

# thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: RAIR Residency

## transfiguration

### desire amaiya

Esther Baker and Bamba Diagne are the pilots in a spaceship to higher consciousness. i am strapped in. there's handmade flowers, trees, a disco ball, washes of blue spotlights, birds chirping. industrial materials amidst a natural landscape projected onto the back wall; a projection of clouds, a field. Baker is wrapped in pink tulle, pink glitter, and a flower headdress reminiscent of *Midsommar*. Diagne is wrapped in wire spaghetti, blue-grays the palette of his garb. there is a futuristic versus naturalistic image about the two of them together, but they work in tandem, rooted in connection. the first section is narrated by their soft hands, soft molding of the space, - shaping and seeing the world they are creating.

Hozier's *Work Song* rings out, a deep well of guitar, clapping, humming, groundedness.

*boys workin' on empty*

the first lyric, as the duo's billowing unison phrase characterized by grounded movements begins. there's a focus on one another that magnetically pulls you inward. seeing informs our perspective, as Baker searches for Diagne through the phrase work. they face opposite, dancing in a circular shape, serving the 360 view. audiences are on three sides; the pair plays the imagery to their advantage. their costumes unravel, simultaneously revealing and concealing them at once. seated on the floor, Baker catches my eye and smiles at me. she grabs a sequined eagles flag, and waves it before staking it in the grave of her costume.

*when my time comes around, lay me gently in the cold dark earth*

the qualities here shift as they become other than who they began as, pounding their chests, pushing with resistance in a downward motion. this undoing, shedding, brings to a raw form, closer to their inner selves. they drag the pieces of them/the costumes around as

they clean. we are given blue fabric to become the waves. the water. we are all the ocean. tugging, shaking, waving, billowing. open arms. compromise. connection. turbulence. they take their shoes off up stage, in a slow ritual.

they drag two blue bins downstage. they step inside. they each grab a sandwich bag filled with water. they splash/crash into each other. they become the water. they are soaked. crashing. they are recycling the elements, and themselves. they become what they were all along; water. home. crafted and uncrafted with care.

*no grave can hold my body down, ill crawl home to her*

[Soppi \(CHANGE\)](#), Icebox Project Space Gallery, Cannonball Festival, September 2, 5, 6 2024

Image One Description: Two Dancers , clad in billowing materials, move amongst piles of dusty cinderblocks.

Image Two Description: Two Dancers, clad in billowing materials, stand in front of a pile of debris. One holds a Philadelphia Eagles flag, the other waves hello to the camera in sunglasses.

By desire amaiya  
September 4, 2024