



LISA KIRK

INVISIBLE-EXPORTS

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ORIGINAL PRESS RELEASE

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5 March 2008

REVOLUTION PIPE BOMB

LAUNCH

Thursday, March 13, 2008
7-10pm

PARTICIPANT INC
253 East Houston Street
New York NY 10002

Lisa Kirk and Jelena Behrend
Revolution Pipe Bomb
Limited edition fragrance, 2008
Edition of 3 (3AP), platinum
Edition of 5 (3AP), 14K gold
Edition of 20 (3AP), sterling silver



On Thursday, March 13, from 7-10pm, PARTICIPANT INC will launch *Revolution Pipe Bomb*, a collaborative limited edition by Lisa Kirk and Jelena Behrend, designed exclusively for PARTICIPANT INC. Fashioned in sterling silver, 14k gold, and platinum, *Revolution Pipe Bomb* is a hand-crafted precious metal decanter designed for this special edition of the fragrance, *Revolution*.

The *Revolution Pipe Bomb* launch event will comprise a scripted environment that unveils this special limited edition. Conceived as the end result of several years of research and related works by Kirk that address the marketing of transgressive practices, *Revolution Pipe Bomb* is a luxury fragrance, produced in collaboration with Symrise Perfumers. Through research gathered from interviews with anonymous journalists, activists, and political radicals, *Revolution* fragrance was developed based on the memory of the smell of revolution. The final solution contains the odor of smoke, gasoline, tear gas, burnt rubber, and decaying flesh.

For this special limited edition, Kirk joined with Jelena Behrend to imagine a precious metal pipe bomb to contain a vile of this faintly aggressive fragrance. Elevating a makeshift device to a valued commodity, this bold and meticulously sculpted object, removed from the register of everyday violence, is held in reserve for the smell of *Revolution*.

Samples and related packaging will be featured in a sculptural display unit reminiscent of Kirk's recent smoking *Revolution* perfume laboratory, installed

upside down at PS1 Contemporary Art Center this fall. Related “marketing items,” including a silk-screened bandana (to be worn as face mask) depicting an exploded view of the *Revolution Pipe Bomb* will be featured, as well as other photographic elements derived from the *Revolution* project.

Through the generosity of artists, PARTICIPANT INC co-produces limited edition artworks specifically intended to support the organization. A portion of the purchase of the editions is tax-deductible, and contributes directly to our program. Other PARTICIPANT editions include Lovett/Codagnone, Tony Oursler, and Shellburne Thurber.

Jelena Behrend was born in Belgrade, Serbia. She moved to the United States in 1988 and apprenticed for Hungarian master jeweler Gabor Nagy in Los Angeles, and in 1994, opened her own jewelry studio in LA. Her edgy, meticulously sculpted works of art have been featured in numerous magazines, movies, music videos, and have amassed an impressive list of celebrity enthusiasts including Lenny Kravitz, Madonna, Queen Nor, Jennifer Lopez, Emma Thompson, Pink, Iman, Hillary Clinton, Courtney Cox, and Drew Barrymore. In 1996, Behrend headed to New York, working in her private studio downtown for clients such as Barney’s New York, Barney’s Beverly Hills, and Barney’s Tokyo. Two years later, she opened Jelena Behrend Studio on the Lower East Side. Behrend has conceptualized and created collections for Donna Karan, Geraldine Laybourne and Oprah Winfrey, Neiman Marcus, and Kenneth Cole. Recent works have appeared on the covers of *Numéro*, *Rolling Stone*, and in the pages of the *New York Times Style* magazine, *Vogue*, and *Interview*.

Lisa Kirk received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts and her MFA from the University of California. Her solo exhibitions and projects have been held at PS1 Contemporary Art Center (a MoMA Affiliate); Galeria Comercial, Puerto Rico; Participant Inc, NY; and MOT International, London. She has also contributed to North Drive Press, NY; Creative Time, NY; and Charlie, NY. Her curated projects include *LEGION*, *Bonds of Love*, *The Outlaw Series*, and *You*. Reviews include *Artforum*, *L’uomo Vogue*, *Plan B*, *The Guardian*, *Time Out London/New York*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*, and *Art Review*.

