

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Lisa Bardarson

Asimina Chremos Shares a Thorny Issue with thINKingDANCE

by Lisa Bardarson

Asimina Chremos is no stranger to the Philadelphia dance scene. She was a prominent presence in the City of Brotherly Love from the early 90's until she left for Chicago in 1997. A daring improviser and creator of performance art, her work often grapples with notions of identity, persona and non-conformity. These rebellious explorations achieve sharper meaning when the lens is focused on her dance beginnings: Chremos was a highly trained ballet dancer who gained soloist status with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre under the direction of Patricia Wilde.

After a ten-year stint in Chicago where she worked as an arts administrator for the independent venue Links Hall and as an arts journalist for Time Out Chicago Magazine and the Dance Insider, Chremos returned to Philly in 2010. She served as Program Specialist for the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage for a few years while performing her choreography under the anonymity of a pseudonym. Having recently left her position at Pew, she is now free to perform under her own name. She is also a freelance journalist for the arts and offers expertise as [explicator](#) for individual artists and cultural organizations.

Last week Asimina Chremos shared her experiences as dance writer and explicator at our thINKingDANCE monthly meeting. I was particularly captivated by her viewpoint on public versus private feedback. She recounted an anecdote surrounding a personal email she received in response to a review she had written. The review, written for Title Magazine, brought up a thorny boundary issue: when a reviewer reports on a performance in a public format is it appropriate to respond to feedback that is received privately? Chremos chose to not "touch" or read the dissenting viewpoint. Leaving the personally addressed email unopened in her in-box, she invited the dissenter to voice their feedback in the public arena under which her viewpoint had been broadcast. I admired her careful consideration of this ethical conundrum: Chremos respected the dissenter's privacy without compromising the integrity of the viewpoint she was holding publicly.

What continues to strike me about Chremos (I have known her since 1981) is her full-on engagement and commitment to push her creative envelope. I've witnessed her grow from her early days as a dedicated and obedient ballet dancer to a creator of original roles. Titling herself as an explicator for artists, she stakes a claim that is earned through personal practice and outside acknowledgement.

She desires to write it as she sees it and struggles with the notion of responsibility, voice, and witness. For me, and I believe for all of my colleagues at thINKingDANCE, this is a subject that is near and dear to our writing hearts.

Thank you Asimina for sharing your honed perspective to the writers at thINKingDANCE and thank you to our TD readership for posting their feedback, thorns and all.

By Lisa Bardarson

May 16, 2014