

thINKIngDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Becca Weber

Perspectives on Dance in Public Places

by Eleanor Goudie-Averill and Becca Weber

Photo on front page: Project Moshen, photo by Anne-Marie Gover. Above: Kùlú Mèlè, photo by Becca Weber.

Dance in Public Places (DiPP) is an initiative of Dance USA/Philadelphia that gave 37 Philadelphia area dancers the opportunity to perform in public spaces.

When preparing to conduct interviews for this piece, we were most curious about the experience of being observed while dancing in public places.



Stone Depot Dance Lab

Photo: Becca Weber

As choreographers (Eleanor for Stone Depot Dance Lab, Becca for Somanaut Dance), both of us were initially curious about the experience of being observed while dancing in public places.

As a whole, we found that the energy involved in being viewed became a part of the process too--making rehearsal more productive. Many of the choreographers we spoke with felt the same.

Below is a selection of interviews we conducted with other participants throughout the month.





Somanaut Dance

Photo: Tori Lawrence

The Choreographers:

Antoinette M. Coward-Gilmore, Artistic Director of Danse4Nia

It is always rewarding to see the organic reaction of onlookers who have never seen Danse4Nia or even conc

I truly believe the creative process in itself is intriguing enough to any onlookers without having to add extras

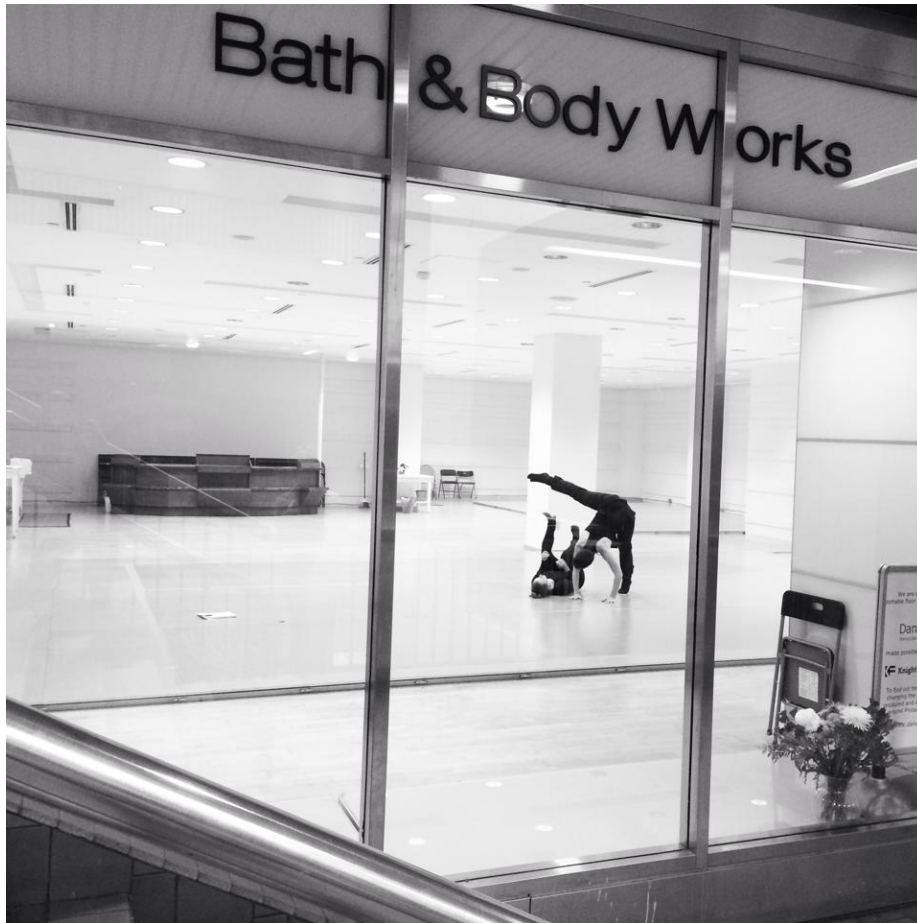


Kùlú Mèlé

Photo: Becca Weber

Dorothy Wilkie, Artistic Director of Kùlú Mèlé

Being observed was positive. It's like working through a piece with an audience where you don't have to give
DiPP gave Kùlú Mèlé great exposure in the Gallery. We had a lot of inquiry about classes and our performanc



RealLivePeople(in)Motion

Photo: Anne-Marie Gover

Gina Hoch-Stall, Artistic Director of RealLivePeople(in)Motion

As I prepared rehearsal material [for a new work] for our Dance in Public Places rehearsal I found myself growing

A large part of [an open rehearsal's] appeal stems from getting to be behind-the-scenes and to see the mess

Annie Wilson, independent choreographer

Being watched definitely puts pressure on us to be moving the whole time, to be focusing more on making more of a *Lovetits*, or the final version.

It's especially weird for me because I interact with an audience so much in performance, so to feel kind of like

I think the level of energy it requires is incredibly useful to me. A trap that I get into in the studio is sloth, for sure



The Ambassadors:

Hired by Dance/UP to serve as docents, the ambassadors connect viewers with the artists and the process of

Belle Alvarez

The first reaction people tend to have is, "Where do I sign up?" They ask if it is an open dance class or if they

My role as an ambassador is to educate the public about Philadelphia based dance companies. I facilitate au

The companies that have the most observations are usually the ones with loud music and/or 10+ company m



Ballet Fleming

Photo: Anne-Marie Gover

Ann-Marie Gover

A mother with her six children stopped by just yesterday and sat on the steps to watch Gabrielle Revlock and

My first week working, a group of girls, who looked like they were maybe 9 to 11 years old, stopped to watch

Studio dance and the media's view of mainstream dance (So You Think You Can Dance, Abby Lee, Dance M



Jose Mendez, Louisa Santiago, Sayyanah Bailey, and Sherry Sellard.
Photo: Becca Weber

The Onlookers:

Louisa Santiago

came with her husband to view dance and see how they could get involved. A security guard pointed them in

Jose Mendez,

commented, “The hand movements with the skirts were very entertaining. I’m learning how to dance hip hop

His sister, **Sayyanah Bailey,**

added, “It’s motivation; it’s so fun to dance. I learn from my dad because I watch him. He’s teaching me and

Sherry Sellard,

grandmother of the two. That viewing Dance in Public Places was a learning experience was a sentiment echoed

Sofia Papanikolaou, viewing Melissa Diane

I found it interesting, because I’ve never seen anything like that in public. Usually I see dance performances in

Tori Lawrence + Co.

Tori Lawrence + Co.

Photo: Tori Lawrence

Biana Levchenko, viewing Tori Lawrence + Co

I did learn that there are different types of dance. I never knew there was such a thing as Dance Film and I thought

Kelly Matyskiela, viewing Gabrielle Revlock and Nicole Bindler

The rehearsing seemed very unstructured, so I wondered how the routine would look on stage during a performance

Briana Odom, viewing Melissa Diane

I learned that there are more than the styles of dance that are highlighted in the media, like movies and TV shows

Tatyana Butterfield, viewing Somanaut Dance

Their dance caught my attention right away because I love contemporary modern. The music and the dance combined

Dance in Public Places, an initiative of DanceUSA/Philadelphia, February 1-March 1, 2014.

By Becca Weber
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