Beverages generously provided by Christiania Vodka and Grolsch.



PARTICIPANT INC’s exhibitions are made possible with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the Lower East Side. Subway: F/V to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit.
www.participantinc.org

Lisa Kirk's Project: *Revolution!*
By Frederick Janka

In 1899, Norwegian-American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen published his Theory of The Leisure Class, a description and critique of the rise of the *nouveau riche*, the leisure class, the child of the Industrial Revolution. Veblen establishes a historical link to the past of nobility and clergy, suggesting an aspect of human nature to class division of work and idea of the image of wealth. Lisa Kirk, artist-curator-cultural-archeologist, indirectly unearths this concept from within our own culture of excess, greed, and war - our new leisure class - bringing attention to our symptoms of consumerism.¹ Kirk's artwork falls under the catch-phrase criticism of rampant consumerism, the result of complicating Veblen's *conspicuous consumption* with the idealism of revolt (think idealisms and failures of '68, the Zapatistas, the 2002 film *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*), the creation of art objects, and the critique of our market driven art world.²

Kirk presents us with pop-trash, the detritus of our culture, glamorized as overly desirable commodity. *Revolution!* is an extensive and ongoing investigation that uses an archaeological approach to the present to expose our nature as simply consumers of objects and ideas. Kirk has pulled the vocabulary of reference for her project *Revolution!* from war, popular entertainment, middle-class America and the sentiment of nostalgia for revolt. *Revolution!* is chuck-full of cultural symbols, whose meanings have been complicated by the artist to not only be about violence and the appeal of something different. These objects purposefully address our own desires for wealth and happiness. These are the true objects revealed to us as they are, not as we *see* them. Think about it, do we truly know what we see, or even what we want? The AK-47 is not a gun, it is a shiny perfume bottle; it is money, power, and social status.

"Humanity the most savage of all species" announces Kirk's shiny gold billboard. Shot up by a corrections officer with bullets designed for prisoner riot control, this piece could double as a subtitle to this exhibition as it suggests that the artist has an underlying motive. This is a deeply personal exhibition essentially about us, not necessarily intended for us - perhaps more for the entertainment of the artist - but we are all implicated with the seductive physical texture and inferred value of her objects. What we are seeing is a collection of fetish objects from a virtual revolution in which our desires have become our weapons and our weapons our desires. The *Urban Decay* brand makeup-on-linen paintings have been shot up as well, this time by the artist with a paint ball gun. They were then burned. These minimal pieces are a mix of the politics of body image and violence; a nod to Art History's Niki de Saint Phalle's shooting paintings, Yves Klien's fire paintings, and the destruction of the beautiful art object. Yet these pieces are somehow *still* beautiful. This is a cookie cutter revolution ready for consumption. This is an invitation appealing to the most revolutionary within us all with a shiny *bling-bling* smoking cash register and glittering cast AK 47's.³

1 I think that the term *nouveau riche* is dated in 80's excess and our current millennium and post 9/11 excess demands its own term.

2 *Conspicuous consumption* is defined as the lavish spending on goods and services, which are acquired mainly for the purpose of displaying wealth, with the goal of attaining or maintaining social status.

3 *Bling-bling* is the imaginary sound light makes bouncing off of a diamond. Referring to predominance for excess also to a lifestyle built around excess spending and ostentation associated with rap and hip-hop culture internationally.



Lisa Kirk

INVISIBLE-EXPORTS

Inspired by the theatricality of street and media activism, Lisa Kirk's projects—or, as she sometimes calls them, “social occasions”—are marked by a winning combination of wit, nerve, charm, and aggression. For “The Greatest Show on Earth,” her exhibition at Participant Inc. in 2003, she had an effigy of the Whitney Museum fashioned from cake, and then blown up. For her project *Revolution*, 2006–, she created a customized fragrance memorializing the persistent smell—or, rather, the stench—of street violence, bottled in pipe-bomb vials and “marketed” with a bandanna face-mask accessory and a DVD commercial. At times, she desists from artmaking entirely, choosing instead to curate polemical shows as rejoinders to contradictions she perceives in the art world. “I figured there was already too much art out there,” she explains. “It seemed like it would be more interesting to do something with it.” Wholly original, Kirk's projects are always a synthesis of personal experience, current events, and an insider's perspective on cultural politics.

