

03 / 23 / 2017

“Juniper Artland launches course to soothe political stress”
by Jane Bradley



Jupiter Artland launches course to soothe political stress



Liz Magic Laser assembled a therapy group composed of actor participants with opposing political convictions. Picture: Contributed

It is a time of global turmoil which has caused stresses and strains as people battle to come to terms with a changing political landscape and struggle to reconcile opposing points of view within friend and family groups.

But now an outdoor sculpture park outside of Edinburgh has come up with a solution – a “guided meditation” to help sufferers of political stress work through the strains of events such as Brexit and the Scottish independence referendum.

The “Political Therapy” course at Jupiter Artland, near Wilkieston, West Lothian – inspired by a work of art which will be on display at the park this summer – uses drama therapy to help release tension in people who feel frustrated by recent political events.

The workshop, which is to be held on two separate dates over the summer, utilises “primal therapy” psycho-therapeutic and meditation techniques, led by drama therapist and actress Louise Platt and inspired by an exhibition at the Artland by Brooklyn-based artist Liz Magic Laser, whose installation tackles a similar theme.

John Heffernan, head of exhibitions at Jupiter Artland, said: “We expect it will be very popular. Especially with the lively political climate we are dealing with in recent times, I think there will be a lot of demand.

“Now, there is a real interest in politics in Scotland and I think it is perfect timing to bring this exhibition by this American artist to Jupiter Artland.”

He added that he expected people from a broad range of political spectrums to attend.

“The whole point is to learn to deal with living with people of different political beliefs and being able to sit down and talk about it without anger or hostility,” he said.

The Artland’s events brochure explains how the workshop will play out. “Participants will be guided through a series of activities to facilitate the expression and release of frustrations associated with Brexit and other current events,” it says.

Ms Magic Laser’s installation *Primal Speech*, which will be on display at Jupiter Artland from 6 May to 1 October, is described as an “immersive mixed media installation”, with grey padded walls and therapeutic props such as punching pillows.

It encourages viewers of a video she created for the project to “express and exorcise” their socio-political and personal frustrations.

Ms Magic Laser, who has made political emblems in the form of soft toys – including one of the Scottish National Party logo – for use in the workshops, said: “I am expecting, that with the issues of Scottish independence being readdressed, that this will be a major theme at the workshops in Edinburgh. I think it could be interesting as there is less likely to be a left and right split.”

The course is to be held on 3 June and 26 August.