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[Interview](#) Mon Apr 18 2011

## [8 Questions With Kelsie Huff](#)

By Nellie Huggins

Kelsie Huff may be the hardest working woman in Chicago comedy. Whether she is producing *the kates*, a rotating cast of all-female comedians, developing comedy-focused outreach programs and workshops for children, or preparing for the opening of her new one-woman show, *Bruiser*, Huff manages to keep it all

together with a smile on her face and the energy of a hummingbird.

### **What was the inspiration for Bruiser?**

My first solo show HUFFS was very personal and a bit dark. I wanted to create a lighter piece with the material I was gathering doing stand-up. BRUISER: Tales from a Traumatized Tomboy is my attempt to merge my background in solo performance with my stand-up experience. I also enjoy watching comedy with big pains and huge humiliations, so that inspires everything I write. Plus I wanted to give out candy and sing in public, which doesn't go over well in my apartment so I had to rent a theater...and charge people \$12. So clearly my inspiration is the fat cash!

### **Who/what inspires you?**

All the ladies of [the kates](#). The kates is an all female showcase I produce at The Book Cellar in Lincoln Square and those ladies are awesome. They always amaze me and "force" me to write new material all the time, I have to keep up with them!

### **Was there a moment when you knew you were a performer?**

I think it was in kindergarten, dance class. To be honest I don't know if it was the performance or the costume that hooked me. Man, I rocked the crap out of that gold unitard and side pony tail. Working 9 to 5 by Dolly Parton, that was the jam! Then in second grade I watched Eddie Murphy's *Delirious* over and over and over again. I remember trying to recreate his set during recess and another girl on the playground told me I talked like a slut because I was swearing up a storm. I thought slut meant hilarious until like fourth grade.

### **If you could be on stage with one person, dead or alive, who would it be?**

My mom. Only because it would be easier to control her on stage. When she's in the audience she just heckles...oh Mom.

### **You do a lot of outreach with the kates. Why is this important for you?**

I grew up in a small town and didn't have a ton of opportunities to find my voice. When I finally was offered a solo performance class in college (Columbia College Chicago) my world just opened up, not just artistically. I found a way to express experiences in a way I just couldn't have on my own. I think teaching kids how to write their own stories is the best gift anyone can give.

### **Do you have a favorite show/act/performer in the city right now?**

Oh man! So many. I have a few great comedians opening for BRUISER, I love watching these ladies: Carrie Bain, Amy Sumpter, Kristin Clifford, Ever Mainard, Jamie Jirak. Also can't get enough of Jamie Campbell, Ken Bernard, Alexandra Tsarpalas, Beth Stelling, Aaron Weaver, and all the ladies of the kates!

### **Where else can we see you perform?**

I will be performing with [Beast Women Cabaret](#) at [Greenhouse Theatre Center](#) closing night on May 21st. Every month with the kates at [The Book Cellar](#) and Saturdays until June I'll be at the [Stardust Showcase](#) at Underground Lounge. I will also be making my way back to Boulder this August for the Fringe Festival.

Super excited about that! Feel free to check out [www.kelsiehuff.com](http://www.kelsiehuff.com) for all future stuff.

### What's next - creatively?

I think I'll open my own high end designer cupcake boutique. I hear there's a real need for those in Chicago, right...right?!

*Bruiser opens Thursday, April 21 and runs through May 26 at Gorilla Tango Theater. Tickets may be purchased [here](#).*

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By Megan Marz

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[Tuesdays on the Terrace: Al Carter Bey and Josh Berman @ MCA](#)

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[Bike-In Movie @ Whole Foods Lincoln Park](#)

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[Peter Bjorn and John @ Empty Bottle](#)

Thu Aug 25 2011

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[The Saps @ Empty Bottle](#)

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[Julia V. Hendrickson Reading @ Andrew Rafacz Gallery](#)

Fri Aug 26 2011

[The Silent Film Society of Chicago presents \*The Mysterious Lady\* @ Portage Theater](#)

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[Farmageddon Documentary @ Siskel Film Center](#)

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[You, Me, Them, Everybody @ The Hungry Brain](#)

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