Dossier: History, Memory, Event: A Working Archive

NOBUKO ANAN, BISHNUPRIYA DUTT, JANELLE REINELT and SHRINKHLA SAHAI

Theatre Research International / Volume 37 / Issue 02 / July 2012, pp 163 - 183
DOI: 10.1017/S0307883312000065, Published online: 03 May 2012

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0307883312000065

How to cite this article:

Request Permissions : Click here
Dossier: History, Memory, Event: A Working Archive

COMPILED BY NOBUKO ANAN, BHINNUPRIYA DUTT, JANELLE REINELT AND SHRINKHLA SAHAI, ON BEHALF OF THE JNU/WARWICK RESEARCH GROUP

This dossier documents a research collaboration between members of the School of Art and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, India, and members of the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick, in Coventry, United Kingdom, between 2008 and 2010. This collaboration was dedicated to a cross-cultural inquiry into methods and topics of performance research that might serve to produce a robust international dialogue capable of approaching performance through multinational lines of inquiry. Participants chose a common topic (History, Memory, Event, and the Politics of Performance 1970–1990), and composed an archive of materials drawn from six nations which was analysed and interrogated by the group. The dossier offers examples from the archive and an account of the way the group processed these artefacts.

Research context, aims and methodology

This dossier documents a research collaboration between members of the School of Art and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, India, and members of the School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick in Coventry, United Kingdom, between 2008 and 2010.2 This collaboration was dedicated to a cross-cultural inquiry into methods and topics of performance research that would contribute to defining an international research paradigm for our field. The difficulty of working across different scholarly cultures to achieve coherent multivocal, multifaceted analyses was our greatest challenge. Our goal was to create a strong enough knowledge base in common to allow us to mutually build upon and enrich our singular insights and to produce a robust international dialogue capable of approaching performance through multinational lines of inquiry.

Our research group organized two key colloquia: the first in Delhi, the second in Coventry. On both occasions, for a week each time, professors to advanced doctoral students were able to meet and engage in face-to-face discussion. The first colloquium (March 2010) was conventional in structure: twenty papers were presented and discussion sessions followed each panel allowing a significant number of graduate students and visitors to participate. Although this was an essential first step in beginning to understand the particulars of each project member’s research interests and expertise, the formality of the paper presentations and the lack of direct links between the participants’ topics did not satisfy the desire to develop a research platform that would be strong and deep
enough to lead to future possibilities and results. It replicated the discrete ownership of expertise – each scholar tells the others his or her ’special’ research findings. The political structure of this exchange makes crossover thinking almost impossible; instead, conventional scholarly behaviour recognizes and values (or perhaps ignores) the other’s offering – there is little way to build mutuality or even minimal collaboration. Our goal of creating ’robust international dialogue’ barely got off the ground.

However, by the end of this time together, the group did have a better idea of what interests members might have in common: both faculties demonstrated an interest in the relationship between performance and politics as it has developed in the recent past. After identifying a number of world events that were important to both groups, it was agreed to focus future attention on the period between 1970 and 1990, as an approximation of the concept of ’recent past’ that would embrace a range of important political and aesthetic developments. Hence our second colloquium, the subject of this dossier, was shaped as ’History, Memory, Event and the Politics of Performance’. Primary to this theme was the relationship between the sociopolitical history of the period and the memory/narration of sequences, constellations and events that passed the threshold of and entered into spaces of appearance such as theatre, dance and other performing-arts forms.

For this meeting, it was crucial to our overarching goal of building a common knowledge base that would support collaboration to find an alternative method of encountering each other’s work, one other than the traditional, paper-giving format. Methodologically, we therefore experimented with working together to construct an archive of materials from India, Japan and selected sites in the West (totalling coverage of six nations) in order to expand our knowledge of each other’s local and national memorial markers while also collaborating on comparative (and contrastive) research strategies. In practical terms, this required each member of the project team to contribute to a working archive by preparing a ’string of beads’: a concept designed to allow for fragments of knowledge and experience to be loosely connected and then laid alongside other contributions, without striving for a unified field or totalizing narrative. A string of beads offered historical documents, texts, images and performances (the beads), connected by a scholarly – and sometimes personal – narrative explanation of why these ’beads’ were significant, and how they were related (the string). So, to give an example, a string might contain beads of an excerpt of dialogue from a play, a newspaper article and a photograph, joined by a narrative that explained the public impact of a performance on a particular context – this was the architecture of a number of our offerings.

The working archive was compiled online, in advance of the colloquium, allowing participants to study and prepare. The result was a fully engaged set of dialogues querying aspects of what had been collected and presented. Several questions came strongly to the forefront of the discussions: what relationships appeared between the nation as a state apparatus and the construction/critique of nation through performance(s)? How did performances achieve political efficacy (when they did)? What relationships existed between performances and the public sphere? How were Otherness and perceptions of Otherness represented during performances of this period? In a highly mediatized period, how did differences in theatrical strategy capture or construct historical events through their aesthetics, their dramaturgy, their medium and/or their styles?
In compiling this dossier, we have consolidated these questions into four main categories: (1) constructing the nation through performance; (2) performativity and the public sphere; (3) representations and exclusions of the Other; (4) the role of media in relation to performance. Each category is explored through selected offerings from the archive. Our hope is that in reading between the documentation of our findings and the archival materials, readers will, on the one hand, grasp the import of our working process and see how this enabled us to more thoroughly complicate and integrate our research encounters, and, on the other, be able to make their own, further connections, alongside those mapped here.

On a practical note, it is helpful to observe the following as a guide to reading this documentation: the dossier contains accounts of fifteen scholars’ strings of beads. While we have grouped them according to the heading that most directly applies, there are many interconnections to other scholars’ beads because of themes or geographic regions. We have put the names of our participants in bold face to facilitate readers’ ability to read around the dossier, making their own associations, and have compiled an online special archive of supplementary material for each entry. To view this archive, please visit http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0307883312000065

1. Constructing the nation through performance

Across all geographic areas studied, performances participated in constructing the nation. We borrow the concept of curation from the fine arts to describe how performances framed nations and versions of national identity and put them on display. The notion of curation entails the idea that there are many different ways of approaching the display of artefacts and disseminating knowledge about them. Similarly, performance presents discrete versions of the nation and national identity. However, while the nation is often curated through performance, the arts are sometimes instrumentalized as tools of the nation (or, more precisely, a particular regime). Thus the power of curation is sometimes only an iteration of hegemonic national construction rather than a truly forceful new shaping of how the nation should be understood. Comparing the various strategies of states and citizens, our group began to recognize and map the politics of performance with respect to the nation. In the four examples below, we begin with a ‘forceful new shaping’ from the bottom up: an example of resistance to state exclusions in post-imperial Britain. Turning to India, we see how post-independence India actively constructed national identity through the performing arts – but with questionable outcomes. The last two examples examine the possibility that performances can be simultaneously progressive and reactionary, first in the situation of eastern Europe, and finally in the transnational situation of Britain in relation to its former colony, Australia.

