



PRESENTS

THROUGH MY EYES

TEACHER'S GUIDE



WELCOME!

To you, teachers and educators:

First, a big thank you for providing cultural outings for children! I am convinced that you will appreciate this specially conceived show for young children aged 3 and up.

Going to the theatre means embracing the imaginary, our senses and magic. It means sharing a moment together.

In a dance show, a story is told with the body rather than with words! Dance requires a sense of movement and has the power to communicate the pleasure of moving. I invite you to let this young audience react freely to the dancers' movements.

It was such an immense pleasure for me to delve into the universe of young children. The gaze of these great explorers and their enthusiasm for discovering, manipulating and transforming the world of matter that surrounds them inspired me. Let yourself surrender to the unexpected; do not seek to understand, but rather to see with your senses! That is the experience I wish for you.

Enjoy the ride!



Hélène Langevin
Artistic Director and Choreographer



Photo © Rolline Laporte

BOUGE DE LÀ IN SHORT

Created in 2000 under the artistic direction of Hélène Langevin, choreographer, Bouge de là is one of the rare professional dance companies in Québec devoted exclusively to creating dance presentations for children. By fusing dance with other artistic disciplines (video, theatre, shadow play), the company offers contemporary dance performances full of humour and poetry. Perhaps you have seen one of the company's past performances, such as *The 26 Letter Dance*, *Bedtime!* or *The Studio... Through My Eyes* is the 8th dance piece by Bouge de là.

MISSION

The mission of Bouge de là is to create and perform prime quality dance works for young audiences and to develop a multitude of cultural mediation activities that promote dance. This action is deployed nationally and internationally. Children are at the heart of the company's approach. Bouge de là offers them a beneficial and joyful dance experience, eliciting the full range of their senses and awakening in them the desire to embrace movement.

VISION

Bouge de là aims to give as many children as possible the opportunity to discover dance, to express themselves through movement and to experience the thrill of dancing with others. The company hopes that this process of discovery will create a significant and lasting impact on their lives.



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THROUGH MY EYES

A dancer comes on stage and discovers a ball. Intrigued, she moves towards it, carefully. As soon as she touches it, the magic of the stage is unleashed: the lights come up, the decor appears all around her, shadows play their tricks... and transform one dancer into many! Now there are four of her to play together and discover a constantly changing environment: a graphical world made up of forms, colours, textures, sounds and illusions. A topsy-turvy playground where dance continually shifts with the context, this performance full of surprises invites audiences to see the world afresh through the eyes of a child who is discovering it.

An ode to the power of imagination, *Through My Eyes* stimulates the child's senses and brings us back to one of the loveliest things about childhood: a tireless capacity for wonder.

Audience: **3 YEARS & UP**
Approximate length: **40 MINUTES**



Photo © Rolline Laporte

APPROACH AND VISION

What was the starting point in your creative process for *Through My Eyes*?

At the very beginning, I thought I would use the “babies” number that opens the show *Bedtime!* (2013) as a starting point. It had been very successful with both children and adults, and I wished to extend my research in that direction to create a 40-minute show especially for younger children. Coincidentally—this was in the fall of 2017—I had gone to the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art to see an exhibition of Olafur Eliasson, an artist who works with coloured lights and shadows. The exhibition inspired me to use shadows to duplicate the dancer’s body, and I felt like playing with that

illusion. I questioned myself about the meeting of these two dimension on stage: the body and its shadows. I also wanted to explore those elements that so often populate a child’s world: balloons, costumes, musical toys, curtains, the sounds of nature.

But everything changed at the first creation residency in January 2018. During a production meeting, our set designer, Marilène Bastien, suggested we place a black-and-white striped floor mat in front of the backstage curtain. Then, our lighting designer, Lucie Bazzo, proposed to add very vibrant colours to the white mats: green, orange and fuchsia. On seeing all of these elements together on stage, my vision of the show took a 180-degree turn! Everything had become so highly graphic: the round balloon against the lines on the floor, the set design colours, the black shadows, the backlit dancers. Exit the babies: we were going to plunge headlong into a completely new creation!

And what did this new vision entail?

I realized almost immediately that this show was going to be highly visual, colourful and graphic. I had the urge to play with abstract matter, such as colours, shapes, shadows and sounds. I used the circle shape as a connecting thread: the balloon's spherical form, the circle of light, the bubbles, eyes. By prioritizing the sense of sight, I indulged in the fun of creating mysterious shadows, playing with set transformations through colour, multiplying coloured shadows.

How does dance fit in with this research process involving colours, forms, and so on?

Usually, the first thing I do is develop choreographies in the studio with the dancers, adding the staging components at the end of the process. For this creation, however, the opposite occurred! Abstract elements dictated my dance numbers: I was choreographing with the balloon, its bounce, its repetitive action, its image; transforming the black and white stripes underfoot into a keyboard on which the dancers would play the piano; letting the sounds of toy instruments dictate embodied textures; accepting that a shapeless costume could maintain its abstract form while going through metamorphosis; working on the duplication of the body and its shadow; renewing the set design through changes of colour and lighting...

And how does the child experience this abstraction?

The world is made up of matter. Children discover and explore that matter with their senses from the moment they are born. Through all the abstraction that attends to this show, it was important for me to make lots of room to accommodate children's gaze, their perspective on matter: pleasure, play, repetition, discovery, sensations, transformation. All of these elements are part of the dance that makes up this show, and children are naturally drawn to the dynamics of movement. *Through My Eyes* gives a wide berth to the child's imagination and to the ways in which children interpret what they see. Dance is like a picture book—or a book of poetry: each spectator is free to read it in his or her own way. Because what is happening is seen “through my eyes...”



Photo © Rolline Laporte

ABOUT DANCE

WHAT IS DANCE?

“With dance we use another language with children, the language of the body. It is a means of expression little used in the classroom, yet it opens up a whole new world, a world without speech. It allows us to get beyond the divisions of language and culture, providing access to a poetic, universal language [...]. Dance is for one and all: girls and boys, the overweight and the skinny, the able-bodied and persons with disabilities, the young and the old.*”

* Excerpt from *La danse pour tous les enfants à l'école*, by Marie-France Bonnard (Éditions Retz, collection Pédagogie pratique, Paris)

DANCE HAS MANY BENEFITS:

- ⊙ Reducing stress, for a body in rhythmic motion helps clear the mind
- ⊙ Developing kinetic, spatial and musical intelligence;
- ⊙ Increasing concentration
- ⊙ Improving posture, musculature, coordination and endurance
- ⊙ Raising self-esteem
- ⊙ Strengthening the individuals in their basic nature and well-being

DANCE ALSO MEANS:

- ⊙ Taking delight in body movement
- ⊙ Inventing our own personal movements
- ⊙ Discovering new ways of thinking, imagining and creating
- ⊙ Using the body to express images, states of being and feelings



WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY DANCE?

“It is not a story with a beginning, a middle and an end, but instead a series of images, scenes that express an idea, an emotion, an expression, a universe. It is not a form that needs to be understood. [...] It is not coded language like classical ballet or a spoken language such as French or English. It is a place where each choreographer invents their own language of movement.”*

* *Ibid.*

TALKING ABOUT DANCE WITH CHILDREN

There are many different styles of dance, from ballet to hip-hop, not to mention contemporary dance, breakdance, tap dance, tango, salsa, folk dancing, etc. The basis of all these styles is the body. The body is the dancer's instrument. Dancers must know and develop their bodies and work on endurance, flexibility, coordination and agility. People all over the world dance—and have been dancing since the dawn of time. Dancing is another form of human expression. It is a way of connecting with the self, of clearing the mind and letting the body speak! Dancing is a great source of joy, whether dancing alone or with others.

Ask kids the following questions to get them talking about their relationship to dance:

- ⊙ How would you describe dance?
 - ⊙ Do you dance at home?
 - ⊙ When do you dance?
 - ⊙ Who do you dance with?
- ⊙ Do you make up dance shows with your friends, or with your brothers and sisters?
 - ⊙ What do you like about dance?
- ⊙ Do you know different styles of dance?
 - ⊙ What style do you prefer?

ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE



© Dominic Gauthier

PREAMBLE

To express itself fully, dance requires space! For all dance activities, we recommend clearing desks from the centre of the classroom to make space and allow for easy movement, without injury. If you have only a little space, divide the group in two for ease of exploration.

Activities can be adapted for any level from kindergarten up to mid-primary school. Motor responses will vary with the children's age.

Dance does not come with right or wrong answers. To begin, the body's natural expression must be encouraged and not subjected to judgment.

THE CIRCLE DANCE

The whole class forms a circle holding hands. The centre of the circle should also be the middle of the room. This dance activity may be done with any up-tempo music of your choice:

- The circle turns
- The circle moves to the right
- The circle moves to the left
- The circle closes in as everyone moves towards the centre
- The circle opens as everyone moves away from the centre

Note: You can vary the kinds of movement according to the children's level of agility: walking, galloping or skipping.

CIRCLE AND LINE

A circle is a line that is joined at the ends; a line is a circle that is undone. In this variant of the exercise, the circle becomes a line, then becomes a circle again.

- Designate a child to be the head of the line; the child beside that child (immediately to their left or right) will therefore be the end (or tail) of the line.
- The circle turns, then the head of the line breaks away from its tail.
- The head steers the line and wanders throughout the room making spirals, semicircles, winding its way all around the room, and so forth.
- The head and tail rejoin to remake the circle.
- Designate two other children to be the new head and tail. Repeat the previous actions.

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

- Make two circles: a smaller circle inside a larger one.
- The two circles turn in opposite directions.

SOLOS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CIRCLE

- One child dances in the middle of the circle.
- Classmates clap the rhythm with their hands and encourage the dancer.
- Have the children do short solos, duets or trios.

DANCING SHAPES

Imagine your whole body is made of play dough: it can easily be changed and take on different shapes. Explore the following shapes one by one, moving your arms, your legs and your back:

- stretched-out shape
- small shape
- round shape
- crooked shape

Process

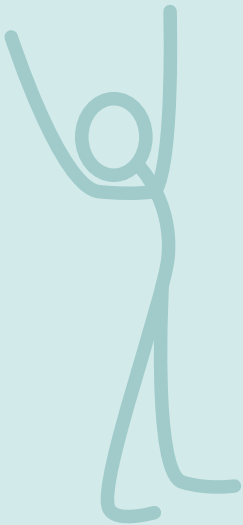
Step 1

Make one of the shapes with your whole body. To lively music, for 30 to 40 seconds, come up with a way of moving your body around the space. This is your shape's dance! You can mix up these activities in your dance: walking, galloping, skipping, turning, jumping, sliding and rolling.

Step 2

When the music stops, make your body take on a different shape. Make up a different dance with your new shape. Let your shape tell you how it wants to dance!

Repeat steps 1 and 2 as many times as you wish.



MUSIC AND THE BODY

Ideally, create a playlist containing many styles of music, for example: energetic, calm, techno, classical, a style from a different culture, robotic, rock 'n' roll, disco, and so forth. The music needs to change each minute.

Process

You will hear different kinds of music. Let yourself be inspired by what you are hearing: the music will tell you how to move! Your body will feel it. Have fun dancing in different ways: use your arms and legs, and draw on your repertoire of actions: walk, jump, roll, gallop, skip, slide... let your body move freely. Let the movements your body wants to make be free to act.

THE BODY AND VISUAL ARTS

Material

- large sheet of paper or roll of paper
- wax crayons or gouache
- black marker
- coloured chalk

Preparation

Place a large sheet of paper on the floor or stick it to the wall with tape—or roll out paper on the floor.

Process

Step 1

On the paper, the teacher traces the outline of a child's open hand in thick black marker. Next the teacher positions the arm and hand of another child on the paper, superimposing the contours of this hand and arm on the previous outline. For each child, vary the direction in the arm (up, down, sideways). Vary the shape in the arms (straight, folded, curved).

Step 2

Children then colour only in the intersections of the lines. Once this step is finished, they can paint the background of the drawing.

And there you have it! The magic of colour lets us see the contours of arm-hands in a completely different way! It's as though the arms and hands were dancing together.

Variations

Variation 1

If you do not have the requisite paper on hand, you can also use a blackboard and coloured chalk.

Variation 2

If you have access to a very large sheet of paper, you can trace the outlines of each child's entire body instead of just hands and arms.



INSPIRATION



TEAM

SHOW

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