



# Performance and Activism: Grassroots Discourse after the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992

*Kamran Afary*

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Much has been written about the Los Angeles riots of 1992, which brought out deep racial tensions throughout the city, exposed by media images of police brutality. This book sheds light on another facet of the events, the birth of a dynamic grassroots activist and community organizing movement that has been little noticed by academics or even by the press. It also focuses on the theatrical production of *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, a performance created by Anna Deavere Smith. *Performance and Activism* analyzes a rich, eclectic, and ongoing ensemble of local activist struggles in the context of the history and political economy of Los Angeles. Building on the important critical urban studies work of Mike Davis and Edward Soja, it also draws on Dwight Conquergood's writings on performance ethnography to theorize the political work of grassroots formations such as alternative/underground media collectives, gang truce parties/picnics, and women-organized prisoner support and court watch groups, such as Mothers Reclaiming Our Children. The book focuses on these events through the inter-disciplinary approach of performance studies, highlighting 'performance-conscious activism' that help bridge the enormous class, race, and gender divides of our society.

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