

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

What We Publish, How We Do It, and Why

by Mira Treatman

thINKingDANCE is a place where ideas thrive, where editors and writers engage one another in transformative dialogue, where we imagine a more just dance media landscape.

Dear Reader,

2021 will mark our tenth birthday! Over this past year, we have transformed our organization to better reflect our updated mission statement in our budget and operations, and to honor our collective's labor through more equitable pay. We are moving away from a top-down editorial structure to horizontal leadership where many voices run our publication through cooperation and collaboration.

In the spirit of having our operations more intentionally reflect our newly updated mission, we also want to open up more lines of communication with you, our readers, followers, artists we cover, and artists we have yet to engage.

Please read on for some nitty gritty about what we do, what we're prioritizing, and how we do it, in the form of our most frequently asked questions.

What is thINKingDANCE's new mission statement?

thINKingDANCE is a collective of independent writers who produce media about dance in its broadest sense. Founded in 2011, we publish a digital journal focused on the Philadelphia area. Our mission is to:

- Meaningfully contribute to the creative ecosystem by marking the presence of dance and movement-based arts
- Innovate and foster the practice of dance writing in traditional and experimental forms
- Work to dismantle dance criticism's status as a gatekeeper by engaging performing artists and writers who have historically been sidelined

We pursue these goals by training together through peer-critique sessions, with guest educators, and a two-tiered editing process. thINKingDANCE is a place where ideas thrive, where editors and writers engage one another in transformative dialogue, and where we imagine a more just dance media landscape.

How do artists request coverage at thINKingDANCE?

- Email your press release, pitch or article ideas to info@thinkingdance.net
- Send us a DM or tag us on Instagram [@thinkingdance](https://www.instagram.com/thinkingdance)
- Not sure about a press release or a pitch? Contact the Editorial Board for support at editor@thinkingdance.net

Are there deadlines for submitting?

Our writers and editors meet the first week of each month. At this meeting, writers sign up for their coverage and editors are assigned. While tD accepts pitches and requests for coverage anytime, we recommend you get in touch a month in advance and at minimum by the first of the month to ensure that we discuss your work. For example, for a performance on December 15, tell us about it by December 1 so it's on our radar and we can discuss it as a group.

How do we determine coverage?

Our editorial board is constantly researching what's happening in dance and performance in our city. Individual writers and editors share events and stories with the group using our internal listserv, and we've historically used local events calendars to stay on top of the scene. You can be part of this process by sending news and releases directly to editor@thinkingdance.net.

Who is on the non-profit board of directors?

Our [board](#) has twelve members, all of whom identify as dancers in some facet of their life. They are also parents, grandparents, tD writers, presenters, watercolorists, poets, curators, architects, professors, choreographers, hydrologists, and organizational strategists, with a majority residing in Philadelphia.

Who decides what our writers cover?

Our writers have their own free will to follow their interests and produce the stories they're available to cover, while also regularly self-auditing and reflecting on how their biases affect their coverage. We recognize that writers develop their interests in the context of cultures and intersecting identities. We work together to be thoughtful about whom we give media coverage, attending to who might be disproportionately covered or ignored. A rotating Lead Editor considers pitches from writers and the community each month. We try not to cover the same story or artist in the same month, except to offer contrasting points of view or jointly written pieces.

What are tD's editorial priorities?

Our editorial priorities are centered around our mission statement and what moves our writers. We empower each writer to pursue the topics that speak to them while also stretching their coverage. tD's editorial leadership encourages a self-critical lens on coverage. Recognizing a past practice of privileging white concert dance, our editorial team is interested in covering organizations with smaller budgets and leadership representing people of the global majority, women, Queer folks, and Trans people.

What's the policy on student performances?

tD does not cover artistic projects made by matriculated students at any level. For current students seeking future coverage, please reach out so that we can get to know you and see if there are ways you can get involved in our publication while you're still in school.

Does buying ads get me a review?

No, buying advertisements will not get you a review. Our writers are not involved in advertising sales and are unaware of ad placements until after they appear on our website.

Why doesn't the website look good on my phone?

We know our site needs an upgrade, and we're working on it! We want to be mobile-responsive, improve our language translating capacity, and make our site fully accessible. We are raising funds to transition to a new platform in 2021. We can't wait to show it to you!

How do writers join tD?

[We hold an open call for new writers annually](#). Applicants submit a cover letter and work sample to be considered. Both the letter and the sample can take the form of writing, multimedia, or something in between. Our Editorial Board and several writers collectively select new writers.

How do writers take on leadership?

Writers are not required to take on leadership, though we've discovered that editing is a great way to sharpen writing skills. After at least one year of contributing articles as a writer and editor, folks are welcome to join the editorial board after training. This system allows for the greatest number of people possible to lead and share responsibility over time.

Does tD use a style guide?

We believe our greatest value as a publication is the breadth of voices to whom we offer a creative home. tD is transitioning its editorial policy from relying solely on AP Style Guide to something more radical, fun, and anti-racist. We don't know exactly what this looks like yet, but we are committed to embarking on the journey towards re-making something that works for these purposes. We encourage all writers to create work in the language and style that feels best in their bodies and hearts. We empower our editors to see each writer and piece from a humanistic perspective, to achieve clarity and passion and to not to be rigidly beholden to grammar and semantics.

What are we doing to equitably pay our writers?

We have long struggled with writer attrition by some of our best and brightest minds, which we tie, in part, to low compensation and cultural barriers that privilege those who are historically holders of power. We are increasing writer pay and removing barriers to becoming a leader in our organization. Many of these changes are long overdue and part of a plan to retain our writers for the long term.

How does tD pay its writers and editors?

tD has compensated its writers and editors a small fee per article. The leadership, including editors-in-chief, executive directors, and managing editors, have historically earned the largest stipend. tD is now transitioning to a horizontal leadership model where a collaborative editorial leadership team shares these responsibilities and compensation. This shift makes it possible to pay writers more per article, with an increase from \$30 to \$50 per article.

Where does the money come from?

tD is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Following initial support from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, tD has received annual grants from the Philadelphia Cultural Fund and the PA Council on the Arts. tD receives [individual donations](#) from our readers and Board of Directors and earns a modest amount of income from advertising sales. We currently, and historically, have made all of our articles available online for free. In fact, you can read the entirety of our archive [here!](#)

What do you want to know about thINKingDANCE?

Write to us at info@thinkingdance.net. DM us or tag us in a post on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. We want to hear from you!

Yours at thINKingDANCE,

Mira Treatman, Managing Editor

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