

Deepika Arwind's Play: I am Not Here

Critic: Manohar Khushalani in Conversation with the Director: Deepika Arwind



Playwright & Director: Deepika Arwind
Group: The Lost Post Initiative, Bangalore
Language: English
Duration: 1 hr 10 mins

Watch Manohar Khushalani's Review about the play in the video above

The Play

i am not here is designed as an 8-step guide in how to censor women's writing, which plays out in a boxing ring. In parts dark, funny and brutal, the dance-theatre production looks at the subtle, almost-invisible and insidious ways in which women's writing has often been flicked to the fringes. The two women performers enter the boxing ring, watching and being

watched, often at unease with what they must do to 'show' you this guide. Their bodies transform: they play men, women and creatures. A frying pan is a metaphor for a chalkboard on which freedom is contested ; a traditional dance class reveals the impossible ways in which women's bodies are written about, a chick-lit writer reads a review about herself in public ... Abundant with movement and haunting music, the play seeks new form, and heightens and complicates the audience and performers.

Director's Note

What is the cost of dissent, of protest in performance? Why is it always important to bear wounds in front of an audience to 'convince' them of lived reality? What is the silence after the protest like? Is it broken, like the two actors who piece together broken words at the end of this 'show'; is there meaning to be made, new language to be formed. i am not here is as much about language and writing as it is about silence. It is as much about protest as it is about its aftermath. This aftermath is embodied by two female performers, because who else will embody it? i am not here continues an experiment I began with my last work No Rest in the Kingdom about gender and performance, and the intersection of the two in the female performer's body, and its significance as a site of protest.

The Director & Playwright

Deepika Arwind is a theatre-maker, playwright and performer based out of Bangalore, India. She works as the Artistic Director of The Lost Post Initiative (TLPI), a theatre and performing arts collective that works with diverse artists, largely around gender and women on stage. She is a scholar of the Internationales Forum at Theatretreffen '18, and presented her work at The John F Kennedy Centre of Performing Arts '16 and Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, Berlin '18. She has won and been nominated for several awards for her work, including The Hindu Playwright Award, the Stückemarkt Prize at Theatretreffen, and the Toto Award. Her current touring works nationally and

internationally are No Rest in the Kingdom (produced by Sandbox Collective) and i am not here (supported by Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore). Her previous works, among others, include A Brief History of Your Hair (supported by India Foundations for the Arts) and Nobody Sleeps Alone. She is the author of a children's book Sarayu (published by Le Cosmographe Éditions, France, 2018).

The Group

The Lost Post Initiative is a theatre and performing arts collective largely working with themes around gender. Much of the work looks at the female performer's body as a site of protest and possibility. Works include Nobody Sleeps Alone, a Brief History of Your Hair, No Rest in the Kingdom, i am not here, among others.

Cast & Credits

Devised & Performed by Ronita Mookerji & Sharanya Ramprakash

Light Design Pritham Kumar

Light Execution Niranjan Gokhale

Music & Vocals Nikhil Nagaraj, Pallavi MD

Set J Dinesh

Producer Veena Appiah

Assistant Akash Narendran

Dramaturge Theresa Schlesinger

Supported by Goethe-Institut Bangalore / Max Mueller Bhavan

Playwright, Design

& Director Deepika Arwind

Contacts

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