



# REVIEW

## Living on the Fringe

*In the second of a two-part series, a resident discusses her artistic involvement in the citywide extravaganza.*

**By Fred Durso Jr.**  
REVIEW STAFF WRITER

When it comes to performance art, Jodi Netzer is a jack of all trades. Dance, theater, puppetry, video projection and stilt-walking are just a few she has delved into.

"I have a love for all of these forms of expression, though I believe it all comes

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from the same place, the same core," the resident of the 4800 block of Windsor Avenue said. "It doesn't matter what medium you use. It's more about the passion, the connection to the subject matter and what is wanting to be communicated."

This bond she tries to create with her audience was evident during her 2003 Philly Fringe show. For three days, she lived in an 8-foot plywood box, writing on its walls while responding to handwritten notes sent through a peephole. Her containment, she said, made reference to those in every type of confined area — from prisons and asylums to office spaces and living rooms.

Now, she is placing her unique mark on this year's Fringe, taking place through Sept. 16 in conjunction with the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, with her debut of "Earthquakes." Through this collaborative work, Netzer, 31, is once again trying to spark reaction.

"I like that the work brings out some personal experience, but also has a deep connection to issues around ecology, social justice and holistic health."

**A 1997 GRADUATE** of Drexel University, Netzer majored in graphic design with a film, video and theater concentration.

The resident was introduced to dance through the college's Group Motion Dance Company, where she would "ritualistically go to their Friday night workshops." Eventually, Netzer created video projections and



Jodi Netzer was responsible for organizing the first Philly Fringe 10 years ago. She is now debuting her show "Earthquakes" this month.

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graphic designs for the group.

Considering herself a sponge when learning new movements, she took classes in improvisation and butoh, a form of modern Japanese dancing. In January, she went to Prague for a workshop conducted by Teatr Novogo Fronta, a Czech-Russian physical theater group.

No stranger to the Fringe, Netzer said she was responsible for organizing the event during its initial stages 10 years ago. She served as art director in its third year and later performed in her own show, "The Bumpin' Big Top," in '02 and '03.

Though she thinks the Fringe has become

more corporate over the years, Netzer feels fortunate the event exists so she can expose her work to a wider group.

"I feel like I can bring [my art] to a theater-going audience so they get some more depth out of their theater-going experience," she said.

Her newest performance, "Earthquakes," might seem like a mixed bag, but Netzer promises it's interconnected. An hour before her show, Brooklyn-based collective Saviour Scraps, along with performance group HAAK, will conduct a piece where they are buried up to their knees. Once Netzer gets "pulled" into the ground, "Earthquakes" begins.

During the scene "Trash 'n' Fashion Show," dancers will don papier-mâché masks while others wear stilts. Through a six-minute video presentation by the Project for Nuclear Awareness, the performance also makes reference to ecological problems, such as waste, throughout the world.

The second scene, titled "Fear," has completely covered dancers playing "shadows," followed by the final scene, "Interconnectivity."

"I'd like people to be more aware of ecological issues," Netzer said. The show "also is about addressing the deepest fears and to do those things, you bring about interconnectivity."

"There's a lot of negative energy out there," said Netzer, adding "as long as we focus on positive energy, that's how people can connect in a more genuine, real way. There would be no need for violence with the support of expressionism through the arts."

Netzer plays a character named "The Quake" during the performance, which "shakes things up a bit."

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—Artist Jodi Netzer, on the Philly Fringe

After her show, Teatr Novogo Fronta will present "Dybbuk," which is based on a Yiddish legend where the spirit of a deceased person enters a woman's body.

Furthering her collaborative efforts, Netzer is continuing to work on her newest endeavor, The Conscious Collective. While this group is still in the formation stage, Netzer's goal is to work with artists who can share their passion for the benefit of others.

"I love to give people an experience they take home with them, that they are challenged by, that they can ask questions to themselves and each other," she said. **SWR**

"Earthquakes" is 3 and 8:30 p.m. Sept. 9 and 3 p.m. Sept. 10 at the Community Education Center Meeting House Theatre, 3500 Lancaster Ave.

For more information on the Philly Fringe and tickets for the show, visit [www.livearts-fringe.org](http://www.livearts-fringe.org) or call 215-413-1318.