

LONDON CONTACT FESTIVAL 2025 'LCF25'



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Morning Intensives

Mirva Mäkinen/ Peter Pleyer/ Eszter Gal

Mirva Mäkinen

Horizontal Falling

Contact improvisation is based on the communication between two moving bodies that are in physical contact and their combined relationship to the physical laws that govern their movement; gravity, momentum, inertia. The body, in order to feel these sensations, learns to release excess muscular tension and abandon a certain quality of willfulness to experience the natural flow of movement. This workshop will include rolling, falling, being upside down, following a physical point of contact, supporting and giving weight to a partner. We will aim towards movable support and gentle flying technique. This could be also called horizontal falling.

Mirva Mäkinen graduated as a Doctor of Dance from University of Arts in Helsinki in 2018. Her doctoral research is about *Somaesthetics of Contact Improvisation*. She graduated (MA) from the Dance Department from the University of Arts, Finland in 2000, before that she did masters of Physical Education from University of Jyväskylä. She is a dance teacher, choreographer and lecturer for dance at the Kallio Upper Secondary School of Performing Arts (permanent position 2000 ->). She has been teaching in several dance companies, Universities and international dance and contact improvisation festivals. Mirva has been working as a dancer with many different dance companies and choreographers, here few of them: Dancecompany Karttunen Kollektiv (choreographer Jyrki Karttunen), New Circus Company Circo Aereo, choreographer Joonas Halonen, Echo Echo dance company (Ireland), collaboration with Frey Faust and collaboration with Jörg Hassmann. Last ten years she has been working with Finnish choreographer Valtteri Raekallio. www.mirvamakinen.com

Peter Pleyer

From ONE to TWO to MANY

The historical score for Contact Improvisation is simple, two or more bodies move in physical co-dependency through sensations of touch and weight. The development of the score in time and space through many different persons and groups has fostered enormous complexities.

Each day we will start with a beginners focus, a principle, a point of reference from which we improvise dances in duos and trios into whole group experiences. Foci will be: the roles of the legs in CI; sharing full body weight in low/slow/flow; the use of the arms and hands in CI and modulated weight sharing through leaning dances. We will develop these foci through practicing mutual witnessing

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scores, seeing and being seen and therefor opening up to performativity into an emerging group score by applying different tools from Authentic Movement, Contemplative Dance Practice, Round Robbins and the UnderScore.

Peter Pleyer is a dancer, choreographer and teacher living in Berlin with a special interest in body/mind/soul techniques developed after the postmodern revolution of the Judson Dance Theater. Educated in the Art Academy of Arnhem/NL in the 1990s, Peter is involved in dance/art-making internationally and a co-founder of the Cranky Bodies a/company. www.crankybodies.com

Eszter Gál

Dancing Dialogues

Always anew, yet somehow known territory can open up when we enter the dance of contact improvisation. A dancing dialogue with oneself and the other(s). Let's immerse ourselves into the wonder of our partner's form, structure and touch, rediscovering the innate wisdom of the moving body.

We will begin our daily practice by listening to small things - fine tuning to our physical / sensory self; opening to the space and our partner(s) - and dancing the moment. Our practice and material will include: autonomy of the breath; listening to the articulation of the spine; core – distal connectivity; core support; changing levels effortlessly; up-side-down moves; being easily moved; center to center connection; opening into duet and/or trio dances from a specific movement practice; being light while falling and landing softly; using momentum. The practices will be cultivated and explored in shorter or extended dances, using simple (or no) scores.

Eszter Gál is a dancer, teacher, RSME, and a researcher, based in Budapest. She has been teaching somatic work, Contact Improvisation, composition, improvisation nationally and internationally over 30 years. In 2023 she co-founded the Somatic Dialogues Academy - SODA www.somaticdialogues.eu, and directs its 500-hour training program. She works with Tánceánia, a mixed-ability dance Company, leading the practice, choreographing and performing with the Company. She joined Cranky Bodies a/company in 2020. Her core interest is somatic-based movement research, improvisation performance, community work for dance education, and as part of her doctoral studies, she researches the Hungarian legacy of Contact Improvisation

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Afternoon Classes * = Beginners Friendly

Thursday 15.30 - 17.30: Rachel Dean/ Holly Thomas/ Mark Rietema/ Thomas Kampe

Rachel Dean

'Small Dance, Big Fall' *

Starting with the small falls of Steve Paxton's Small Dance we will work with a partner to amplify these falls, and through encouraging folding and spiralling, find ways of entering and leaving the floor with great ease and fluidity. We will try slowing down to allow time for this to happen, and speeding up so we depend on our bodies' intuition and responses. By progressing with gentleness and awareness what was once not possible can become so, and with the possibility of falling comes the possibility of flying. An opportunity to practice and develop the key Contact skills of listening and falling, ready to approach the weekend's dancing with ease and confidence.

