

3<sup>rd</sup> Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies Conference

**WHO'S LAUGHING?**  
**The Politics of Humor**  
**April 4&5, 2008**

**CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

**Friday, April 4**

**5:00 PM – 9:30 PM**

**REGISTRATION: 5:00 – 8:00 PM**

*Outside 32-123, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Stata Center*

**OPENING RECEPTION: 5:30 – 6:45 PM**

*\*Presenters, panelists, & GCWS affiliated faculty only  
R&D Dining Room, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Stata Center*

***Building Boxes***

Performance by the **Institute for Infinitely Small Things**

The Institute for Infinitely Small Things is a research institution dedicated to the discovery, creation, collection, construction, and documentation of all of the infinitely small things in the world, past, present, and future. We conduct creative, participatory research that aims to temporarily transform public spaces dominated by corporate and political agendas.

**PERFORMANCE SHOWCASE: 7:00 – 9:30 PM**

**THEY MUST BE HYSTERICAL! An evening of Feminist Comedy**

*Room 32-123, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Stata Center*

Come for the laughter and stay for the discourse! On Friday, 4/4, from 7-9:30 PM, the opening conference event is a showcase of performances by feminist comedians from across the northeast. The showcase will be followed by a Q&A and discussion with the artists.

*Please note: Some performances may include challenging and/or adult content. These performances may not be suitable for children under 13.*

### **Opening Remarks:**

**Chris Bobel**, GCWS co-chair and Assistant Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston

**Shane Landrum**, GCWS Graduate Student Conference Co-Chair, 4th year PhD student, American History & Women's and Gender Studies, Brandeis University

**Emily MacMillan**, GCWS Graduate Student Conference Co-Chair, 2nd year PhD student, Sociology, Boston College

### **Emcee: Mal Malme, Queer Soup Theater**

Karen "Mal" Malme is a theater artist, co-founder, writer and performer with Queer Soup Theater, which celebrated its fifth anniversary this past summer with their production "lost + found: the anniversary series" at The Boston Playwrights' Theatre. Mal performed in three of the pieces and contributed her original play "gutting" to the production, inspired by her experiences volunteering in New Orleans in the fall of 2006. Mal also tours her solo performance project "Still Married", which received a 2006 Artist Grant from The Cambridge Arts Council, to schools, colleges, and conferences, in an effort to encourage dialogue on same sex marriage. By day, Mal works as Dr. Mal Adjusted at Children's Hospital in Boston as a hospital clown for The Big Apple Circus Clown Care Program. Mal is also an advisor and board member with the North Shore Alliance of GLBT Youth (NAGLY). ([www.queersoup.net](http://www.queersoup.net))

### **PERFORMERS:**

#### ***Stand-Up Comedy by Erin Judge – Erin Judge***

Erin Judge is featured on [comedycentral.com](http://comedycentral.com) and will appear on Comedy Central's Live at Gotham TV show in its 2008 season. In addition to telling jokes, acting in sketches, performing characters, and producing shows, Erin is also an award-winning writer. ([www.erinjudge.com](http://www.erinjudge.com))

#### ***Laughing Liberally – Katie Halper and Desiree Burch***

Raised on the mean streets of New York City's Upper West Side, Katie Halper is a comic, writer, blogger, satirist and filmmaker based in New York. Katie co-founded Laughing Liberally, a political comedy group and is an artistic director of The Tank, a non-profit performing and visual arts space in Tribeca. Katie performs comedy throughout the country and can be seen at venues including Town Hall, Symphony Space, and The Culture Project in New York, and at Net Roots Nation (the convention formerly known as Yearly Kos) in Chicago and Las Vegas. ([www.katiehalper.com](http://www.katiehalper.com))

Desiree Burch is a writer, comedian, actress, New York Neo-Futurist and the Executive Director of The Hysterical Festival, a new festival for women in all areas of comedy, debuting in October 2008. She is the former producer/host of the Smut Reading Series at Galapagos Art Space and creator of four full-length solo performances, including "52 Man Pickup," a salacious evening of sex and storytelling most recently featured in The Black Comedy

Experiment. ([www.myspace.com/destheray](http://www.myspace.com/destheray))

