

Gina Stevensen
Artist Statement
Fall 2022

Not to brag, but I'm kind of an expert at artist statements. I should be more specific: I'm an expert at letting my desperation to sound smart, worthy, and articulate stifle my expression, resulting in a panicky and bland statement that may as well have been written by a moderately feminist computer program. I don't know much about writing an artist statement that sounds like me, like how I actually speak or write my plays. But since early 2021, when I came out as queer and polyamorous two years into a seemingly heterosexual marriage, I've been working super hard at communicating more honestly with myself and my partners about who I am and what I want. So I think it's time to try and communicate more authentically about my writing. *(Like starting that sentence with the word "so." Informal? Totally. Do I often start sentences that way? Yep).*

So here goes.

I write socially responsive funny plays, usually about women and femmes. I write to dismantle the violent and painful monoliths that I benefit from, like white supremacy, and the ones that trap me, like patriarchy and capitalism. I try to write plays the same way I try to engage in polyamory: embracing discomfort in order to push past assumptions toward a more radical, honest, and equitable communication that centers community and collective liberation. This striving toward community is also what always keeps me coming back to theater. It's theater's power of presence, of sharing real space with real people, breathing the same air together, synchronizing our heartbeats, that makes me feel alive and responsible to my fellow humans. Like when menstrual cycles sync up and you suddenly realize that your body and someone else's body are actually yearning to listen to each other. If you're reading this and you don't have a uterus, that's great too! The best comparison I have for it is that it feels like really good and really surprising theater. Plus, cramping.

Reading over this statement, I begin to wonder if the style I'm writing it in is actually insecurity masquerading as cheekiness. If it's simply a new way for me to apologize for my thoughts, to diffuse their strength by not letting them stand unadorned. But then I think, strength looks like a lot of things. And in my plays, it looks a lot like this – earnest, vulnerable, more interested in the struggle toward authentic expression than in presenting what is polished or perfect.