



## 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. A recent graduate from Carnegie Mellon School of Drama, I am looking to share my dual passions in humanizing education and forward-thinking artistry with the next generation of creators and changemakers.

### 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

### **MFA 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
- **Patient Educator, University of MN - Twin Cities**
  - Head to Toe Physical Exam, 1st Year Med School Tutorial Workshops, 2012-2022

## Teaching Achievements

### **Future Faculty Program Certificate**

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

## Additional Teaching Experience

- **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***

- Semi-finalist for the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, 2024 (in process)
- 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

- 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

- Writer-in-residence, The New Harmony Project, 2023
- Awardee, Further Fund Grant, Frank Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry (Pittsburgh), 2023
- Finalist, CMU-Alfred P. Sloan Screenwriting Competition
- 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
- Script Pitch New Play Commission, Walking Shadow Theater Company (Mpls), 2019
- Semifinalist, Juilliard School Playwriting Certificate
- Finalist, Bell Museum of Natural History Artist-in-Residence, 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

- 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)  
Drs. 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 I 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

# Work Experience

## **Graduate Ambassador, School of Drama**

Carnegie Mellon University | August 2023 - Present

- Conceived, designed, and launched MFA New Works Salon Series with the MFA Advising Office in the School of Drama.

## **Development and Communications Assistant**

Upstream Arts | March 2020 - Dec 2021

- Wrote and coordinated public-facing digital and print communications: weekly newsletter, social media and website content, Annual Report, Appeal and additional mailings. Additionally, processed individual donations, acted as a donor liaison, and provided grant writing support.

## **Project Manager, Our Space is Spoken For**

Twin Cities Media Alliance | Feb - Sept 2018

- Worked with Executive Director Adaobi Okolue to launch BIPOC performance-as-public art fellowship, ran artist RFP, managed timeline and administration, and participated in hiring additional project personnel.

## **Content Manager (2017 - 2019), Assistant Curator to Northern Spark (2017),**

### **Volunteer Coordinator (2016)**

Northern Lights.mn | Seasonal 2016-2019

- Managed all public-facing content for annual Northern Spark Festival in conversation with Graphic Designer, Directors, and Festival Artists. As Curator, provided project support and didactic research/writing for 70+ artists. As Volunteer Coordinator, recruited and managed 150+ volunteers during all-night festival.

## **House Manager, Ted Mann Concert Hall**

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities | December 2015 - April 2016

- Managed events at 1,400 seat concert venue for the University of Minnesota School of Music. Managed staff and oversaw audience services during event span.

## **New Play Development Agent**

Porte Parole Productions | Sept 2013 - 2015

- Served as primary interview transcriptionist and dramaturg for company playwright Annabel Soutar's *The Watershed* documentary play, project managed companion project *The Watershed* installation's 10-month research and development and three-week presentation at the 2015 Pan American Games.





## Work Experience con't

### **Standardized Patient & Patient Educator, M Simulation**

University of MN - Twin Cities | August 2012 - Present

- Performs in-role clinical simulations with medical, nursing, dental, midwifery, social work, and psych nursing students, facilitates one-on-one and small group feedback with learners, and completes assessments on students' professional mannerisms. As Patient Educator, facilitates head-to-toe physical exam workshops with 1st year medical students.

### **Audience Services Coordinator (2011), Festival House Manager (2010)**

MN Fringe Festival | May-August 2011, Seasonal 2010

- Part of the Fringe Festival's central team for coordinating staff and volunteer front-of-house positions, managed staff house managers during the 10-day festival.

### **PlayLabs Intern, The Playwrights Center**

The Playwrights' Center | August - October 2011

- Acted as Script Assistant to Playwright Sarah Gubbins during her 2011 PlayLabs residency, assisted with tasks-as-needed for PWC's annual PlayLabs festival.

### **Puppet Wagon Coordinator**

City of Shoreview, Minnesota | May - August 2010

- Wrote, built, and performed weekly puppet shows for the City of Shoreview, Minnesota's summer programming.

### **Artistic Production Intern, Teatro del Pueblo**

Teatro del Pueblo | May - August 2009

- Assisted Executive Artistic Director with all facets of company administration: programming and promotion, artist communications, grant writing and reporting, and database upkeep.

### **Arts Field Organizing Intern**

Minnesota Citizens for the Arts | May - August 2008

- Assistant to head Arts Field Organizer Donna Bachmann for the voter education campaign for the nonpartisan Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment - a MN state ballot amendment that granted unprecedented public funding to clean water, environment, parks and trails, and the arts.

References available upon request.