Nadine Holdsworth selected immigration and the rise of the far right in the UK as her focus in order to look at issues of inclusivity and exclusion in relation to citizenship. She built a string of beads that linked together Enoch Powell’s infamous anti-immigrant ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech (1968); David Edgar’s play about the rise of the fascist National Front in Britain, Destiny (1976); and Tara Arts, the Asian British theatre company, formed in 1977 as a response to a racist attack in which a Sikh teenager was killed in
Southall, an Asian community in London. The string of beads ends with information about ‘Tara Arts’ twentieth-anniversary production of *Journey to the West* (1998–2002), a large-scale trilogy which charts the journey of the Indian diaspora first to Kenya to work as indentured labour to build the East African Railway and then from Kenya to Britain (which prompted Powell’s speech), and thereafter the ‘journey’ this initiated in British society.5 Holdsworth’s narrative joining these documents emphasizes the cultural struggle to combat racism, starting with her own experience as a young girl in school. What was revealed by her experiences growing up, and by the role that a fledgling theatre company could play in figuring a more inclusive nation, was the ability of performance to represent diverse bodies and voices onstage (missing on the civic stages), offering a challenge to the state’s models of who counts as a citizen and what is important about their lives.

In contrast to Holdsworth’s narrative, the large-scale international festivals of the 1980s that Bishnupriya Dutt describes in her string of beads illustrate a contradictory curation of the nation, one which was seemingly inclusive but actually full of exclusions. On one hand, she describes nation-building desires to place India’s culture on the world stage in a way that would definitively shape the reception of ‘India’ in the next decades – providing curation that would shore up or strengthen the version of the nation congenial to the regime at that time (Rajiv Gandhi). On the other hand, this was also a watershed moment in globalization: the beginning of its power and effects on cultural production. The replacement of older, singular performers by nubile bodies and by groups, the new displays of technology that were part of the festivals and would remain a determining feature in future international reception, and the shifting economic interests of the state towards capitalism and the West allowed performance to consolidate state power, and even strengthen it through its attachment to global culture and the world stage.

A crucial departure from the past came with the administrative structure of the new festivals. Since independence, cultural institutions had enjoyed a large degree of autonomy and minimum bureaucratic control; there was no Ministry of Culture but rather cultural bodies made up of experts who held authority in particular areas. They were now placed with the Indian Council of Cultural Relations directly under the External Affairs Ministry, Government of India. The choice of performers and groups to be included, and programme shape and substance, were carefully controlled.

The major festivals of the period were held in UK (1982–3), France (1985), the USA (1986) and the USSR (1987–8), as well as in Sweden and Japan and at numerous other smaller-scale festival venues. The festival culture produced a landscape different from the post-independence national horizon, namely the international arena and its cosmopolitan circuits of importing and disseminating culture in a globalized world. In that respect, these festivals marked a performative watershed.

The performance culture presented at the festivals evolved a new mode of ‘packaging’ to be circulated subsequently as a commodity in the global cultural market. The long and elaborate structure of the Indian classical performance genres was now reduced to representative skeletal forty-five-minute capsules, while the intricacies of the texts, including their subversive playfulness, giving the performer an opportunity for agency,
were explicitly abandoned. Very strictly structured formats, with no leeway for the performer to innovate and create a subtext, governed the new modified materials, which then became the latest vogue after the festival. It is also interesting to note how, in respect to the music industry, this was a period of creating East–West fusion utilizing two of India’s major composers playing and recording with Western groups or orchestras. The first debut products in the new global market were Ravi Shankar playing with George Harrison in the USA and with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra in the USSR, and Dr L. Subramaniam performing with Pink Floyd in the USA and with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra in the USSR.6

While Dutt’s archival contributions drew attention to the collusion of the ‘international’ cultural project with the domestic economic and political changes of the period, our discussion of the ‘festivals phenomenon’ was further historicized by Indian colleagues as the culmination of a process that sought to give the state control or mastery over the radical assertions of minority, tribal and regional identities; over gender; and over the violent ultra-left – a process that had surfaced most spectacularly in the declaration of the National Emergency in 1975 and its subsequent repression of all of those groups. In its turn, this provoked a mobilization in several states (most prominently in West Bengal and Karnataka, but also significantly in Kerala, Delhi, Manipur and Bihar) of a theatre of protest outside the architectural boundaries of theatre houses, and often in itinerant, open spaces or in intense/sharing enclosure modes, upholding and identifying voices raised against the nation state. Thus theatre participated both in nation-branding and in resistance to that branding through the assertion of another model of theatrical practice linked to political activism.

Within the context of a Yugoslavia on the verge of break-up, Silvija Jestrovic’s materials examined the way nationalist sentiments first appeared as part of a Serbian imaginary. During the 1980s a wave of plays and performances appeared focusing on the history of the Serbian nation. This theatre repertoire emerged while Tito’s Yugoslavia still seemed relatively stable and followed the country to its downfall. The ideological set-up of Tito’s Yugoslavia required a multicultural approach epitomized in the ethos of ‘brotherhood and unity’, while local patriotism and nationalism were strongly suppressed. Thus, at this pivotal time, national sentiments and historical nostalgia could have an allure of political subversion rather than an immediately reactionary tone.

Three years after Tito’s death, The Battle of Kolubara was staged in Belgrade in 1984. It was a dramatization of the epic novel The Time of Death (Vreme Smrti) by Dobrica Ćosić – a dissident in Tito’s time and arguably the greatest bard of Milošević’s time. (When his popularity was at its peak, Ćosić was considered the ‘father of the nation’ – a spiritual voice of Serbian national identity.) The novel is often viewed from two conflicting positions – either as a bible for Serbian nationalists or as sentimental and dangerous third-rate literature for those holding more cosmopolitan views. The dramatization by Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz focused on the part of Ćosić’s grand epic that had taken place on the battlefields of the First World War, reinforcing the notion of Serbs as historically heroic warriors (see Fig. 1). The hugely successful production did not appear as dated and reactionary as the later criticism of this work implied– rather the
performance had a positive commemorative impact on its audiences, who understood it as an assertion of a hitherto deliberately marginalized historical narrative.