Biography I am a Choreographer, Movement Director, Performer and Facilitator/Teacher with 19 years professional experience in a wide variety of contexts in Leeds/Bradford, across the UK and in Europe. I am Artistic Director of *Speedwell Dance* and work freelance on other projects. Contact Improvisation is central to my practice. Speedwell Dance's work is co-created through playful processes in which children and exceptional improvising dancers and musicians come together to create. *The Mountain Witch and Thumbelina* are our current touring productions. Our creative processes begin with families and we are always keen to hear from community and arts organisations with similar values to work in partnership with. Research, reflection and exchange are important to my practice. Inclusion & respect for the unique qualities each person brings are integral to my work. My MA thesis (Independent Dance/Trinity Laban) was *'Entwining Solo Pathways through a Duet Form: A Practice-based Investigation of Contact Improvisation.'*

Holly Thomas

'Listening Bodies' *

A contact improvisation class oriented toward movers who see differently, who work with senses other than sight, or who are interested in the creative potential of de-centering the visual in dance making. This class blends established contact improvisation techniques with touch-based practices drawn from Holly's lived experience of visual impairment and her connection with natural landscapes. We will explore confirmatory touch, continuous contact pathways, and sensory navigation strategies as ways into dancing. You will be invited to work with eyes open, eyes closed

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and with a soft gaze, exploring how we might navigate, communicate and witness dance through senses other than sight. We will work with spoken word, directional contact, sensory way-finding and embodied audio-description. Holly will facilitate the class with studio access worker and creative audio describer **Ania Varez**.

Access

Holly is committed to creating accessible spaces for dance, with the understanding that access is a co-created and ongoing practice. Time will be given during class to explore, create and celebrate our access practice. Holly's class will be a 'relaxed space' meaning you are free to come and go, rest or take part, sit, move, witness, make noise, lie down, as desired and needed. If you have any access requirements that you would like to share with Holly or the CI festival organisers ahead of attending the festival then please contact?

Holly Is a resident at The Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol. The Studio is a creative technologies collaboration with Watershed, University of the West of England and University of Bristol. Holly is a member of the Bristol Sight Loss Council - Arts & Culture Forum

Mark Rietema

'Follow the Tail' *

In this class, we'll quite literally be chasing our own tail, exploring the coccyx as a key to grounding, connecting with our backspace, and sensing the integrity of the spine. Through playful movement and early developmental patterns, we'll tune into the tailbone and its relationship to the feet, using this awareness to awaken the imagination and expressive potential of the tail, and our spinal axis in general. We'll carry this embodied curiosity into the dance, exploring how the tail can guide us over, under, and around our partners and the space around us. Expect warm-ups and explorations drawn from Body-Mind Centering®, leading into partner work and group dancing. (Body-Mind Centering® and BMC® are registered service marks of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen).

Mark Rietema teaches Somatics and CI in London and abroad, and offers workshops, lectures and group facilitation around embodiment, dance and mental health in Universities, the NHS and grassroots groups. He works as a psychotherapist and somatic educator, having studied Process Oriented Psychology and Body-Mind Centering®. His previous background is in community arts projects and performances (UK, US) with an MA in Community Arts (Goldsmiths). He teaches as faculty for Embody Move UK and the *Institut Prozessarbeit* Deutschland, and previously as an associate in Kings College. Mark is part of the organising team for the London Contact Festival and Goldsmiths jams & classes.

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Thomas Kampe

'Inversions- Feldenkrais & Contact Improvisation' *

In this class we integrate principles from the Feldenkrais Method® with Contact Improvisation, using movement experiments & detailed partner-work to develop awareness and ease in our CI dancing. We will focus on developing a fluid coordination of our core, and on fine-tuning our ability to relate creatively to gravity and our living environment, including upside down and inversion skills. The Feldenkrais Method®, developed by Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais (1904–1984), is a somatic learning process that enhances mobility, self-discovery, and well-being. It invites us to listen to ourselves and to explore the world of our internal sensation and activates our organic intelligence & relational partnering skills.

Thomas

Kampe (PhD) lives in London and has worked with dance, theatre, performance and movement for the last 45 years. He has worked as performer, choreographer & director and was Professor for Somatic Performance and Education at Bath Spa University until 2022. Thomas has taught somatic movement approaches & Contact Improvisation around the world. Thomas is a Feldenkrais® practitioner. His numerous research writings and performance works have been published internationally. He is a member of the 'CI@Goldsmiths' collective and of the 'International Forum for Eco-Embodied Arts' (IFEAA).

