

# MOCEAN DANCE

## *Wild Within*

### Study Guide

#### Content and Themes

What natural elements did you observe in this dance piece, *Wild Within*?

How do you personally feel when you interact with the natural environment or spend time in nature?

Do you have a wild space or outdoor space that you like to go to feel free or collect your thoughts? If yes, where is this space and why are you drawn to it?

Describe a section in the piece in which you could see the dancers become elemental forces (air, water, earth, fire)?

#### Composition and Design

Resonating Moments: Describe a section of *Wild Within* that captured your imagination or drew your attention in? How did this resonating moment affect you?

How would you describe the quality of the movement in *Wild Within*?

How would you describe the music? Would you use a similar description as the movement? Do they relate?

What are your reactions to the use of props in *Wild Within*?

Describe a section of the piece that was rhythmic, fast-paced and exciting?

Describe a section of the piece that unfolded slowly or took time to build and evolve?

Of the three elements: movement, sound/music, video projections which element did you connect with the most? Why?

## **Ecological Associations**

The creation of Wild Within was inspired by spending time on the Yukon River. Can you describe the importance of rivers and the ecological impact healthy river systems have on the environment?

What can you do locally and globally to bring awareness about the importance of our natural environment?

## **Indigenous Perspectives**

Research and learn what this area is called in Mi'kmaq. What does this word mean?

Research and share some of the meaning and symbolism behind water and the eagle in Mi'kmaq culture. What are some of the philosophies that each of these embody? How do you relate to what you learned?

## **Professional Performing Arts**

Do you participate in a movement or sports practice on a regular basis? If yes, what practices?

How does intricate choreography and the physical capacity needed by the dancers to perform at this level relate to how sports teams work together and aim to win a game or a tournament?

Research and share a performing artist in any genre that inspires you (dance, music, theatre or circus). Why do they inspire you? What excites you about their art form?

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

### Dance 11

#### *Group Discussion or Personal Response*

Describe how the elements of time, space, energy were visible or used specifically throughout *Wild Within*.

For example: How did the timing change? How was time used specifically to evoke tension? How was the space designed or scenography used to evoke place? How did the space between the dance expand and contract? Was there a homogenous use of space? How did the movement or the music serve to change the energy of the piece? When was soft energy used to represent memory? When was frantic energy used to represent chaos? When was strong energy used to represent perseverance?

#### Activities

- With a partner, compose a series of 4-6 movements. Experiment with the element of time by repeating the sequence at different speeds (ie. slowly, as quick as you can). Try having each partner use a different speed at the same time.
- Throughout this piece, the dancers make physical contact and begin creating movements based on supporting one another's weight. This is called partnering. Just as teammates have separate but complementary roles, so do dancers who are dancing together. One must be stable and anchor the movement, while the other needs to be in the right place at the right time to maintain their balance and shape. With a partner, see how many movements you can create where you depend on the other person to hold your weight. How does the movement differ when you do it on your own?
- Write down two of the most significant moments in your life. Try to make four moves for each memory. Now you will have two miniature dances. Try putting them together, how do they relate or contrast with each other?

## English and Literary Arts

### *Group Discussion or Personal Response*

How do you analyze and/or review a dance work? What criteria would you use?

When analyzing a dance work, some things to consider are:

Energy and style of movement · Relationship of the dancers · Relationship of movement and music  
Communication of theme (if any) · Personal reaction · Technical/production aspects

### **Writing Activity**

Using the writing form of your choice, write a response to the Mocean Dance performance. (i.e letter, poem, short story)

- Write a review article for your school newspaper about the performance.
- Write a Press Release promoting a dance performance of your choice, including your own.
- Prepare interview questions for a performing arts professional. Conduct the interview and compile the answers.

## Visual Art

### *Group Discussion or Personal Response*

How might the genre of dance be compared to the visual arts?

What is visual art to you? Does it have to be image or object based? Beautiful, or pleasing to look at?

Consider dimensions of time and space in different art forms. For example: a photograph is a two dimensional image of a moment in time, yet the photograph itself has permanence. Consider the dimensions of time and space for a painting, sculpture, film, and dance. How do each of these differ or used similarly?

### **Activities**

- Using the visual arts medium of your choice, create a response to the Mocean Dance performance.
- Use visual art as inspiration for creating movement. For example, consider how different colours make you feel, the shape and texture of a sculpture, or the image from a photograph or painting.

## Music

### *Group Discussion or Personal Response*

Is there a difference between “music” and “noise”? If so, what? How do choreographers choose certain pieces of music?

If you were to create a dance, what music would you use and why? Do choreographers need music or songs with lyrics? Can dance be in silence?

### **Activities**

- Using found objects, experiment with possible sounds. You can also try using your body as an instrument. In small groups, compose a soundscape. Begin with one member playing and sustaining their sound element and each member joining sequentially until everyone is playing together.
- Pair groups together and have one group create movement while the other group creates the soundscape/music.

## **ABOUT MOCEAN DANCE**

Mocean Dance is an award-winning contemporary dance company based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Led by Co-Artistic Directors Susanne Chui and Sara Coffin, Mocean commissions Canadian and international choreographers to create dance that is highly physical, collaborative, and technically and emotionally rich. Founded in 2001 by Carolle Crooks Fernando, Sarah Rozee, Sara Harrigan, Alicia Orr MacDonald, and Lisa Phinney Langley, Mocean Dance is nationally recognized as a leading company from the Atlantic region. A resident company of Halifax Dance since 2002, Mocean is committed to its home base in Nova Scotia, contributing to the province's dance and arts community by providing opportunities for creation, performance, collaboration, development and education.

[www.moceandance.com](http://www.moceandance.com)

### **Sara Coffin, Co-Artistic Director, Choreographer**

Sara Coffin is an independent dance artist, dance educator and Co-Artistic Director of Mocean Dance. She received her MFA in Choreography - Smith College (Northampton, MA), BFA in Dance - Simon Fraser University and Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology - Dalhousie University. Coffin has been teaching and creating interdisciplinary contemporary dance work for over fifteen years. Her award credits include Nova Scotia Established Artist Award (2018), the Gretchen Moran Teaching Fellowship (Smith College, 2012-2014), Iris Garland Emerging Choreographer Award (2009), and BC Emerging Dance Artist Award (2005). She has taught as adjunct faculty at Smith College and Hampshire College in Massachusetts, and as a visiting artist at Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala City), Earth Dance, Holland College SOPA (Charlottetown, PEI), Princeton, Boston University and locally at NSCAD.

Sara has danced with Mocean Dance in works by Serge Bennathan, Danièle Desnoyers, and Heidi Strauss. Additionally Coffin has worked professionally with Chris Aiken and Angie Hauser (USA), Annie Kloppenberg (USA), Daelik (MACHiNENoiSy), Susan Elliott, The Holy Body Tattoo, Claire French, Jennifer Mascall, Tilt: Sound + Motion and she is a co-founder of SiNS (Sometimes in Nova Scotia). An award-winning choreographer, her choreographic work has been presented in many prominent dance festivals across Canada. Her research interests includes interdisciplinary collaboration, technology as an extension of the body, contact improvisation, and the poetic junction between vulnerability, resiliency and courage.

[www.saracoffin.ca](http://www.saracoffin.ca)