

THE STAGE

Juliet and Romeo review at Battersea Arts Centre, London – ‘expertly crafted’



Ben Duke and Solene Weinachter in Lost Dog's Juliet and Romeo. Photo: Tristram Kenton

by [Anna Winter](#) - Feb 19, 2018

Link: <https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/juliet-romeo-review-battersea-arts-centre-london/>

The most famous teenage lovers in Western literature didn't actually die. At least, not in Lost Dog's outstanding Juliet and Romeo, a darkly comic and despairing piece of dance-theatre devised and performed by Ben Duke and Solene Weinachter.

Having escaped to Paris, the pair live in the shadow of their youthful selves, Shakespeare having bestowed them with verse they never said and dramatic intentions – like poisoning themselves for love – that they never actually had.

Now they're in their 40s, burdened with secrets and seething resentments and seeking a new form of couple's therapy in which they play out memories and re-enact scenes from their 'story' in front of an audience.

It turns out that Juliet is keen on staging the death scene around the house, preferring poetic fantasy to the quotidian dullness of life with the real Romeo.

All this disappointment and disillusionment is deftly staged, the pain made manifest in superb sections of dance. There's a striking sequence in which they arrive at their Paris apartment, opening the door onto two plain kitchen chairs and a table. The breathless sense of adventure soon gives way to stasis and silence, an anti-climactic emotional chasm filled by an ugly, desperate dance of forcibly tangled limbs and limpet-like embraces.

Moments of hope emerge, like a shimmying dance to Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell as the clinical white light of the therapy room turns golden and dreamy, only to die away again. It's a bitter and lingering antidote to the age-old tropes of romantic mythology.

Choreographer Ben Duke: 'Surrounded by violence, I wanted to explore who we're angry with'