Friday 14.30 -16.30:

Lewis Wilkins/ Mike Doolan/ Mary Prestidge/ Simonetta Alessandri /

Studio 5 'SELF MADE': Josh Jones

Lewis Wilkins

'Principles of Flight'

My class will centre on technical principles of flight in CI. I will propose ideas, skills, and movement patterns to develop competence and awareness when dancing in flight and when offering responsive platforms of support within the dance. In CI classes and jam guidelines, it is common to encounter the advice: *"Do not grab."* We will examine the application of this in practical flying contexts, considering how using the surfaces of the upper limbs and engaging with brief non-restrictive grabbing, might, in some contexts, enhance safety, comfort, and efficacy of communication. The material in this class may not be suitable for everyone and is not recommended

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for complete beginners. Some parts of the session will involve using the shoulder girdle in an upright position as a surface of support. We will work together to find appropriate modifications for those who may need them.

Lewis Wilkins trained at London Contemporary Dance School 2006-2009, and has worked as a performer and artistic collaborator with various choreographers and companies over the past 16 years. These include Jean Abreu, Richard Alston, Bregenzer Festspiele, Riccardo Buscarini, Tom Dale, Stephanie Dufresne, The National Theatre, Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Joel O'Donoghue, The Royal Opera House, Scottish Dance Theatre, Lea Tirabasso and TrashDollys. Lewis has been teaching since 2014, and credits include Agitart Figueres Es Mou, DV8 Physical Theatre, National Dance Company Wales and Scottish Dance Theatre. He regularly teaches at B12 Berlin, London Contemporary Dance School & Nuova Officina Della Danza. Additionally, Lewis is a regular guest lecturer at Roehampton University, London Studio Centre, Middlesex University, Rambert School, and University of Limerick. He aims to create an inclusive, supportive, and focussed learning environment where creativity and playfulness can thrive.

Mike Doolan

'Messed Up'

This class is based on a book I recently read called 'Mess and Contemporary Performance: Complexity, Containment & Collapse' by Harriet Curtis. I'm not so interested in performance but I do like rocking the boat, as it were. Join this class if you've had a bit of experience in CI or mosh pits. This class will try subvert our notions of organisation, efficiency and group understanding through the lens of 'messing things up'. Learning is non-linear. So, expect to get worse (in order to get better...)

Mike Doolan - A dancer of CI for 9 years now and works as a dance teacher, educator and fitness coach. He is part of the faculty of dance at Trinity Laban and works within the Science department, and one of the co-founders and organisers of CI@Goldsmiths. His main interest in CI is how it intersects with daily life. Tell him about your experiences in this intersect... he would LOVE to hear them

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Mary Prestidge

'Down to Earth' *

A session looking at ways to bring attention to relationship and interplay of image and action. Regarding the structural alignment of the bones and visualising pathways along their axes allowing for rotation of the body around them. Giving time for sensing small movement and changes within in the body as we experience both lightness and weight as we stand and move.

Mary Prestidge has been evolving a dance practice for over 50 years. She performed with Ballet Rambert in the early 1970's but later gravitated toward an independent context with artists giving space and support to experimentation and research. Mary was a co-founder of the radical X6 Dance Space and collective and its successor Chisenhale Dance Space in London in the late 70's and 80's. Specific influences were the improvisational forms via the lineages of Steve Paxton, Mary Fulkerson, Lisa Nelson and others. Based in Liverpool since 1995 Mary teaches and continues movement and performance research both with her dance collaborators and with others in a diverse range of contexts and communities.

Simonetta Alessandri

'Feldenkrais & Contact: Emergence of the Collective Mind'

Through a Feldenkrais-inspired exploration, we tune into our movement, cultivating awareness, presence, freedom to foster a felt sense of agency. A gradual journey unfolds from the inside out, moving toward connection with the world around us and with the others — a journey from the inner sense of self to collective awareness. As we attune to gravity, momentum, and touch together, we play with weight-sharing, supporting and lifting as a group. We engage with shared attention and collective decision-making, recognizing clear intentions and directions of the group mind. Together, we allow the emergency of spontaneous group composition. Technical material will also be integrated to support the group exploration. A strong sense of togetherness arises — a sense of agency that moves between individual presence and collective flow.

