

Sudhanva Deshpande

is an actor and director with Jana Natya Manch,
and works as editor at LeftWord Books, New Delhi.

Born 26 December 1967
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Professional experience

1998 to present working as Managing Editor at LeftWord Books, New Delhi
1994-1998 worked as editor at Tulika Books, New Delhi
1995-2004 Visiting Faculty, Street Theatre, at the A.J.K. Mass Communication research centre, Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi
1993-94 worked as editor at Orient Longman, New Delhi
1992-93 held Faculty position at National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad.
Designation: Coordinator, Science and Liberal Arts Programme.
1990-92 worked on the Discovery of India permanent exposition at the Nehru Centre, Mumbai, with the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad.

Street theatre experience

1987 to present have been an integral part of Jana Natya Manch, Delhi. Have acted in about 50 street plays, logging over 3,000 performances. Have been involved in conceptualising and evolving most of these plays. Have directed more than 30 street plays. Have conducted numerous workshops and training sessions for street theatre groups, colleges and schools. Have lectured and spoken extensively on street theatre in India, Germany and the US. Have written on street theatre in several scholarly journals, newsmagazines, and newspapers. Toured 16 cities in the United States of America with Janam in 2007, performing, lecturing and workshoping with students and faculty in over 20 colleges and universities, including Columbia University, NY; University of California, Berkeley; University of Southern California, LA; Trinity College, Hartford, CT; etc.

Other theatre experience

Present Fellow, ArthinkSouthAsia fellowship on Arts Management, under the aegis of the Goethe Institut, Delhi.
2010 Directed and co-wrote Janam's production *Char Rang*, an intimate proscenium play based on Rabindranath Tagore's novel *Chaturang*, which opened at SARKASH: The Festival of Alternatives, at Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai, in December.
2010 Member of the Curatorial Committee of the Kerala International Theatre Festival.
2009 Conceived, directed and performed in *Ujle Safed Kabootar*, a reading performance of poetry for Palestine, accompanied by a visual essay by Sherna Dastur.
2008 Was amongst the main organisers of Not the Drama Seminar, organised by the India Theatre Forum, at Ninasam, Heggodu, Karnataka. This was

- attended by about 140 leading theatre practitioners, scholars and other intellectuals and activists.
- 2008 Directed Janam's production of Brijesh's *Ulte Hor Zamaney Aye*, an open air proscenium play, with music by Kajal Ghosh.
- 2006 Conducted, along with Surajit Sarkar, a workshop with the students of the Ninasam Theatre Institute, Heggodu, which resulted in a play. The workshop was specifically meant to introduce to the students the idea of projections and light in theatre.
- 2005 Directed Janam's production of Brijesh's *Shambookvadh*, an open air proscenium play, with music by Kajal Ghosh. The play was invited to the Prithvi Festival and the National School of Drama's festival in 2006.
- 2002-05 Documented the work of Habib Tanvir and Naya Theatre with interviews, photographs, and video recordings over two years. Travelled with Naya Theatre to several towns and cities in this period. The project, which was self-funded, resulted in two documentary films, co-directed with Sanjay Maharishi. The films, entitled *Gaon ke Naon Theatre, Mor Naon Habib* and *One Day in the Life of Ponga Pandit*, are distributed by Under Construction Films.
- 2004 Conceived and directed Janam's production of *Bush ka Matlab Jhadi*, commissioned by the World Social Forum, Mumbai. This production had large masks by H.G. Arunkumar, video projections by Surajit Sarkar, songs by Habib Tanvir, music by Ashish Ghosh and visual design by Kanishka Prasad.
- 2002 Wrote *Bahut Raat Ho Chali Hai*, which was produced by Yashpal Sharma and featured himself and Pratibha Sharma. The play opened at the Prithvi Festival that year.
- 2001 Co-wrote with Brijesh, and directed Janam's production of *Azadi ne Jab Dastak Di*, based on Manini Chatterjee's *Do and Die*, with music by Kajal Ghosh.
- 2000 Was Assistant Director to Habib Tanvir, and acted in, Janam's production of *Ek Aurat Hypatia Bhit Thee*, written by Tanvir.
- 1997 Directed Janam's production of *Hum Yahin Rahenge*, a large open-air proscenium production.
- 1995 Acted in Janam's production of *Varun ke Bete*, based on Nagarjun's novel of the same name, written by Brijesh, music by Kajal Ghosh and directed by N.K. Sharma.
- 1992 Directed Janam's production of Govind Deshpande's *Satyashodhak*, a proscenium play on the life and times of Jotirao Phule. The play was invited to the Prithvi Festival, Mumbai, and the Sahitya Kala Parishad Festival, New Delhi.
- 1990 Was production controller for Janam's production of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother*, directed by M.K. Raina.
- 1988, 1992 Acted in, and was stage manager for, Janam's production of *Moteram ka Satyagraha*, based on a short story by Munshi Premchand, written by Safdar Hashmi and Habib Tanvir, and directed by the latter.