Seeing the strong and emotional reaction of spectators to the production, Jestrović’s beads invoke Benedict Anderson’s imagined communities to emphasize the aspirational and myth-building features of the production of national identity, and their links to Jill Dolan’s concept of utopian performatives. The very ambiguity of the impulses this performance unleashed – what, looking back from the bloodshed of the 1990s, would have looked very different from the early to mid-1980s – balanced the rediscovery of a national history, identity and religion against the backdrop of an allegedly artificial collective Yugoslav identity imposed by the Communist regime. National imaginaries gave the illusion of a progressive alternative to flawed Communist rule. The community that sang the patriotic songs in *The Battle of Kolubara* perceived itself to be part of a genuine historical counternarrative.

The experience of utopian performatives is perhaps fleeting, but their sociocultural impact reverberates far beyond the ephemeral performance event. Although situated in the context of the historical past and somewhat old-fashioned in its aesthetics, *The Battle of Kolubara* was a performance about the future – awakening sentiments and constructing an ideology that would have a very real political and existential impact in the years to
come. These utopian performatives, and others that were similar, indeed haunted the Balkans of the 1990s.

Finally, we encountered an example of transnational cultural appropriation and its ambiguities. Jim Davis developed a string of beads that highlighted how a postcolonial text could be repositioned by a well-intentioned and left-leaning playwright to apply to the colonial nation, stripping out its most trenchant critique by absorbing its message. Davis admired a particularly perceptive account of the imposition of British rule and culture on Australia in Thomas Keneally’s *The Playmaker* (1987), which implicitly questions the certainties with which Britain believed it was spreading civilization and enlightenment around the world. The novel is based on the preparations for a staging of the first English play to be performed in Australia, George Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* (1789), performed by convicts indentured to the British colonial settlers. While acknowledging that the experience of playmaking can be empowering, a dark and ironic note runs through Keneally’s novel, almost as if the very triumph of the performance signifies the erasure of other languages and cultures.

When Timberlake Wertenbaker adapted the novel into *Our Country’s Good* (1988) and the Royal Court Theatre in London produced it in tandem with *The Recruiting Officer*, she was attempting a political intervention against Thatcherism, but, as Davis argues, the play emphasized the value of education, penal reform and empowerment through the arts, in effect ‘colonizing’ the novel to produce a ‘state-of-the-nation’ play for the UK. The dark side of Keneally’s novel was sacrificed for the more immediate and contemporary message that Wertenbaker wished to communicate. Thus a play about Australia became a play about England.

These were far from the only strings of beads that documented ways that performance constructs and is constructed by the nation. Of our four organizing themes, this was perhaps the most ubiquitous – all our beads might be seen as having some relevance to significations of national identity. The most important finding was probably the volatility of intention in relation to these various accounts: the slide from nation building to regime strengthening in the case of India; the morphing of the ‘good intentions’ of nascent Serbian nationalism into a horrific hypernationalism within a decade. Also, both instructive and ironic was the example of how, as performance travels, it can transform its effects – thus the postcolonial relation ironically repeats the cultural appropriation and instrumentalization of the colony, even as it comes from those hypothetical ‘good intentions’.

2. Performativity and the public sphere

The question of efficacy (the ability of performance to effect change) appeared throughout our beads to depend upon the power of the performances in context – who saw them, how they were conveyed into other forms of public discourse, whether they ‘caught on’ in other forms of cultural practice. The evaluation of the efficacy of any particular performance depends on an understanding of how it will operate within the public sphere of the nation or community in which it is performed. Certainly, one live performance seen by a discrete audience, even a large one, cannot compete with
representations that circulate widely in cinemas, or, more recently, on the Internet. But public life is made up of many interlocking outlets for representation and expression. Live performances have an immediate impact on those who see them, but also enter circulation among other sources of public discourse and representation – documentary films, television talk-show topics, journalists’ prose in multiple languages and in different strata of publication (‘posh’ papers versus tabloids; scholarly articles versus popular word-of-mouth advertising) – all of these things combine with the contextual attributes of the moment (what is happening locally and on the world stages concurrently with the performances).

While perhaps performance cannot change the world, it can become a part of a network of representations in the public sector that together can make change occur. This is, of course, both a positive means of making change and a neutral structural possibility: performances can help create reactionary as well as progressive political climates for change. The four examples from our research group in this section illustrate how this potentiality can be harnessed to varying political outcomes.

In the first example, a single performance focuses, if not drives, reactionary political change at a key site in eastern Europe, and contrasts interestingly with Silvija Jestrovic’s findings drawn from the previous decade. The interruption (and ultimate closing) of a production of *Saint Sava* at the Zenica National Theatre in Belgrade (1990), as Milija Gluhovic revealed to us in his materials, prepared for and was supported by parallel events going on within Serbian culture that were forcing a link between a new hypernationalism and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), but it was also a defining moment. Religious activists and church officials joined battle to desecularize society before that evening in the theatre. Gluhovic describes a series of events in the public sphere that together added up to a shift in national identity and operative ideas of nation. The linkage of nation to religion becomes visible in a specifically performative way in the *Saint Sava* event, but it was shored up and reinforced by other activities in the public arena in advance of the particular ‘performance’.

The play was written by Siniša Kovačević, directed by Vladimir Milčin and performed by the Zenica National Theatre at the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade. Without doubt, the symbolism of the national theatre site and company heightened the theatricality of the event as ‘about’ the nation. The group that disrupted the performance was made up of young people, who identified themselves in public as theological students and activists of the Serbian Youth Bloc, and who were led by Žarko Gavrilović, the archpriest of the SOC, and Vojislav Šešelj, a high official of the Serbian Renewal Movement at that time. Thus the *Saint Sava* event condensed religion, politics and art to produce the first example of state censorship after communism and to provoke a strong performative assertion of the power of the church within the new form of the state.

