



## Dark Throws Light On Gender

By Marguerite O'Callaghan

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A few days ago I had the exciting opportunity to interview the renowned performance artist and poet Kimberly Dark

I was immediately taken with her soft, warm voice and found myself understanding why so many critics and reviews spoke of her "feminine magnetism" - it seemed to creep along the phone line and quietly demand my attention much as I imagined it would during one of her live performances.

Here was a woman who rejected stereotypes, who refused to chop off her hair and throw out her lipstick when she "joined" the lesbian community.

She is a self confessed "lesbian diva" who feels strongly that there is huge pressure on the lesbian community to conform to a certain stereotypical norm.

Dark represents what seems to be a new generation of lesbian identity - one that is more subtle than the politically active lesbian groups or "gender benders" who defy traditional male/female physical stereotypes.

Dark embraces a type of lesbian identity which is creative, peaceful and undeniably feminine.

She uses her feminine charm to provoke and evoke...

On listening to her CD *You Are My Singing Lesson* I decide that Dark reminds me of Sylvia Plath. Dark had the same commanding voice as Plath which seems to force the listener to accept the most trivial or twisted thought as matter-of-fact or rational, yet she has the optimism and contagious charm that Plath did not.

San Diego-based Dark has been writing and performing for more than fifteen years and combines her background in and fascination with social research with her creative writing and performance.

She uses sociology as a source of material for her creative work - analyzing sociological topics like gender, sexual orientation and women's roles both on a professional level and an extremely personal and creative one.

This balance between objectivity and intimate analysis certainly gives Dark an edge and has made her a force to be reckoned with on every level - as a strong, professional woman, a lesbian who defies the stereotypical norm and as an artist who continues to shock audiences as she presses their buttons and gracefully serves the truth up to them on a pretty pink plate.

You can catch Dark tonight at 8 p.m. at Tigh Fili on MacCurtain Street, or you can partake in her workshop entitled First Person Story-telling For Performance this Saturday, February 19 from 10 am till midday. Booking is required.

[kimberlydark.com](http://kimberlydark.com)