

# a.k. payne (she/they)

[akpayne9@gmail.com](mailto:akpayne9@gmail.com)

412-584-1805

---

**BIO:** *a.k. payne (she/they) is a playwright, artist-theorist, and theatermaker with roots in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their plays love on and engage the interdependencies of Black pasts, presents and futures and seek to find/remember language that might move us towards our collective liberation(s). They hold a B.A. in English and African-American Studies from Yale College and an MFA in Playwriting under Tarell Alvin McCraney from fka Yale School of Drama. Their work has been finalist for the L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. She is the current recipient of the Van Lier New Voices Fellowship, National Black Theatre's I AM SOUL Playwrights Residency, the Kemp Powers Commission Fund for Black Playwrights and Atlantic Theater Company's Judith Champion Launch Commission. Their work has been developed with the National Playwrights Conference, The New Harmony Project, Great Plains Theater Conference, and Manhattan Theater Club's "Groundworks Lab." They are a proud graduate of Pittsburgh Public Schools; grandchild of the Great Migration; descendant of a music teacher and a carpenter; who both march every year with their unions in Pittsburgh's Labor Day parade; a queer & non-binary abolitionist affected in community by the 'New Jim Crow;'' and of a great lineage of Black women storytellers and living-room archivists; all of which deeply informs, uplifts and amplifies their work as a playwright, community organizer and spacemaker.*

## **REPRESENTATION & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Representation: Jamie Kaye-Phillips, Paradigm Talent Agency  
+1.917.671.1001  
jkayephillips@paradigmagency.com.

Member: The Dramatists Guild, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., Yoga Alliance 200 HR RYT

## **EDUCATION**

### **Yale School of Drama (c/o 2023) MFA in Playwriting**

Playwriting Teachers: Tarell Alvin McCraney, Sarah Ruhl, Jackie Sibblies Drury,  
Christina Anderson, Robert O'Hara, Aya Ogawa, Kirk Lynn and Amy Herzog

### **Yale College (c/o 2019) B.A. English & African-American Studies (Playwriting Concentration)**

Advisors: Deborah Margolin, Donald Margulies, Daphne A. Brooks, Tavia Nyong'o

## **THEATER WORK EXPERIENCE, FELLOWSHIPS, & COMMISSIONS**

**National Black Theatre's I AM SOUL Playwrights Residency Program;** New York, NY  
— September 2023-Present

**Van Lier New Voices Fellowship, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater;** New York, NY—June 2023-Present  
**Box Office Representative, Yale Repertory Theater;** New Haven, CT— 2016-Present

**Atlantic Theater Company's** Judith Champion Launch Commission, 2023  
Pittsburgh **City Theatre's** Kemp Powers Commission for Black Playwrights, 2022  
Front of House Staff, **International Festival of Arts and Ideas**; New Haven, CT—Summer 2021

## **SELECTED PLAYS – FULL LENGTH**

### FURLOUGH'S PARADISE

World Premiere Production—Alliance Theatre's Hertz Stage Upc. Jan 2024  
Production—Carlotta Festival of New Plays (Yale School of Drama) [Dir. Leyla Levi] May 2023

### 'TIA PRAY A SOUND

Reading & Workshop—Breaking the Binary Theater Festival Oct 2023

### EDI YA & DIAMOND'S GROVE

Reading & Workshop—Pittsburgh City Theatre (Commission) Aug 2023

### *AMANI*

World Premiere—National Black Theatre & Rattlestick Playwrights Theater [Dir. Josiah Davis] Feb 2023  
Workshop—Groundworks Lab: Manhattan Theater Club [Dir. Cristina Angeles] 2022  
Workshop & Reading—Roundabout Theater Company [Dir. Cristina Angeles] 2021  
Workshop—Spring Workshop w Robert O'Hara (Yale School of Drama) 2020

### *LOVE I AWETHU FURTHER*

Reading—O'Neill National Playwrights Conference [Dir. Tamilla Woodard] June 2023  
Reading—Do More: New Plays—Bedlam Theater [Dir. Jacob Basri] 2022  
Workshop Production—Langston Hughes Festival (Yale School of Drama) [Dir: Jacob Basri] 2021

### *DWELLERS*

Workshop—Dwellers Play Collective (founder of new theatre ensemble) 2021  
Workshop—Spring Workshop w Christina Anderson (Yale School of Drama) 2021

### WHERE PATHWAYS MEET

Zoom Production—Yale Summer Cabaret [Dir: Christopher D. Betts] 2020  
Workshop Presentation—New Play Lab (Yale School of Drama) [Dir: James Fleming] 2020

### *BURNBABYBURN: AN AMERICAN DREAM*

Staged Reading—Atlantic Theater Company's MixFest [Dir. Awoye Timpo] Aug 2023  
Production—Yale Summer Cabaret [Dir. Jacob Basri] 2022  
Staged Reading—Great Plains Theater Conference [Dir. Beaufield Berry-Fisher] 2021  
Staged Reading—City Theatre Momentum Festival [Dir. Reginald L. Douglas] 2019  
Staged Reading—EAG & QST Thomas Barbour Awards [Dir. Joniece Abbott-Pratt] 2019  
Staged Reading—Yale Playwrights Festival [Dir. Tiffany Fomby] 2019

### *AIN'T NO DEAD THING*

Production (Rendered Radioplay Re: COVID 19)—Yale Cabaret and FOLKS) 2020

Workshop—Fall Workshop w Sarah Ruhl (Yale School of Drama)	2019
Staged Reading—Congo Square Theatre Company [Dir. Ann Joseph Douglas]	2019

