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THE ARTS

Butch paper clothing, an LGBT homeless shelter, deconstructed closets and much more.

By [Rafael Risemberg](#)
Friday, December 28, 2007

With one noted exception, all of the artists whose exhibits are described below are gay or lesbian.

Phranc

Self-proclaimed "All American Jewish Lesbian Folksinger" Phranc doubles as a visual artist in this clever exhibit that was curated by actress Ann Magnuson. The gallery appears to be a clothing store, except that the merchandise is made mostly of craft paper, constructed using her grandmother's Singer sewing machine. The artist subverts the functionality of dress, leaving behind only the clothing's aesthetics, and in so doing provokes contemplation of gender identity. Particularly amusing and revealing are her black "leather" jacket, Scottish kilt, butch briefs and boxers, and her trademark "Bulldagger" tampons. Apparently you are what you wear. *Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., until Jan. 26, Cue Art Foundation: 511 W. 25th St., cueartfoundation.org, 212-206-3583.*

Lucky Michaels

A counselor for four years at Sylvia's Place, a local homeless shelter for LGBT youth, Lucky Michaels is exhibiting 30 photographs from his newly released book, "Shelter." As fortunate as these teens are to have a place to stay (most of them having been kicked out by their intolerant families), the photos show shelter life to be no picnic. Twenty-five of them sleep on rustic cots or on the floor in one cluttered room, which they need to vacate every morning to make way for food pantry set-up. And the one toilet we see offers little privacy. Still, the kids seem to be in decent spirits, such as a shirtless fellow who tellingly sports an arm tattoo that reads SHADY, and a yellow plastic CAUTION tape around his torso, like a sash at a beauty pageant. *"Shelter," Tues.-Thur. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Fri. 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat. noon-8 p.m., until Jan. 26, Exit Art: 475 10th Ave. near W. 36th St., exitart.org, 212-966-7745.*

Tom Burr

Artist Tom Burr breathes new life into the overused metaphor of the closet by installing a new version of his 1993 "The Storage Project," originally housed in an empty apartment building in France. In the current show, the gallery is strewn with a number of free-standing and deconstructed closets, and piles of planks that evoke demolished closets, into and onto which Burr has placed his own shirts, jackets, socks and other personal wearables. The sculptures work because we gain an expanded sense of what closet can mean—not just a cramped space for storage and hiding, but a momentary sanctuary for personal reflection, and even a meditation on sensuality. It's about striking a healthy balance between the private and the public. *"The Storage Project," Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m., until Jan. 19, Swiss Institute: 495 Broadway near Broome St., swissinstitute.net, 212-925-2035.*

Ann Carlson & Mary Ellen Strom



'Untitled, 2007,' by Lucky Michaels. His exhibit, 'Shelter,' at Exit Art includes 30 photographs taken at Sylvia's Place, a local homeless shelter for LGBT youths.



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Life partners Ann Carlson and Mary Ellen Strom examine the polar extremes of labor in their latest video work. In one piece—"Sloss, Kerr, Rosenberg & Moore"—four real-life New York City lawyers perform stylized, choreographed movements in their office building, inspired by events from their law practice, to hilarious effect. In the artists' other video, titled "Four Parallel Lines," somber Latino day laborers drag wooden planks along a stretch of Pacific beach, with the lines they make in the sand obliterated by the oncoming waves. The fascinating parallels between these two groups—men performing arbitrary tasks, costumed and situated in their respective places of work—serve to diminish the men's obvious class and cultural differences. These two works have such synergy, they seem to be two parts of one piece. *Tues. – Sat., 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., until Feb. 2, Alexander Gray Associates: 526 W. 26th St. (10th floor), alexandergray.com, 212-399-2636.*

Pablo von Lichtenberg

Links between globalization, consumerism, sex and religion are explored by artist (and DUMBO gallery owner) Pablo von Lichtenberg in collages that have been transferred onto hard acrylic sheets. In one work, photocopies of dollar bills have been painted and arranged to form American flags, next to which lie images from fashion magazines, including models wearing gas masks, meant to convey the poisons of globalization. In another piece, three copies of a male centerfold (a holy trinity) are juxtaposed with scenes of crucifixion, as well as male nudes on ancient Greek vases. Due to the artist's transfer process, the images seem as distressed and faded as the mess of a world we currently live in. *"Out of the Dark," Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 1–6 p.m., Thur. 3–8 p.m., until Jan. 31, Gallery Twenty-Four: 111 Front St. (2nd Fl.) near Washington St. in DUMBO Brooklyn, oder24.com, 718-801-8040.*

Christiaan Diedericks & Dianne Heesom-Green

Also showing in DUMBO, gay artist Christiaan Diedericks has teamed up with straight artist Dianne Heesom-Green—both from South Africa—to create small, mostly ceramic sculptures of transgressing angels and otherwise unearthly creatures. Heesom-Green forms the shapes, then Diedericks (better known for his woodcut prints) applies fine strokes of paint. Some of the most striking pieces include a series of dual-gendered figures, a spotted angel hanging upside down from a rope around his ankles, and an explicitly homoerotic encounter between an angel and Trojan hero Ganymede. Though spiritual in their way, these works would presumably give religious purists a fit. *"Feet of Clay/ Wings of Light," Sun. – Thur., 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., until Jan. 30, 5 + 5 Gallery: 111 Front St. (2nd Fl.) near Washington St. in DUMBO Brooklyn, fodde.com, 718-488-8383.*

Rafael Risemberg, Ph.D., leads gay & lesbian art gallery tours through New York Gallery Tours: nygallerytours.com, 212-946-1548. The next LGBT gallery tours start 1 p.m. on Sat., Jan. 19 and Sat., Feb. 16, at 526 W. 26th St.

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