

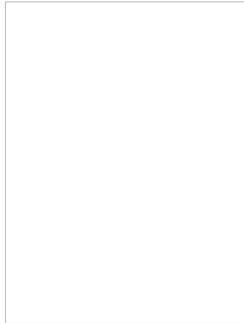
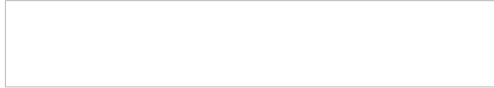
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Wednesday, January 11, 2012

On Writing Dance

By sydnielianamosley

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Last night the Junior Committee had the privilege of sitting and talking with dance writer [Eva Yaa Asantewaa](#). Forever a student, I listened intently taking notes on what she finds important when writing about dance because let's face it - writing about dance performance is not always the easiest thing to do.

First, she stated that she is not so invested in the term "dance critic." Instead of criticizing what she sees per se, she is more interested in bringing her personal experiences to the reader. She said, "We are bodies watching bodies... and what emerges from that experience is precious." How refreshing. Seriously, when is the last time you read a review and you felt the author wasn't distantly looking down his or her nose at the performance? When is the last time you read a review that you actually felt was in support of the artist, and of the dance field as a whole?

Other advice she offered on writing about dance included:

- Create a vivid, telling impression of a work but not a detailed play by play
- "The writer has to be a full person," so that you bring your own voice and ideas
- Try to understand the values that the work comes from: both a linear history, as well as broad contemporary context

In my own work as a dancer and choreographer, I highly value the audience experience. I was so pleased to have a conversation with a writer who also values the audience experience, and seems invested in bridging a connection between artists and audiences. Eva Yaa Asantewaa understands her position as an advocate for the field as a whole, and she struck me with one of her closing comments: "We need to offer people in our society more courage to look at dance."

Absolutely. Yes we do.

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