**Being Suzi Gablik:**

**Ann Shrosbree**

Thinking back to October when Fern was ‘in residence’ at Small World Theatre, it was an intense and thoughtful week where revisiting Suzi Gablik’s ‘Converstions before the end of time’ created a unique opportunity for both audiences and ‘enacters’. To experience Suzi by proxy ‘live’ in conversation over 20 years ago with some of the artists and thinkers wresting with the emerging consequences of human impact on the environment and realization that the world is “a web of interdependent living communities……….not a department store” as so aptly put by Christopher Manes.

My own experience of speaking Suzi’s words played directly into my ear while Fern spoke Satish Kumar’s words was slightly surreal. Thankfully as Satish speaks at length there were shortish spaces for Suzi to ask questions so my practical task was not to get too lost in listening and be ready when I (as Suzi) needed to respond. I felt somewhere between acting and being Suzi experiencing the conversation – surreal, especially as the voice in my ear was Phil’s!

The separation of art from life by the art industry expressed by Satish as a sort of death, mirrors human interaction with the environment that uses resources with no thought for the consequences. Can we not learn from the past to live in the present for the benefit of the future as the Algonquin and other traditional societies always did?

Satish and June were my neighbours in the late 1970’s and early 80’s when I gave up art for farming on John Seymour’s self-sufficient farm in Pembrokeshire. Satish was instrumental in my returning to art through creating theatre on environmental themes initially for the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth and leading into many theatre for development projects in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. This ‘conversation’ resonated for me with a time when Satish and other inspirational figures such as Schumacher, Gwynfor Evans, George Trevelyan and Fritjof Capra first became a powerful force that still pulses beneath positive changes in environmental, economic and social awareness.

I am very grateful to Suzi firstly for having these thoughtful conversations and for making them available through the book. I also appreciate enormously Fern’s bringing them into the present through these seven ‘live’ events within our near zero carbon theatre space. They demonstrate both how jaw-droppingly slowly things change and yet that there is hope. With awareness of human impact on the fragility of the planet now mainstreaming through a strong younger generation. Current gross political leaderships surely must represent the last throes of a dying era!

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