

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Women Theatre Makers

edited by
Elaine Aston
Lancaster University
Melissa Sihra
Trinity College Dublin

MAYA RAO AND INDIAN FEMINIST THEATRE

Bishnupriya Dutt
Jawaharlal Nehru University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-07317-2 — Maya Rao and Indian Feminist Theatre
Bishnupriya Dutt
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009073172
DOI: 10.1017/9781009071987

© Bishnupriya Dutt 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-009-07317-2 Paperback
ISSN 2634-2391 (online)
ISSN 2634-2383 (print)

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Maya Rao and Indian Feminist Theatre

Elements in Women Theatre Makers

DOI: 10.1017/9781009071987
First published online: August 2022

Bishnupriya Dutt
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Author for correspondence: Bishnupriya Dutt, bishnupriyapaul@gmail.com

Abstract: Maya Rao, performer, performance maker, and feminist, has not only contributed to Indian feminist theatre but is also a trailblazer who set new standards in solo performances, mapped an alternate career trajectory for women in theatre, and, in the face of right-wing state repression in India, has engaged significantly in performance activism. This Element looks back at her early career in the 1980s, when she was creating agitprop theatre for the feminist movement, and forward to her performance activism in the twenty-first century, with detailed attention to Rao's acclaimed protest *Walk* and her participation in the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act. The study also encompasses her parallel work in the theatre, from early collaborations with feminist directors to her solo projects. The author traces her creative-political journey towards an egalitarian feminist future.

Keywords: Maya Krishna Rao, performance activism, gender, experimental theatre, solo performances

© Bishnupriya Dutt 2022

ISBNs: 9781009073172 (PB), 9781009071987 (OC)
ISSNs: 2634-2391 (online), 2634-2383 (print)

Contents

1 Introduction	1
2 Women on the Streets: The Feminist Movement and Agitprop Theatre	3
3 <i>Walk</i> and Its Multiple Trajectories	15
4 Performing Dissent As Citizens of Democracy	27
5 Feminist Theatre Practice and Maya Rao's Solo Performances	38
6 Conclusion	54
References	58