Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Sink or Swim

Sarah Elgart · Wednesday, January 17th, 2018

I'm pleased to say the countdown has begun… The jury has met and in just two weeks **Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival** will announce the winning films. Meanwhile, all those of you who submitted, go rally your base for the Audience Choice Award today!

It's great to start the New Year right, and sometimes a little underwater ballet is just what we need. To whet your appetite (pun intended), today we have **Sink or Swim**, a visually lush short film from the Nowness: Just Dance series. It's hard to go wrong when you have a beautiful classical dancer, stunning lighting, slow motion, and water… I've seen dozens of films with these components and it's a winning combination almost every time. What is lovely about this short is the melding of shapes as the camera moves from under water to dry land in the studio or vice versa, often with movement beginning in one place and resolving in another. The slow motion, the dancer's body making gorgeous lines, the bubbles, the mostly subdued color in black, white and blue tones are visual eye candy for sure, but not sugar coated – there's actual substance intended here.

Beautiful Francesca Hayward in "Sink or Swim"

As per the liner notes the film is about a woman struggling with depression and was inspired by an oil painting from the Northern Irish artist Ian Cumberland. **Sink or Swim** is by a London based director, Louis-Jack, with dancer Francesca Hayward, a principal with The Royal Ballet, and was supported in part by The Royal Ballet, the extremely laudable Wayne McGregor, and the mental health charity Mind. The film opens very aptly with the sound of breathing, and melds into a moving score is by Matt Dunkley. The choreography by Charlotte Edmonds while a bit limited in its language by my contemporary standards works fine, and certainly shows off Haywards' gifts and beauty as a dancer.

While to my eye **Sink or Swim** might veer a little over the top at times, its reined in enough to have real substance, and of course beauty abounding. And sometimes in this day and age in order to get a point across, the subject matter is important enough to risk what might be construed as a surplus of emotion.

Enjoy.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4u_gLSp3AM

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