

Improvisation: *What Moves Us and Why?*

There is deep inspiration and rigor in a practice of improvisation that posits vulnerability at its heart. Developing the skills to be able to care for, engage, respect and respond to that state of vulnerability in oneself and others gives life to improvisation that is powerful and transformative.

This is the work that Kirstie engenders through facilitated exercises, open time for play and exploration, movement scores, observations and discussion. Much of the work is experienced through partnering and connection with others, balanced with solo time for processing and reflection. Kirstie shares the movement practices and underlying philosophies she has developed over forty years of teaching dance improvisation. She is interested in creating a safe space where participants feel they are seen, heard, and supported to discover, move, and share from the deepest parts of themselves. This helps facilitate meaningful dances that evolve our practices.

Kirstie draws from her knowledge of Contact Improvisation, dance techniques, the Alexander technique, Aikido, meditation and her extensive experience of improvisation in performance. Her work explores the huge potential of the body's response to the primal urge to move, inspired by the energy released through human interaction, physical challenge and playfully daring to go beyond inherent ideas of limitation.

Kirstie Simson (UK) has been a continuous explosion in the contemporary dance scene, bringing audiences into contact with the vitality of pure creation in moment after moment of virtuoso improvisation. Called "a force of nature" by the New York Times, she is an award-winning dancer and teacher who has "immeasurably enriched and expanded the boundaries of New Dance" according to Time Out Magazine, London. Kirstie is renowned internationally as an excellent teacher, a captivating performer, and a leading light in the field of Dance Improvisation. For the past thirteen years she has been a tenured professor in the Department of Dance at the University of Illinois, USA. In August 2020 Kirstie returned to her home base in Wales UK from where she continues to explore and share her work as an Independent Artist. Kirstie is currently developing work around the topic of Movement, Health, & 'Being' Well, as a result of going through a health crisis that has challenged all her previous notions about what it means to be sick or healthy. She also sees her own illness as intrinsically connected to the ill health of the planet.