### **SELECTED PLAYS – SHORT**

“blooms”	
Production—Ensemble Studio Theatre (New York, NY; Dir. Chika Ike)	2022
Virtual Production—Theater Masters TAKE TEN [Dir. Dennis A. Allen II]	2021
“Shayla the Great and the Magic Paintbrush” (A Play for Young Audiences)	2020
ZOOM Production—Hangar Theatre Company: Kidstuff Series [Dir. Lydia Fort]	

### **TEACHING & ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE**

Instructor, **Yale Young Global Scholars**; Course Titles: Embodied Playwriting & Postcolonial Adaptation  
—July 2023

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **Dwight Edgewood Project**; New Haven, CT—Summer 2023

Playwriting Guest Lecturer, **Southern Connecticut State University**; New Haven, CT—  
November, 2022

\*Playwright in Residence, **Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School**; New Haven, CT;  
2020-2022

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **New Voices in Theater Program**; New Haven, CT—Spring 2021

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **Hangar Theater Company**; Ithaca, NY—Summer, 2020

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **MEZA Makers Yale Summer Cabaret**; New Haven, CT  
—Summer, 2020

Playwriting Co-Teacher/Guest Lecturer w Anne Erbe; Course Title: Impossible Theater—The Art and  
Politics of the Imagination, Yale School of Drama; New Haven, CT—Fall, 2020

Presenter, Presentation Title: Oral Histories, Playwriting & Dr. Saidiya’s Hartman’s “Critical Fabulation”,  
**Edna Manley College: Rex Nettleford Conference**; Kingston, Jamaica—Fall, 2019

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **Alumni Theater Company**; Pittsburgh, PA—Summer, 2019

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **Yale Playwriting Workshop Series @ Dwight Hall**;  
New Haven, CT,—2018

Playwriting Teaching Artist, **O’Neill Playwriting Program at Yale**; New Haven, CT, 2016-2017

### **HONORS/AWARDS**

O’Neill National Playwrights Conference (Semifinalist: <i>Where Pathways Meet</i> )	2023
Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwright Award (Winner: <i>Furlough’s Paradise</i> )	2023
ASCAP Cole Porter Prize in Playwriting	2023
O’Neill National Playwrights Conference (Winner: <i>Love I Awethu Further</i> )	2023
Clauder Competition (Special Commendation: <i>Love I Awethu Further</i> )	2023
Susan Smith Blackburn Prize (Finalist: <i>AMANI</i> )	2023
Alliance/Kendeda National Playwriting Competition (Winner: <i>Furlough’s Paradise</i> )	2023
Bay Area Playwrights Festival (Finalist: <i>Dwellers</i> )	2023

New Harmony Project ( <i>Love I Awethu Further</i> )	2022
David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award (First Place: <i>Love I Awethu...</i> )	2022
Rosa Parks Playwriting Award (Second Place: <i>Love I Awethu...</i> )	2022
L. Arnold Weissberger New Play Award (Finalist; <i>AMANI</i> )	2022
O’Neill National Playwrights Conference (Semifinalist: <i>Dwellers</i> )	2022
August Wilson House Visiting Playwright Fellowship (Finalist)	2021
Playwrights Realm Scratchpad Series (Finalist: <i>AMANI</i> )	2021
Jane Chambers Student Award (Winner: <i>Love I Awethu...</i> )	2021
Seven Devils Playwrights Conference (Finalist: <i>AMANI</i> )	2021
THEATER MASTERS Take Ten Finalist (“blooms”)	2021
Leah Ryan’s Fund for Emerging Women Writers (Finalist: <i>AMANI</i> )	2021
Ucross+ The Blank Theatre—Future of Playwriting Prize (Finalist)	2021
Great Plains Theater Conference—PlayLab Series ( <i>BURNBABYBURN...</i> )	2020
Playwrights Realm Scratchpad Series (Semifinalist: <i>BURNBABYBURN...</i> )	2019
Louis Sudler Prize in the Performing and Creative Arts	2019
Marina Keegan Award for Excellence in Playwriting	2019
Thomas Barbour Playwriting Award (Finalist: <i>BURNBABYBURN...</i> )	2019

## **RELEVANT ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS**

\*“Toward a Theater of Liberation” by Lucy Gellman, New Haven Arts Paper (On 2020 Live Reading/ Zoom Production of *Where Pathways Meet* @ Yale Summer Cabaret): <https://www.newhavenarts.org/arts-paper/articles/towards-a-theater-of-liberation>

\*\*“In a Marathon of One-Act Plays, Boundaries Are Pushed and Pulled” by Elizabeth Vincentelli, The New York Times (Mention of 2022 EST Production of “blooms”); <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/theater/one-act-plays-ensemble-studio-theater.html>

\*“In ‘The Magical Freaking Bird’ Co-Op Students Make Dreams Come True” by Lucy Gellman, New Haven Arts Paper (On 2022 Playwright in Residence; Co Op High School): <https://www.newhavenarts.org/arts-paper/articles/in-the-magical-freaking-bird-co-op-students-make-dreams-come-true>

“blooms” published in *Theater Masters’ Take Ten: Volume 7*, Concord Theatricals—<https://www.concordtheatricals.com/s/94051/theater-masters-take-ten-volume-7>

## **RELEVANT SKILLS**

Some proficiency in Spanish

Typing: over 70 WPM

Creativity, empathy, open-mindedness, organization, dependability, attention to detail & customer service

## **REFERENCES**

Tarell Alvin McCraney, Sarah Ruhl, & Anne Erbe