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## Funny Women Crack SF's Male Comedy Scene

Monday Night Foreplays showcases women's humor with sketch comedy

By: [Ambika Kandasamy, SF Public Press](#)

For the women running the Monday Night Foreplays comedy group, their short skits are an effort to fill a large void that they say exists in the female sketch comedy scene.

The group's creators, Ruth Grossinger and Kate Jones, said that women are in the minority in leading sketch comedy groups in the city.

"In San Francisco, there are a lot of sketch comedy groups, but there aren't a lot of just female-based groups," said Jones. "The voice for female sketch comedy, not just in the city, but across the board, could definitely be expanded on."

There are several co-ed sketch comedy groups in the Bay Area such as Stanford University's Robber Barons, San Francisco's Richter Scale and San Francisco production company PianoFight's "Stop Hating Imagination Time" show. PianoFight also produces Monday Night Foreplays.

Some of the male sketch comedy groups in the city are Uphill Both Ways, Kasper Hauser and Four in the Back.

Jones created the group with Grossinger in November 2009 to provide a platform for female comedians to write and perform humorous skits. "Now it's just become this full show that represents women, but not in an overbearing way," said Jones.

The group is currently presenting a montage of their past performances called "Monday Night Foreplays: One Year AnnivHERsary Show" at the Off-Market Theatre at 965 Mission St. The show celebrates various sketches from the seven productions they produced since launching the first show last year.

Past shows included a sock puppet show that parodied Sesame Street, a frivolous dancing cows segment and a standup comedy routine that delved into themes of female body image.

Grossinger said the shows give her an opportunity to play unique, non-gender typical roles such as a high school boy in an air band, a dictator and a robot. "I think of myself as more of a character actress, so that was just super fun. I totally transformed myself," she said.

Even though the show is produced entirely by women, sketches can feature both male and female performers, such as a comedic musical performance by a brother and sister pair called "Rainbow Chair" who write and perform songs in a new age music style.

Most members of the group are trained actors who have performed in improv shows and other theatrical productions, but they said that working on this show has given them the opportunity to take part in other behind-the-scenes roles like writing and directing.

Another group on the female sketch comedy scene in the city is the nonprofit Killing My Lobster production company.

"Seeing a lot of sketch comedy troupes — it just really hits you on how many men kind of drive the comedy scene," said Shaye Troha, a San Francisco based actor. Troha created Killing My Lobster's first all female sketch comedy show, "Killing My Lobster For the Very First Time" in 2007.

She said that this year, the group produced "Killing My Lobster Holds the Mayo" which was entirely about food and are now in the process of creating another show for next year.

"There are all these incredible women in Killing My Lobster and I just wanted to really showcase all of us and give the women in our troupe an opportunity to not just play the girlfriend, but to play a male cop," she said. "I wanted to do cross-gender casting. I wanted give all the women a chance to play a lot of different characters that you wouldn't normally play when you're in a male and female show."

She said that she enjoyed playing male roles in the Lobster shows. Her favorite one was a character called Malfar, a foul-mouthed ruler of the underworld who is kicked out of his position and made to work in San Francisco's financial district.

"The entertainment scene is driven by beauty and as a female comedian, sometimes funny is really ugly," she said. "I really like it when female comedians are ugly and raw. I think that's funny cause you're going against the societal norm of what everyone thinks a women should be or act like."