Organisational experience

- 2010 Festival Coordinator, SARKASH: A Festival of Alternatives, at Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai, from 4 to 12 December, 2010. This is a fundraising

2007 to present	<p>festival for Janam, in support of the alternative theatre space we are working towards in Delhi.</p> <p>Have been part of a publishers' collective, the Independent Publishers' Group, and am one of the founding members of a book distribution agency set up by a group of 8 small and independent publishers, the Independent Publishers' Distribution Alternatives.</p>
2006 to present	<p>Member of the Core Team of the India Theatre Forum, a Prithvi Theatre initiative. The ITF is a loose body dedicated to working together to address problems of Indian theatre and to creating institutional and other resources to enable practice.</p>
1987 to present	<p>Have been a member of the Executive Committee of Jana Natya Manch for several years in this period. Have been involved in organising a number of campaigns and performances in several areas of Delhi, including organising performances by Habib Tanvir and Naya Theatre, Vidya Rao, poetry readings, qawwali performances, performances of musical forms such as Birha, Alha, Bidesiya, etc., in several working class areas of Delhi. In particular, the Safdar Hashmi Memorial at the site of Safdar's murder in Jhandapur on the 1st of January every year has been a space where we have brought a large number of artists, writers and poets. Also involved in organising the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Lecture in Delhi every year.</p>

Publications

Have written a number of articles and essay in English, Hindi and Marathi for several journals, magazines, newspapers, and websites, including *Frontline*, *Outlook*, *Seminar*, *Nukkad Janam Samvaad*, *Udbhavana*, *Himal*, etc. Have been writing a regular column on popular culture entitled 'Kalat-Nakalat' in the Marathi journal *Samaj Prabodhan Patrika*. Listed below are some of the more scholarly essays and publications.

2009	Co-edited, with Akshara K.V. and Sameera Iyengar, <i>Our Stage: Pleasures and Perils of Theatre Practice in India</i> , Tulika Books, New Delhi.
2008	Co-edited, with Akshara K.V. the 'Talking Theatre' issue of <i>Seminar</i> . No. 588, August.
2007	Edited <i>Theatre of the Street: The Jana Natya Manch Experience</i> , Janam: New Delhi.
2005-06 2005	Co-edited, along with Ramu Ramanathan, the online theatre journal e-STQ. 'The Consumable Hero of Globalised India', in <i>Bollyworld: Popular Indian Cinema through a Transnational Lens</i> , edited by Raminder Kaur and Ajay J. Sinha, Sage, New Delhi.
2004a	'Upside-Down Midas: Habib Tanvir at 80', <i>The Drama Review</i> , Vol 48, No. 4 (Winter).
2004b	Contributed essay on Street Theatre to <i>The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre</i> , edited by Ananda Lal, Oxford University Press, New Delhi
2003a	'Excluding the Petty and the Grotesque: Depicting Women in Early Twentieth Century Marathi Theatre', in <i>Re-Searching Indian Women</i> , edited by Vijaya Ramaswamy, Manohar, New Delhi. Also included in <i>Theatre in Colonial India: Play-House of Power</i> , edited by Lata Singh, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009.
2003b	'Subaltern Fantasies', <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> , Vol. 38, No. 23 (7-12 June).

- 2003c contributed entries on IPTA and Safdar Hashmi to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance*, edited by Dennis Kennedy, Oxford University Press, Clarendon
- 2002 Guest edited *Cannibal Times*, an issue of the *Seagull Theatre Quarterly*.
- 1997 'The Inexhaustible Work of Criticism in Action: Street Theatre of the Left', *Seagull Theatre Quarterly*, December.
- 1996a 'Sculpting a Play', *Seagull Theatre Quarterly*, September.
- 1996 'Sahmat and the Politics of Cultural Intervention', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 31, No. 25 (22 June)

Educational qualifications

- 1990 M.A. in Modern Indian History, University of Delhi.
- 1988 B.A. (hons) in History, from Ramjas College, University of Delhi.
- 1985 Higher Secondary from Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi.