Known widely as a stage and screen actor, Franca Rame (1929-2013) was one of the most visible and pioneering presences in postwar Italy. Deeply engaged in Marxist theory and politics, concerned for the working classes and women, Rame embraced subversive and transgressive tactics both on stage in her solo theater and off stage in her own life to challenge the extent to which women could be accepted as politically engaged, intellectual artists in the 20th and 21st centuries. Rame models a highly integrated activism in which performance is an intentional component to her public persona while at the same time she seamlessly integrates political organizing into her already highly charged performances. In this paper I offer a brief overview of Rame’s life, examine her play Il Risveglio (1977), and analyze the ways in which she turned subverting convention into a form of activism for both her theatrical practice and in her life.