



Intensives:

K.J. Holmes: Contact/Improvisations:

“What is my body doing when I am not conscious of it?”

(Steve Paxton)

These classes are to honor practices devised by dancer Steve Paxton (1939-2024). We will artfully enter the basic principles of the form of Contact Improvisation which he initiated in 1972, and his Material for the Spine, begun 1986. “Forms for sensations and sensing” (Steve Paxton), these classes will offer students the opportunity to deeply enter the basic study of the physics and ecological forces dancers experience as they move in relationship with each other and themselves. We will engage with the body in spherical space to improvise in solo, duo and with the class as an ensemble. As we deepen into the discipline of practice, we will evolve the process as tools for dancing to witness how we make sense of being HERE. Playing with the chronosphere and spirals of time, space and weight, we will explore what Steve has said: “Dance is the art of taking place. Improvisation finds those places.” Sources will include several of Steve’s writings as well as what we discover in our practices together in this living art form.

K.J. Holmes has been practicing Improvisational forms as process and performance since 1981. These practices have deeply informed her journey as an independent dance artist as well as an actor, vocalist, writer and teacher. An avid improviser and creator of solo/duo and ensemble work, she has studied with the early pioneers of contact improvisation including Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith and Daniel Lepkoff, has collaborated and led work with and of Simone Forti and Troupe, and was a member of Image Lab performing the Tuning Score of Lisa Nelson. Other collaborators include poets Julie Carr and Edwin Torres, dancer Karen Nelson,

drummer Jeremy Carlstedt, trumpeter Roy Campbell, Jr., actor Keith Biesack, and the Feel Trio (violinist Ramsey Ameen and poet/writer Fred Moten). Her influences include Body Mind Centering ® and the work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Ideokinesis with Andre Bernard, Meisner acting work with Terry Knickerbocker, voice and singing with Richard Armstrong, Barbara Maier Gustern and Samita Singha, among others. K.J. is a certified Yoga teacher through her studies with Sondra Loring, and a certified Ayurvedic Holistic Health Counselor through her studies with Dr. Naina Marballi. She teaches at NYU/Experimental Theatre Wing and Movement Research in NYC, as well as traveling nationally and internationally teaching, performing and creating, most recently at La Manzana de Paxton in Mazunte, Mexico and at the Montreal Annual Contact Improvisation Jam. K.J. has performed in the work of Steve Paxton, filmmaker/artist Matthew Barney, dancer/writer Karinne Keithley Seyers, music video of Mitski, Miguel Gutierrez, Xavier Le Roy, among others, as well as developing her own solo and group work. She is currently conducting a new ensemble piece, Blu/print, that began Fall 2023 with a grant from the New York State Choreographers Initiative through the New York State Dance Force and with the mentorship of composer/instrumentalist Henry Threadgill.

Mary Prestidge: 'Where are we now?'

I would like to bring forward a few questions to ponder for these morning sessions. I am considering the interests and exploration that have taken place over many years of involvement in this movement form. What approaches and methods have been and are being investigated to further our understanding and experience of movement and particularly the art of improvisation? The sessions will cover: Basic tools and methods for developing skills and supporting safety in this open form. Working with the natural forces: weight, mass, gravity, momentum etc. 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 and around their axes. Giving time for sensing small movement and changes within the body as we experience both lightness and weight as we stand and move. Developing perception and bringing into consciousness, methods to hone movement qualities and compositional possibilities What does movement look like? What does it reveal? Where are we now?

Mary Prestidge has been involved in dance for over 50 years. She performed with Ballet Rambert in the early 1970's and later moved toward an independent context with artists giving space and support to experimentation and research. Mary was 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. Mary worked as a freelance teacher of Contact Improvisation for many years attending annual European CI Teachers' Exchange (ECITE) and co-hosting the event in the UK in 1996 and 2009. 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.

Thomas Kampe: 'Gravity, Sensation, Touch' - Feldenkrais & Contact Improvisation

In these sessions we integrate principles from the Feldenkrais Method® with Contact Improvisation, using movement experiments and detailed partner-work to develop awareness, spontaneity, and ease in our CI dancing. Through Feldenkrais-based explorations, we will deepen our self-awareness, refine our sensitivity to touch and weight, and discover new pathways of movement and complexity in coordination that support creativity and connection in partnership

Using 'Awareness Through Movement'® lessons and guided touch-based explorations, we will focus on developing fluid coordination of our core and torso, and on fine-tuning our ability to relate creatively to gravity and our living environment.

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. It supports somatic communication through touch, a readiness for being-with and re-orientation in gravity, allowing for gentle, sensorial and exhilarating dancing.

Thomas Kampe (PhD;UK/DE) lives in London and has worked with dance, theatre, performance and movement for the last 45 years. He has worked as performer, choreographer and director in Germany and Britain, and was Professor for Somatic Performance and Education at Bath Spa University, UK until 2022. Since the late 1980's Thomas has taught somatic approaches towards Movement Education, Theatre and Contact Improvisation in different settings around the world. Thomas is a qualified teacher of the Feldenkrais Method® which forms a foundation for his teaching of dance and movement. His numerous research writings and performance works have been published internationally. Thomas recently co-edited JDSP Vol. 13.1 &2 (2022): 'Embodying Eco- Consciousness: Somatics, Aesthetic Practice and Social Action', and was guest editor of the IFF Journal Vol. 6 (2019): 'Practices of Freedom: The Feldenkrais Method and Creativity'. He was co-editor of the book 'Beyond forgetting – persecution/exile/memory: transdisciplinary perspectives on design, performance and education' (2021). He is a member of the 'CI@Goldsmiths' collective, London, and of the 'International Forum for Eco-Embodied Arts' (IFEEA).

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