Simonetta is an Italian dance artist and a somatic educator based in London. Her work is informed by more than 35 years of dancing, teaching and choreographing. She is an internationally recognised teacher that applies the Feldenkrais Method in dance and movement training as well as performance making. Since 1991 Simonetta has been practicing, performing and teaching Contact improvisation. She kept Contact Improvisation alive in Rome for more than ten years through her classes and Jams. She teaches at London Contemporary Dance School, Trinity Laban, and Goldsmiths University. She

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holds the Post Graduated Diploma from London Contemporary Dance School, and is a qualified teacher of the Feldenkrais Method and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is one of the founders of CI@Goldsmiths, an association of dance artists dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of Contact Improvisation in London and the UK.

'SELF MADE' Studio 5

Joshua Jarvis Jones

'From Floor to Flying' *

This 2-hour workshop explores the connection between floor and sky through contemporary movement and contact improvisation. Beginning with guided attunement—tuning into self, space, and others—we'll build a relationship with the floor using head–tail connectivity to find softness and fluidity. Through progressive level changes, we learn to enter and exit the floor with ease. Once grounded in this first partnership with the floor, we transition into dancing with fellow humans, bringing embodied understanding into shared weight, partnering, and lifting techniques. The journey moves from solo exploration into physical dialogue, drawing from our initial grounding to support human connection in movement. We'll close with a gentle cool down, centering aftercare and responsibility for our own bodies.

Josh Jarvis Jones is a contemporary dancer and facilitator whose practice is rooted in emotional exploration and embodied connection. Following a time of personal loss, he found dance—especially contact improvisation—as a vital tool for healing, grounding, and rediscovering relationship with self and others. Trained at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Josh has performed internationally with artists like Ricardo Buscarini and Madeline Shan, exploring themes of intimacy & identity. His deep engagement with contact improvisation bridges technique & relational psychology. He shares this through workshops, labs & festivals worldwide. Josh founded *Lean In*, a nomadic movement series that has grown into the annual retreat *Lean_In_Nature*, inviting people into co-creative embodied research. He has taught at CI hubs & circus events across Europe, informed by years of training with Vega Luukkonen & Hugh Stainer. His work invites participants into a dance of authenticity, where movement becomes a meeting place for truth and transformation.

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Saturday 14.30 -16.30:

Kennedy Muntanga /Rick Nodine /Harriet Roberts / Robert Anderson /

Studio 5 'SELF MADE': Joanna Rosenfeld

Kennedy Junior Muntanga

Class description:

Discover a fresh approach to movement in Kennedy's class, designed for dancers eager to expand their artistry through contact improvisation. Blending theatre, expression, and athleticism, this class takes inspiration from the innovative techniques of theatre practitioner Sanford Meisner. Kennedy's thoughtful and engaging teaching style encourages you to refine your skills, push creative boundaries, and deepen your connection to your body, movement, and others. Whether you're looking to refresh your practice or discover new inspiration, this class offers a supportive space to grow and evolve as a dancer.

Kennedy Junior Muntanga is a Zambian-born choreographer, artistic director, and rehearsal director based in the UK. A leader in contemporary dance, his work is driven by a deep commitment to storytelling, movement research, and the transformative power of dance. Kennedy studied at Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance and has performed for world-renowned artists, including Akram Khan MBE, Humanhood, Sir Robert Cohan CBE, Alesandra Seutin, Michael Keegan-Dolan and more. He has created choreographic works for Phoenix Dance Theatre, ACE Dance & Music, Frieze London Festival, Saul Nash, Bath Spa University, Trinity Laban Conservatoire, The Place (LCDS), Rokia Koné, and his own company, Kennedy Muntanga Dance Theatre. In addition to his choreographic work, Kennedy has held leadership roles as Artistic Director of Trinity Laban's Youth Dance Company and Rehearsal Director for ACE Dance & Music, guiding dancers and shaping creative processes at a high level.

Rick Nodine

'Seeing Sensation - CI and Performance'

This Improvisation performance session is about being seen and seeing. The focus will not be on looking good or perfecting our CI patterns for an audience, but instead, about the way that being seen supports us in seeing ourselves. We will work on including sensation and feelings while maintaining CI as a language within our improvisations. We will develop CI practice into a larger space of whole group awareness and include witnessing each other dance as an expanded way of

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connecting. We will work on relating to multiple partners at the same time. We will work on how to get in and out of contact with a partner while maintaining the integrity of our own dance. Difficult issues or blocks to our creativity related to fear, failure, taking space and confusion will be welcomed into our dances. This work is about integrating somatic awareness and CI skills into a broader sense of our artistry as dancers and it is about including our imperfect and glorious humanity.

