

Dykeopolis. You need to see this show. Seriously.

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by [Janelle](#) - Aug 20, 2013

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Dykeopolis: Queer Tales and Travels for Our Time

I had the opportunity to meet with [Dykeopolis: Queer Tales and Travels in Our Times](#) writer/performer Kimberly Dark before her first show opened for this year's Edmonton's Fringe Festival.

Although it's not her first time speaking in Edmonton, it is her first time performing at our Fringe Festival.

I admit, I was really nervous and equally excited. Her website is modest and has a couple of Youtube clips here and there but it doesn't quite capture the vivaciousness of the woman I was about to meet.

Fresh from a yoga class, she graciously met me at one of my favourite Whyte Ave pubs and I got to pick her brain about being a queer activist and academic, who unabashedly says "fuck" at precisely the right time.

When she isn't on tour with her show or giving lectures, Dark teaches in a graduate program in Sociological Practices at California State University. Dark makes it clear that she isn't an actress but her palpable sense of humour leaves little wonder how she can own a stage for over an hour.

"This is a show that plays sometimes at colleges and universities... I do two other shows [Dykeotomy](#)" which is kind of the deep end of the pool in terms of gender-queer theory kind of stuff and it's really hard to do it for general audiences because ... without a basic understanding of gender as a social construct, it feels gratuitously pornographic in parts. But if you're already in that head space then you can go with some of the nuances of the stories in a different way."

What is the reaction from the audience who aren't in that head space who have seen Dykeotomy?

"So [\[Dykeopolis\]](#) was kind of the answer to "okay, how can I still deal with gender and sexuality as two separate things that effect other?" Because you know most people are not walking around with that mindset. Like, how can I still do that but not be so deep in the pool right away? And that's this show."

Through [Dykeopolis](#) , Dark addresses how we handle gender and sexuality – or lack there of – across time and across culture.

"I guess one of the big punch lines of the show is really that sexism is at the root of homophobia and we can't handle one without handling the other."

[box style="quote"]The message is restated in a whole lot of different stories in different ways about how gender and sexuality are not the same thing and we're so fucked on gender, we don't even know we're handling sexuality in a weird way. [/box]

[Dykeopolis](#) is like swimming in the shallow end of the "Examining the Binary Gender & Sexuality Roles" pool. It's not a lesbian standing in front of a crowd, addressing societal norms and roles we're all supposed to play. It's a person, Dark, in this case, presenting life from her point of view and radicalizes an awakening within the audience.

"It's highly disturbing to me the way how the whole quest for gay marriage has become this thing where we end up very homogenized and you see, at least in our media, whenever you see women getting married it's always two "bride" looking people together. You know, it's

Portia and Ellen over and over again. It's this very homogenized version of lesbianism....



It worries me because the whole reason we have any rights at all is because of people on the fringes, people who were gender deviant, people who were quite visible and transgender people and sex workers and I'm not willing to assimilate."

"I feel that at this point in my life I have a whole number of fairly well thought out views and I'm not interested in capitulating those and so regardless of what I look like, there's going to be an "OOOOH!" that comes at some point," she said laughing. "OOOOH! *Wait a minute. What's she saying?*"

[box style="quote"] **There's a piece [in the show] where I say sometimes being queer is not about the gender of the person with whom you have sex but more the role you take in the fucking. So, let me just be clear about this: that's like some heterosexual men who get a blowjob from a guy at the gym don't consider themselves gay because they're in the dominant position.... And then this thing in the audience happens and then I get to say, "oh right, right, you thought I was really a nice lesbian![/box]**

Dark is cheeky, sexy and a complete riot. She address really serious social issues but without aggressive angry activism.

"I kind of relish those moments and then I can make fun of them and go "no no, you can be comfortable still but I'm still going to say this stuff."

If there is a show to see at this year's Fringe Festival, it is this one.

If you haven't come out or are still on that fringe of exploration, bring some friends or even your parents. Something tells Dark will be able to connect with everyone in the audience.

After an hour of chatting (and far too many notes and excellent quotes to pick from for this article) we hugged it out and I told her, from one vegetarian to another, to check out [Padmanadi](#). From one queer mother to another, she gave more advice and outlooks on life than I could have expected.

Dykeopolis: Queer Tales and Travels for Our Time

Written and performed by Kimberly Dark

Venue: Acacia Hall – 10433 – 83 avenue

August 20 – 8:45 pm

August 21 – 2:15 pm

August 23 – 4:15 pm

August 24 – 12:15 pm

Connect with Kimberly Dark on her [Facebook page](#) or visit her at [kimberlydark.com](#).

And go see her show!

xo

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