

<http://dailybruin.com/2013/04/24/one-woman-performance-addresses-faith-sexuality/>

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES  
**DAILY BRUIN**

April 24, 2013 12:01 am    More stories in [A&E](#), [Theater & Arts](#)

## **One-woman performance addresses faith, sexuality**



Courtesy of Miguel Morales Karen Anzoategui's "Catholic School Daze" is a one-woman theatrical performance and interactive workshop that depicts Anzoategui's experiences as a lesbian Latina at a time before she realized she was gay. The performance will take place in the Chicano Studies Research Center Library.

By [Natalie Chudnovsky](#)

## "Catholic School Daze"

**Today, 3:30 p.m.**

CSRC Library

FREE

The schoolteacher looks down at the empty desks around her and teaches her imaginary students about Jesus Christ. She then sits down at one of the desks and transforms into a schoolgirl thinking that Jesus wasn't so different from her after all. He was a loner too.

Writer and actress Karen Anzoategui's "Catholic School Daze" is a one-woman theatrical performance and interactive workshop that addresses her experiences finding her faith and sexuality.

"The show is based on her experience as a queer Latina in Catholic school, but at a time before she realized she was gay," said Rebecca Epstein, events coordinator for the Chicano Studies Research Center, where the show will take place.

The CSRC librarian Lizette Guerra said she invited Anzoategui to UCLA as part of the CSRC's LGBT and Mujeres Initiative, which aims to address gaps in the library's collection regarding Latinas and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Anzoategui began writing the show in 2011, but said it is an ongoing creation that evolves every time it's performed based on new observations and audience reactions.

The show centers around Anzoategui's experience of being falsely accused of kissing another girl in front of her high school student body.

Anzoategui said a rumor spread that she was one of two girls that students saw kissing after school. She was pulled out of class by the dean, interrogated by school administrators and reproached for the incident. Her fellow classmates stopped speaking to her. She was 15 years old.

"People couldn't even look me in the eye and that's worse than people staring at you and giving you dirty looks," Anzoategui said.

The event was complicated by the fact that Anzoategui was having romantic feelings for girls, although she said she didn't consciously realize it at the time.

Anzoategui shows how she struggled with her faith through biblical imagery, drawing parallels to the life of Jesus as she discovers her love for Christian service, suffers the kiss of betrayal and is crucified by the school.

Despite the traumatic events she experienced during her high school years, Anzoategui said they were blessings in disguise because they made her realize how badly gay people were treated. The show follows her as she moves away from her hometown, comes to terms with her sexuality as a lesbian and finds a different approach to religion.

Although “Catholic School Daze” addresses heavy topics, the story is told through comedy. Anzoategui said laughter allows the audience to become more open to emotion, helping them empathize with her story and come to terms with their own traumas.

“The only way I can tell this story is if I’m telling it through humor,” Anzoategui said. “Through comedy people open up because they’re laughing. The reverberation that happens physically and metaphysically is a beautiful alignment to the good energy we want to feel.”

She ends the show with a question-and-answer session during which she and the audience ask each other questions.

Some audience members relate their own experiences and become very emotional, Anzoategui said. She usually brings a psychologist and a campus therapist to speak with students who need help.

Anzoategui said she feels a communion with her audience at the end of her shows. During a previous performance, she even brought bread to share with the audience members.

“I would have them break off a piece and I would tell them they’re beautiful and thank them for being there,” Anzoategui said. “Some people said thank you, some people took the bread, others said, ‘You’re beautiful, thank you.’”