

# Living the Magical Life: life/art/ritual residential workshop September 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> 2024



Suzi Gablik's Red Shoes

## An invitation from Fern Smith & Suzi Gablik Centre for Emergence in the Dyfi Valley, Wales

*Suzi Gablik was a friend and mentor to Fern as well as being one of the inspirations behind [Emergence](#). In the last year of Suzi's life, Fern and Suzi embarked on a collaborative project to offer a workshop based on her final book, 'Living the Magical Life: An Oracular Adventure.' We celebrate Suzi's '90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 26<sup>th</sup> September and mark the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of her passing by offering this RitualArtworkshop with her blessing.*

**You are invited to participate in a workshop exploring what it is to have a magical art practice** and using it to live day to day, moment to moment, connecting to the mystery.

**Guided by Fern Smith in communion with Suzi Gablik**, we will embark upon an oracular adventure, take magic seriously, and revel in the abundance of the invisible universe.

**We will find, use, and share pathways, maps, models, practices, medicine** to take our place in the lineage of magical creative practitioners who collaborate with the hidden realms and the world beyond the known.

**The experience offers each of us a time both 'within and without time,'** to listen to the messages from the natural world, use divination tools, offer prayer, perform ritual, and connect to the embodied imagination. We will follow in the footsteps of Suzi Gablik, our own, and presenting guides and inspirators. We will connect to and draw support from the spirit of place as we seek and find guidance, exercising our own capabilities, intuitions and skills in honing what 'the magical life' represents to each of us.

**This is a space to connect to the work of one of the most significant artists, critics, and magical seekers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** We follow in the footsteps of Suzi with her as guide, provocateur, and psychopomp.

**Through silence, vigil, song, chanting, walking on the land, writing, mark-making, the use of ritual and objects of significance,** and becoming acquainted with the body of the universe, we will cross the gateway, go beyond the veil, meet the angels and the guardian spirits, and give offerings to our dead.

*We will make A RitualArtworK together.*

## **More about the Workshop**

At the beginning of our time together we will cross a threshold into deep time and ritual space. We will each weave a journey through this experience honouring our own path whilst travelling in company with one another.

Each day we will incorporate into our schedule a reading from 'Living the Magical Life.' A theme or strand will be identified arising from the reading. There will then be an invitation to be 'in conversation' with this in a contemplative, embodied, experimental, and practical way. We will follow where these threads lead us.

Throughout the 7 days together, we will build and deepen connection with an emergent creative practice, sharing with and being witnessed by others.

Drawing inspiration from the book, there will be invitations to make solo and collective rituals as art, connect to the sacred, the numinous, the mystery, and the divine feminine whilst continuously orienting to the spirit of emergence and our own version of 'living the magical life.'

We will create moments of sacred activism, prayer, and stillness. We will work with divination cards, medicine walks, pilgrimage, the four elements, crafting an intention, speaking circles, breath, movement, voicework and visualisation. The work will be located in and develop from the ritual emergent space in which we situate ourselves.

We will be encouraged to ask questions, seeking and taking seriously the responses that come from outside and inside and the space inbetween. There will be feasting, there will be dancing, there will be spontaneity, there will be structure, there will be pleasure, there will be work, there will be challenge and deep resting. The work is intended to sharpen our faculties readying us for our crucial role as human beings in the times ahead.

*Think of this as part workshop, part installation, part performance for the invisible ones.*

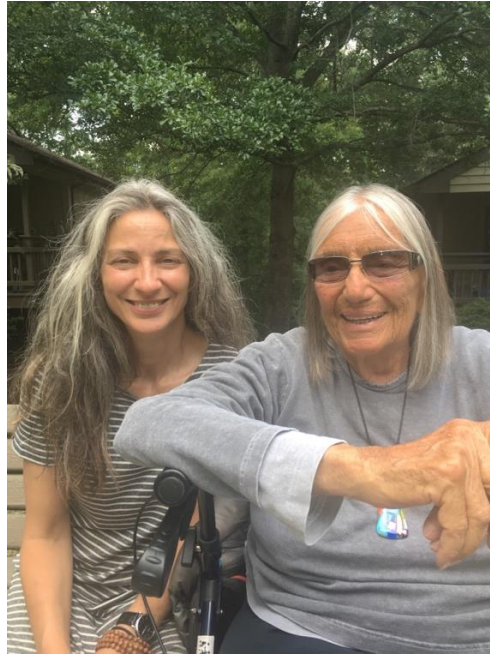
## **Who and What is this For?**

Living the Magical Life is open to artists and creative humans who have a magical practice or are open to finding one. This is not wicca, this is not druid, this is not pagan, this is not the celtic twilight... this is A RitualArtworK and the times are calling it in. This work is for both ourselves and for the wider body of the universe and all that dwell within it. This is sacred activism,

subtle work, inner work *and* world work. I believe this is the most important work we can do in this great time of collapse and re-configuring.

