

Theatre & War

Notes from Afar

SERIES IN PERFORMING ARTS

“Nandita Dinesh has created an intensely personal reflection on her own practices in theatre making, but it should resonate with most artists who have worked in situations characterised by risk. Largely styled as ‘performative writing’, it is part autoethnography, part script, part documentary, with a dose of the cautionary tale. The critical reflexivity is couched in immersive theatre experiences, with scenarios scripted carefully to prod mercilessly at anyone who has attempted so-called applied theatre, including Dinesh herself. Wry humour characterises the critique of, amongst other things, privilege and guilt, “do-gooders”, voyeuristically “witnessing” another’s pain, education and condescension.”

Prof. Veronica Baxter

Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town, South Africa

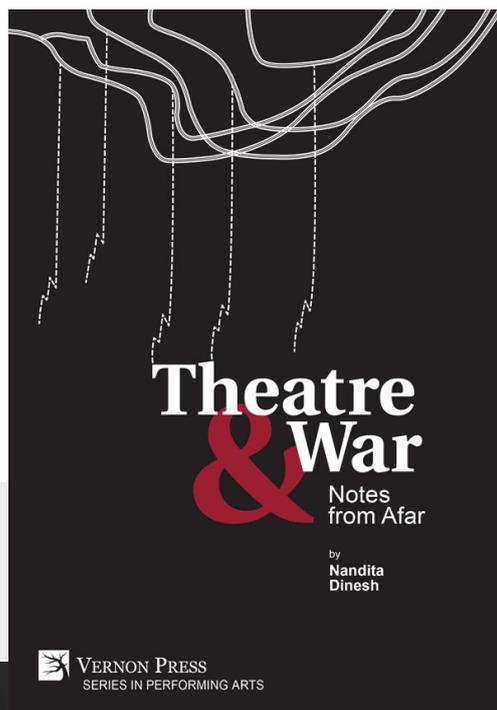
Summary

In *Theatre & War: Notes from the Field* (2016, 2018), Dinesh writes about making theatre in zones of conflict. She analyzes practice; she describes various projects that she has undertaken ‘on the ground’; she theorizes strategies that might be useful to other practitioner-researchers who are involved in similar work. In this sequel of sorts, Dinesh chooses to return to the same themes: of theatre, of war. But this time, she intentionally crafts her notes from afar. From somewhere outside the field. From somewhere outside the practice. And yet, a somewhere that is consumed by the field. And the practice.

Through writing that seeks to ‘do’, through writing that seeks to ‘perform’, Dinesh uses different voices in this book. Voices that come from more traditional archival sources, which are then re-conceptualized as drama. Voices that come from sources that occupy the space between archived and lived experience, which are then shaped into creative vignettes. Voices that come from Dinesh’s repertoire – her own lived experiences – that are then crafted as flash fiction about past/present/future collaborators. By weaving together variously positioned experiences and voices through creative (re)interpretations, *Theatre & War: Notes from Afar* is a book that could be read; it is also a book that could be performed.

About the author

Nandita Dinesh holds a PhD in Drama from the University of Cape Town in South Africa and an MA in Performance Studies from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. Focused on the role that theatre can play during and after violent conflict, Dinesh has conducted community-based theatre projects in India, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. She currently teaches Theatre Arts and Literature & Performance, in addition to overseeing the juvenile justice programming, at the United World College in Montezuma, New Mexico. Nandita’s books include *Theatre & War: Notes from the Field* (2016; 2018 republication in India), *Memos from a Theatre Lab: Exploring What Immersive Theatre “Does”*, *Scripting Detention: A Project in Theater and Autoethnography with Incarcerated Teens*, *Memos from a Theatre Lab: Spaces, Relationships, & Immersive Theatre*, *Information for/ from Outsiders: Chronicles from Kashmir and Memos from a Theatre Lab: Immersive Theatre & Time*. In 2017 she was awarded the Elliott Hayes Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy by Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas.



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