

DR. NANDITA DINESH

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Academic Background

January 2013-

December 2015

University of Cape Town

Cape Town, South Africa

Ph.D. in Drama. *Grey Zones: Performances, Perspectives and Possibilities in Kashmir* was a doctoral project that explored the aesthetic, pedagogic and ethical frameworks that a theatre practitioner might employ when seeking to devise cross-community workshops and performances with civilians, soldiers and militants in Kashmir.

June 2006- May 2008

New York University

New York City, USA

M.A. in Performance Studies with a full tuition waiver. Focus on the role of theatre during and after violent conflict.

September 2006- July 2007

Watson Fellow

Guatemala, Northern Ireland, Rwanda

Recipient of an independent traveling fellowship awarded to graduating college seniors from institutions in the United States to design a research project of their choice: pursued project entitled *All the world is a stage: Using theatre to address conflict*.

August 2002- June 2006

Wellesley College

Massachusetts, USA

B.A. in Economics and Theatre Studies (Hons.) with a Shelby C. Davis Scholarship for each of the four years of the programme.

Work Experience

February 2024- present

Project Based Learning Works (PBLWorks)

Various

Member of PBLWorks' National Faculty, facilitating professional development workshops, courses, and support services for K-12 teachers across the United States.

August 2022- present

Mount Tamalpais College

San Quentin, California

Dean of Academic Administration at this independently accredited college serving incarcerated students at San Quentin State Prison.

- July 2021 -
December 2022
- San Francisco University High School** *San Francisco, California*
Led the self-study process that is responsible for the transformation of UHS' Human Development Program into an [Institute for Responsive Education](#).
- February 2020 -
June 2021
- Revolution Prep** *Santa Fe, New Mexico*
Tutor in a range of different subjects for this online education company.
- January 2019 -
January 2020
- Independent Projects** *Santa Fe, New Mexico*
Created a range of socio-political, immersive installations along this lines of [You & Distant Wars](#) that was featured in the Santa Fe Reporter.
- August 2015 -
December 2018
- UWC-USA** *Montezuma, New Mexico*
Teacher of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme's *Theatre and Literature & Performance* courses. Coordinator of UWC-USA's juvenile justice programming. Notably, conceptualized and launched the Prison Education Portals program, which offers distance-learning opportunities taught by UWC-USA faculty to youth in detention, via immersive technologies created by Shared Studios. (www.sharedstudios.com)
- January 2015 -
May 2015
- UWC Dilijan College** *Dilijan, Armenia*
Head of Performing Arts & teacher of the International Baccalaureate Theatre Arts programme. Co-designed and led *ARAKS: An Artistic Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide*.
- August 2011-
May 2014
- UWC Mahindra College** *Pune, India*
Head of Arts and teacher of the IB Theatre Arts and Literature & Performance courses. Managed the execution of the College's Theatre Season: a month long, annual, event that showcases students, faculty, and staff in around fifteen different productions. Founded a Night School to offer educational opportunities to the College's Cafeteria workers.

July 2010 -
December 2010

Independent Projects

Mexico

This six-month project-based trip to Mexico consisted of leading community theatre workshops and directing performances in liaison with many different Mexican institutions/ individuals.

February 2009 -
May 2010

Mahatma Gandhi International School

Abmedabad, India

Teacher of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme's Theatre course and Director of the School's Creativity, Activity, & Service Program.

February 2007 -
January 2009

Never Again Rwanda

Kigali, Rwanda

Theatre Programme Coordinator for this NGO that works with Rwandan youth around issues of conflict resolution and peace building.

Books

2024

Routledge

[*Creative Writing and the Experiences of Others: Strategies for Outsiders*](#)

This book focuses on writing as the act of witnessing when the writers themselves are outsiders to an experience. What might it mean to write about others in ways that do not essentialize or sensationalize, and in ways that are as humble, ethical, and responsible as possible?

2023

Routledge

[*Writing in-Between: Collaborative Meaning Making in Performative Writing*](#)

Writing in-Between lies at intersections: between theory and praxis; between fiction and non-fiction; between author and reader; between the personal and the political.

2022

Melville House Publishing

[*This Place | That Place*](#)

An impassioned and inventive debut novel about two people earnestly searching for a way to preserve their friendship across seemingly insurmountable political divides.

- 2020 **Open Book Publishers**
[*Information for/ from Outsiders: Chronicles from Kashmir*](#)
Chronicles from Kashmir as developed between 2013 and 2018, as a collaboration between Dr. Nandita Dinesh and the Ensemble Kashmir Theatre Akademi in Srinagar.
- 2020 **Vernon Press**
[*Aleph-naught: a Play & a Plan*](#)
By using one specific play to address larger questions around staging Immersive Theatre, *Aleph-naught* is a unique resource for practitioners and researchers who are committed to immersive forms of socially relevant theatre praxis.
- 2019 **McFarland Books**
[*Immersive Theater and Activism: Scripts & Strategies for Directors & Playwrights*](#)
This book articulates theatrical “grey zones” when addressing juvenile detention, wartime interventions and immigration processes. It presents scripts and strategies for directors and playwrights who want to create theatrical environments that are immersive and pedagogical; aesthetically evocative and politically provocative; simple and complex.
- 2019 **Vernon Press**
[*Theatre & War: Notes from Afar*](#)
In *Theatre & War: Notes from the Field* (2016), Dinesh writes about making theatre in zones of conflict. She analyses 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.
- 2018 **Vernon Press**
[*Memos from a Theatre Lab: Immersive Theatre & Time*](#)
Dinesh frames the third experiment in her New Mexican theatre laboratory by placing its data and analyses in conversation with her work in Kashmir.
- 2018 **Vernon Press**
[*Memos from a Theatre Lab: Spaces, Relationships, and Immersive Theatre*](#)

This practice-based-research project considers the potential impact of pre-existing relationships between actors, spectators, and performance spaces when using immersive theatrical aesthetics toward educational and/or socio-political objectives.