In this show, “House of Cards,” Kirk gleefully conflated the collapse of the real estate market, vacation time-share incentive marketing, and the “hard-sell” techniques used in furniture showrooms. She constructed a freestanding one-and-a-half-room shack within the tiny Orchard Street gallery. The structure, built in fifty-two parts from found materials, is both a sculptural installation and a time-share sales model. Ingeniously conceived and made, the shack is an indigent clubhouse. A wok dropped into the center of three stacked-up tires serves as a cooking range. Metallic gift-wrap curtains frame Plexiglas windows. The scavenged plywood interior walls are adorned with peeling wheat-pasted posters from yesteryear's protests—one shows a



Lisa Kirk, *Maison des Cartes* (House of Cards) (detail), 2009, mixed media, 8 x 24 x 8'.

cop clad in full riot gear, with the pitiful phrase **ABOLISH ALIENATION** printed on his face-shield.

At the close of the show, the work was moved to a donated lot in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where it will remain until next April. Viewers were invited to participate in the project by purchasing one-week time-shares at the low starting price of \$199. Backed up by a “deed” produced by Kirk herself, the shares entitle their owners to full use of the shanty for the purchased time period. Battery and solar power are available at the site. Should they choose to do so, owners can take up residence throughout their week, or simply use the time-share as a venue for parties. Higher membership levels are also available. For \$599.99, “Basic Collectors” can own a signed piece of the shanty when it's removed from the yard. For \$8,999.99, Kirk will have the piece bronzed. Fees can be paid in convenient, interest-free installments.

Actors Susan London, Luella Lu, and Bob Spence were recruited to function as “sales associates,” greeting prospects as they entered the gallery and conducting tours of the model while highlighting ownership benefits: “You are contributing to art history by becoming part of this project. . . . You are not only buying a piece of art but becoming part of it!” Eventually, viewers were led to a windowless sales center (otherwise known as the gallery office), where the deals were closed. As an added incentive, buyers were allowed to “look under the rug”: That is, they were led down a flight of rickety stairs to the dank gallery basement, where portions of Kirk's *Revolution*—ransom notes, a milk crate of gilded Molotov cocktails, posters proclaiming **SORRY ABOUT ALL THE TORTURE AND EVERYTHING**—were reprised as a peep show.

An artist with ideas to spare, Kirk approaches the “House of Cards” enterprise with the same zeal that drove Claes Oldenburg's *Store*, 1961, his exuberant ode to primitive capitalism. But whereas Oldenburg sold plaster sneakers and sausages from his storefront studio, “House of Cards” transcends the mere physical object. What's for sale is the *idea* of ownership, backed up by specious grant deeds.

—Chris Kraus



Art in America

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

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House Proud: Lisa Kirk Reinterprets the Timeshare

by aimee walleston 06/01/09

Perhaps the most inelegant object lesson in America's thirst for luxury and escape is the timeshare vacation home. This quintessential "you get what you pay for" bargain is paved with good intentions in the form of a less-expensive holiday in a supposedly comfortable, homelike dwelling. Yet the stories one hears about them typically depict humanity at its least civilized. Timeshares are owned by many and claimed by none. Trussed up and turned out again and again by desperate brokers, timeshares are forever found in deplorable conditions, abandoned by previous tenants. Human nature, it seems, pushes otherwise gracious individuals to divorce themselves from the responsibility of ownership -- even at its most temporary.

American artist Lisa Kirk explores themes of commodity fetishism and audience participation in her work. Past projects include a perfume she created called *REVOLUTION*, which features top notes of tear gas and decaying flesh. Her latest project, *maison des cartes*, employs a critical sense of humor in considering the neglected timeshare. *Maison des Cartes* was originally created in an interior environment for "House of Cards," her solo show earlier this year at Invisible/Exports gallery on Orchard Street. In its current iteration, the piece has been transformed from an art installation to a rentable timeshare on a waterfront locale in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.



