

Elle Thoni (they/them)

Playwright & Public Artist

210 West St. #3

Pittsburgh, PA 15221

elle.thoni@gmail.com | 507-421-2673

ellethoni.com | wildconspiracy.org



Born on Dakhóta and Anishinaabe homelands (currently known as 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



Queen B: a new work of honeybee futurism (100 minute musical) - an original musical written by myself and composed by Dameun Strange, premiered at Tamales y Bicletas 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. with Music Direction by Carlisle Evans Peck.



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/



The Mammoth (roving performance) - premiered at MN March for Science 2017 (St Paul, MN) with support from The Awesome Foundation - Twin Cities. I conceived, organized, co-built, and puppeteered this 90% to scale wooly mammoth puppet, designed by Christopher Lutter-Gardella with lead fabrication by Alison Heimstead, to be a spectacle at climate-related demonstrations and events.



Lost Lake (40 minute stage play) - premiered at In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theatre in March 2018 following development as HOBT/Jerome 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)

Queen B: A New Work of Honeybee Futurism

- See first page for production history

Bestiary of Rogues

- Finalist play 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
- Gained Offer of 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 performers at Queertopia (Minneapolis, MN), June 20-23 2018

The First Whale

- Reading, The Future is Female Festival (Olympia, WA), April 2017
- Reading, The Rose Festival (Montréal, Canada), May 2017

DRAMATURGY

The Wastelands, dir. Walken Schweigert, Open Flame Theatre (Osceola, WI), Sept-Oct 2017

Queen, dir. Alison Heimstead, In the Heart of the Beast (Mpls, MN), Sept-Oct 2016

The Watershed, dir. Chris Abraham, Porte Parole-Crow's Theatre (Montréal-Toronto), July 2015

RECENT AWARDS (SELECTED)

Finalist, R&D Group, The Civilians (NYC), 2022

Awardee, Mental Health Grant, Dramatists Guild Foundation, 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, MN), 2019

Awardee, Artist Initiative Grant, Minnesota State Arts Board, 2019

Finalist, Bell Museum of Natural History Artist-in-Residence, 2019

Semi-Finalist, Juilliard School of Drama Playwriting Certificate program, 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*

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

CURATORIAL EXPERIENCE

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

TEACHING

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

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, upcoming Oct 28, 2022

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

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

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Member, Dramatists Guild Foundation

Member, The Playwright's Center (Minneapolis, MN)

Individual Member, Network of Ensemble Theatres