Biography I started teaching CI in 1996 and gradually expanded the scope of my pedagogy to include performance improvisation, solo dancing, choreography, somatic exploration and ensemble composition. In the last few years, in collaboration with Emilie Darlet, I have been developing an ecosystem for CI in London which centres around providing regular classes, workshops and pedagogical progressions for all levels of study within CI.

Harriet Roberts

'Toning In' *

This workshop offers a chance to connect and explore essential techniques for dancing with partners and larger groups. We'll emphasize self-responsibility as we explore how to move with others while staying attuned to your own well-being—caring for your partner by first caring for yourself. Through a series of physical exercises we will explore our use of tone or effort, finding sweet spots of engagement and release as we move with others.

Harriet Roberts is a dedicated practitioner of Contact Improvisation, with over a decade of experience in both teaching and practice. She hosts thoughtfully curated courses and events in the UK, drawing on her extensive training in contemporary dance, somatic research, and hands-on therapy to offer a holistic, embodied approach to movement. Harriet's playful, practical and poetic teaching style invites dancers of all levels to explore connection and creativity through Contact Improvisation.

Robert Anderson

'Feet to Pelvis: strength and sensitivity in CI' *

In this CI class, we'll explore the dynamic connection between feet, legs, and pelvis. We'll ground ourselves through solo movement and build into partner work focused on balance, listening and weight exchange. Using the legs as both support and source of motion, we'll discover new pathways into playful dancing. Open to all movers. Come ready to move, explore, and connect from the ground up.

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Robert Anderson (UK) has been passionately involved with contact improvisation since 1996. He teaches CI to dance students at Trinity Laban and in other contexts in the UK and abroad. Robert was a co-founder of London Contact Improvisation which coordinated a programme of classes, jams, and workshops for twenty years in the capital. He is a member of Touchdown Dance, a company that makes dance accessible to visually impaired people. In teaching dance improvisation Robert seeks to find connections through the senses, inviting poetry and play for the dancing body.

'SELF-MADE' Studio 5

Joanna Rosenfeld

'The Space In Between' *

What happens in the moment before we touch? This workshop explores the subtle terrain where connection begins—not with technique, but with listening. Through guided improvisations, Butoh-inspired imagery, and sensory tools like threads and toothpicks, participants will enter the poetic space between self and other. We will slow down, attend to impulse, and dance with the invisible tension that binds us. Moving between stillness and contact, sensation and imagination, this session invites a release from habitual patterns and opens the door to emotional, co-created movement. A space for presence, risk, and the emergence of something unknown—together.

Joanna Rosenfeld is a movement artist, teacher, and somatic researcher with over two decades of experience in Contact Improvisation, Butoh, and physical theatre. Her work focuses on the body as a site of transformation, exploring impulse, imagination, and relational presence. She creates spaces where raw physicality meets poetic expression, and where deep listening opens new pathways into movement. Joanna's facilitation is rooted in trust, play, and a commitment to what is real and alive in the moment.

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Friday 16.30 – 17.45

Studio 154 – Jam & Chat

A facilitated session with time to discuss pertinent questions in relation to CI practices & cultures

Studio 3 CI & Body-Work: THE SLOW SPACE *

Facilitated by Justin Philpott & Halina Rozensztrauch

Come & join a gently facilitated space where we will explore ways of integrating freestyle bodywork into a slow CI flow. We will move together & explore how a soft polarity of giver and receiver can freely arise, lazily flowing back & forth between partners, and melt again within a slow restorative dance. Come as you are with a friend you'd like to practice with. You are free to listen, follow, and interpret as you like, and to choose how active you wish to be. You are also free to simply rest in this restorative space. We will explore some ways of giving with different surfaces of the body, with a focus on ease, relaxation and intuitive flow. There will be a guided relaxation and possibly some chilled music too. As with CI, this is a space to cultivate our ability to listen to ourselves, to our partners, and to practice being alert and responsive to any needs that arise, however they may be felt or communicated. This is not a space for the expression of sexual energy, but rather to offer and receive clear restorative touch.

Saturday 16.30 – 17.45

Studio 154 – Jam & Chat

A facilitated session with time to discuss pertinent questions in relation to CI practices & cultures

Studio 3 ONE-TO-ONE

A facilitated session by the CI@Goldsmiths team where you can work with for a short time with a Festival-teacher on an individual level – come with ideas or questions regarding skills, embodiment or creativity in dancing, or just bring your curiosity for learning

We hope you enjoy your time at LCF25.

In any emergency, contact a member of the CI@Goldsmiths Team, our helpers, or the Security desk and team who are also First Aiders.