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## Q&A with Lipstick Theatre president Ali Shields

[James Blen](#), Writer  
March 4, 2013 •

Communication sophomore Ali Shields is president of Lipstick Theatre, a new theater group that focuses on women's rights, featuring female-penned plays or ones that address issues modern-day women face. Lipstick Theatre's goal is to empower women to continue producing art in traditionally male-dominated fields. Shields recently spoke with The Current to discuss the creation of Lipstick Theatre and the goals she hopes to achieve through it.

**The Current:** What compelled you to create Lipstick Theatre?

**Ali Shields:** I got the idea in October while talking to a professor and my roommate about the theater community as a whole. He asked us what we felt was missing, and my roommate felt that there aren't enough opportunities for women. I also met an alumna member who said that while she was here, there was a women's theater group on campus, but it no longer existed. By January we developed a board of people who were interested and excited, and by February we hosted our first show, the stand-up comedy night.

**The Current:** What does "Lipstick" mean?

**AS:** We wanted something a little fun. Even though we address very serious issues, it's still a lot of fun doing it. Also, there's a broad perspective of lipstick, of feminism and what it means. On one hand, the lipstick may represent oppression and conformity, while it can also represent Jane Fonda's "I can wear lipstick if I want to" attitude. The lipstick means a lot of things to a lot of people. We liked it because it was an evocative image.

**The Current:** What do you think is the most effective means of expressing pride and feminism?

**AS:** Being open to having discussions about it. People think about feminism in many different ways. Everybody loves women in some way, shape or form. Being open to that discussion raises some really interesting and exciting topics to do with women's rights, which deserve respect and discussion.

**The Current:** In this day and age, what do you think are the most pressing issues facing women?

**AS:** (The) treatment of women in politics is very important. Right now a woman in politics is either a bitch or a joke. Take Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin. Also, women's health issues are very prominent, women in India standing up for their rights because of rape culture. When I'm reading stories like that, it is so unbelievably important to reexamine what it's like in the U.S. and how we treat women. While we have come very far, there needs to be constant discussion about women's rights.

**The Current:** What are some goals and plans you have for Lipstick?

**AS:** Right after Spring Break we will have our burlesque show on April 6, which will be immediately followed by the variety show, featuring Snickerdoodlin', Significant Others and the ladies of Titanic. We are also in talks to do Project Unbreakable, which is a photography project focused on women who have been victims of sexual assault ... We also want to feature works by more female playwrights or male playwrights with strong plays about female issues. We have a large scope of plans and a lot of people can contribute.

**The Current:** What kind of influence do you hope to have on the Northwestern community?

**AS:** We are trying to create a loving, artistic circle of people who will support a woman in what she wants to do and promoting awareness of what they deserve. I also hope to create a dialogue and get people excited. So many people on this campus are so incredibly talented, so through this I hope to create a space for them to express themselves.

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