We welcome women, men, transgender, and non-binary/non-conforming persons.

*This is an invitation to be an imaginal being in an animal body.*



Fern and Suzi at her home in Blacksburg, Virginia

## **Fern and Suzi Embark on a Collaborative Project**

Fern Smith met Suzi Gablik in 2017 after a 3-year correspondence. Between that time and her death on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022 there were many letters and phone calls exchanged. In the year of Suzi's life, Fern and Suzi embarked on a project focussing on her final book 'Living the Magical Life'. The idea was to create a workshop based on this her last book to create space for the divine feminine and the Black Madonna to take her rightful place. In Suzi's words, it was to spark a 'Revolution'. The project began with Fern reading aloud and recording Suzi's words, burning each chapter onto CDs and sending these disks to Suzi in the U.S on a weekly basis. These were then listened to and commented on by Suzi during regular phone calls, who reported it as akin to experiencing an 'out of body' experience, re-experiencing her life afresh through the voice of another 'self'. The recordings totalled thirty chapters on 16 disks. This workshop is a gift to and from Suzi Gablik. She is and will be a full collaborator in designing the structure and process. Suzi will be present.

*This is an invitation for you to join us.*

**Suzi would have been 90 years old on September 26<sup>th</sup>**

**It is the Autumn Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere on September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**This workshop has been designed to encompass both of these significant events.**

## Yes I'm interested!

There is a cost to participation. This covers all food, accommodation, hall rental and a contribution to Emergence and to Fern who will act as guide, interpreter, translator, designer, facilitator, and director.

- If you are interested, please send Fern a short message as an **'Expression of Interest'** sharing a few words about yourself and why you are interested.
- The next step is to have a **conversation** in person or on zoom with Fern.
- The next step is to pay a **deposit** and to begin the preparation.

There are 7 places on this workshop.

### Participation Fee

Cost to join is £650 for 7 days for a single room (3 places).

£500 to camp or bring your own van (4 places).

£400 non-residential. I can provide an accommodation list or make suggestions.

Deposit of £200 to secure your place (non-transferable, non-refundable – unless the workshop is cancelled). The remainder is payable one month before.

*Please state accommodation preferences at time of booking.*

### Venue and Field Trips

We will be based at The Barn at The Centre for Emergence in the Dyfi Valley, Wales. We will also visit, walk, meet the immediate surroundings, and make fieldtrips and pilgrimages to significant places in the local area.

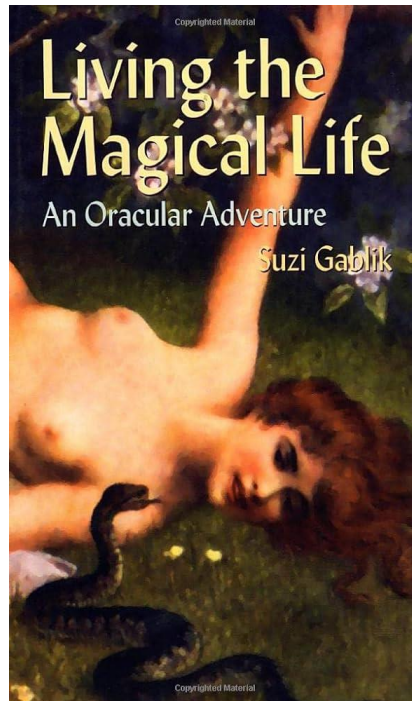
We will have time each day at Y Ganolfan in Aberhosan, a beautiful building which was built as the local village school over 100 years ago. This gives us a larger venue for movement, sound and ritual practise as well as a large kitchen for preparing food and feasting.



The Barn at The Centre for Emergence

## Living the Magical Life Book

You may or may not have come across Suzi's book 'Living the Magical Life.' There is no expectation, pressure or requirement to have read it or to read it before you come. Saying that, if you can get hold of a copy I urge you to, you won't regret it! The book is still in print but as there was only ONE edition ever printed (with no plans to reprint) it is now quite rare and very expensive. Suzi supported a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition being printed but as the rights to the book were passed to another publisher when the original ceased trading, the book seems to have been lost without a trace. It's not even available on kindle. We hope that a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition might be printed in future.