Gluhovic’s string of beads begins with details of the theatre event, and then connects the account to articles that place this incident in a broader sociopolitical context, showing the historical role of the SOC in relation to nationalism from the nineteenth century to the present, and some theoretical essays by Saba Mahmood (2009) and Judith Butler (2009) that position the incident in the light of ongoing debates in Europe and broader issues of secularism, postsecularism and the (religious) far right today.
In a further example, one drawn from visual culture, Trina Banerjee showed how gender can be a powerful factor in public-sphere representations of political leaders and surrogates for those leaders. The case in point is the construction of Indira Gandhi as both monster and powerful mother through the manipulation of iconography in the public sphere. Here visual images played a part alongside public opinion and political realities in shaping the image of Gandhi. Existing tropes of gender representation became triggered or strengthened by Gandhi’s actions, but also by the public’s changing attitude towards her and her ‘reforms’. (Under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi the nation reeled with the shock of the severest censorship of the press, draconian laws and mass imprisonment of all political and civil rights activists, including, of course, various members of all the opposition parties.) The density of the representational web of visual images representing Indira Gandhi during this period enabled the shape-shifting vacillation from virtue to evil that could be attributed to her.

The particulars of Indira Gandhi’s construction were broadened out to a discussion of the roles of female political leaders in South Asian countries and the difficulties that feminist theory faces in analysing effectively their political contributions. These questions come into sharper focus during the Emergency when Indira Gandhi’s authority grew to unimaginable proportions and slogans such as ‘Indira is India’ filled the air. Larger than life, and in some cases enormous, blow-ups of her figure appeared everywhere. It was widely agreed that Gandhi looked rather sordid in most of these gargantuan visual representations and she later had some of them pulled down. But the upshot was that the urban and semi-urban spaces of the country were pervaded by ‘monstrous’ representations of the female leader of the nation, who had by then begun to be widely hated in several circles for her uncompromisingly authoritarian ways. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi was often popularly referred to as the ‘only real man’ in the Congress, signalling a continuance of the reading of effective political leadership in terms of masculinity and femininity within what was, in reality, an atmosphere of severely repressive governmentality. Thus gender-coded images were pegged to political valuation and personal characterization of the leader.

Within theatrical representation in this period, Banerjee points out two differing approaches to gendered power. In Sambhu Mitra’s Chandbaniker Pala, a play written and published in Calcutta in 1978, the goddess Manasha appears as a monstrous and all-pervasive female figure. In contrast to this theatrical representation, the figures of revolutionary women that appear in Utpal Dutt’s plays from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s – especially in Kallol, Surya Shikar and Shon Re Malik – are individuals who have stepped out of their usual gender roles and taken on the mantle of political activism or leadership. These plays seem ostensibly to be primarily about class war, but Dutt still engages closely with sexual politics and gender relations, questioning at several crucial moments the territorial laws of property that seem to govern conjugal relationships. As a playwright, Mitra also explores gender relations in Chandbaniker Pala, but with a sort of misogynistic dismissal of ‘woman’ as reactionary, which leaves the male hero very much at the centre of political action at the end.

However, both these playwrights imagine in their texts a face-off of some finality between notions of the ‘ideal nation’ and the then-current degenerate form of the
postcolonial state. In setting these playwrights and their texts in dialogue with each other, we can see how masculinity and femininity emerge as complex representational tropes in the cultural products of a postcolonial state that is locked in a near-fatal struggle with its own emergent repressive visage at this time.

This insistence that performances calibrate their efficacy from the way they are combined and contribute to a larger circulation of images, discourses and performances clarifies the concept of performativity as the research group came to understand it. In both its aspects, as a structure of repetition and sedimentation (Judith Butler), or as a ‘force of the performative’ where a break in previous forms of repetition is possible (Jacques Derrida), performativity is the social force of visibility and repetition that establishes, reinforces or interrupts ongoing cultural practices. We have been able to identify in our beads some of those points where change emerges or hegemony is enforced. Sometimes the complexity of the interchange between politicians and artists complicates a clear either/or interpretation.

For instance, in our third example, Samik Bandyopadhyay looked at the theatre in its left-leaning efforts to critique state violence in the 1970s and the state’s attempts to repress or silence it, but also at how, after a so-called left government came to power in 1977, the betrayal of critique, cronyism, and repressive policies led theatre workers to develop different articulations of a counternarrative about the history and value of violence as a political weapon. Focusing on theatre in West Bengal, Bandyopadhyay looked back to a landmark production in 1965 that clearly argued that state violence needed to be met with violent resistance since non-violence would not secure justice. Utpal Dutt’s *Kallol* (The Call of the Waves) at the Minerva Theatre turned to the past to valorize the tradition of armed struggle in the Indian freedom movement and to challenge an official history that downplayed this aspect in favour of the triumph of non-violence in gaining independence. The play was explosive, and according to Sudeshna Banerjee,

Dutt was arrested; the vernacular press, under pressure from the government refused to carry advertisements for *Kallol*, prompting Tapas Sen to draft and spearhead a whole new advertisement campaign. He created a slogan: ‘Kallol cholche cholbey’ [‘Kallol continues, and will continue’]; and the city was plastered with thousands of small posters inscribed with these words. ‘Cholchhey cholbey’ was to become a standard slogan for any movement, and continues even to this day. This was the first time that violence and its representation did not cease within the confines of the theatre alone; it became an issue, with the entire organisational structure of a theatre group facing violence from the State, and countering it.7

Staging productions that promoted resistance to oppression in public spaces also became a provocation for the state. In the early 1970s, Badal Sircar, especially aware of the urban–rural divide and wanting to create a closer, more interactive, relation between actors and audience, moved out of proscenium spaces and either into redesigned indoor spaces with flexible seating or outdoors into public spaces such as parks. In 1974, police tried to stop one such performance in Surendranath Park, Kolkata (Calcutta), killing a young spectator and arresting some members of the theatre group. After that, ten
thousand artists and ordinary citizens protested at a rally against the police brutality and demanded the right to perform in the park.

