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Cherish Menzo and Camilo Mejía Cortés in Darkmatter. Photo © Bas de Brouwer



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A dystopian poetry that comes from other-worldly dark matter and  
black blood

A Black, male persona, made anonymous by a mirror-like mask, checks upon his female equal, lying on the floor front stage. There seems to be a wound and blood, black blood, pouring out of it. In the semi-dark, he calmly pokes into the wound and smears the blood over her body.

The dystopian character of the scene becomes even sharper when the lights change, allowing us to see the back of the stage. A translucent curtain made of thick, wide plastic strips falls and piles up on the floor, partially covered with dirt – black dirt. Are we trapped in the back of an enormous fridge, where bodies are hung to be cut? Who are these people? When are they?

In this thriller-like set and after uncovering their faces, Cherish Menzo and Camilo Mejía Cortés move in slow motion, sing rap songs written by themselves and others, laugh at each other and show their bodies in full. The colour black is the thread uniting their skin, their actions, their words, their high leathered boots, their changing of the space. They pour black liquid onto the white floor, and pull up the translucent strips to let dirty, messy bits rise. The landscape changes.

‘Can you hear the explosion / of voices from the ocean / songs full of emotion / from a time without a notion.’ The words are bound and bundled in a booklet, given to us upon entry. They have been written and treated with care, they matter. ‘I know it might feel as if I’m coming on too strong,’ we hear Menzo utter at one point. Taking away the ‘too’, I’d say yes, with *Darkmatter* she beautifully does. Not as an accusatory slap to my white face, but by means of a powerful audiovisual poem telling of the depths of Black experience, stressing how it still takes place in the back, somewhere behind the curtains. There, where peoples have been gasping for air, light and lightness of being for too long.

 (<http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=https://springbackmagazine.com/read/cherish-menzo-darkmatter/&t=Cherish Menzo: Darkmatter>).  (<http://twitter.com/home/?status=Cherish Menzo: Darkmatter - https://springbackmagazine.com/read/cherish-menzo-darkmatter/>).  (<http://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=https://springbackmagazine.com/read/cherish-menzo-darkmatter/&media=https://springbackmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Darkmatter-fotografie-Bas-de-Brouwernaamsvermelding-altijd-verplicht-2-web.jpg>).  (<http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&title=Cherish Menzo: Darkmatter&url=https://springbackmagazine.com/read/cherish-menzo-darkmatter/>).

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**The bottom line:** A fragment of a sci-fi movie? Rather an Afrofuturist monument to a perspective that is all too real

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 Frascati Theatre, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
 [www.frascattitheater.nl/nl/agenda/1045/Cherish\\_Menzo\\_Frascati\\_Producties\\_GRIP/D\\_A\\_R\\_K\\_MATTER/](http://www.frascattitheater.nl/nl/agenda/1045/Cherish_Menzo_Frascati_Producties_GRIP/D_A_R_K_MATTER/)  
[\(https://www.frascattitheater.nl/nl/agenda/1045/Cherish\\_Menzo\\_Frascati\\_Producties\\_GRIP/D\\_A\\_R\\_K\\_MATTER/\)](https://www.frascattitheater.nl/nl/agenda/1045/Cherish_Menzo_Frascati_Producties_GRIP/D_A_R_K_MATTER/)

Tour to through Netherlands and Belgium until 2023. Details:  
[www.grip.house/en/productie/4187/](http://www.grip.house/en/productie/4187/) (<https://www.grip.house/en/productie/4187/>)

Concept & choreography: Cherish Menzo / Creation & performance: Cherish Menzo, Camilo Mejía Cortés / Lighting design: Niels Runderkamp / Musical composition: Gagi Petrovic, Michael Nunes / Mastering: Gagi Petrovic / Scenography: Morgana Machado Marques / Costume design: Justtatty.Com / Dramaturgy: Renée Copraij, Benjamin Kahn / Text: Cherish Menzo, Camilo Mejía Cortés, Boisu, Shari Kok-Sey-Tjong / Vocal & delivery coaching: Boisu, Shari Kok-Sey-Tjong / Artistic advice: Christian Yav, Nicole Geertruida / Voices Distorted Rap Choir: via [www.distortedrapchoir.com](http://www.distortedrapchoir.com) / Technicians: Niels Runderkamp, Amber Stallenberg/Nele Verreyken / Production: Grip, Frascati Producties / Coproduction: Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels, BE), CCN-Ballet national de Marseille dans le cadre de l'accueil studio / Ministère de la Culture (FR), actoral festival (Marseille, FR), STUK (Leuven, BE), La Villette, Paris (FR), Beursschouwburg (Brussels, BE), Festival d'Automne à Paris (FR), De Coproducers (NL), Perpodium (BE)

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