The Source Book

## About Fern Smith

### Life Milestones

I grew up in the East End of London before moving to Essex and Epping Forest where I discovered trees. After a school trip to the mountains, I moved to Wales, initially to Swansea where I discovered the sea and studied for a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. I then embarked on a Masters' Degree in Industrial Relations. These two chunks of my education helped me dive more into the questions, 'How to Live?' and 'What is (the) Work?' both of which have travelled with me throughout my life - to date, 60 times around the sun.



Me on holiday in Italy in 2019!

Immediately after university in 1985 I co-founded an international touring theatre company [‘Volcano’](#) which gave me the chance to deepen my exploration of these questions, this time through the frame of live performance, improvisation, physical theatre and voice work for over 25 years. In the past decade I have more consciously followed an ecological, ritual art and healing path as a therapist and with Emergence which I developed in 2010. With Emergence I honour the power of sacred or subtle activism as a force for balance and wholeness in the world. I also work in private practice as a craniosacral therapist and trauma informed body worker (TRE Certified Instructor) as well as guiding individuals and groups through nature and soul-connected initiatory experiences with my partner Phil Ralph at the Centre for Emergence.

### **Apprenticeship**

I apprenticed to theatre with Volcano for 25 years, directing and performing shows and running workshops nationally and internationally. In 2010 I became a student of and then associate of The [Annwn Foundation](#) guided by Ian Rees, studying and working practically with the Western Mystery Tradition including the Hermetic Kabbalah and the Arthurian cycles and the Books of Wales through the gateway of the embodied imagination. I came across the work of Suzi Gablik the same year, initially through her books and then in person beginning a life-long apprenticeship to her and what she referred to as the ‘methodology of the marvellous’

### **Magic & Mystery**

My relationship to magic and mystery is through my life-long creative art practise, my work with the body through touch and trauma work, tending to and opening to the natural world and the everyday sacred, and committing to ‘sacred personal research’ combining ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ work in projects such as The Emergence Land Journey & Summit (2012), Retracing Our Steps (2013), The Walk That Reconnects (2014), COP 1,2 & 3 (2015) Being an Earth Pilgrim (2016), Who Do You Think You Are (2017), Seven Sundays in Spring 2018, To the Moon & Back (2019), Bardsey Time (2020-2022), and participatory RitualArtworKs such as Women of the Winter Solstice, Beltane Women (2020), Climate Lab (2022-3) and Women Dancing (2014-2024).



*My work is as an experiential ritual artist, space-maker, and life-long student of Emergence.*  
<https://fernsmith.uk/>, <https://craniosacraltherapy.wales/>, <https://emergence-uk.org/>

## **Suzi Gablik Life and Death**

“Born in New York, Suzi was the only child of Anthony Gablik, a commercial artist, and Geraldine (nee Schwartz). She attended PS9 school in Manhattan, New York City, then Black Mountain College in North Carolina, a radical arts institution where she found what she called “my people”.



The Artist Suzi Gablik

Aged 18 she moved on to Hunter [Art](#) College, New York, to study art – including painting under Robert Motherwell – and English, graduating in 1955. She then lived in the Upper East Side, Manhattan, making ends meet as an artist, before a fire in a warehouse where her belongings were stored led to an insurance cheque that enabled her to travel to Europe in 1959.

Through René Magritte’s lawyer in New York, Suzi began a correspondence with the Belgian artist, of whom she was intent upon writing a biography. She subsequently lived with René and Georgette Magritte in Brussels for a year, gathering material for her book *Magritte*, which was eventually published in 1973.

In the mid-70s, Suzi took on lecturing work for the United States Information Agency, which sent her around the world to speak about contemporary American art. The experience of lecturing on modernism, and recognising its part in colonialism, catalysed her sense that the movement had arrived at a dead end.

This shift of thinking underpinned her book *Has Modernism Failed?* (1984). The work’s heretical views made Suzi many enemies in the art world, but also a swathe of allies.



Art Critic, Commentator and Writer Suzi Gablik

Written in Suzi's clear and direct style, the book later influenced the idea of "social practice" art, which focuses on engagement through human interaction and social discourse. Her reputation was further enhanced with *The Re-enchantment of Art*, published in 1991, the year she ended her 25-year sojourn in London to settle in Blacksburg, Virginia.

In 1995, *Conversations Before the End of Time* explored ecological and social themes of art through a series of exchanges with artists and thinkers.

***Her final book was *Living the Magical Life: An Oracular Adventure* (2002), in which she explored through autobiography the idea of divination and chance guiding ourselves through life."***



At Home with Suzi Gablik 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/sep/30/suzi-gablik-obituary>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/arts/suzi-gablik-dead.html>



***Living The Magical Life is an Emergence Initiative***

***For more about Emergence Current & Past Projects go to***

<https://emergence-uk.org/>

