

Seattle Magazine Fall Arts Preview 2016: Dance

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Photo by Hayley Young

Mother of Invention - Ezra Dickinson

Seattle choreographer, dancer, and performance and visual artist Ezra Dickinson is a familiar and always arresting presence, whether dancing on Seattle's stages or on its gritty downtown streets. A standout performer in the Seattle-based Maureen Whiting Dance Company and co-director of The Offshore Project dance group, the ballet-trained Dickinson's solo work has more recently focused on the role his paranoid schizophrenic yet devoted mother played in the development of his imaginative, creative self.

In 2013, he gained critical praise performing a powerful stealth dance work on the streets and sidewalks of downtown Seattle, titled *Mother for You I Made This*, which was inspired by his childhood memories of simultaneously being raised by and caring for her. Dickinson performs his new work, *Psychic Radio Star* (a term his mother once used to describe herself), as a dance and large-scale installation that incorporates painting, animation, sculpture and spatial design to continue his ongoing exploration of this subject.

It's part art and part activism, he says.

“It will process my evolving relationship with my mother while encouraging healing and constructive conversation around the failed mental health care system in America.”

The show is based upon memories of his mother’s evocative language and the way words can distort and heighten our sense of reality. Through a sober recounting of a touching, painful and humorous personal experience, Dickinson takes on the notion of family, the nature of social stigma, and the strange connections between mental illness and the artistic practice.