



TOP blog STORIES

- We'd Like to Help Films That Should Get Oscar Noms But Won't**
By Michael Nordine
- L.A. History: Huell Howser, Remembered**
By James Adomian
- First Person: I Lost the California Dream. And Then I Found It**
By Joseph Lapin
- Drink: Why Do People in L.A. Drive Drunk So Much?**
By Amanda Lewis

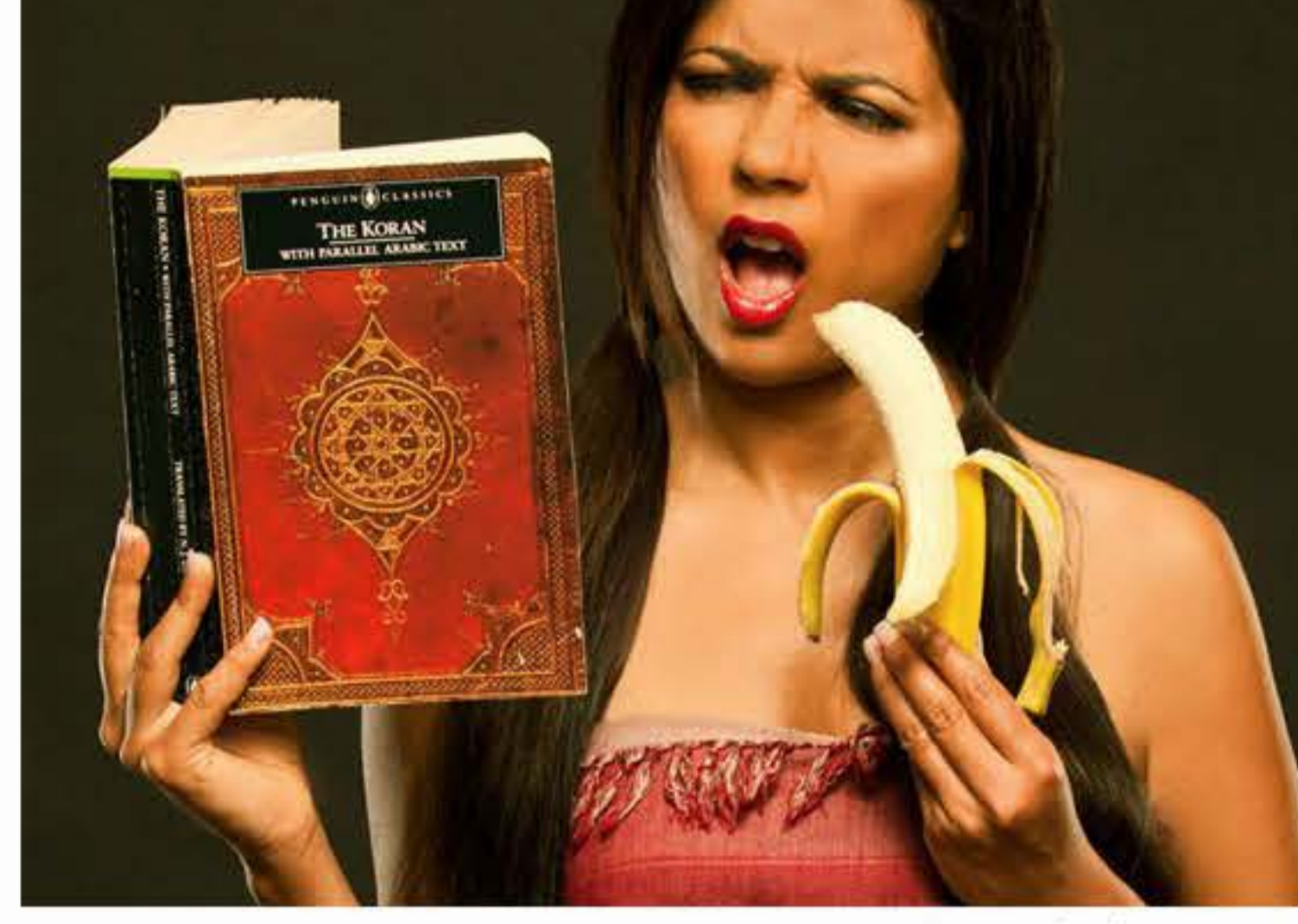
Stand-up Comedy

Mona Shaikh Is a Naughty Muslim Comedian

By Paul T. Bradley Mon., Aug. 6 2012 at 10:50 AM 2 Comments

Categories: [Comedy](#), [Culture](#), [Religion](#), [Stand-up Comedy](#)

