



Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation

Transitions in thINKingDANCE Leadership

by **Kalila Kingsford Smith**

Dear thINKingDANCE Community,

We are in a moment of exciting transition! You have probably seen the first articles published by our new cohort of writers who came onto our staff just a few months ago. You may have also heard rumblings of our new website launching soon. This has been a long-term goal rooted in our growth and what we know about the changing landscape of internet publication. These long-desired developments are a realization of some of the values and goals I have brought to my time as Executive Director at thINKingDANCE.

As these visions are now becoming reality, I have decided to make room for the next generation of leadership at thINKingDANCE and step down as Executive Director. I am excited to pass the pen to Miryam Coppersmith, who will be taking over as Executive Director starting this month. Miryam has worked closely with me over the course of my tenure, serving as the Operations and Programming Manager and on the Editorial Board. I have full confidence in her ability to lead tD and am excited to see how her vision shapes tD's future.

To support Miryam in taking up the helm, Ellen Miller will be stepping in as Assistant Director. Ellen has served on the Editorial Board and is currently managing the transition to our new website. We couldn't think of a better choice to support Miryam in this transition.

I have served four and a half years as the Director of thINKingDANCE, including my early time as Co-Director with L. Graciella Maiolatesi. My primary goals have been to make this organization more sustainable and equitable, to include our internal staff in the collective dreaming of what tD can be for Philadelphia's dance ecosystem, and to bring justice oriented visions into thINKingDANCE's leadership and writing practices. Most of this labor has happened quietly, behind the scenes at tD, where small changes have made way for better support systems and facilitated the collective interests of our writers. Together with Miryam, we revamped tD's budget to move towards equitable pay for writers, editors and administrative staff. We worked to increase the accessibility of our writing by including image descriptions with guidance from Editorial Board member Rachel DeForrest Repinz. Emerging out of a time when pandemic restrictions caused a loss of community connections, we started focusing more on creating spaces for community for both our staff and with you, our writers. I am excited by what our new team of event planners, Caitlin Green, Lauren Berlin, and des amaiya, are planning for in the future, including more events like Write Back Atchas and drINKingDANCE. We made sure you can hear about all our exciting writing and events through our social media and newsletters, thanks to the work of Emilee Lord and Ziyang Cui. We brought on and trained new writers and editors, increasing our ability to provide crucial critical response for dance in Philadelphia and beyond with our stellar Editorial Board.

As you can tell, it takes a village. I am certain that with all of the energies of the staff members committed to tD, the organization is in good hands. And, of course, we couldn't do it without your support. Thank you for reading thINKingDANCE, coming to our in person events, following our social media, and donating to support our publication. I hope you continue with us on this journey.

If you want to join us in celebrating these transitions in person, come to our [Fringe Festival Kickoff Party on Sept 1...](#) Let's toast to the future of tD together!

With care and sincere excitement about what's next for thINKingDANCE,

Kalila Kingsford Smith

Executive Director of thINKingDANCE, 2021-2025

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