself awed by the majesty of our economic system, a system she claims is gigavastly superior, more viable – not to mention forgiving – than just about any other process of organising labour and value currently operating in the multiverse. She's also a practicing artist.

Laniakea, (*she chose this name herself. In Hawaiian it means 'immeasurable heaven', which I thought was just wicked*), is a class XVI celestial daemon and interstellar painter, whose nefarious extra-dimensional practice spans both time and space. For this, her first exhibition on Earth, she plans to open up a storm-wrapped rift to a parallel universe in GAO's carpark. Laniakea considers probing the deep-time history of our planet to be as much of an aesthetic endeavour as a cosmiconservational one, and will show a series of contextually-purged, paradoxical, live-alternative-past-political-paint-portals in the main gallery. Since she is undeniably evil, Laniakea finds it funny that her work will be displayed to us via a medium whose technological advancement, (due to our frail, transient sun) shall forever remain out of reach. Even after finishing a string of residency programs dotted throughout the slowly gentrifying Andromeda galaxy, and spending a few eons in marketing/interplanetary relations, Laniakea felt she still lacked empathy. By moving in to our 'rotten and needy solar system' she thought she would experience the 'shocking penury of this plebeian civilisation first-hand.' So the void of unknowing, of fortune and calamity plus the making of something pretty out of something painful, is the terrain of this exhibition. Plus dinosaurs.

Most critics from Laniakea's world-equivalent biosphere generally view the Earth's Anthropocene as a barbaric and thrillingly deranged accident. Laniakea says that there are just *two* scholars who still 'waste time on your stagnant backwater of history', and even they are only interested in the place on a planetary level. One is curious as to just how we could've messed it up so bad with regards to the resources, wars etc., and the other guy (who's more of an open-minded, mycelium-hugger type), is basically trying to see if it's worth anyone's space-time trying to talk to the council of conscious nomadic suns; maybe one could be convinced to like, move or something. Nobody else cares. Laniakea herself is far more interested in potentiality and alternatives – parallel histories. Say, just for example: what would've happened if the 10+ kilometres-wide CHICXULUB K/Pg IMPACTOR asteroid (which struck the Earth approximately sixty six million years ago) had missed, what then? Suppose that during those wild years Jupiter's alignment was even *slightly* off-kilter – its huge gravitational force just *lightly* shoving the freefalling asteroid off target, forcing it to miss its dinner date with destiny? In all likelihood those then-dwellers of cretaceous Earth, the dinosaurs, would've looked up in helpless wonder at the moonlit sky, and far beyond the clouds, in the distance, still might've glimpsed the beautiful scorching comet, shrieking through the vast susurrus of space – but instead of witnessing their annihilation and doom, instead of conceding their planet to this zealous, burning emissary of extinction, they'd have simply thought, *Cool*.

All being said, the dinosaurs were a fairly decent answer to the demands of earthbound existence. Laniakea's portals show our planet in an alternative/parallel-reality present, where that fateful asteroid missed its target. Which is why it's so wild that the dinosaurs, tenacious as cockroaches, improved over many eons of evolution, would have evidently turned into a society more or less identical to ours. The familiarity is shocking: they would've invented exactly the same class and culture, all sorts of head-smacked celebrity chefs, trained-nose perfume critics and mental health problems, crime, drugs, corruption and poverty, antibiotics and iPhones; Prozac and politics. Indeed, if we look through the large portal embedded in the gallery ceiling we get breaking news: '*...thanks Fiona, yes, incredible scenes here this morning – approximately seven hours ago in the midst of a heated "administrative discussion" outside the House of Commons, the Prime Minister ate the Leader of the Opposition...*' Through an adjacent portal we get instant critique from a public intellectual: '*No! It is raedikal intervenshunisht politcksh! Why waste resources? She is giving them what they want! Look, if, on reflection, the individual sees that his contribution simply does not make any difference to the collective endeavour, if his benefit is precisely zero, or if, he is, to slightly paraphrase Lacanisaurus: "overcome by his imperceptibility", he will eventually just withhold his vote – one won't make any difference! It is naive liberal utopia to imagine otherwise: voters as this great, lumbering, selfless mass who love the voting booth, who just like to participate in dinocracy and so on... No! I accept that voting drives are complex. Voting can be totally illogical, abstract, even expressionistic – dinosaurs simply sending a signal: "take nothing for granted", and so on and so on, wanting to feel good, "make their mark", you know, like "there's at least one Marxist in Margate," and so on. Sure, this self-justification is not normal behaviour, but, crucially, here I am certain, it is totally paradigmatic of th'Pryme Ministersh indulgencsh!*' He wipes spittle from his gaping maw and continues, '*she ish blind wif ideology! The Soritesuchomimus Enigma. No single MP is going to make her gain weight or get fat she thinks, right? So, she might as well go ahead and eat this one – one won't make a difference – but look, if no single MP will ever make her chubby, then, having already eaten one last week she thinks, I might as well eat another one today and so on and so on, *sniff*, It's a paradox, or something.'*

Politics is clearly at the heart of Laniakea's artistic enquiry. Upon closer inspection, the news portal on the ceiling is actually showing an edited sixty-minute loop, '*...As international storms of partisan enmity rain on Downing Street, we pay our respects to a great fallen dinosaur with one of his great speeches: "It will be tough. We'll have to invest, we'll have to invert the priorities of the market, dinocratise its structures and replace it with a system we all deserve! For the Manyoraptors, not the Fewalodons!" – the Right Honourable Diplodocus, Jeremy Corbyn.'*

Elsewhere, a more delicate feature of Laniakea's work moves into the foreground with the sculptural-photo-portal 'Umt!leeb', situated in the centre of the gallery. The piece comes across as autobiographical, almost like a self-portrait, with two of her heads engaging in the sort of debate lovers hold in hot countries. Post-verbal poetry such as, *The Sea Has Nothing But Hatred For Humanity* floats through the air. Turns out this imperiously evil bohemian autodidact has a soul, and a past – and even knew something like love, once: *My Own Universe Cloyed; I Ran Out of Space*. 'Umt!leeb' is a personal history, explaining to the viewer how she spent the past three hundred thousand years. It even clarifies her ambitions in coming to the Milky Way. Captivated by our planet's fantastic nature documentaries she thought she'd visit our oceans, paint portals, possess the souls of a few gallerists and show work where possible. Change was cumulative, she knew that, even though the resident swanky dressing London intelligentsia soon mistook her for one of their own. She was able to rebuke society from her own interplanetary experience, and was a thrill to argue with on long meandering walks, her fury taking off, erupting from the bushes like a pheasant. She planned to send documentation back home, as she was single-handedly trying to reinvigorate the megamaxi-macromodernist vanguard, as it had become quasi-religious and schlocky as friends and enemies both from her supercluster seemed to think this necessarily meant the throwing of the galactocentrist colonial baby out with the metaphysically analytical bathwater, but they couldn't have been more wrong. Both criticism *and* narrative could serpentine through her artwork the way an express-shipment speeds through the earth's DHL network. She still posed for pics even though she knew gender was a universally hegemonic construct. Ditto with regards to drinking blood outside private views, occasionally sucking on a cigarette. After all, she was sort-of mortal. Anxious, suffering and alive, "so for fuck's sake could the cosmos just get off my back for once and let me be as hip, seductive and ostentatiously self-promoting as I want to be, like a poly-brain 1960's Joan Didion or something, shit."