***Good Girls Don't, but Indian Girls Do – Vijai Nathan***

In 1997, Vijai mortified her parents by giving up a career in journalism, canceling her wedding, and becoming a stand-up comedian. She has been featured at the L.A. Women's Theater Festival, appeared on the BBC and UK Comedy Channel's "The World Stands Up", and was the first and only woman to be nominated Comedian of the Year 2005 by the South Asian Media Awards.  
([www.vijaicomedy.com](http://www.vijaicomedy.com))

***My Dick is Bigger than Yours: Sexuality and Censorship – Janice Perry***

Janice Perry has toured internationally with her solo stage work since 1982. She's received multiple fellowships from the William Fulbright Commission and the US Department of State, the Vermont Arts Council, the NEA, and others. She teaches identity performance as an artist-in-residence at cultural and academic institutions worldwide. Her work has been adapted for radio, television and print in the USA and Europe (NPR, PBS, BBC 2, Channel 4, BBC 3). Perry's recent interdisciplinary, multi-media work expands traditional definitions of performance.  
([www.janiceperry.com](http://www.janiceperry.com))

**Saturday, April 5**

**9:30 AM – 7 PM**

**REGISTRATION: 8:30 – 10 AM**

*Student Street, Stata Center*

\*Open cartoon screening and breakfast in room 32-124 from 9:00 – 9:30 AM

**SATURDAY MORNING CARTOONS: 9:30 – 10:50 AM**

*LOCATION: Room 32-124*

A blast from the past: a Saturday morning of Pop Tarts, Cocoa Puffs, and cartoons. Saturday will begin with a screening of cartoons - old and new, rare and familiar - that offer ripe material for cultural analysis, feminist discussion and critique. We will alternate between short screenings and discussion throughout the morning.

The cartoons are curated by Elena Marx, *PhD candidate, History of American Civilization Program, Harvard University*. Elena and Ian Condry, Associate Professor of Japanese Cultural Studies in Foreign Languages and Literatures at MIT, will be moderating the discussion.

*See insert for cartoon screening list and schedule.*

**STUDENT PANELS**

**Session 1: 11:00 – 12:30 PM**

*Locations noted below*

*Room 32-144*

**CROSSING THE LINES? CRITICAL PERFORMANCE AND CULTURAL BACKLASH**

- **“Tutti Frutti/Good Booty: Little Richard, Subversive Sexuality, and Humor”**, Nora Morrison. *History of American Civilization, Harvard University*
- **“Dirty Shorts and Muslin Curtains: How my Artwork Ended Up Under Wraps”**, Rachelle Beaudoin, *New Media Artist and Adjunct Professor at Keene State College and Chester College of New England*

*Moderator: Glenda Carpio, Assistant Professor, African and African American Studies and English and American Literature and Language, Harvard University*

*Room 32-141*

**LISTEN TO THIS: THE MEANINGFUL AND CHANGING SOUNDS OF LAUGHTER**

- **“Laughter as a Tactic for Surviving in Prison: Memories of Women as Political Prisoners”**, Meral Akbas, *Sociology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey*

- **“The New Sound of Slap-of-the-Stick: Sound/Image Relationships in Looney Tunes (1937-1958)”**, Andres Lombana, *Comparative Media Studies, MIT*
- **“Your Body Must Be Heard’: Hillary Clinton and the Politics of Cackling”**, Abby Paige, *Creative Writing, Bennington*

*Room 32-155*

#### **INNER CIRCLES/OUTER SPACES: LIMINALITY AND RESISTANCE**

- **“The Sycophant and the Jester: A Comparative Study”**, Ayse Karinca, *Anthropology, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey*
- **“Laughing at/Laughing with/Laughing at: (Un)layering Hijra and Mainstream Performative Relationships”**, Radhica Ganapathy, *Theater, Penn State University*
- **“The Little Planet that Couldn’t”**, Lisa Messeri *History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society, MIT*

*Moderator: Claudia Castaneda, instructor, Emerson College, Brandeis University, and the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies at MIT*

