

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Ellen Chenoweth

#mixingitup: 10 Hashtags Inspired by #GPSBodies

by **Ellen Chenoweth**

#GPSBodies is an experience that is a little bit like a treasure hunt and a little bit like a dance performance, all mediated through Twitter. Taking advantage of the fact that our phones are practically attached to us at all times, #GPSBodies turns them into an integral part of the performance.

The experience takes place on the streets of Center City, with participants watching and making short dance videos on their phones, exchanging banter with their unseen guide via Twitter, and wandering the streets. Before the performance begins, each participant receives a beginning location and instructions about a character to follow on Twitter, and then is guided through most of the experience by that entity. A story about a flirtation is loosely woven, with somewhat cryptic slips of pink paper containing bits of narration and posted in public places along the path, as if we were on an urban hiking trail marked by pink blazes.

#realness: The young performers—Jay Oatis, Drew Kaiser, and Kemar Jewel (Jewel also co-choreographed the work)—are simultaneously fierce and vulnerable, with beautiful authenticity.

#adorbs: It is really fun to bring kids on this journey, since it is basically a game. (Just screen for teenage/adult content as your parenting style desires.)

#mixingitup: The project tries out an innovative ticket structure. If you buy one ticket, you can invite up to 5 friends to join you on the same ticket. Awesome.

#collaborationforthewin: #GPSBodies is part of Philly Tech Week. The tech community doesn't have the best track record for [diversity](#) and [inclusion](#) (#understatement). The partnership between Attic Youth Center, project director/conceiver Marcel Foster, and PTW14 is

good for tech geeks, good for youth, and good for Philly.

#tinysquirtof Dopamine: For the duration of the performance, you will have new notifications on twitter every single time you check!

#whyilovephilly: There are beautiful, hidden side streets and eye-pleasing details everywhere. #GPSBodies heightens observation skills and draws you into noticing some of that beauty.

#picsoritdidnthappen: #GPSBodies leaves a trail of tweets in its wake; it's nice to have some documentation to remember the experience.

#artimitateslife: Dating has a lot of highs and lows, and can be tricky to navigate. Sometimes it's confusing and you're not sure what to do next. And then sometimes you get sweet, handwritten notes tucked away just for you.

#prepared: I arrived before the rest of my party and my previously assigned Twitter companion was ready with tasks for me to do while I waited, inviting me to share what I was seeing or to make a dance with my fingers.

#boom: #GPSBodies came out of discussions with Attic Youth Center young people about their experiences with mobile dating apps. The project will continue and its larger mission is safer dating and sex for queer youth. Who doesn't want to get behind that?

Who to follow for more information:

[@PhillyTechWeek](https://twitter.com/PhillyTechWeek)

[@MarcelWFoster](https://twitter.com/MarcelWFoster)

[@K_Jewel](https://twitter.com/K_Jewel)

[@AtticYouthCen](https://twitter.com/AtticYouthCen)

#GPSBodies, Performance Hypothesis, Center City Philadelphia, April 6-12, 2014. Tickets for April 12:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gpsbodies-tickets-10998686367>.

By Ellen Chenoweth

April 10, 2014