

Emma Catherine Schillage (they/she) is an NYC-based Columbia MFA playwriting student, an actor, director, theatre educator, and dramaturg from Southeast Louisiana. Growing up in New Orleans, Emma has been influenced by the artistic and cultural hub their entire life. They were surrounded by stories in their youth and developed a passion for telling stories through Theatre. With empathy, humor, and a dash of magic realism, Emma invites audiences to explore the audacity of what it means to be alive, the variety of ways in which we love one another, and how our youth never truly leaves us.

Emma was inspired by the stories of the town her family settled in when they first came to America, an unsuspecting town called Independence. Emma's love for her Italian-Sicilian heritage has influenced her writing, which bore her first full-length play, *LA FAMIGLIA È TUTTO*. Since then, Emma has been working on various other writing projects in playwriting, short story writing, and screenwriting. Their short play, *THE PURGATORY FOR WOMEN WHO COMMIT SUICIDE* (*Winner - Spectral Sisters 2022 Short Play Festival*), received productions at Southern Rep Theatre in New Orleans (November 2020) and Columbia University (October 2021). Their newest play, *GOD AND GIRL*, also received a production at Columbia University (February 2022).

Emma is relentlessly fascinated by the works of Southern Gothicism. Although, unlike classic Southern Gothic stories, Emma is interested in telling the stories of Women+ communities. They often write about motherhood, girlhood, addiction, mental illness, queerness, and the absolute magic and horror of adolescence.

Emma graduated from Loyola University New Orleans, where they received their Bachelor of Arts in Theatre. There she studied Acting, Directing, Dramaturgy, and Playwriting. When not writing, Emma can be found acting, reading, cooking, communing with nature, or playing Dungeons and Dragons.