Finally, in 1977, when opposition to the State of Emergency and the conviction of Indira Gandhi for corruption combined with a serious economic crisis, the Janata Party (a coalition of several parties and groups, widely perceived to be left-identified) came into power. The new government reversed many Emergency-era decrees and opened official investigations into Emergency-era abuses. However, the new government had its own problems with corruption, infighting and ideological differences, making it difficult for effective reforms to prevail. Theatre artists who thought there would be markedly improved circumstances were disappointed. Asit Bose, a young playwright who had written an impassioned play (Kolkatar Hamlet, 1973) insisting on the contrast between a people’s theatre with idealistic political goals and theatre based on personal economic gain, saw the disillusionment of the Janata period as changing the character of the left theatre as well, causing it to lose its dynamic focus and force. About this period and its fallout he commented, ‘The present government has destroyed the guts of this theatre by distributing awards and favours to those who kowtow to them, and by leading those engaged in theatre to promote one another within the coterie of the favoured’. This point of view, that being artists in opposition is more radical and productive than being linked to those in power, is by no means unique to the Indian situation. In the West, in the period under discussion, different attempts to foster and maintain a counterculture were common. Sometimes these were militant and explicitly political, but other strategies were subversive – falling under the radar of state vigilance – to create counterexpressions to the dominant regimes of representation in local communities.

Susan Haedicke developed a string of beads that displayed the role of street arts in France in events in public spaces designed to break with official culture and to celebrate alternative uses of public spaces. While this strategy was similar to Bandyopadhyay’s account of Sircar’s emphasis on free public spaces within the Indian context, Haedicke was interested in the extension of radical innovation into daily life. Pioneering French street theatre companies abandoned traditional theatre buildings for the freedom and populist appeal of the street, offered their shows to the public for free, and insisted on a revolutionary aesthetic of innovation, provocation and overthrow of norms. These radical French artists launched artistic interventions into the actual life of the city and thereby affected the public’s understanding of social life by challenging the demarcation between the fiction of the theatre and reality of the street.

Although often not ‘political’ in terms of state or party politics, street performances captured the French yearning for a different mode of everyday life, one that could produce public memories of familiar urban places transformed by theatrical interventions. They thus offered an alternative social experience based in performativity.

Haedicke compiled ‘beads’ that linked these performances to the theory of the Situationists and the protests of May 1968 in Paris. She wanted to show the connection between creative artists’ commitment to making change in everyday life and the larger, more recognizable, forms of political resistance on view in the public sphere of the time.

Underlying this theatrical activity are the ideas and goals of those involved in the 1968 riots: a rejection of the status quo, with its hierarchies, capitalism and consumerism,
and a quest for justice, equality, free speech and citizen control over one’s own world – democratic ideals.

The cumulative political effect is, as we have seen throughout these examples, stronger than any singular mode of protest when networked through modes of public expression that link performance with other forms of dissent.

3. Representations and exclusions of the Other

All of the countries we studied struggle with issues around ‘othering’ certain groups within the nation, whether through lack of adequate political representation or through marginalization in terms of discrimination or exclusion from cultural practices, belonging, or key identity formations. In this section, we highlight the role of theatre and performance in combating, exposing or, in some cases, consolidating these exclusions.

For H. S. Shivaprakash, concerned with the Dalits and the particular situation within his home state of Karnataka, the process of ‘othering’ is both regional and ethnic. However, the relationship between Dalits and upper-caste Hindus broadly follows the same pattern all over India. The Dalits make up the lowest caste in the Hindu caste hierarchy; hence they have often been treated as ‘untouchable’ and excluded from marriage, dining or any interaction involving physical contact with those belonging to the higher castes.9 During the period we were studying, though more often than not these divisions and exclusions were maintained by upper castes, neo-literate Dalits began to challenge them through their organizational power. This frequently led to a violent response by upper castes, including burning Dalits alive in different parts of India.

In the state of Karnataka, the impact of the first, large-scale mobilization of the Dalits and other backward castes10 on its artistically rich theatrical culture made itself felt in artists’ attempts to redefine the modern in opposition to institutionalized, state-supported aestheticism. These communities brought forward their resources and expectations to challenge the colonial and national languages and cultures which had marginalized their sensibilities for centuries, producing the complex dynamics of an encounter that in the long run, however, appropriated and curbed Dalit self-assertion.

The first most important response of Karnataka theatre to this situation was the problematization of pre-1970s modernism and a search for new alternatives emphasizing the political function of theatre. The limited version of modernism that had hitherto dominated the theatre scene was derived from French existentialism and Anglo-American modernism. In light of the declaration of the Emergency in 1975 and the suspension of democratic rights for the first time in independent India, subjective modernism was of little, if any, use at all, and it was the leftist theatre movement, Samudaya, that emerged as the champion of the oppressed castes and classes, with Brecht displacing Beckett as more important to Karnataka. Samudaya activism received a fillip from the newly emerging Dalit-Bandaya movement, the expression of Dalit and backward castes. In this context, street theatre became a weapon of political protest. CGK (C. G. Krishnaswamy) produced Belchi, a protest against massacres of Dalits in Bihar, which became a super-hit not only in Karnataka but also in other parts of India.
However pervasive the overtly political agenda of theatre during the period, the opposite trend in aesthetics also came into being as an antithesis of the former. This aesthetic preoccupation in theatre was spearheaded by drama school theatre culture committed to actor training and technical perfection. B. V. Karanth, the former director of the National School of Drama (NSD) in New Delhi, returned to live in Karnataka in 1973. His three major productions – *Oedipus*, *San Kranti* and *Jokumar Swami* – inaugurated the renewed modernist theatre in the state. The new theatre that B. V. Karanth and his team promoted lacked the political dynamism of the Samudaya theatre (see Figs. 2 and 3).

The tension between the two poles of the political and the aesthetic was reflected in every aspect of theatre: playwriting, staging and organization. The vehement politicization of theatre that began in the 1970s during the Emergency had gradually petered out by the end of the 1990s as a result of increased patronage from the state and foreign foundations for a more aesthetic and less political theatre, and also due to the fragmentation of the various movements and organizations. The end of the Soviet dream had a metonymic relationship with these developments in Karnataka theatre. The ‘others’ returned to their outsider niche. This rich period of experiments, discoveries and achievements is nevertheless an exciting chapter in modern Indian theatre history.

Identifying growing state discrimination against Muslims in this period as part of a macro-level swing to the right, Urmimala Sarkar Munsi pointed out the concerted projection by the state, media and the religious right of the iconic Hindu god Rama, who was given a status far beyond that conceived in the epic Ramayana text to which he belongs. Muslims, sharply discriminated against by the Hindu majority, were poorer on the whole than Hindu Indians. As Muslims were also the majority population in neighbouring Pakistan, the long-standing enmity and distrust stemming from the 1947 partition of British India into India, Pakistan and, later, Bangladesh contributed to the outsider status of Muslims – in spite of the secular and multicultural ideals of the original constitution. In the 1970s and 1980s there were performances in several modes (particularly dance) in many places, but especially on the national TV Doordarshan (offering a long-running serialization of the Ramayana narrative which almost became a ‘signature’ for the new medium), investing Rama with a sacred excess that was soon turned into a rallying point for anti-Islamic communal violence, culminating in the demolition of the Babri mosque. The icon appeared frequently in performances, political demonstrations, dances, music theatre and video, displaying the myth of Rama and its narrative subtexts, consolidating religion and politics.