#### **LUNCH**

**12:45 – 1:30 PM**

*Student Street (Lunch Provided)*

#### **STUDENT PANELS**

**Session 2: 1:30 – 3:00 PM**

*Locations noted below*

*Room 32-124*

#### **BAWDY/BODY LANGUAGE: SEX, POWER, AND REPRESENTATION**

- **“Robert Crumb: Drawing Misogyny and Sexual Violence”**, Jimmy Stroup *American Studies, California State University, Fullerton*
- **“Hot, Nude Ladies: Gender, The Body, and Humor in Campus Ladies”**, Jenn Brandt *English and Women’s Studies, University of Rhode Island*
- **“M.A.D. about The Bomb”**, Elena Marx, *History of American Civilization, Harvard University*

*Moderator: Yael Sherman, PhD Candidate, Women’s Studies, Emory University*

*Room 32-144*

#### **POWER PLAYS: HUMOR AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

- **“You Just Don’t Get It: The Uses of Humor in Conversations about Race”**, Jennifer Dorsey and Jennie Weiner, *Harvard Graduate School of Education*

- **“Flipping the Script about Race and Religion: Satire as a Resource for Faith-Based Multiracial Activism”**, Lydia Bean, *Sociology, Harvard University*
- **“How to Do Things with Jokes: Humor and Discursive Power”**, Ryan Wepler, *English, Brandeis University*

*Moderator: Chris Bobel, Assistant Professor, Women’s Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston*

## **COFEEE BREAK**

**3:00 – 3:30 PM**

*Student Street*

## **KEYNOTE PERFORMANCE AND PRESENTATIONS**

**3:30 – 6:45 PM**

*32-123*

### **3:30 PM: Announcement of the 2008 GCWS Mother Board Writing Prize Winner**

*Barbara Gottfried, GCWS Board Representative, and faculty in the Women’s Studies Department, Boston University*

### **3:45 – 5 PM: MONDAY NIGHT IN WESTERBORK**

**Keynote Performance by S. Bear Bergman**

#### ***Performance:***

*Monday Night In Westerbork* draws from many sources, personal and historical. Bergman weaves in threads of hir childhood experiences at Jew Camp (and the survivors who shared the same camp), visits to Westerbork and other concentration camps, storytelling, tribe behavior, resistance and the experiences of being queer-as-in-homo and also queer-as-in-different in a culture which values conventional achievement as a mode of survival. The artistic mélange cooks up a piece that’s unique on the theater landscape - a performance that takes the opportunity to educate about Holocaust, engages and challenges viewers, and manages to be funny, touching, brutal and deeply inspiring by the end of an hour.

**S. Bear Bergman** is a writer, a theater artist, an instigator, a gender-jammer, and a good example of what happens when you overeducate a contrarian. Ze is also the author of *Butch is a Noun* (Suspect Thoughts Press, 2006) and three award-winning solo performances, as well as a frequent contributor to anthologies on all manner of topics. Bear is also a frequent lecturer at colleges and universities regarding issues relating to gender and sexuality, and has advised the staff of numerous institutions on their policies regarding transgendered and transsexual students. ([www.sbearbergman.com](http://www.sbearbergman.com))

**5:05 – 5:15 PM: Intermission**

**5:15 – 6:00 PM: Keynote Presentation by Glenda Carpio**

***Keynote presentation:***

In the January, 2007 issue of *Vanity Fair*, Christopher Hitchens published an article titled “Why Women Aren’t Funny,” in which he argues that the gap in humor between men and women has to do with reproduction. Apparently not joking, he writes that, “For women, reproduction is, if not the only thing, certainly the main thing,” and further, that the fact that women can conceive gives them “unchallengeable authority,” in the face of which men have had to develop a healthy and virile sense of humor. The April 2008 issue of *Vanity Fair* offers a counterargument, a pretty tame and polite one, given the vulgarity of Hitchens’s ideas. Examining the work of Moms Mabley, Josephine Baker, and Wanda Sykes, this talk explores the underpinnings of the *Vanity Fair* debate, historicizing it while also asking how race and concepts of physical beauty impacts it.

**Glenda Carpio** is Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies and of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University. Professor Carpio focuses on African American literature and culture, literature of the African Diaspora, and Anglophone Caribbean Literature. She is currently working on a manuscript entitled, “Black Humor in the Fictions of Slavery,” and her writings and presentations include analysis of the works of Gayl Jones, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Derek Walcott. She is also co-editing an anthology of Caribbean women writers.

**6:00 – 6:45 PM: Discussion and Q&A with S. Bear Bergman and Glenda Carpio**

**6:45: Closing remarks**