

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

How to Audience

by Miryam Coppersmith and Kalila Kingsford Smith

Questions to consider when viewing a performance.

You know how to audience; you've probably been doing it for a long time. Maybe you even have your own rituals (like texting your mom whether she needs to see that show afterwards). At thINKingDANCE, we view performances both as audience members and critics. Our purpose as critics is to be the audience's advocate. If you didn't get to see the piece, what would you need to know in order to experience some part of it? Or to know what it was about? Or whether it succeeded in its goals? We try to put all of that into our writing. This process starts even before we enter the theater.

Here are some prompts for intention-setting and noticing that might deepen your viewing experience: before, during and after the performance. How do you audience?

Artistic Intentions:

Before: Think about the title, program image, and description for this piece. What do they tell you about the artist's intentions? Try to hold those in your mind as you experience the piece.

After: Think back to the program materials. Did what you experience align with their intentions? Were they successful? How do you know?

Strong Impressions:

As you witness the performance, notice the gestures, colors, sounds, words, etc. that create a strong impression.

Afterwards, close your eyes and think of the first memory from the performance that comes to mind. Feel it in your body. Describe that moment.

Interpretation:

Movement often is metaphorical, like poetry, rather than literal, like a book. What metaphors come up for you when witnessing this performance? How does that impact your interpretation of the work?

Cultural Contexts:

Who is this work for? Am I the target audience or not? How does that inform my interpretation and understanding of the work?

This resource is an extension of our program [Write Back Atcha](#) and was created in 2022 as part of a partnership with [Cannonball Festival](#).

By Miryam Coppersmith

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