Sarkar’s archival materials evidence the politicization of dance as an aesthetic form and its instrumentalization as a source of national cultural capital, highlighting the homogenization of approved dance protocols growing out of the desire of the government to elevate to national prominence certain ‘classical’ dance traditions at the expense of others. The re-creation of canonical versions of dance forms in the reinvention and formalization of ‘classical’ dances was funded and supported by the state between 1960 and 1980, adding to the ever-increasing list of classical dances in India under the supervision and patronage of government institutions and funding agencies.
Fig. 2 *Gokula Nirgamana*, by B. V. Karanth, shows the protected, well-equipped aesthetic stage, while Fig. 3, *Belchi*, by C. G. Krishnaswamy, illustrates the endangered theatre of political protest, performed on the street. Photographs courtesy of the Regional Resource Centre, National School of Drama, Bangalore.

Most historical references to dance remained focused on the colonial legacy and the reforms of the first half of the twentieth century. While the policies and practices of the new government institutions, in their endeavour to continue to strengthen the
post-independence Nehruvian model of ‘unity in diversity’, still looked at dances as projections of tradition, they also simultaneously eroded or at least marginalized or excluded community performances which nevertheless continued as parts of living traditions all over India. Thus there were many micro-histories of power politics leading to complete enculturation, deletion or restructuring of regional, lesser-known dance forms, in accordance with the requirements set forth by the goals of the funding bodies and the government.

In terms of state patronage, the effort, on the one hand, to situate the dancing body in the sacred, pre-sculpted context of a temple, as seen in all the festivals held in famous archaeological sites like Konark Sun Temple or Khajuraho Temple, and, on the other hand, the state approval of some local ‘folk’ dances by making them part of the carnival-like fairs and festivities of the state, in point of fact created a neutralizing effort that wiped out voices of difference/resistance in order to create a generic identity related either to ‘Indian-ness’, or to a sweeping state/regional membership, or to both.

In India, we were able to see how both individuals and art forms were ‘othered’ by the state and/or hegemonic forces. In Japan, another sort of ‘othering’ was revealed through the previously undisclosed linkages between women’s rights and militarism that began to be visible during the period we studied. Nobuko Anan began her string of beads by calling attention to a girls’ manga series popular in 1972–3, The Rose of Versailles. In this comic-book format, girls such as Anan, who was thirteen in 1986 when she read this still-popular story, could follow the romantic adventures of a young woman who dresses as a man to serve Marie Antoinette as the commander of the Royal Guard. She becomes a revolutionary and is shot trying to take the Bastille. Although Anan links The Rose of Versailles to the nascent women’s movement in Japan in the 1970s, she thinks that the critique of militarism and women’s role in supporting the colonial past of Japan was not really referenced in this manga and remained unexpressed. Instead she suggests that several parallel developments of the time were disjoined until the 1990s. These include the feminist movement, some early feminist theatre and the first books to appear questioning the colonial legacy.

Anan points forward to the 1990s public discussion of the issue of the ‘comfort women’, sex slaves to the occupying Japanese army in many parts of Asia, which eventually led to the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal for the Trial of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery (2001). Although this was a performance with no juridical power, it circulated through the Asian public sphere as a focus for issues of responsibility and acknowledgement that these crimes against women took place under the structures of militarism and empire. The excluded victims (excluded from public reality) were finally recognized, although the Japanese government still has not acknowledged that the comfort-women system was a war crime.

If the Indian illustrations show how state patronage can promote certain aesthetics at the expense of, and ultimately suppressing, others, Anan shows how the Japanese authorities ignored and suppressed their negative history, making it invisible for many years. In our last example in this group taken from the USA, we see how a complex political history is simplified and commodified, even in the hands of ‘liberal’ artists.
Janelle Reinelt described her childhood growing up in California in the period under study as a time when political assassinations of leftish figures (the Kennedys, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X), combined with other forms of mass violence (such as the first schoolground shootings), made the 1980s a time of mourning for heroes who ‘died too young’ and also a time of public fear of unexpected outbreaks of violence.

The date of 27 November 1978 in California can be seen as a flashpoint for the nation at this time, in the form of another devastating assassination. The mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone, and City Supervisor Harvey Milk were shot and killed in their offices by a former member of the City Council, a local policeman named Dan White. The racial, class and sexual politics of San Francisco were complex and demonstrated the deep divisions in American society: a white, working-class, Catholic police officer had killed the mayor and the first openly gay elected official in the country, Harvey Milk. The ostensible reason was because White had resigned his supervisor seat in angry response to political loss on a key vote, and when he changed his mind and asked for the seat back, the mayor had refused. Because the political battle had involved conflict with Harvey Milk and because Dan White was opposed to the ascendancy of gay rights in the city, he shot Milk as well as Mayor Moscone. Dan White was found guilty of the murders, but on a reduced charge of involuntary manslaughter, and sentenced to only seven years. When the verdict was announced, thousands attacked City Hall and later the police rioted in Castro Street, the heart of the gay district, attacking homosexuals on the street and in the bars. White, who was paroled in 1984, killed himself the following year.

Gays and lesbians had been organizing politically as an oppressed ‘other’ and discriminated-against minority for more than a decade (often commonly dated from the 1969 Stonewall protests). The murder of Harvey Milk seemed iconic of a still-pervasive hatred for and exclusion of gay persons such as Milk within American society.

This chain of events became represented in artistic form almost immediately. The Execution of Justice, a documentary play by Emily Mann, was produced in 1984 by San Francisco’s Eureka Theatre, one of the most respected small theatres in the country. In addition to the play, Randy Shilts wrote a successful biography, The Mayor of Castro Street (1982), and an important documentary film, The Times of Harvey Milk (1984), directed by Rob Epstein, won the 1984 Academy Award for best documentary. Then in 2008 Sean Penn won the Academy Award for best actor for his portrayal of Harvey Milk in a widely distributed film – Milk – directed by Gus Van Zant. In the transfer to a mass cinema audience, however, the multifaceted specificity of San Francisco politics, captured so well in the play, fades before the charisma of Sean Penn’s portrayal of a local hero and gay rights leader – American legendary individualism trumps left politics in the mainstream cinema.

