

Artist Statement

Gina Stevensen

I write plays about healing and self-discovery, processes which – like theater – never occur in a vacuum. Other people are always involved: we are hurt and learn how not to hurt in return; we struggle to find and express our authentic selves so we can be loved and known, and so others can look to us as they navigate their own journeys. There is no healing without collaboration; there is no theater without collaboration.

As a martial arts practitioner with a background in physical theater and dance, I write for the whole body, seeking through physicality and kinetic energy what cannot be expressed in spoken language. My theater making is entwined with activism and mutual aid, pressing on the friction points we invent to divide us from each other. I work at a shelter for families experiencing homelessness, in a city with a growing unhoused population – and a growing “us vs them” fervor. In my plays, I aim to construct containers in which audiences can listen to understand rather than respond, seeding new pathways to empathy and toppling false perceptions of supremacy.

My plays are full of people crying, laughing, fucking up, and communicating bravely as they stumble messily towards healing themselves, each other, and their communities. I embrace discomfort, centering characters who illuminate the revolutions – personal and political – that are possible when we are not afraid to be uncomfortable, wrong, or imperfect. I subvert the fourth wall in every play, because I believe that real-time collaboration between performer and audience transforms the theater into a sacred space in which we can imagine new futures and experiment with how we might get there together.