

# THE HUFFINGTON POST

This Is The Punk Rock Water Ballet We've Always Dreamed Of

By Priscilla Frank

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If you live in Los Angeles, you may recognize the name Ryan Heffington from his cult-followed Sweaty Sunday dance class in Silver Lake. If you are an art buff, you may know the name from his 2013 collaboration with painter Nolan Hendrickson titled KTCHN. And if you've gone on the internet in the past year, you know him as the choreographer of Sia's epic "Chandelier" video.

Now he's making a punk rock water ballet.

The piece, entitled "WADING GAMES," is described as a "true danse macabre that will fascinate, delight and call into question notions of mortality and survival." And yes, it's in water. The aesthetic experience will be scored by musician BANKS, with songs specially remixed for the performance, and accompanied by video film projection entitled TEOHPC (The Elements of Human Physical Communication) by creative studio Osk. The film was made using algorithmic software, yielding a fragmented, multifaceted and raw visual experience. The piece, which has been in the works for ten years, will take place for one night only, in the pool of the Ritz Carlton South Beach on December 4, 2014. We reached out to Heffington to learn more.

What exactly is a punk rock water ballet?

An elegant dance piece whose subversive narrative explodes with cut like movements and mental turmoil. The landscape evokes danger with the possibility of death yet still upholds elegance and class.

How do the dance elements and film elements interact in the piece?

Unlike the narrative nature of the dance work, the film (directed by OSK) dives into the psyche of the lead character, explores and exploits the mental fragility in great detail. It's much more personal. On stage you will witness how we get to understand such fragility. By interacting with other bodies, the lead character is thrown into a whimsical, untethered realm of strife and disconnect.

What intrigued you about Banks' "Waiting Game"? How was the song updated for this performance?

My connection to Banks' album 'Goddess' is severely emotional. There are phrases that ring in me everyday but the emotional quality of her voice is where my attraction lies. I can produce movements that parallel these levels of heartache, desire, and loneliness and these are woven to create a new narrative. Her music plays as a soundtrack to the dance work. I requested stems from her producer to intermix and rework four tracks for this piece to create the perfect tone and arc for this ballet. The warped darkness that is the music behind her voice, I mixed to repeat and repeat, allowing strictly the movement to take focus, unveiling relationships, connection or disconnect, therefore allowing the audience to attach to possibly a familiar sense of humanity.

What do you hope to communicate through the piece?

I hope to create a sense of awe in terms of connecting audience to dance as an art form. Within 11 minutes you will have the opportunity to witness the debilitating over action of the mind, so warped and deliberately narrated that one actually cares as a viewer. I'm not making a pretty aesthetically contrived piece, but a visceral journey that, if you have a heart, will cause transformation.

Ryan Heffington's Wading Games with video installation by Osk. Hosted by Sara Von Kienegger and the Art of Elysium. Presented by Mama Gallery. Performance begins promptly at 9:30pm on Thursday, December 4, at Ritz-Carlton South Beach pool (event open from 8pm-11pm).



Image credit: Still from TEOHPC (The Elements of Human Physical Communication) by Osk Studio. Courtesy of Osk Studio and MAMA Gallery