

# The New York Times

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**Ron Linden**

**Phranc**

*Cue Art Foundation  
511 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Chelsea  
Through Jan. 26*

CUE's formula of mounting two shows simultaneously can have exponential consequences. The two become almost like four when organized by artists whose choices function as extended riffs on their own practices.

This is particularly true with Ron Linden, a painter, gallery director and educator in the Los Angeles Harbor area, whose work was selected by the critic and painter Peter Plagens. Both artists share what Mr. Linden calls a "stingy palette" — in his case moldy yellows and ochres and grays — and create work that harks back to the 1940s and 1950s, with a strong hangover of Surrealism and ancestors like Arshile Gorky. In Mr. Linden's work, this evinces itself in murky, weathered-looking surfaces that bloom with biomorphic shapes and occasional enigmatic objects.

In the front room is Phranc, a self-described "all-American Jewish lesbian Folk singer," whose work was chosen by the performer, singer and writer Ann Magnuson. Dress shirts, T-shirts, combat boots, a life preserver, motorcycle jacket, barbells, bandanna, picnic basket or sailor's cap skillfully made from paper or cardboard recall Claes Oldenburg's "Store" or Warhol's paper clothing. Phranc's treatment of Eisenhower-era objects is loaded with subversive significance, however, since many of them functioned as signifiers of gayness in a heavily closeted period. Because the artist-curator is generally the better known party in the equation at CUE, one of the rewards is seeing what he or she has chosen, like the revelations you get sniffing through someone's book, music or art collection. Neither Mr. Plagens nor Ms. Magnuson offer any big surprises. The artists they chose essentially underscore their own predilections: classic mid-century abstract painting for Mr. Plagens and kitsch postmodern Pop for Ms. Magnuson.

Martha Schwendener