



“Heather Gold breathes new life into the solo show format.”

**Chad Jones,
Oakland Tribune, Best of the Bay**

Over 19,000 cookies served...

It's not your mother's kitchen anymore.

No topic is out-of-bounds for San Francisco-based solo performer Heather Gold, who whips up a fury of ideas along with a batch of cookies in her innovative, debut solo show.

In *Cookie*, Heather searches for her whole self as “she sifts through the complexities of sexuality and identity with baking's simple truths.” (Robert Avila SFBG) She makes chocolate chip cookies with the audience through her own hilarious and moving exploration of the recipe: heterosexuality (DRY), lesbianism (WET), the Left (MIX) and other tasty 1980s tunes and secret ingredients.

Cookie is “open source” directed by Heather, written in front of its audiences and played to sold-out rooms and critical raves, running over a year in San Francisco to audience and critical raves.

And yes, everyone gets cookies.

“I was a tiny, redheaded, Jewish intellectual geek in your average working-class Mafioso-run tourist trap,” Heather notes while the cookies bake in the on-stage oven. But the show is as much about the limitations of these adjectives as it is about their truths. *Cookie* moves beyond identity politics through the kitchen. As the smell of fresh-baked cookies fills the air, the superficial melts away, and Heather brings the audience together through food, humor, shared experience and Air Supply slow dancing.

While *Cookie* follows a recipe, it involves the audience in the heart of the mix, letting Heather's gift for extemporaneous comedy and insight fly. The show is different every night. “Canned comedy has been driving people out of comedy clubs,” says Gold, “I'm trying to do for comedy what Alice Waters and the Bay Area did for food: make it local, relevant and organic. I'd rather share something substantial than hand out punchlines like twinkies.”

Cookie is anything but predictable. It's a new kind of theatre that draws heavily on spoken word, alternative stand-up comedy and Internet structures: finding some of its substance each night from audience contributors and special guests as varied as leading pastry chef Elizabeth Falkner (Citizen Cake) and punk rock legend Lynnee Breedlove (Tribe 8). It's a show as eclectic as Heather herself, never nailed down as one particular ingredient, but drawing from many to make a provocative and tasty whole. *Cookie* brings the social tradition of after-theater dessert into the theater, and finds connection with others isn't some sugary afterthought—it's the meat of the show. *Cookie* premiered at top restaurant Chez Spencer in 2003, where Heather baked the cookies over cherry wood in the giant built-in brick oven. It then moved to the larger Joie De Vivre venues in San Francisco's theatre district and played the Hotel Adagio and Rex, bringing in huge crowds and running over a year to critical and audience acclaim. *Cookie* was honored by *Curve Magazine* with its 2004 Lesbian Theatre Award.



Heather Gold

Driven to comedy by law school, Heather Gold continues to mix mind with matter, never doing the same set or show twice.

Heather's unique style is a reflection of her unorthodox artistic path, reflecting her studies at Yale, Northwestern Law, Groundlings, improv legend Cynthia Szigeti and years in the geek and entrepreneurial culture of Silicon Valley.

Her unique performance style is equal parts quick wit, big heart and audience conversation.

Heather spent years on the business side of the entertainment world in her quest to get alternative voices into the larger culture. She followed and help further the promising path of digital convergence (as part of New Line Cinema, CD-ROM pioneer Knowledge Adventure and Apple Computer's first music group which pioneered webcasting) which she felt would eventually democratize distribution of art and media. She sat on the Advisory Board of SxSW Interactive for years and has been a Webby humour judge and member of the International Academy of Arts and Digital Sciences since 2000.

Heather continued to perform and produce comedy, co-creating Tangent, San Francisco's first alternative comedy room and soon realized that hers was one of the voices she was missing. She shifted her major focus from the business world to pursue genuine experience on the stage and the page where she created her popular piece *Microsoft = Christians / Apple = Jews*, which aired on Canada's Life TV. Heather studied with Ron Campbell (Actor's Gang) and Charlie Varon (Rush Limbaugh in *Night School*) who encouraged her to develop her interactive performance style. She created "Green Card" under his tutelage at The Marsh in San Francisco about hurting the ones you love, created a live "listserv" discussion in theatre. The audience shared their amazing stories, and Heather was hooked by the experience of "open sourcing" the performance, leaving some of each piece to come from the audience.

The limitations of traditional stand-up venues led Heather's to theatres and museums where she began to create comic pieces that fuse raw self-revelation, social observation and communal activity. Her work includes: *Gynomite: Fearless Feminist Porn* (BUILD 2001, Spanganga 2002) the *Internet Roast* (SxSW 2000, 2001) and "Becoming American" (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts curated by Loris Bradley 2003), "Powerpoint for Peace" (Berkeley Arts Museum 2005 Brava Theatre 2004, directed by Amy Mueller, co-created with Amy Tobin), and "Marriage Law" (Ladyfest 2004) and *The Heather Gold Show: a Shabbat Salon*, workshopped at The Hub, Eugene and Elinor Friend Center of the Arts (JCCSF).

Heather brings her intelligent and extemporaneous style to venues and conferences across the continent, like San Francisco's QComedy and Just for Laughs Showcase 2004, Toronto's alt.comedy, hosting Austin's Gay Pride, and at New York's B3, The Duplex and Gotham Comedy Club. She's written with Jennifer Coolidge and for Alan Cumming and contributes to many shows and publications, including the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, shift magazine, TechTV's Silicon Spin, the *San Jose Mercury News* and her own popular subvert.com.

In 2002 Heather was awarded a residency at the Jon Sims Center for the Arts where she developed her first full-length show: "I Look Like An Egg, But I Identify As A Cookie." *Cookie* was also workshopped at The Vortex Rep in Austin. In *Cookie*, Heather bakes chocolate chip cookies with the audience while searching through sexuality and identity for her whole self. It is "open source" directed by Heather, written in front of its audiences and played to sold-out rooms and critical raves, running over a year in San Francisco. Heather was invited to discuss her comic innovations at the 2004 Playwright's Horizon Conference. *Curve Magazine* honored *Cookie* with its 2004 Lesbian Theatre Award. *Tribune's* Chad Jones credits her with "breathing new life into the solo show format" and selected *Cookie* as Best of the Bay.

“I look like an **EGG**, but I identify as a **COOKIE**”

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Me Want Cookie

National Lesbian Theatre Award



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“smart, funny and filled with crunch bits of thought-provocation!”

"The real surprise of the show is not only the eclectic crowd of tourists, businesspeople, foodies and theater hounds but the effortless way Gold is able to connect with all of them
- Beth Lisick – SFGate.com



"Gold wielding her remarkable improvisation skills, creates an atmosphere of cozy intimacy and inspires a room full of natural comedians...."
Gold's ability to connect with her audience isn't just about the smell of fresh-baked cookies. On a more profound level, her stories... resonate deeply with all of us.
– Chloe Veltman, SF Weekly



"Gold has mastered that oh-so-rare breed of comedy—witticisms that actually make you think."
– Amber Adrian, Theatre Bay Area Magazine