

## This Week in Theatre: “Opheliamachine”

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Frederique Michel of City Garage brings us another stunning piece of performance art. Magda Romanska (writer) uses the tortured relationship of Ophelia and Hamlet to convey a message that is as relevant today as it ever was with both political and emotional messages. The stage is so full of activity, it was hard for me to look away to take notes.



Frederique’s vision and creativity along with the brilliant writing of Magda Romanska takes us on a visionary exploration of love, politics, and confused emotions. Trapped by her own consciousness, Ophelia is gagged in a sense by oppression in a world of testosterone. She speaks to Hamlet as if she is his slave and captive. She reveals several characters where she regurgitates using her words of hatred, anger, love and confusion. She creates a space where she can explore the ugliness and the beauty of being a woman torn apart by her needs and desires.

Both Ophelia and Hamlet are separated by Ocean, unable to connect with their physical emotions. Frederique uses TV screens with constant news footage to convey the message of the world in gloom, while the large over screen shows us beauty, sex and the complexity of the world we live in. Hamlet (Joss Glennie-Smith) is glued to the TV using that acts as his medium for understanding the world around him. Wow, what a statement that is. We could relate that to today as men crowd around a screen in a sports bar watching guys with a ball fight for domination.

The metaphors are nonstop, making this an intense and complex work of art. I thought the use of the mating habits of a bed bug was an excellent scenario showing the power of the dominant male. Personally, I hate the thought of bed bugs, but it was fascinating to decipher the meaning. Kat Johnston (Ophelia) does a great job as the intellectual personality, while Megan Kim plays the terrorist personality who is full of hate and ready to revolt.

I wish I could say more about this but to be honest there is just too much there to interpret in a review, I would love to see it again. I am sure I would see it differently the second time and different yet again a third time. What I can say is please don’t miss this. Whether you fully comprehend it or just enjoy, it is a fabulous treat for your psyche.