

# The Hubble Telescope finds a galaxy glowing strangely from behind a dark nebula

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This galaxy, IC 4633, shines brightly and beautifully in the center of the image. But if you look to the lower right, you can see dark streaks of dust blocking light from part of the galaxy.

The image was taken with Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys ACS system, combining data collected from the DECam instrument on the Víctor M. Blanco Telescope, located in Chile. By combining data from Hubble in space and DECam on the ground, astronomers have gotten a better look at IC 4633, currently located 100 million light-years away and obscured by dark dust. partially, but still shines extremely brightly.



This is a bustling, busy galaxy, with active star formation and harboring a bright center called the active galactic nucleus. Because IC 4633 is oriented toward Earth, we can see its characteristic spiral shape quite clearly. Spiral galaxies tend to be symmetrical, so it can be deduced that the bottom right part of the galaxy is obscured by something as the area is much less bright, most likely a dark nebula .

Scientists believe that the dust cloud blocking the view is part of a star-forming region called Chamaeleon, and that it is much closer to us than the galaxy it blocks. Chamaeleon is likely only 500 light years away, which is much closer to Earth than IC 4633.

When viewed in the visible light portion of the spectrum, the same wavelengths that the human eye sees (also known as optical), these dust clouds appear dark and featureless. Indeed, for many years astronomers considered such cosmic dust to be just an annoying ingredient that interfered with their observations. But in recent years, the importance of cosmic dust has become more clearly understood as a key player in processes such as star formation.

The gas dust becomes even more interesting when it is observed at infrared wavelengths, with instruments like those used on the modern James Webb Space Telescope. Instruments operating in the infrared can see through layers of dust to see hidden structures, such as concentric dust shells around stars or dust swirls in nearby galaxies. .

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