



# The Realisation Festival

## *Programme 2022*

### Unlearning & Re-imagining Nature

*9th-12th June*  
*St Giles House, Dorset*

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Thursday

*Gathering*

4–5pm

Arrival at St Giles House and settle into your accommodation

6pm

Gather in the Library, in the main house.  
Welcome from Nick and Dinah Ashley-Cooper

Introduction to the weekend with Elizabeth Oldfield  
and Jonathan Rowson

7:30pm

Dinner

8:30pm

Entertainment. Music, improvisation and  
song with The Realisation Trio.

Our troupe of brilliant performers and musicians will  
make us laugh and help us process the rich ideas and  
felt experiences that accompany our unlearning and  
reimagining.

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Friday

## *What is it to unlearn and reimagine nature*

7—8am

Early morning activities – yoga with Rowan Cobelli, running, wild swimming in the stream

7:30—8:30am

Breakfast

9—10:30am

What Brings Nature Into Being? Conversation with Alastair McIntosh.

Our times are asking us to think again. What we presume may be mistaken. Sources of inspiration must be rediscovered. Big ideas and the widest vision could be vital to address practical problems with renewed vigor, as the radicals of former years often realised. Alternative traditions, ancient and new, which may be thriving on the margins, could provide the perceptions needed for today and tomorrow.

10:30 —11am

Break

11am —1pm

Workshops - Three options, engaging with our themes primarily, though not exclusively, via the body, mind or spirit. Pick one, not necessarily in your comfort zone!

Jonathan Ainscough: Singing is in our nature.

Science tells us we sang before we could talk. A workshop to find your voice and be in harmony together by writing and learning an original song, drawing on the weekend. Warm up provided. Feeling guaranteed. No expertise required.

Xiaolu Guo: Taoism, landscape and embodiment.

A workshop using Chinese ink paintings and poems as a way to understand the Tao, including a chance to contribute to copying a master landscape painting. Less is more. Non action is the act. One stroke can be sufficient.

Minna Salami: Rethinking individualism.

Individualism typically has a negative connotation, and rightly so in that it encourages consumerism and exploitation. But can individualism also guide us toward conscientious and holistic ways of seeing ourselves, each other, and our planet?

1pm

Lunch

2pm

Walk in the parkland, in conversation with Nick Ashley-Cooper, considering St Giles past and present.

4.00pm

Workshops - Three options, engaging with our themes primarily, though not exclusively, via the body, mind or spirit. Pick one, not necessarily in your comfort zone!

Indra Adnan: Can politics come naturally to us?

As humans develop their individual and collective agency, what inner and outer technologies will help us be regenerative? This workshop, which includes discussion of up and running projects, will consider what has already emerged to incubate the new forms of value that give energy to communities. It offers a chance to ask how radical we must be to re-align power with flourishing.

Susan Harrison: Experiencing Collaboration.

Nature is replete with spontaneous and practical collaborations. Life is entangled. This workshop will include learning the basics of improvisation, exploring its possibilities and discovering how it can be done.

Amisha Ghadiali: Spiritual cosmologies: Journeying with the more-than-human world.

An imaginative exploration of the energies and dynamics in nature as you open up your intuitive intelligence and experience the enchantment and wisdom of this land. If weather allows, this workshop will take place outside.

6.00pm

Small groups - Meet altogether in the Library before going into your small group, to hear from others and grapple with what's being unlearned.

7.30pm

Dinner

8.30pm

Evening entertainments including watching the stars and singing in the grotto

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Saturday

## *What if we unlearn and reimagine nature?*

7—8am

Early morning activities – yoga with Rowan Cobelli, running, wild swimming in the stream

7:30—8:30am

Breakfast

9—10:30am

How To Take Care. Conversation with Madeleine Bunting.

Attachment to place is a powerful political, personal and spiritual resource. An awareness of that connection across time can shape that soulful energy to raise a consciousness of care and relationships of attention, presence and touch. That, in turn, can inspire creativity and reverence, as well as habits of affection and capacities of endurance, which are needed now and will resource us for the future.

10:30 —11am

Break

11am —1pm

Workshops - Three options, engaging with our themes primarily, though not exclusively, via the body, mind or spirit. Pick one, not necessarily in your comfort zone!

Damian Hallam and Sarah Langford in conversation: If The Soil Could Speak.

It is widely acknowledged that farming needs reform and that attitudes to food are unsustainable. But what if we responded to these crises by listening to the land and learning from nature itself? Drawing on the practical experience of running farms and working with animals, this is a chance to hear of the wisdom that arises when we are challenged and changed by nature.

Tom Chatfield and Mark Vernon in conversation: Varieties of Transhumanism.

The nature of human beings is routinely imagined via machine metaphors. Transhumanism is often presented as the vision of machines being the way in which we will live and move and have our being. But transhumanism has a spiritual past and uncertain future. Untangle the possibilities and fantasies, the hopes and fears.

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11am —1pm

Sonia McNally: The Spirit of Place.

No expertise is required for this drawing workshop engaging with the spirit of place through a guided practice of observation, dialogue and drawing. The imagination will take the lead to re-envisaged what we see. (This workshop is limited to 12 people and will take place in and around the Grotto, located in the enchanted grounds of St Giles.)

3pm

The Antidebate

How can public debate become less combative, more constructive, and possibly a transformative journey of discovery? Join Jonathan Rowson, Indra Adnan and Ivo Mensch as they guide us through The Antidebate. This time altogether, sharing views, learning from others, and tackling differences and difficulties, will explore a key question from the weekend's theme of unlearning and reimagining nature.

6.00pm

Small Groups

7.30pm

Dinner

8.30pm

Evening entertainments including night stories around the fire pit and dancing in the Bat Cave.

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# Sunday

# What Now?

7—8am	Early morning activities – yoga with Rowan Cobelli, running, wild swimming in the stream
7:30—8:30am	Breakfast
9am	Time Renewed. Conversation with Oliver Burkeman.  As we approach the end of the weekend, Oliver will help us take stock. How do we keep inspiration alive? What ongoing practices open alternative futures? How might we develop the understanding we have gained? What is it to live in a world with pressing problems and a need for radical conversion? This session is a moment altogether to consider insights from across the weekend and ready ourselves to take the unlearning and reimagining back into the world.
10am	Meet in your small groups
11am	Break
11.30am	Feedback from small groups on a panel with our host Elizabeth Oldfield.  What learnt, what to contemplate, what to take away?
12:30pm	Closing ritual
1pm	Lunch and partings

## Terms of engagement

1. Speak to fellow realisers. No phones in St Giles House.
2. Speak wholeheartedly. Different takes are valuable.
3. Invite what you don't know. Challenge yourself.
4. Consider the soulful side. Engage with social questions.
5. Agree expecting more. Disagree with kindness and curiosity.