



STUDY GUIDE

A film by Ephrat Asherie

Inspired by the abstract drawings of Mo Willems

Directed and choreographed by Ephrat Asherie

Co-commissioned by

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Table of Contents

EAD Company Bio	3
Ephrat Asherie Bio	4
Mo Willems Bio	5
The Dancers & Additional Credits	6
About the Film	8
Try it Out!	9
Think About...	11
What to Look and Listen For	12
Resources and Further Learning	13

National Core Arts Standards: CASEL Core Competencies

DA:CR1.1.1

DA:CR1.1.2

DACR:1.1.3

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.A.1

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.A.2

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.5

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.G.B.6

(Social-Emotional Learning):

Relationship Skills

(communicating effectively and developing positive relationships)

Responsible Decision-Making (demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness)



EPHRAT ASHERIE DANCE

Ephrat Asherie Dance (EAD) is a dance company rooted in Black and Latinx vernacular dance. Dedicated to exploring the inherent complexities of various street and club dances, including breaking, hip-hop, house, and vogue, EAD investigates the expansive narrative qualities of these forms as a means to tell stories, develop innovative imagery, and find new modes of expression. EAD's first evening-length work, *A Single Ride*, earned two Bessie nominations in 2013 for Outstanding Emerging Choreographer and Outstanding Sound Design by Marty Beller. The company has presented work at Apollo Theater, Columbia College, Dixon Place, FiraTarrega, Works & Process at the Guggenheim, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Joyce Theater, La MaMa, River to River Festival, New York Live Arts, Summerstage, and The Yard, among others.

Ephrat Asherie



Ephrat “Bounce” Asherie is a New York City-based b-girl, director, choreographer and performer, and a 2016 Bessie Award Winner for Innovative Achievement in Dance. Asherie has received numerous awards to support her work, including Dance Magazine’s Harkness Promise Award, a Jacob’s Pillow Fellowship at the Tilles Center, and a National

Dance Project Award. She is a 2021-2022 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow. As artistic director of EAD, Asherie’s work has been presented at ArtPower at UC San Diego, Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, the Joyce Theater, and Works & Process at the Guggenheim, among others. She is honored to have been mentored by Richard Santiago (a.k.a. Break Easy) and to have worked and collaborated with Buddha Stretch, Bill Irwin, Michelle Dorrance, Doug Elkins, Gus Solomons Jr., and Rennie Harris. Asherie is a co-founding member of the all-female house dance collective MAWU and is forever grateful to New York City’s underground dance community for inspiring her to pursue a life as an artist.

Mo Willems



Mo Willems is a number one *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator, and has been awarded a Caldecott Honor on three occasions (for *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!*, *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*, and *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*). *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. He was also an

inaugural inductee into the Indies Choice Picture Book Hall of Fame. Mo's celebrated *Elephant & Piggie* early reader series has been awarded two Theodor Seuss Geisel Medals (for *There Is a Bird on Your Head!* and *Are You Ready to Play Outside?*) and five Geisel Honors (for *We Are in a Book!*, *I Broke My Trunk!*, *Let's Go for a Drive!*, *A Big Guy Took My Ball!*, and *Waiting Is Not Easy!*). In 2019, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC named Mo the first-ever Education Artist-in-Residence. Mo began his career as a writer and animator on *Sesame Street*, where he garnered six Emmy Awards.

The Dancers

Learn more about the roles on a film set by clicking on the hyperlinked positions below!

Cast (in order of appearance):

Dorren "Mogli" Smith
Eriko Jimbo
Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie
Teena Marie Custer
Valerie "Ms. Vee" Ho
Manon Bal
Mo Willems

Additional Credits

Director of Photography: David Bengali

Original Music: Marty Beller

Editing and Production Design: David Bengali

Foley Design and Additional Music (Paper Adagio):
Donovan Dorrance

Additional choreography and improvisations by the cast

Costumes: David Dalrymple (using artwork inspired by Mo Willems, all rights reserved)

Animation: David Bengali, Jaqueline Reed

Dramaturgy: Megan Alrutz

Gimbal and "B" Camera Operator: Riley Nightingale

Additional Credits

Gaffer: Rich Barbadillo

Camera Assistant: Katerina Vitaly

Keying and Roto: Jaqueline Reed, Daniel Vatsky, David Bengali, C. Andrew Bauer, Lacey Erb

Location Sound Engineer: Diego Quintanar

Scenic Fabrication: Marty Chafkin

Props: Ron Chunn, Diego Quintanar, Valerie “Ms. Vee” Ho, Eriko Jimbo

Makeup: Brenda Garcia Jaramillo, Karina Milan

Project Management: Mia Silvestri

Representation: Pentacle Dance Works Inc.