129 18



Courtesy of Muslims Do It Better

Mona Shaikh: sexy extremist

Mona Shaikh is not impressed with the supposed merits of Islamic martyrdom. "Seventy-two virgins? As a reward? Have you ever been with *one* virgin? [winces] That shit sucks. Can you imagine having to teach 72 of them how to do everything? Guys -- wouldn't you rather have 72 hos?" she asks.

Shaikh is one of a half-dozen or so comedians who performed two Friday nights ago as part of the Levantine Cultural Center's *Sultans of Satire* comedy show. In its seventh year of semi-regular performances, the show includes a slate of Arab, Persian, South Asian and Turkish comedians. Shaikh, unlike her stagemates that night, was on track to piss some people off -- even a crowd of mostly non-white Muslims in the middle of Ramadan.

Where most Middle Eastern comedians trade in weak cultural taboos like toilets and body hair (apparently it's one giant human hairball from Rabat to Rajasthan), Shaikh is willing to put some sacred cows on the chopping block. "I really wanted to open the set with a beer and say, 'Ramadan Mubarak!' but I thought that lady in the front would have a heart attack. I don't want her blood on my hands," she says, referring to a veiled elderly Muslim woman in front.

OK, so she's going to hold back a bit sometimes. "I'm probably not going to make jokes about the Prophet's sex life ... at least not yet," she told us in a follow-up interview. But everything else is on the table.

"There's this perception that we're all angry and serious. Muslims are *funny!*" she says in a hammed-up tone. Her act and her nascent media empire answer to this. Her online platform *Muslims Do It Better* is a first of its kind -- a website dedicated to Islamic-oriented humor, run by women, no less. Using such an outlet, she's turning those sacred cows into some delicious comedic kebabs and keeping some pretty uptight political and religious leaders in serious check.

Shaikh insists that she's not playing politics, however. She's quick to point out, "It's art. Not politics. I'm making artist statements, not political or religious ones. Entirely artistic." That may be, but her art is inescapably taking both to task.



Pornsama: a photo from Shaikh's website Muslims Do It Better

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Shaikh came to the United States at 15. Now 32, she recalls, "We first came to Jersey City and I couldn't believe that it was the U.S. It looked exactly like Pakistan. Then I barfed." As the youngest of five kids, and the only girl, she evolved some pretty thick skin. That skin was further thickened through some rough high school years. "Everyone thought I was Puerto Rican, so I got in trouble every time I opened my mouth," she says. After dropping out of community college (a "college for winners" she jokes was "just too overachieving" for her), she began working as a model and theater actress in New York.

Now an Angeleno, she's about three years into a stand-up career, and she really wants to focus more on *Muslims Do It Better*, realizing that she can have a global audience and more creative scope. She and her unnamed partner post blush-worthy photos and keep tabs on the most extreme fundamentalists in the Islamic world. They focus on exactly the type of overprotective sentiments that seek to keep women's bodies covered and suppress any discussion of normal female sexuality. Fusing that with a tongue-in-cheek take on the awful Western perceptions of Muslims-as-terrorists, she's created a singular niche -- and a hilarious one at that.

Up next: The risks she's taking

1 | 2 | [Next Page >>](#)

GET THE ARTS NEWSLETTER

Get the latest news and offers from the LA art scene sent directly to your email address. Exclusive events and art related sales you won't hear about anywhere else!

