



The Forum on Contemporary Theory (FCT) is initiating an engagement with interdisciplinary thinking on performance traditions and embodied cultural practices in India/South Asia. While FCT has worked on literature and cultural theory so far, it is with a livelier conception of the humanities that we are trying to include performing arts traditions as one more prism for refracting our world. By incorporating these practices within its existing intellectual repertoire, FCT hopes to encourage contemplation, dialogue and critical response. We are organizing a brainstorming session to gather ideas that will contribute towards shaping this initiative at FCT.

At once ephemeral and enduring, material and transcendent, performance traditions represent our embodied understanding of the world. As such they are tools for living. We seek to unpack how these embodiments do such work. How do performance traditions configure meaning and propel people to act? What are the social factors and intellectual stances that drive change and cause these practices to transform? What is it that survives as tradition within changing contexts and disappearing life-worlds? How do practitioners negotiate these realms of uncertainty?

In the longer term FCT will look at 'performance' as a broader category that includes play, games, rituals, politics and everyday life. However, for the purposes of this discussion we will focus on consciously staged performative traditions of puppetry, theatre, dance and music with historical/regional moorings in South Asia.

Performance is both a space for enquiry and a lens through which to view the world, a way of being and a way of doing. Given the paucity of interactions between scholars and practitioners of traditional performing arts, we feel that facilitating and deepening critical thinking in this area will make a meaningful contribution. FCT hopes to create an alternative platform for forging stronger connections between practitioners and theorists.

A study of performance that bridges theory and practice will bring to FCT a new interface in our existing interdisciplinary work in the humanities.

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Forum on Contemporary Theory

Studies in Performing Art Traditions & Embodiments

**A path-finding &
perspective- building session**

(for invited participants only)

**Nov 10-11, 2017
Baroda, Gujarat**

‘[When I perform] I become myself and I
become more than myself’
-Shinde Anjaneyulu
(Shadow puppet artist)

‘Performance is transformation: the
startling ability of human beings to create
themselves, to change, to become
- for worse or better –
what they ordinarily are not.’
-Richard Schechner