INTRODUCTION

Seeing a dance performance with children requires a bit of preparation to ensure that they find it enriching and stimulating.

That is why we developed this teaching tools. It provides tools that will help you better understand the themes explored in the performance and assist you in your research.

Before seeing the show, we suggest that (if possible) you first talk to your students about the company Bouge de là (see page 2), and discuss the context in which the piece was created and its intent (pages 3 to 5). You might also want to try one or more of the proposed activities (pages 6 and 7).

After the show, we suggest that you engage the children in various appreciation activities, based on what they remember from the performance. We also suggest that you start a discussion about the children's perceptions about the themes explored by the piece or certain parts of the choreography, or encourage them to draw anything that they found striking.

Choreographer Hélène Langevin warmly encourages the children to share their impressions with her by sending drawings they have made following the show. The drawings can be sent to publics@bougedela.org.

THE COMPANY

Bouge de là is one of the rare professional dance companies in Quebec focused exclusively on creating dance performances for young audiences. Founded in 2000 under the artistic direction of Hélène Langevin, Bouge de là presents contemporary dance performances that draw upon a variety of disciplines: video, theatre, shadow play, etc. The company’s varied and playful creations appeal to children’s curiosity, and usher them into a world of emotions that stimulate the imagination. Eager to convey to their young audiences the pleasure of movement, the company also offers dance workshops in schools.
THE STUDIO
When dance meets the visual arts

An artistic “blind date.” This was choreographer Hélène Langevin’s dream in opening dance to the influence of the visual arts in her new show, The Studio. How could a dialogue be established between these two forms of expression? How could they be engaged, in their differences as well as their natural affinities?

Sensitive to the lines, rhythm and space in painting and sculpture, the choreographer plunged into the art of the 20th century, its major themes, and the leading artists of the time. She was attracted to the work of Jean Dubuffet, Sonia Delaunay, Jackson Pollock and René Magritte, as well as Expressionism and Pop Art, and they served as a point of departure for the choreography and sets created for the performance.

Onstage is an artist’s studio. This space for invention and creativity is full of surprises. It is a place where ideas burst forth, blending together and taking off in all directions. The four dancers – Audrey Bergeron, Nicolas Labelle, Jean-François Légaré and Jessica Serli – treat the studio as a magical treasure chest, playing with everything they find: fabric, frames, paintings and props and accessories of all sorts. Inventive and curious, they alter, reshape and transform the objects at hand in a game where there is only one rule - to have fun! Paintings spring to life before our eyes, turning into enchanting dance and movement in an ebb and flow that is driven by the whims and imagination of the performers, who joyously plunge into a universe of their own making.

The creative momentum of the four dancers/artists produces striking choreography and tableaux full of dynamic motion. Some of these are filmed, and immediately processed and transformed by means of image capture software, and then projected as a live onstage broadcast. The video offers a different view of what is happening onstage, showing, for example, the line created by a body in movement. Video is thus an integral part of the performance, which becomes a vibrant mingling of dance, painting and the visual arts.

A veritable ode to the creative spirit that lies in each of us, The Studio explores colours, line and movement, transporting young audiences into an enchanting world that stimulates their senses, inherent performing ability and curiosity.

Direction and choreographic creation
Hélène Langevin
with the collaboration of the dancers

Dancers
Audrey Bergeron
Nicolas Labelle
Jean-François Légaré
Jessica Serli

Choreography assistance
Sophie Michaud

Dramaturgy
Mélanie Dumont

Designers
Pierre-Marc Beaudoin (video)
Bernard Falaise (music)
Véronique Bertrand (sets and costumes)
Lucie Bazzo (lighting)

Duration 55 minutes
Age group 5 years and up
INTERVIEW WITH HÉLÈNE LANGEVIN

Why did you want to link dance to painting?
I've always loved the visual arts, and I wanted to see how a painting or an artistic period could influence my choreography. What could painting (art in two dimensions) have in common with dance (in three dimensions)? How could our vision of one influence our perception of the other? I try to visualize the space on stage as a great canvas that is painted, or erased or painted over, thereby becoming a playground that is constantly being transformed.

What was the impetus behind The Studio?
I began with an enormous amount of research in order to find some paintings that would appeal to my sense of movement, my imagination. As I conducted my research, I began to hone my view and was able to see how each artistic movement has its own themes and lines of enquiry that can be expressed in choreography in a way that speaks to children.

What artists inspired you?
I set my sights on the paintings and sculpture of the 20th century and the European and American artists who were most influential. I wanted to make it easy for teachers to do their own research if they decided to give a workshop on art or on movement. Finally I narrowed the field down to Jean Dubuffet, Sonia Delaunay, Jackson Pollock, René Magritte and the Expressionist and Pop Art movements.

What is your goal with this show?
I hope it will stimulate children's creativity and imagination and show them how to play with materials, how to use the body to transform materials. I want viewers to feel the pleasure of creation, such that the children, when they go home, will want to undertake creative experiments with whatever is at hand.

Why did you decide to use video?
This show is a meeting of the visual arts and dance. I want to show children how contemporary artists work, and video is an integral part of contemporary art. Here, it serves this purpose particularly well. Just as the painter's movement produces a line, a dot, or a design on canvas, I show the line left by movement on a screen. Using software that modifies the image captured by the camera in real time, we develop very interesting, almost magical images. It's colourful, entertaining and stimulating. Children will love it!
The Studio - Bouge de là

With Magritte’s surrealism, we introduce two headless characters and a rabbit. As for Pop Art, I was inspired by the movement’s festive sense. It’s the spirit of performance, of a “happening,” and the star quality that we see on stage.

Jackson Pollock represents the energy expended by the body in the act of painting. I created the sequence based on the words “dripping, pouring, flinging, splashing,” the words Pollock himself used to describe his technique. The dancers hold on to large pieces of coloured fabric that become paintbrushes that they use to splash and splatter all over the performance space.

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For Jean Dubuffet, raw art is a spontaneous form of art that functions beyond the limits of conventional aesthetic standards. In this painting we see people in frames, they resemble children’s drawings. I wondered what these characters would have to say, and I wanted to see them express themselves through movement. In this sequence, the body can express an emotion and be theatrical, but the movement is raw and natural.

© Jean Dubuffet Estate / SODRAC

The work of Sonia Delaunay is full of circles. We therefore worked on the pure line of the circle and where the circles join, in space. In this sequence, the circle dominates the search for movement, and the dance is more abstract.

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PAINTING AS CHOREOGRAPHY

As the show unfolds, Hélène Langevin constantly transforms the visual image, our perception of the set, the space, the lines, the energy. The objective is to have the audience experience the painting. The choreographer provides several examples of how certain paintings influenced her stage picture.

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Pollock-Krasner Foundation
SODRAC (2010)
1. **Create a fresco inspired by the Fernand Léger piece “Les grands plongeurs noirs”**

**OBJECTIVES**
- To discover the works of contemporary painters
- To explore the notion of body image

**AGE GROUP**
Children aged 5 to 8 (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

**MATERIALS**
Child-high lengths of paper, poster paint (gouache), scissors, pencils, paint brushes, glue

© Succession Fernand Léger / SODRAC (2010)

1. Trace the form of each child’s body or body parts (arms, legs, feet) on a large piece of paper that has been placed on the floor. Have each child lie down on the paper, with another child tracing the contour of the prone body. Ask the children to make a shape with their bodies: lying down, foetal position, arced backward, etc. Place the arms, legs and torsos in a variety of positions. Use a pencil to trace each body shape on the paper.

2. Cut out each body shape obtained, and paint each shape a single colour: yellow, red, green, black, blue, orange.

3. Use black gouache to trace the outline of each body shape.

4. Position the shapes on the fresco. They can be superimposed, intertwined, inverted, etc. Pay attention to colour placement. Glue the biggest shapes to the fresco first. Follow with bodies and half-bodies, and end with details and small shapes.

N.B. The size of the paper used is important. If it is too big, the fresco will appear to be empty.

2. **The Sculptor, the Model and Clay – Body Observation Exercise**

**PROCEDURE**

Split the group into teams of three children each.

The child representing clay squats down into a ball shape. The child playing the model takes a position standing, sitting or lying down – a position that makes use of the arms, legs and back, with the entire body fully engaged.

The child who is the sculptor looks at the model and manipulates the clay-child to recreate the position taken by the model. The clay-child lets himself be manipulated and follows the sculptor’s instructions.

**VARIATIONS**
1. Copy the identical shape, or its mirror image.
2. In teams of five, increase the level of difficulty by having two lumps of clay and two models, with one sculptor manipulating both lumps of clay.
3. A POLLOCK-INSPIRED COLLECTIVE PAINTING

Pollock invented action painting, where the movement of the body leaves its mark on the canvas. The colours and the marks they make become the subject of the painting. He would place the canvas on the floor and, moving his arm to the rhythms of background jazz music, would throw and splatter paint on it, or let paint drip down onto the canvas.

1. ACCUMULATION
   Let each child draw one or two lines on the blackboard, but with the entire body involved in the movement of the arm. The line left on the painting is influenced by the action of the body - jumping, rushing forward, falling, swinging, reversing, zigzagging. The trajectory of any given line is thus determined by chance.

2. DECONSTRUCTION
   Once everyone in the group has participated and the painting is full of colours, have six children make a single swipe of the hand to erase part of the image.

3. SUPERIMPOSITION
   In groups of three, the children approach the painting and draw recognizable forms on it - a circle or square, a heart, a car, an airplane, a triangle, letters, numbers - filling in the shapes with colours or lines and outlining the shapes with a contrasting colour. Make sure that each child gets involved.

And ta da! An action painting!
Dance is the art of moving the human body in space and time. Who hasn’t danced at least once in their life? Whether you dance to burn off excess energy, to explode with unbridled joy or simply to stretch your legs! Dance is an incredible way to express yourself: body language is universal. It is understood by everyone. A moving body speaks to us, it tells us countless things. We dance in response to a universal drive, and this is independent of gender. Both boys and girls feel the need to let off steam, invent movements, and see where their bodies can go.

The choreography is the series of movements that make up a dance performance. The word comes from the Greek words khoreia, which means “to dance,” and graphein, which means “to write.” A piece of choreography is generally developed around a theme. We may want to tell a story or talk about something in the news, an emotion, or a person. Sometimes choreography only transmits some energy or abstract images that you shouldn’t try to understand. You just have to let yourself be open to the sensations it provokes.

Professional dancers are people who have decided to dedicate themselves to dance, to make it their profession. Professional dancers go through unusually demanding physical training, much like a top athlete. The training is hard, since dancers need to have both strong muscles and great flexibility. In rehearsals, dancers either repeat the movements shown to them by the choreographer or invent movements by improvising. During a performance, they dance the movements of the choreography.

Some References

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