4. The role of media in relation to performance

Trying to understand how popular culture functions in different nations, we turn in our final section to the interrelationships between media and live performances, including
those of everyday life. Of our three examples, one highlights the role of television, one the cinema and one the rolling conflation of live, simulated and magnified realities coming into being through what is now called ‘celebrity culture’.

At the interface of local, regional and global negotiations of national identity, television emerged in India as a prime determinant in the 1980s. It opened up new mediatized environments for performance and reception and influenced the content, form and format of performing arts with their inclusion into broadcast media. At the same time, the overarching political performativity of the ‘nation’ also circulated through state-controlled television. On the one hand, it played a critical role in filtering the ‘global’ through the telecast of important international political events. On the other hand, media representations attempted to assimilate regional identities through the fantasy utopia of the nation as a cultural unity in diversity.

Shrinkhla Sahai underlined how the national television station Doordarshan, which first began broadcasting in 1959, was committed to a standardization of ‘national unity’ as exemplified in the nationwide telecast of ‘Mile-sur Mera Tumhara’ as an extension/illustration of the prime minister’s speech, its self-conscious artifice betraying its compulsion. (‘Mile-sur Mera Tumhara’ is a song and video promoting national integration and unity in diversity, composed in 1988 and broadcast for the first time on Independence Day following the prime minister’s speech telecast from the Red Fort).

The context of curation in terms of television programming also emerged as a significant aspect for the reification of the national imaginary. The understanding of television’s power as ‘cultural technology’ was harnessed by the state to disseminate concepts of nationhood. The Soviet model of using television with cultural control and censorship and for the purpose of nation building aligned with the Nehruvian socialist vision which was deeply connected with ideas of scientific method and technological advancement as instruments of nation building. However, it was not Nehru himself, but Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi who harnessed the power of television to disseminate the vision, values and views of the state. The strategies connected with the state’s relationship with television changed remarkably during 1964 when Indira Gandhi was the minister for information and broadcasting, and in 1966 with her ascent to power. In 1976 television, which had been operating as a subset of All India Radio, was formally established as a separate entity under the Doordarshan name. The year 1982 opened the era of colour television in India, following the historic telecast of Asian Games on Doordarshan.

In 1989, the Nehru centenary year, television was an important tool for the national-integration activities and programmes that were planned for the entire year. For instance, the television spot called Spread the Light of Freedom brought together India’s renowned cricketers, hockey stars and athletes in a three-minute torch-passing sequence replayed in slow motion to stirring music, and it concluded with the on-screen slogan ‘Mera Bharat Mahan’ (‘My India is Great’).

The National Programme of Music and Dance on Doordarshan was an exclusive segment for the classical performing arts. The genres of music and dance, the artists and the repertoire selected for telecast were significant indicators of the cultural policy and the promotion of specific cultural symbols for the reinforcement of national identity. These also operated as sources of legitimation of the categories ‘classical’ and ‘folk’ and often
articulated genealogies of the ‘classical’, mythologizing and linking them with glorious cultural pasts.

As mentioned by Sarkar, in 1987 Doordarshan began the telecast of Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayana. By broadcasting this particular version of the epic on national television (which was prevalent in the Khadi-Boli-speaking north Indian regions), the local/regional versions of the epic were overwritten while one was standardized. All this was happening against the backdrop of the political upheaval of secessionist movements in Punjab and Kashmir.

Moving to the Indian cinema, in the 1970s, for the first time in the country, the ‘New Indian Cinema’, as it defined itself, established direct, creative contact with the non-professional, urban middle-class theatre, and came to share a common ground, questioning and critiquing exclusion and marginalization, urban and rural exploitation, the false pretensions of bourgeois justice, and the machinations of state power (still not so sharply evident in the early 1970s). It offered an alternative – or a ‘parallel’, as it claimed – to the commercial Bombay Hindi cinema; this new kind of film opened out in the regional languages, especially in Malayalam, Kanada, Bengali and Manipuri, throwing up major directors in the international scene, and drawing continuously on local radical theatre practice for directors, designers, scriptwriters and actors. The dominant commercial media, with support from the state and a massive, expensive publicity barrage carried on through the national television and the print media, had managed to ‘kill’ this tendency by the end of the 1980s.

Soumyabrata Choudhury drew our attention to a significant work from this genre, Ritwik Ghatak’s Jukti Takko Aar Gappo (1974), with its strongly eccentric and subjective reading of radical violence in the politics of the times, and the role of the intellectual vis-à-vis the revolutionaries: the cinematic narrative exploding into a performance orchestrated and planned by the director virtually playing himself in the movie as a disillusioned alcoholic intellectual calling for a reconsideration of ‘the limits of politics’. Among some members of the intelligentsia, disenchantment with early independence narratives and revolutionary ideals, especially in view of the Naxalite movement (a violent revolutionary group), forms a dissonant contrast to the representations of both nation state ideology and the earlier anticolonial rhetoric of independence. As the aged alcoholic actor, representing an earlier political left sensibility gone soft, approaches death, the young revolutionaries in the film confront their own mortality in his image. This film is an example of an intervention into public discourse by a non-commercial art-led film practice. Before being overwhelmed by the commercial industry, the independent cinema for a brief time was able to reach a large segment of Indian citizens across its many linguistic groups and geographic communities.

Tim White took a wide-ranging look at the role of media in the USA, tracing its ability to produce identity, to become itself an instrument of power and therefore of desire, and to gradually challenge the value of authenticity in favour of celebrity persona. A key example in this regard is the kidnapping of newspaper heiress Patty Hearst (1974) by the radical Symbionese Liberation Army and the subsequent rejection of her privileged prior life and affirmation of her new identity as ‘Tania’. Her participation in the group’s bank robbery put her on the FBI ‘most wanted’ list. Linking her trial to the
O. J. Simpson murder trial through her lawyer F. Lee Bailey (who represented Simpson two decades later), White points out how the public was in thrall to questions about their identities: in both instances the public was invited to distinguish between competing media representations of individuals.

