



Elle Thoni

(they/them pronouns)

I am a practicing playwright, screenwriter, and public artist who investigates how our sense of belonging, identity, and loss are changing with our climate. A versatile dramatist, creative researcher, and public art producer, I have taught in a variety of settings from one-on-one mentorship to full university courses.

Core Skills & Research Areas:

- Playwriting
- Screenwriting and TV Pilot Writing
- Dramaturgy
- Eco Drama
- Gender & Queerness in Performance
- Ensemble, Devised, and Community-Engaged Performance Practices
- Documentary Theater
- Creative Research Methods for Artists
- Puppetry, Mask and Object Theater
- Producing for Theater Artists
- Composition and Intro to Creative Writing

Contact

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Education

M.F.A. Dramatic Writing

Anticipated May 2024 | Carnegie Mellon University

B.A. Theatre for Social Change (Self-Designed)

2011 | Augsburg University, Summa Cum Laude

Performance for Social Change Semester Program (Johannesburg, South Africa)

2010 | NYU Tisch School of Art

High school diploma, Literary Arts concentration

2007 | Perpich Center for Arts Education

University Teaching Experience

- **Instructor of Record, Carnegie Mellon University**
 - Documentary Theater, Fall 2023
- **Teaching Assistant, Carnegie Mellon University**
 - Eco Drama (under Wendy Arons), Spring 2024
 - Basics of Producing for Theater Artists (under Rob Handel), Spring 2023

Teaching Achievements

Future Faculty Program Certificate

Anticipated May 2024 | Eberly Center for Excellence in Teaching (Carnegie Mellon University)

Additional Teaching Experience

- **Instructor**, Loft Literary Center (Minneapolis), Upcoming 2024
- **Teaching Artist** | Assemble (Pittsburgh), 2023-Present
- **Playwriting Mentor** | Jungle Theater (Minneapolis), 2017-2019
- **Teaching Artist** | SteppingStone Theatre for Youth (St. Paul, MN), 2012-2016
- **Teaching Artist Training Fellow** | SteppingStone Theatre for Youth, 2011-2012
- **Teaching Artist Intern** | Central Touring Theater, Central High School (St. Paul, MN) Sept - Dec 2008

Artistic Works

FULL LENGTH PLAYS

From the Ground Up

- Rosa Parks Playwriting Award, Second place recipient of the Mark Twain Award for Comic Playwriting, and a Planet Earth Playwriting Award, Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival New Play Program, 2024

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

- Concert reading, Carnegie Mellon University, April 2024
- Semi-finalist for the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, 2024
- Long-listed, Lift Every Voice Festival, American Repertory Theater (St. Petersburg, FL)
- 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
- The Playwrights Realm's Script Share program, Dec 2023

Queen B: A New Work of Honeybee Futurism (original musical with book & libretto by Elle Thoni, music by Dameun Strange with additional contributions by Carlisle Evans-Peck)

- 2021 Southern MN Farm & Green Spaces Tour, Wild Conspiracy (artist's company), directed by Harry Waters Jr. with funding from 2020 Arts Tour Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, Franconia Sculpture Park, and Dreamery Rural Arts Initiative
- 2019 Workshop Production, Wild Conspiracy (artist's company), funded by a 2019 Artist's Initiative Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board

Saber, MN (original audio play with score by Carlisle Evans-Peck)

- Audio play release December 2020 with funding from the Arts Impact for Individuals Grant of the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (Twin Cities, MN)
- Commissioned by In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theater (Minneapolis) for "Coming Home To Wild" as funded by 2019 NEA Art Works Grant, live premiere canceled due to COVID-19.

Aquanesia (live outdoor adventure game, Game Writer Elle Thoni in collaboration with Game Designer Kim Loken and Art Director Bayou Bay)

- Premiere productions in Grand Rapids, MN (Reif Performing Arts Center) and Rochester, MN (Rochester Arts Center) Sept-Oct 2018
- Commissioned by Northern Lights.mn (Twin Cities, MN) with funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

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).

Lift Off: An American Counter-Myth about Sex, Loneliness, and Outer Space

- Staged Reading, In the Heart of the Best Puppet & Mask Theatre (Minneapolis, MN), Dec 2015

Awards

- Alfred P. Sloan Student Grand Jury Prize nomination, 2024
- \$25,000 First Place Award, Carnegie Mellon University-Alfred P Sloan Script Competition, 2024 (Finalist, 2023)
- Rosa Parks Playwriting Award, (Kennedy Center), 2024
- Second place recipient, Mark Twain Award for Comic Playwriting (Kennedy Center), 2024
- Planet Earth Playwriting Award, (Kennedy Center), 2024
- Semi-finalist, Princess Grace Playwriting Award, New Dramatists, 2023
- Second place recipient, Paula Vogel Playwriting Award (Kennedy Center)
- Merit Award, (Kennedy Center, Region 2 Festival)

Recognitions

- Finalist, Core Apprentice Fellowship, The Playwrights' Center, 2024
- Artist-in-Residence, Everwood Farmstead, upcoming 2024
- Writer-in-residence, The New Harmony Project, 2023, upcoming 2024
- Semi-finalist (current), 2024 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference
- Awardee, Further Fund Grant, Frank Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry (Pittsburgh), 2023
- Finalist, R&D Group, The Civilians (NYC), 2022
- Grantee, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (Minneapolis-St. Paul), Arts Impact for Individuals, 2021
- Awardee, Travel Grant, Network of Ensemble Theaters, 2020
- Grantee, Minnesota State Arts Board Arts Tour, 2019

SHORTER PLAYS

Moon Zoo

- Playwrights Symposium selection, Mid-Atlantic Theater Conference, March 2024
- Student showing, Playground XXI Festival, Carnegie Mellon University, Dec 2023

Lost Lake

- Premiere production, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theater (Minneapolis, MN) March 2018 as part of 2017/2018 Puppet Lab Fellowship

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), May 2017

La Maison de la Lumiere (puppet show co-created with Jeanne DL)

- Performance, Bread & Puppet Theater (Vermont), August 2015
- Performance, Café Concret, Casa del Popolo (Montréal) June 2015
- Performance, Mâche-Puppet II, Coop de Touski (Montréal), May 2015

The Circus of Small Wonders

- Bedlam Theater 10-Min Play Festival, June 2012

The Adventures of Juan (puppet show co-created with Anna Kunin)

- Commissioned by Teatro del Pueblo (St. Paul, MN), toured to elementary schools and community settings between 2008-2018, received over 100 performances.