Tags: [comedy](#), [fatwa](#), [islam](#), [muslims do it better](#), [ramadan](#)

We Recommend

- 5 Best Comedy Shows in L.A. This Week, Including Making Fun of Crappy Gifts (Public Spectacle)
- Huell Howser, Remembered (Public Spectacle)
- The Average Salary of a Catholic Priest (eHow)
- 10 Movies We're Excited to See in 2013 (Public Spectacle)

2 comments VOICE

Sign in or Create Account 1 person listening

Sort: Newest | Oldest

- NeonMosfet** Sep 10, 2012
Just don't get battered.
Angela Garcia as NeonMosfet Like Reply
- maxgoldbergonline** Aug 8, 2012
stand up comedy. quite a thing. Like Reply

Powered by Livefyre

Now Trending

- Would You Buy Art Created by a Serial Killer?
- Real Housewives of Beverly Hills Pecking Order, Episode 308: Brandi Glanville Towers Above Other Housewives, and Scheana Marie
- Huell Howser, Remembered

50% off two tickets to Travel & Adventure Show

VOICE DAILY DEALS **TRAVEL & ADVENTURE SHOW**

View Deal

IMAGINE CREATE CONNECT

Art and Design Programs for All Ages
Spring Semester Begins February 2, 2013

OTIS Otis College of Art and Design
Continuing Education
and Pre-College Programs

From the Vault

PUBLIC SPECTACLE
Top 10 Artworks Inspired by Cult Movies, Including Fight...

Public Spectacle - L.A. Weekly Arts & Culture

2,989 people like Public Spectacle - L.A. Weekly Arts & Culture.

Slideshows

- Lina in L.A. - Rockin' Eve
- Sunday Funday Bike Ride in The Valley
- Mr. Leather Contest 2013 @ Eagle LA

[More Slideshows >>](#)

One-Motion 3rd-Row Magic Seat®



THE 2013 ODYSSEY

Services ADIndex

- Donor Services Group - Now Hiring!
[View Ad](#) | [View Site](#)
- UCLA Extension
[View Ad](#) | [View Site](#)
- Concorde Career College
[View Ad](#) | [View Site](#)
- UCLA Extension
[View Ad](#) | [View Site](#)

[More >>](#)

SHARE THE WEALTH
LAWEEKLY COUPONS t f

Twitter Feed

Follow laweeklyarts on Twitter

- LAWeeklyArts 10 standard types of reactions from award show nominees ow.ly/gHW14 #Oscars
36 minutes ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- LAWeeklyArts @thankyou4coming No problem!
55 minutes ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- LAWeeklyArts Films that should be nominated for #Oscars but won't be: our complete list: ow.ly/gHbYX
6 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- LAWeeklyArts "Hot Tub with Kurt & Kristen" moves to L.A. after becoming a hit stand-up show in NYC ow.ly/gGdJ0 @kristenschaaled @kurbraunohler
21 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- JaiDaveon LA really has incredible gyms | Top 10 Gyms in Los Angeles blogs.laweekly.com/arts/2012/05/b... via @laweeklyarts
yesterday · reply · retweet · favorite

[More Twitter >>](#)

TOP blog STORIES

- We'd Like to Help Films That Should Get Oscar Noms But Won't**
By Michael Nordine
- L.A. History: Huell Howser, Remembered**
By James Adomian
- First Person: I Lost the California Dream. And Then I Found It**
By Joseph Lapin
- Drink: Why Do People in L.A. Drive Drunk So Much?**
By Amanda Lewis

Stand-up Comedy

Mona Shaikh Is a Naughty Muslim Comedian

By Paul T. Bradley Mon., Aug. 6 2012 at 10:50 AM
Categories: Comedy, Culture, Religion, Stand-up Comedy

Like 129 Send Tweet 18 +1 0

Continued from page 1



Mona unveiled
Courtesy of Muslims Do It Better

With that global reach, there is definitely a risk that she might stoke the ire of the same fundamentalists who seek to kill artists for merely drawing a picture of Mohammed. To that end, she promises, "Oh, if someone issues a *fatwa* against me, I'm going to issue a *fatwa* against that *fatwa*. I can *fatwa* right back." Even *South Park* and the phalanx of powerful TV executives who manage it don't have such balls. "In Pakistan, I would probably last ... hmmm ... about a week," she concedes. "I'm a naughty Muslim."

All joking aside, her keen cultural observations do betray political sentiments. "Look, Islam is going through its Dark Ages right now. Christianity already had them and we're going through ours. Human beings are flawed and we created these religions, so they're flawed, too."

