

Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Plays by Women

The Early Twenty-First Century

This book foregrounds some of the ways in which women playwrights from across a range of contexts and working in a variety of forms and styles are illuminating the contemporary world while also contributing to its reshaping as they reflect, rethink, and reimagine it through their work for the stage. The book is framed by a substantial introduction that sets forth the critical vision and structure of the book as a whole, and an afterword that points toward emerging currents in and expansions of the contemporary field of playwriting by women on the cusp of the third decade of the twenty-first century. Within this frame, the twenty-eight chapters that form the main body of the book, each focusing on a single play of critical significance, together constitute a multifaceted, inevitably partial, yet nonetheless integral picture of the work of women playwrights since 2000 as they engage with some of the most pressing issues of our time. Some of these issues include the continuing oppression of and violence against women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and ethnic minorities; the ongoing processes of decolonization; the consequences of neoliberal capitalism; the devastation and enduring trauma of war; global migration and the refugee crisis; the turn to right-wing populism; and the impact of climate change, including environmental disaster and species extinction.

The book is structured into seven sections: Replaying the Canon; Representing Histories; Staging Lives; Re-imagining Family; Navigating Communities; Articulating Intersections; and New World Order(s). Encompassing several generations of playwrights and scholars, ranging from the most senior to mid-career to emerging voices, the book will be essential reading for established researchers, a valuable learning resource for students at all levels, and a useful and accessible guide for theatre practitioners and interested theatre-goers.

Penny Farfan is Professor of Drama at the University of Calgary.

Lesley Ferris is Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor of Theatre Emeritus at The Ohio State University.

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Penny Farfan and Lesley Ferris,
EDITORS

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