Featuring original artwork by Mo Willems, © Mo Willems. Used with permission.

Audio Description provided by Audio Eyes

Filmed at Samson Stages, Brooklyn, NY

Additional support for Ephrat Asherie Dance

provided by: Charles and Deborah Adelman, The Hertz Family Foundation, and the Gelli Family.

Special thanks to: Sandy Garcia, Charlie and Debbi Adelman, Paul and Cynthia Hertz, Aulo and Zeinat Gelli, Marcia Wernick, Lincoln Center Education, Sherisa Oie, and Jane Rabinovitz

In the MOment: A Drawing Dance was first shared as a digital presentation through the Kennedy Center with the world premiere during the 2020-2021 Season.

ABOUT

THE FILM

Ephrat Asherie, Artistic Director of Ephrat Asherie Dance, created *In the MOment* collaboratively with Mo Willems and the dancers in her company.



They drew inspiration from Mo Willems' art to create a dance, and their movement in turn inspired new art from Mo Willems, featured in the production.

"Mo showed me that "a drawing is just a series of shapes in the right order," and a dance, too, is made up of movements we create with our bodies and place in space in a specific way!... The smallest movement, shape, or idea can bring us the biggest joy. Never underestimate your own imagination and the delight that comes from taking the time to create."

-Ephrat Asherie

ACTIVITY

TRY IT OUT!

(All Ages)

Explore the connections between drawing and movement in your home or classroom!

1. Start by drawing a line on a piece of paper. Is your line straight or curvy, thick or thin?
2. Imagine the line you drew is on the floor. Follow the line with your body. Did you choose to move quickly or slowly? Did you use big movements or small ones?
3. Try drawing the line you just danced. How can you show movement choices, like fast or slow, big or small, on a two-dimensional piece of paper?
4. Try drawing a new shape, any shape you like! Consider how much space your new shape takes up on the piece of paper, as well as the places where it's straight, curved, or has corners.
5. Turn your art choices into movement by imagining the room is your piece of paper—can you take up as much space in the room as your shape does on the page? Are your movements straight, curved, or angular? Does this shape require you to move fast or slow?

TRY IT OUT! (Cont.)

6. Consider trying to “dance” your shape several different ways. For example, try tracing your shape with different parts of your body. Imagine your shape on the floor underneath you or in the air above you and go around, under, or through it.

7. Try moving and drawing as many times as you like! How many different ways can you dance your drawings and draw your dances? You could also try this activity in pairs or small groups: invite someone to dance while you draw; then switch and draw while they dance; or work together to create a drawing, then use that drawing as the inspiration for a dance.



ACTIVITY

THINK ABOUT...

- *In the MOment* is a performance built from the connection between lines, shapes, and movement. **How do you think lines, shapes, and movement effect and inspire each other? Where do you see unexpected connections like this in the world around you?**
- Ephrat Asherie refers to each scene in the performance as an “imagination room.” **Why do you think she uses that term to describe the art, animation, and choreography? What would the “rooms” of your imagination look like if you drew them or danced them?**



WHAT TO LOOK AND LISTEN FOR

- Shapes like lines, circles, triangles, and rectangles. Where do you see these shapes in the art and animation? Where do you see them in the dancers' movements?
- A spider that moves with the dancers
- Different emotions expressed through art, color, and movement
- Music created from "found" sounds, or sounds that are created from objects that exist in the dancers' environment rather than from traditional musical instruments. For example, listen for pencils tapping or scratching on paper, markers squeaking, and paper tearing.
- Big blocks of color. When do you notice these color blocks or backgrounds changing? Why do you think the artists chose these colors?
- Moments where the dancers' movements are large and take up lots of space, and moments where the dancers' movements are small and contained
- Moments where the dancers move very quickly or very slowly
- Moments where the dancers move in unexpected ways—like upside down!
- A surprise guest!

Resources & Further Learning

- <https://www.screenskills.com/starting-your-career/job-profiles/film-and-tv-drama/>
- <https://www.ephratasheriedance.com>
- <https://www.pentacle.org/blog/artist/ephrat-asherie-dance/>
- <http://www.mowillems.com/>

Educational content and activities in this study guide were created by Performances for Young Audiences at The Kennedy Center with selections of this guide written by Emma Cahoon.

Learning Content Developers:

Dr. Liz Schildkret

Kennedy Center Office of Accessibility and VSA

Design:

Emma Cahoon

College/Post-Grad Program Intern

Booking Department, Pentacle

