

Dancing the Unknown

About the retreat

In this retreat we are researching the meeting points of free movement improvisation and meditation. Movement improvisation uses fun physical and vocal exercises to promote creativity, mindfulness and greater awareness of the body. By stepping into the space without a plan, we learn about the choices we make, discover where our interest and fascination lies, and we learn to play with the texture and rhythm of our own and others' expressions.

Improvisation supports meditation in helping us to be present to the ever-moving mind, as thoughts and feelings come and go, without holding on. 'Dancing the Unknown' (<http://dancingtheunknown.wixsite.com/improvisation>), as it is all about being present and engaged in this moment only, leaving the next one to come freely without being weighed down by our plans or assumptions.

This retreat is for people who want to explore physical and vocal expression and research links with the practice of meditation. We can apply what we notice in the body experience, straight into meditation. Sharing our work with each other will be an integral part of the process. The atmosphere will be supportive, playful and appreciative, and so is also very suitable for people who do not think of themselves as performers.

The group will consist of some people who have never done any meditation, and some who have practiced it for years. And the same for the improvisation - so it should be an interesting mix! And no need to worry at all if you do not have much experience of either - all will be explained, and we all engage in the research together.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

For the improvisation it will be good if you wear clothes you can move in easily, like for any movement or exercise.

What can you expect from the programme?

The programme is not fully decided yet, but it is likely that we will start the day with some gentle movement before the morning meditation. Then after breakfast we have the main session of improvisation until lunchtime. The afternoon will have some free time to explore the beautiful surroundings and some meditation, including an introduction to the practices. The evening will be meditative, and generally there will be silence overnight.

About the retreat team

Jayachitta has followed a Buddhist practice since 1981, and a member of the Order since 1990. She has lived and worked with other Buddhists for a lot of that time. Jayachitta has a deep love of performance and the infinity of human expression. Improvisation, movement and exploring the clown are very important to her as additional approaches to the spiritual life, as they are based in physical expression and play. She sees them as an interactive way of entering and exploring the space that one discovers in meditation. It's in that spirit of play that we can discover who we are and can be.

She has also worked in the world of dance and theatre – which is where her teachers in improvisation come from (Andrew Morrish, John Britton, Kate Hilder and others). She holds an MA in Applied Theatre, and has studied physical theatre (after Jacques Lecoq) at Kiklos Scuola in Italy.

For more information please see:

<http://dancingtheunknown.wixsite.com/improvisation>