Through White’s archival materials it is possible to connect the dots from Hearst’s actual events to Martin Scorsese’s 1982 film The King of Comedy and Tom Wolfe’s popular novel Bonfire of the Vanities (1987) – also made into a film – both of which deal with the transformation of individuals into celebrity icons and with media magnification of reality for spurious ends. White points out that Ronald Reagan, the actor–president, was at home in his political role because he was a practised performer. His materials also demonstrate how, starting in the 1970s, the media led the way to a contemporary environment which naturalizes the stage-managing of reality, photo-opportunities and the packaging of occurrences into media events, brought to a rolling boil in ‘breaking news’ that actuates a sense of the present in the domestic sphere as events of great import are strung out with endlessly scrolling updates at the bottom of the television screen.

Consolidating collaboration

The range and scope of these materials are clearly vast, and what started out as an ambitious one-time project has turned into a promising long-term research collaboration. Our assumption was that by simply laying these materials, these strings of beads, alongside each other, we would discover important connections and comparative/contrastive relationships. It seems obvious, for example, that the religious and political right alliances that fuelled Serbian ultranationalist performances and in turn stimulated the trajectory towards the wars of the 1990s exhibit features that also appear in the Indian consolidation of Hindu hegemony during the same period. Ronald Reagan’s presidency in the USA also propagated a fundamentalist version of Christianity, seen in the rise of tele-evangelism and highly performative charismatic preachers using television in many ways that recall the Indian strategies of state-sponsored Doordarshan, in spite of the lack of direct government sponsorship (or ownership) of the US networks – and this strand of thinking could be developed much further. In fact, the recurring aspects of artistic integrity coopted by projects of nation building, or state or corporate funding, or artistic intervention, or censorship, or persuasion were striking at multiple sites. Yet we had little time to explore these findings in sufficient depth, or to build further on these initial lines of analysis, or follow up on the directions they suggested.

Looking back at our goals, we did achieve a robust international dialogue, throwing our topic into multinational relief. One critically important outcome of our research over this period was to establish a ‘strong enough knowledge base in common’ to allow us to collaborate at a fuller, deeper level in the future. The research group continues its collaboration (bilateral teaching exchanges took place in 2011–12) and there are plans to continue developing the archive. The fact that so many of our group grew up during the period under study also adds a certain personal frisson to our research, as we try to understand now the world we inhabited then from a fuller international (and historical) point of view.
Supplementary Material

Two Supplementary material files for this article are available on-line, one containing six examples of the strings of beads and the other containing supporting documents for each scholar (these are listed in the order in which the scholar’s material appears in the Dossier). To view this material, please visit http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0307883312000065

NOTES

1 The participants in the archive research project are Nobuko Anan (Warwick), Samik Bandyopadhyay (JNU), Trina Banerjee (JNU), Soumyabrata Choudhury (JNU), Bishnupriya Dutt (JNU), Jim Davis (Warwick), Milija Gluhovic (Warwick), Susan Haedicke (Warwick), Nadine Holdsworth (Warwick), Silvija Jestrovic (Warwick), Urmimala Sarkar Munsi (JNU), H. S. Shivaprakash (JNU), Shrinkhla Sahai (JNU), Janelle Reinelt (Warwick) and Tim White (Warwick).

2 Our two universities had entered into a formal collaborative relationship with each other as ‘preferred partners’ in 2008.

3 These dates are, from one point of view, quite arbitrary, but from another the list of events generated from those years demonstrates some of the issues of interest to all: the Vietnam War and its aftermath; the Bhopal disaster and the emergence of the environment as a world concern; the rise of the religious right in India, the USA and the UK; and the hegemony of the political right in India (Indira Gandhi), the USA (Ronald Reagan) and the UK (Margaret Thatcher). In addition, the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent ‘end of socialism’ was of critical importance to both partners.

4 At Warwick, the Masters in International Performance Research (MAIPR) trains students to think and work in three modalities: scholarship, curation and creative practice. This Erasmus Mundus course, offered by a consortium of Warwick and the Universities of Amsterdam, Belgrade and Helsinki, structures the curriculum to offer coursework in all three modalities. The JNU/Warwick partnership adopted this concept as useful to its work as featured here.

5 The image can be viewed on line at www.flickr.com/photos/tara-arts

6 The collaborations depended on short independent pieces by two groups improvised separately with only a short finale bringing the two in dialogue. For both Shankar and Subramaniam it also meant a shift from the intricacies of Indian classical to lighter hybrid musical compositions. These performers were creating a new nation’s mnemonical cultural identity through music in a form complicit with the branding taking place in the theatrical and dance elements of the large international festivals.


8 Quoted in Banerjee, ‘Between Violence and Democracy’, p. 15.

9 Ambedkar, the great Indian jurist and reformer of these communities in the twentieth century, gave them the name Dalit (‘the trampled down’), with which he replaced different traditional caste names to unify the traditionally ‘untouchable’ communities.

10 The Indian government uses this collective term for castes that are economically and socially disadvantaged. The actual term is ‘Other Backward Classes (OBC)’, but we have retained the specification of ‘castes’.

11 The process was documented by Anand Patwardhan in his historic film In the Name of God (Ram Ke Naam), 1992.
NOBUKO ANAN (nobukoanan@gmail.com) was Newton International Fellow at the School of Theatre, Performance, and Cultural Policy Studies at University of Warwick between 2009 and 2011. She is now a Lecturer at Northumbria University. Her work on women and girls in Japanese theatre has appeared in TDR and the Journal of Popular Culture. She is currently working on a book: Playing with Girls: Contemporary Japanese Women’s Performance and Visual Arts.

BISHNUPRIYA DUTT (bishnypriyadutt@gmail.com) is Associate Professor in Theatre Studies in the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is codirector of the Archives project with Janelle Reinelt. She is the author, with Urmimala Sarkar Muni, of Engendering Performance: Indian Women Performers in Search of an Identity (Sage 2010).

JANELLE REINELT (j.reinelt@warwick.ac.uk) is Professor of Theatre and Performance in the School of Theatre, Performance, and Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick. Former President of IFTR/FIRT, her most recent book is The Political Theatre of David Edgar: Negotiation and Retrieval (Cambridge University Press), co-authored with Gerald Hewitt.

SHRINKHLA SAHAI (sahai.shrinkhla@gmail.com) is a Doctoral Student in Theatre Studies in the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Her dissertation is on the body in contemporary Indian performance practices.