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Funny Wins

Comedy and conversation with Judy Gold at the Cinderblock Comedy Festival.

BY LAUREN LOGIUDICE

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Judy Gold

Judy Gold When I first scanned the list of shows and performers at the Cinder Block
ERIC KORENMAN Comedy Festival I thought it was a women's festival. Then I thought maybe it had an LGBTQ slant ... or diversity in general? Why does this weekend of laughs include such a unique lineup?

After chatting with many incredibly hip and very friendly festival volunteers I learned that Cinder Block is simply ... a comedy festival. What sets them apart is that the coordinators do an incredible job of including comedians and acts from a range of age, race, sexuality, and gender experiences. In the comedy world, having this level of inclusion is somewhat rare.

The festival ran was a refreshing weekend filled with hysterical shows from new and established voices. Festival headliners included Judy Gold, Janeane Garofalo, and Nikki Carr. The themes of the shows ranged from women over 40 ("Women of a Certain Age"), to sketch comedy ("Fantasy Grandma Live!"), to abortion storytelling ("Speakout Laughout"). You can't get that range of comedic insight in the average comedy club in one night and in some places in one year—or ever!

During the festival, I had the very fortunate—and hilarious—opportunity to speak with Judy Gold about why festivals like the Cinder Block are a wonderful place to see shows and how, as difficult as comedy is, funny wins in the end! Excerpts from this conversation are below.

Why did you decide to be a part of the Cinder Block Comedy Festival?

To me, these comedy festivals are awesome because they bring people to different parts of the city and include different comics. I like the fact that I get to meet all these comics that I have never met before. It's great. I love doing standup and I love that there are these festivals where people can work together who would not normally ever work together. It's just so great to see the next generation even though I feel really fucking old.

A few gale male comics told me that it's just so much easier for queer women and lesbians because people don't mind hearing about two women having sex.

Oh my god, are you fucking kidding me?

Unfortunately, I am not.

Standup is not easy for anyone. Funny is funny that's it. I've been doing this for 34 years ... funny wins in the end.

It's hard work. Don't make stupid excuses like “they don't want to hear about this,” “they don't want to hear about that.” They want to laugh. That's what they want to do, they want to laugh. I can say I haven't gotten this or that, because I'm a Jew and I'm female and I'm lesbian. I can say that over and over again and I'm sure in a lot of cases it's true, but, you know what, I am who I am ... I'm a comic, that's what I am. So stop making excuses and using your sexuality and/or gender or whatever to sort of be a disclaimer or a reason for not being as successful as you want to be. It's a marathon it's not a sprint.

And do you find like when you perform in front of a straight audience are there certain things that you can't talk about?

No, I perform in front of audiences. You need to know your audience. If I'm at a corporate gig I'm not gonna talk about how much I hate Trump. It's about getting to the point where you're comfortable in who you are and you're fearless, and that takes a long, long time. You know, it

really kinda takes about 20 years to know what the fuck you're doing.

You know I work for so many different kinds of audiences and I don't say this is a gay audience ... you know, when I'm in Provincetown I know who I'm working for, you know what I mean. But it's about funny. People come to see me they're all different ages, genders, colors. You know, it's a sense of humor. It's a sense. You either like salty food or you don't like salty food.

It pains me to hear this shit. It's like you guys are so lucky, there are so many outlets to perform. You can make videos, there's just so much you can do. You know, if we had an audition for a TV show you went on at the club at the time you were allotted and it didn't matter if somebody puked in the front row, if the guy before you was talking about rape, whatever. That was your shot. Go do the work and stop complaining.

What do you see for the future of lesbians and queer women in comedy? Where do you see it evolving?

I think it's about being true to who you are and I think it's getting to a point where queer women, I like to say lesbians because I'm old-fashioned, will say, "I'm a comic who happens to be a lesbian" or "I'm a standup who happens to be a lesbian." That's how we have to look at it. Look at the world at large and say, "Wow, there's a governor who happens to be a lesbian" or "There's a CEO who happens to be a lesbian." We are as capable, as funny, as creative as everyone else out. But we have a different look at the world a different view of living in this world and that's what they need to hear about.

Humor is a unifier. I remember years ago when I first talked about my little kids when I was in Texas doing a gig at one of the Improvs and I talked about my kids not understanding why we can't get married. Some guy came up to me after the show and was like, "Listen, I was in the military and I didn't understand and now I get it."

It's through laughter and it's through knowing that we have the same issues as you guys have. Our families are just as ordinary as yours.

Have your point of view and live your life knowing this is who I am, no one's going to stop me. We are in the most misogynistic period and we will prevail, we will win, but it's about getting out there and being true to who you are and stop making excuses about the fucking audience. Write better jokes.

Check out Judy's podcast "Kill Me Now" and her upcoming gigs over at JudyGold.com. You can for sure see her at Women's Week in Provincetown from October 10th through 13th. Go and support, Curvettes!

About the author:

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