

Elle Thoni (they/them pronouns)

Playwright & Public Artist

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Born on Dakhóta land (Minneapolis, MN) and brought up by the Mississippi River, Elle is a xenogender playwright and public artist who investigates how our sense of belonging, identity, and loss are changing with our climate. They are a 2024 Dramatic Writing candidate at Carnegie Mellon University.

MAJOR PUBLICLY PRESENTED WORKS (SELECTED)



Queen B: a new work of honeybee futurism (100 minute musical) - an original musical with book & libretto by myself and music by Dameun Strange and Carlisle Evans-Peck, premiered at Tamales y Bicicletas Urban Farm (Minneapolis, MN) in August 2019 with support from a MN State Arts Board Artist Initiative grant. 2021 tour of urban-rural MN outdoor green spaces, supported by MN State Arts Board Arts Tour Grant, directed by Harry Waters Jr.



Aquanesia (live adventure game) - premiered in riverfront locations in Grand Rapids and Rochester, MN Sept-Oct 2018. Commissioned by Northern Lights.mn and co-created with Kim Loken and Bayou Bay. I was the Playwright and Performance Director for this live outdoor adventure game, where players completed a set of performance-based watershed activities to decipher clues about why people were losing their memories from the past century.



Saber, MN (radio play and photo series) - an original short play commissioned by In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre (HOBt, Mpls, MN) with support from the NEA Art Works Program. I wrote, directed, voice-acted, and fabricated antlers for this dark tale about haunted woods and resource extraction. **Play premiere canceled due to COVID-19.** Audio play and photo series released Dec 2020. View online at wildconspiracy.org/sabermn/

(MAJOR WORKS CONTINUED)



Lost Lake (40 minute stage play) - premiered at In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre in March 2018 following development as HOB/TJerome Foundation 2017/2018 Puppet Lab Fellow. *Lost Lake* is a freshwater fable told through the poetry of mask performance. I conceived, wrote, co-directed, performed, and fabricated set/puppets for this piece.

FULL LENGTH PLAYS (SELECTED)

Monstrous, or, A Short Narrative on an Extraordinary Birth of Rabbits

- Second place recipient, Paula Vogel Playwriting Award, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival New Play Program, 2023
- Region 2 nomination - National Partners of the American Theatre Playwriting Award, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival New Play Program, 2023

Queen B: A New Work of Honeybee Futurism

- See first page for production history

Bestiary of Rogues

- Finalist submission for MFA Playwriting Programs at Brown and Yale Universities, 2016

Woolly: A De-Extinction Play

- Athena Project “Read & Rant” Featured Play, Oct 2022
- Finalist submission for Jerome Fellowship in Playwriting (Playwrights’ Center) 2018
- Awarded acceptance to MFA Playwriting program, Columbia University, 2015 (never enrolled).

SHORTER PLAYS (SELECTED)

Modern Anxiety Goes to the Beach (co-created with Kat Luna and Kat Purcell)

- Remount at Mother Goose’s Bedtime Stories (Minneapolis, MN), Oct 21, 2018
- Juried performance at Queertopia (Minneapolis, MN), June 20-23 2018

The First Whale

- Merit Award, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival - Region 2, January 2023
- Reading, The Future is Female Festival (Olympia, WA), April 2017
- Reading, The Rose Festival (Montréal, Canada), May 2017

ADDITIONAL RECENT AWARDS (SELECTED)

- Awardee, Further Fund Grant, Frank Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry (Pittsburgh), 2023
- Finalist, R&D Group, The Civilians (NYC), 2022
- Awardee, Arts Impact for Individuals, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, 2021
- Awardee, Arts Tour Grant, Minnesota State Arts Board, 2020
- Awardee, Travel Grant, Network of Ensemble Theaters, 2020
- Script Pitch New Play Commission, Walking Shadow Theater Company (Mpls), 2019
- Awardee, Artist Initiative Grant, Minnesota State Arts Board, 2019
- Finalist, Bell Museum of Natural History Artist-in-Residence, 2019
- Semi-Finalist, Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program, Juilliard, 2019
- Finalist, Jerome Fellowship in Playwriting, 2018
- Finalist, Yale School of Drama MFA Playwriting program, 2016

EDUCATION

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA - *MFA Dramatic Writing*

Pursuing, anticipated 2024

Augsburg University, Minneapolis, MN - *BA Theatre for Social Change, Summa Cum Laude honors*

SEPT 2007 - JULY 2011

A self-designed, interdisciplinary degree in theatre arts, literature, and sociology with an emphasis on applied learning and field research. Included Performance as Social Change semester at University of Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, South Africa) in partnership with NYU's Tisch School of Art, as well as a Writing for Social Change semester through the Higher Education Consortium of Urban Affairs (Twin Cities, MN).

Perpich Center for Arts Education, Golden Valley, MN - *High School Diploma, Literary Arts concentration*

PROFESSIONAL PLAYWRITING APPRENTICESHIP

Mentor, Annabel Soutar — Porte Parole Productions (Montréal, Québec, Canada) 2013-2015

FELLOWSHIPS & JURIED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (RECENT)

Puppet Lab Fellow, In the Heart of the Beast/Jerome Foundation, 2017-2018

Composer-Librettist Studio, Nautilus Music-Theater (St. Paul, MN), 2017

PUBLIC ART CURATION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Manager, Our Space is Spoken For Fellowship, 2018, inaugural year of BIPOC performance-as-public art fellowship housed under Twin Cities Media Alliance

Assistant Curator, Northern Spark 2017 Festival “Climate Chaos I People Rising”, public art festival produced by Northern Lights.mn, head curator Steve Dietz

Project Manager, Water Shed installation, Porte Parole Productions, 2014-2015 developed and presented as a part of the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, Canada.

TEACHING

Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, PA), 2022-present

- T.A. Basics of Self-Producing for Theater Artists under Rob Handel, Spring 2023
- Co-Teacher, Documentary Theater, upcoming Fall 2023
- T.A. Eco Theater under Wendy Arons, upcoming Spring 2024

JungleWrites, Jungle Theater (Minneapolis, MN), 2018-2019 & 2017-2018, 7-month long mentorship program with adolescent womxn and gender-nonconforming playwrights.

Teaching Artist Fellow, SteppingStone Theatre for Youth (St. Paul, MN), 2011-2012

PUBLICATIONS (RECENT)

On Hauling Water: Outdoor Theatre as Re-Enchantment amidst Climate Crisis, Howlround Theatre Commons, May 2022, web.
<<https://howlround.com/hauling-water-outdoor-theatre-re-enchantment-amidst-climate-crisis>>

Controlled Burn [image], Dark Mountain Issue 19, Spring 2021, print and web.
<<https://dark-mountain.net/the-end-of-all-things>>

The Show Must Not Go On: Curing Theatre in the Age of COVID-19, MinnesotaPlaylist, April 2020, web. <<https://minnesotaplaylist.com/magazine/article/2020/the-show-must-not-go-on>>

SPEAKING AND CONFERENCE ROLES

Public Health, Private Spaces - creative response generator, Carnegie Mellon University, Oct 28, 2022

From Seeds to Movements, Feminist Leadership in Climate Justice - panelist speaker, University of MN, March 3, 2020

Making It Public - panelist speaker, Forecast Public Art (St. Paul, MN), Nov 19, 2019

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS - The Dramatists Guild, The Playwright's Center (Mpls, MN)