2017

McFarland Books

[*Scripting Detention: A Project in Theater and Autoethnography with Incarcerated Teens*](#)

This monograph uses autoethnographic analyses of Dinesh's work in detention centers in New Mexico to generate a new play text that bases its form and content on an original performance that was created with incarcerated young men between September and December 2015.

2016

Routledge

[*Memos from a Theatre Lab: Exploring what Immersive Theatre 'does'*](#)

This monograph uses a practice-based project and qualitative research methods to generate propositions about how an Immersive Theatre experience might differently affect its spectators in comparison with a more 'conventional', proscenium performance.

2016

Open Book Publishers

[*Theatre and War: Notes from the Field*](#)

As an auto-ethnographic book that is aimed at theatre-in-war researcher-practitioners, this monograph seeks to perform a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice: to speak to 'doing' without undervaluing the importance of 'thinking about doing'.

Essays/Book Chapters/ Journal Articles

2022

Guernica Magazine

[*Thinking About Toilets*](#)

"As India tries to breathe, as I weep for family that I will never see again... I can't stop thinking about toilets."

2018

Textshop Experiments

[*Information for/ from Outsiders: Chronicles from Kashmir*](#)

Featured in Volume of 4 of Textshop Experiment's Winter 2018 issue, this article is an overview of the different modes of (re) presentation that are encased within this twenty-four, immersive performance.

- 2017 **Methuen**
The Ambiguities of Shakti: Performing women's well being in India
 Invited to contribute a book chapter in *Performing Health*, edited by Drs. Veronica Baxter and Katherine Low, discussing the work of the Darpana Academy for the Performing Arts in Gujarat
- 2016 **Journal for Artistic Research**
Information for Foreigners: Chronicles from Kashmir
 This peer-reviewed exposition puts forward insights that have emerged around the notion of 'balance': from an evolution of balance vis-à-vis narratives of victimhood and perpetration to considerations of balance regarding representations of time (the past, the present, and the future).
- 2015 **Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre & Performance**
Elaborating Performance: Transnationalism and Blended Learning in the Theatre Classroom
 This article analyses the work of E(Lab)orating Performance, a transnational collaborative teaching and learning project involving Massey University (New Zealand), University of Cape Town (South Africa), UWC Mahindra College (India), and University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa).
- 2015 **South African Theatre Journal**
In-Between Spaces: Theatrical Explorations from Rwanda to Kashmir
 This article is framed by Giorgio Agamben's (1999) claim that the way forward when dealing with themes of extreme conflict and violence might lie in the space between understanding/ explaining violence and stressing on its sheer incomprehensibility.
- 2015 **Performance Research Journal**
Poetics & (Mis) Representation: Creating theatre with/ for/ about ex-militants in Kashmir
 The article analyses *Meri Kahani Meri Zabani* (MKMZ; translates in English to *My Story My Words*), a Documentary Theatre piece that Dinesh directed in Kashmir in May 2014.
- 2015 **Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre & Performance**
Delusions of singularity: Aesthetics, discomfort and bewilderment in Kashmir
 This article analyses *Cages*, a devised, site-responsive and immersive performance that placed two spectators, literally, in the shoes of an(Other).

2014 **activate**
Solidarity and Soldier(ity): Using Theatre in Military Contexts
This piece includes reflexive analyses of theatre workshops with Indian Armed Forces' cadets at the National Defence Academy in the city of Pune (India) that resulted in the creation of a devised performance entitled *Waiting* – a piece that wove together excerpts from Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* with monologues that the cadets wrote about things / people that they are waiting for.

2013 **South African Theatre Journal**
It's not that simple...Doubts, Responsibility, Theatre, & War
There are two texts in this article: one involving a discussion of projects in northern Uganda and Rwanda that use theatre in war-stricken communities; the other is a set of notes on a workshop/performance in Nagaland (a state in north-eastern India).

Conferences

2014 **Theatre & Stratification** *University of Warwick, U.K.*
Presentation entitled *In the Shoes of an(Other): Toward a Definition of Immersive Theatre* in the New Scholars' Forum of the International Federation of Theatre Research's (IFTR) conference on *Theatre & Stratification*.

2013 **Drama for Life** *University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa*
Presented *Safari: Theatrical Journeys through Rwanda, Kenya and Kashmir* at the Drama For Life conference on *The Unfinished Business of Truth and Reconciliation: Arts, Trauma and Healing* in Johannesburg, South Africa.

2013 **Brown International Advanced Research Institutes** *Brown University, U.S.A*
Selected and funded by Brown University to attend the *Theatre & Civil Society* Institute at the *Brown International Advanced Research Institutes*. Awarded a seed grant by Brown University to pursue a project on transnational pedagogical collaborations between: UWC Mahindra College, India; University of Cape Town, South Africa; University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa; Massey University, New Zealand.

2012 **African Theatre Association** *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

Presented a paper entitled *It's not that simple... Theatre, Responsibility & War* at the African Theatre Association (AFTA) conference held at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. This paper was a presentation of the M.A. final project from NYU and explored 'performative writing' vis-à-vis experiences making/researching theatre in Rwanda and northern Uganda.

Awards

2017

Elliott Hayes Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy

The award was granted for the project "Information for/from Outsiders: Chronicles from Kashmir".

Languages

Native fluency in English

Fluent in Spanish and Hindi

Verbal fluency in Tamil and Malayalam