They Will Be Sent Into the Dawn

- Minnesota Fringe Festival, Teatre de la Jeune Lune, August 2007

Recognitions con't

- Script Pitch New Play Commission, Walking Shadow Theater Company (Mpls), 2019
- Finalist, Bell Museum of Natural History Artist-in-Residence, 2019
- Grantee, Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative, 2018
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- Finalist, Jerome Fellowship in Playwriting, The Playwrights' Center, 2018
- PuppetLab Fellowship, Jerome Foundation, 2017-2018
- Awesome Foundation Twin Cities Grantee, 2017
- Finalist, Yale School of Drama Playwriting MFA, 2016
- Finalist, Brown University Playwriting MFA, 2016

Apprenticeship

Annabel Soutar,
Porte Parole Productions (Montréal)
September 2013 - July 2014

Trainings

Composer-Librettist Studio, 2017
Nautilus Music-Theater
Dir. Ben Krywosz

Muktadhara-V
Forum Theatre Training & Festival
Jana Sanskriti (Kolkata)
Dir. Sanjoy Ganguly

'With Joy' Puppetry Intensive
In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask
Theater, 2011
Dir. Sandy Spieler

'Philosophy of Breath'
Puppetry Intensive, 2010
Handspring Puppet Company (Cape Town)
Dir. Basil Jones and Adrian Kohler

Public Art and Community-Engaged Projects

PRODUCTION, CURATION, PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Founder, Producer, Artistic Head, Wild Conspiracy, 2020-present

Queer performance project with a focus in ecological performances (immersive, outdoor, multi-platform). Instagram: @wildconspiracy

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 | People Rising," 2016-2017

All-night public art festival spanning 7 neighborhoods across Minneapolis-St. Paul with 70+ participatory artist projects, produced by Northern Lights.mn, head curator Steve Dietz

Producer & Project Manager, Keke the Mammoth, 2017
90% to scale lifelike Woolly Mammoth puppet, supported by the Awesome Foundation - Twin Cities. Presented at the 2017 March for Science MN.

Co-Founder, Producer, Curator, HYSTERIA, 2016-2017
Underground feminist and queer performance in South Minneapolis showing experimental and avant-garde new works.

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.

Stage Manager, BareBones Puppets Halloween Extravaganza, 2012

Stage managed large scale outdoor community-engaged spectacle (including live orchestra, puppets, aerialists, fire performers etc) honoring life, death and grief.

Co-Producer, Curator, Director, Wheel Sexy Cabaret, 2012
Community-Professional Bicycle Burlesque Show, Performances March 2012 at Bryant-Lake Bowl (Minneapolis). Supported by successful Kickstarter campaign. Completely sold-out run.

New Play Development Dramaturgy

- **The Wastelands** devised by the company, dir. Walken Schweigert, Open Flame Theatre (Osceola, WI), Sept-Oct 2017
- **Queen** by Erik Ehn and Junauda Petrus, dir. Alison Heimstead, In the Heart of the Beast (Mpls, MN), Sept-Oct 2016
- **The Watershed** by Annabel Soutar, dir. Chris Abraham, Porte Parole-Crow's Theatre (Montreal-Toronto), July 2015

Publications

- **Artist Reflections, Northern Lights.mn retrospective publication**, upcoming Spring 2024, print
- **On Hauling Water: Outdoor Theatre as Re-Enchantment amidst Climate Crisis**, Howlround Theatre Commons, May 2022, web.
- **Controlled Burn** [image], Dark Mountain Issue 19, Spring 2021, print and web.
- **The Show Must Not Go On: Curing Theatre in the Age of COVID-19**, MinnesotaPlaylist, April 2020, web.
- **WATER IS LIFE**, Andrea Carlson in Conversation, Northern Lights.mn
- **Becoming Wheel Sexy**, Taking the Lane #7, bikesexuality zine, April 2012, print

Conference & Jury Roles

- **Mid-Atlantic Theater Conference**, Playwrights Symposium participant, March 2024
- **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
- **Panel Speaker**, *Making It Public*, Forecast Public Art, Nov 2019
- **Artist Facilitator**, Water Resources Conference (Minneapolis, MN), Oct 2019
- **'Our Space' Community Storytelling Curation Panel**, Twin Cities Media Alliance, June 2018
- **MN Artist Delegate**, One Water Summit, June 2018
- **Community Arts Grant Juror**, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council (MRAC), 2017
- **Northern Spark Festival Juror**, Northern Lights.mn, 2017
- **Performance RFP Juror**, Art Shanty Projects, 2016
- **Performer**, Library of Human Rights, Split Britches, Encuentro 2014 (Montréal), Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics (NYU)

Professional Memberships

- Dramatists Guild, Member, 2022 - Present
- Playwrights Center, Member, 2015 - Present
- Network of Ensemble Theaters, Individual Member, 2019 - 2021
- Great Lakes Commons, Affiliated Artist, 2015 - 2021