

# PHRANC

## THE BUTCH CLOSET



## PRESS RELEASE

Phranc: The Butch Closet is a multi-disciplinary installation that spans over 40 years of her life as a queer artist, Jewish Lesbian Folksinger and Cardboard Cobbler. Building on her performance Phranc Talk, which explores the development of Phranc's butch persona, this exhibition contextualizes the artist's experience as a trailblazing performer and maker, constructing and reconstructing her image against a larger historical context of second wave feminism and queer activism – all the way from lesbian separatism through the ongoing evolution of gender identity.

By meticulously re-creating such personal objects as Phranc's Baby Quilt and Lamb Chop Halloween Costume out of paper, cardboard, thread, and found materials, Phranc explores complex and layered aspects of memory, personal history and nostalgia. These handcrafted objects illustrate the narrative arc of her life set against the artistic, musical and revolutionary scenes in LA (feminist art, punk rock, surfing, and queer communities) that she was an integral part of and witness to, from the 1960s to the present. The Butch Closet brings together Phranc's art, music and personal archive at a pivotal moment in queer history when we are claiming our past and by doing so securing our future.

Born in Santa Monica, Phranc came out when she was a teenager and quickly became a lesbian feminist activist studying at the Feminist Studio Workshop at The Woman's Building in the mid 1970s. In the late 70s she was a leading voice of the LA Punk Rock scene with bands such as Nervous Gender, Catholic Discipline and Castration Squad. As a reaction to punk violence and use of the swastika, she wrote a song called "Take off Your Swastika" and began identifying on stage as The All-American Jewish Lesbian Folksinger and released her first solo album Folksinger 1985. Her visual arts practice of making sculpture from painted paper and found cardboard has been part of her creative process from back in the punk days. Her commitment to building community has led to projects that focus on queer survival such as in the exhibition, Swagger (2018) that included a series of orange painted paper life jackets, and an installation of a gay trading post for the Autry Museum during their "Out West" series highlighting LGBTQ history within the museum's collection. "Lifetime Guarantee: Phranc's Adventure in Plastic" a 2001 film that follows her career as a Tupperware Lady is currently screening on the Criterion Channel.

This survey of Phranc's career, "The Butch Closet," includes a number of new painted paper sculptures that reference the clothing and significant objects that track her evolution from a young girl to an old butch, such as colorful, little girl dresses and black leather combat boots. The exhibition also includes an archive room highlighting posters, record albums and other ephemera from her music career and an installation that re-creates her studio, documenting the many facets of her artistic process.

Phranc: The Butch Closet premiered at the Craig Krull Gallery (October 28th, 2023 - December 3rd, 2023) as part of the LA citywide, Circa: Queer Histories Festival organized by the One Institute.

In September 2024, The Butch Closet will open at the University of Michigan Institute for the Humanities gallery and the artist will perform the multi-media exploration of her butch persona: Phranc Talk, as part of the Penny Stamps speaker series at the M Stamps School of Art and Design.

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## BUTCH CLOSET PRESS:

The logo for 'curve' is written in a bold, lowercase, rounded sans-serif font in a bright blue color.

I Enjoy Being a Butch

The logo for 'SPIN' features the word in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font in blue, enclosed within a pink rectangular border.

Phranc's Butch Closet

The logo for 'LA WEEKLY' is in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. The 'LA' is in blue and the 'WEEKLY' is in pink.

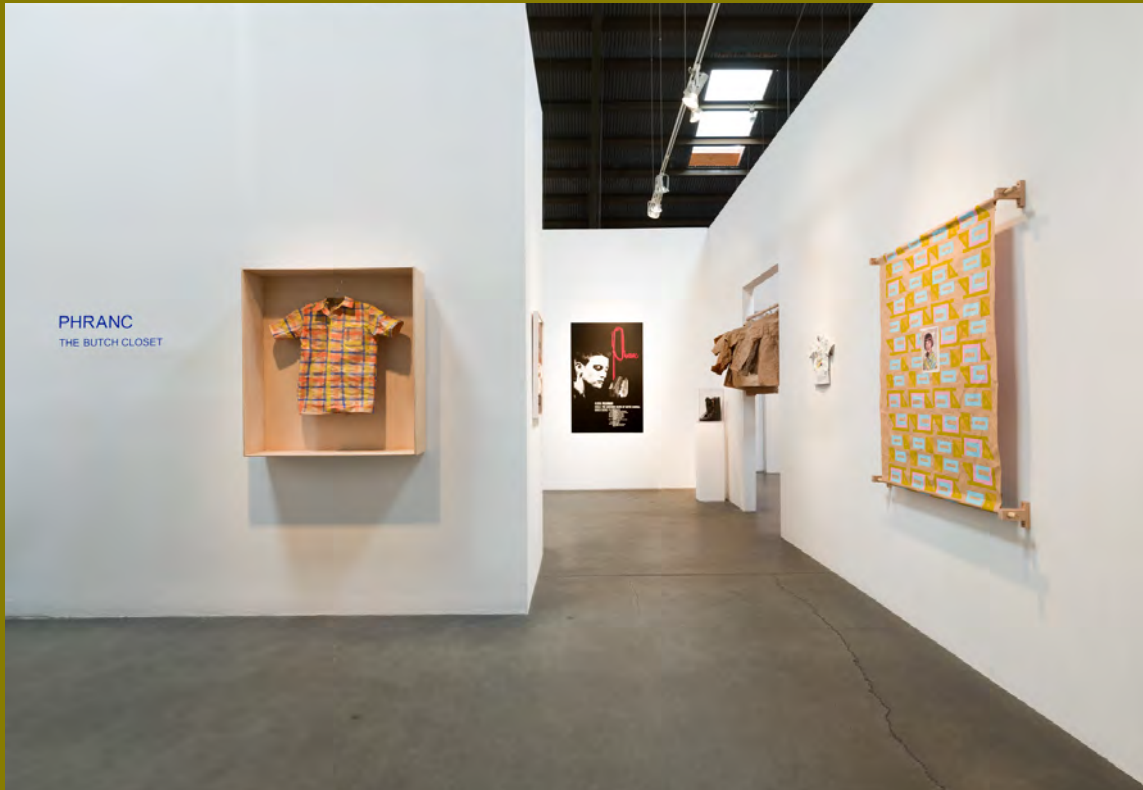
Phranc's Queer Cardboard Fashion Sense

The logo for 'artillery' is in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font in blue.

GALLERY ROUNDS: Phranc

The logo for 'Los Angeles Times' is in a classic, blue, serif font.

Phranc opens 'The Butch Closet' in Santa Monica



## ONLINE MEDIA

**Website:** [www.Phranc.LA](http://www.Phranc.LA) **Instagram:** [@phranc.la](https://www.instagram.com/phranc.la)

**BandCamp:** <https://phranc.bandcamp.com>

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**"I'm proud to be butch today, I love it.  
You can call me butch." - Phranc *LA Times***



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