She continues, "Just like outsiders get to poke fun at Islam, I'm saying that we get to poke fun at ourselves while we're going through this now. We get to do and say things that are not so kosher ... or halal, rather [laughs]."

Dark Ages or no, Shaikh definitely has the support of her family. "Well my brothers are 50-50 -- two are amused and two are confused," she says, "but my mom is my biggest supporter. She's posted things on Facebook promoting 'Muslims Do It B-A-T-T-E-R' ... She's trying."

Shaikh almost makes it seem too easy to be so contrarian. She's a Muslim woman in an American culture whose worst parts are still at war with hers, and a gadfly comedian who trades barbs with the most dangerous agents of both sides. We can't wait to see what she's got up her burqa next -- that is, if she's wearing anything at all.

Follow me on Twitter at @paultbradley, and for more arts news follow us at @LAWeeklyArts and like us on Facebook.

<< Previous Page | 1 | 2

GET THE ARTS NEWSLETTER

Get the latest news and offers from the LA art scene sent directly to your email address. Exclusive events and art related sales you won't hear about anywhere else!

enter email

Tags: comedy, fatwa, islam, muslims do it better, ramadan

Email to Friend Write to Editor Print Article submit

We Recommend

- 10 true tales of celebrity frugality (Bankrate)**
- 12 L.A. Comedy Acts to Watch in 2013 (Public Spectacle)**
- Real Housewives of Beverly Hills Pecking Order, Episode 307: Faye Resnick Comes Out of Nowhere (Public Spectacle)**
- Why Does Everyone in L.A. Drive Drunk All the Time? (Public Spectacle)**

2 comments

Sign in or Create Account 1 person listening

Comment box with @ symbol, + Follow, and Post comment as...

Sort: Newest | Oldest

- NeonMosfet** Sep 10, 2012
Just don't get battered.
Angela Garcia as NeonMosfet
- maxgoldbergonline** Aug 6, 2012
stand up comedy, quite a thing.

Powered by Livefyre

Now Trending

- Real Housewives of Beverly Hills Pecking Order, Episode 308: Brandi Glanville Towers Above Other Housewives, and Scheana Marie**
- Sellebrity: Photographer Kevin Mazur Discusses His New Film About Gossip, Paparazzi and the Cost of Fame**
- #FindTesla Hashtag Mobilizes Hundreds in Silver Lake to Search for a Lost Dog**

50% off two tickets to Travel & Adventure Show
VOICE DAILY DEALS VoiceDailyDeals.com TRAVEL & ADVENTURE SHOW Save 50%

IMAGINE CREATE CONNECT
Art and Design Programs for All Ages Spring Semester Begins February 2, 2013
OTIS Otis College of Art and Design Continuing Education and Pre-College Programs

From the Vault
10 Groundbreaking Celebrity and Music Photographers

Public Spectacle - L.A. Weekly Arts & Culture
2,989 people like Public Spectacle - L.A. Weekly Arts & Culture.

Slideshows

- Lina in L.A. - Rockin' Eve
- Sunday Funday Bike Ride in The Valley
- Mr. Leather Contest 2013 @ Eagle LA

Services

- UCLA Extension View Ad | View Site
- UCLA Extension View Ad | View Site
- The Groundlings View Ad | View Site
- UCLA Extension View Ad | View Site

SHARE THE WEALTH LA WEEKLY COUPONS

Twitter Feed

Follow laweeklyarts on Twitter

- LAWeeklyArts 10 standard types of reactions from award show nominees ow.ly/gHW14 #Oscars 38 minutes ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- LAWeeklyArts @thankyou4coming No problem! 57 minutes ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- LAWeeklyArts Films that should be nominated for #Oscars but won't be: our complete list: ow.ly/gHbYX 8 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- LAWeeklyArts "Hot Tub with Kurt & Kristen" moves to L.A. after becoming a hit stand-up show in NYC ow.ly/gGdJ0 @kristenschaaled @kurtbraunohler 21 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite
- JaiDaveon LA really has incredible gyms | Top 10 Gyms in Los Angeles blogs.laweekly.com/arts/2012/05/b... via @laweeklyarts yesterday · reply · retweet · favorite

Accept credit cards anywhere. Get a free reader