Kirk recently inaugurated the piece with a festive ribbon cutting ceremony. Made from 52 separate pieces of material, "the shanty," as the artist has nicknamed the *Maison*, recalls a dishabille squat, and includes an outdoor commode, security in the form of both a padlock and a combination lock, and a cheerful, disused kitchen. The structure is placed a few steps away from an abandoned airplane fuselage (property of a nearby prop house), which acts as both neighbor and aesthetic appendage. The shanty's home at the Brooklyn Navy Yard is, unfortunately, not permanent. Its placement was a hard-won victory. Says Kirk: "It took us a while to find the perfect place, and finally we ended up knowing someone who had this land." In a gesture that recalls the *Fake Estates* project of Gordon Matta-Clark -- from 1973-1974, the artist bought the property titles to tiny slots of gutter space from the city government -- Kirk says she looked at lots around the city but found it impossible to jump through the necessary bureaucratic hoops. The Brooklyn Navy Yard proved a fortuitous (and last-minute) alternative.

Lest one think that this is all just for art worldy titters, Kirk is currently accepting weeklong reservations, which are priced at \$199.99. (Act now! Due to the Venice Biennale exodus the week of June 5th may still be available). But be forewarned: any potential guests will have their insouciant timeshare habits recorded for posterity in the form of a third exhibition, the location of which has yet to be determined. Says Kirk: "The final show will include ephemera from peoples' stays there. Before and after check-in, the *Maison's* matron will note any damages on a checklist, as a landlord does. Then I'll come in when they leave, archive the detritus and photograph the environment. All detritus left behind is property of *Maison des Cartes*."



The piece seems deliver a warning: Buyer beware! A combination of personal experience with a timeshares and an interest in the current decline in property values inspired Kirk: "The time share experience is a nightmare. You're always getting harangued into 'upgrading,' and that experience is woven into this project. It's also a joke on the art market, with its system of pricing. The people who rent *Maison des Cartes* will get emails and paper mail inviting them to upgrade and become a 'collector.' And then, they can move to the next level, and become a 'bronze collector.'" Spoken like a true art veteran of both the art world and the timeshare.

[All images courtesy the author and Lisa Kirk.]

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House of Cards, 2009,
sales specialists Susan
London and Bob Spence.
Photo: Tom Powell Imaging.
Courtesy Invisible-
Exports, New York



Lisa Kirk

House of Cards

Invisible-Exports, New York
20 February – 29 March

As the global financial and subprime mortgage crisis shook world stock markets in late 2008, the inflated price of real estate declined in the United States and the ranks of the unemployed began to rise. One could sense this new downturn would take years to dig out of. Lisa Kirk's *House of Cards* is certainly not an antidote to society's ills, but a thought-provoking and satisfying pill that makes you want to participate in her project.

Kirk's *Maison des Cartes* (2009), a show model 'shanty timeshare', wouldn't look out of place in a down-and-out part of any large metropolis. Made from 52 separate pieces, one for each week the time share is available, the dwelling comes complete with a sleeping area comprising two hammocks, a kitchen table made from wooden construction barriers and a bar for that much-needed afternoon cocktail. Kirk promotes green living with a washbasin and shower facilities consisting of a rubber hose that draws rainwater from a container on the roof, while the heater is powered by a solar panel.

A functioning real estate office takes up the rest of the gallery, where agents who work on commission talk up potential clients after giving a walkthrough of the shanty. Sales specialist Susan London gives a compelling performance as a perky, highly caffeinated marketer for Kirk's property, pointing out the benefits of buying a one-week stay in the shanty for \$199.99, which will be relocated to the Brooklyn Navy Yard after the show ends. A more expensive option is the 'Collector Level', which includes a signed piece taken from the dismantled dwelling; or the 'Bronze Level', featuring an interior element cast in bronze, both available on zero-down instalment plans.

Beneath a rug in the middle of the residence is a hidden entrance to the gallery's basement, where a second series of works by Kirk, entitled *Revolution* (2006–9), is hosted. Here Kirk has used directions found on the Internet for making a pipe bomb and used them to create containers for her *Revolution* perfume, which is advertised in a slickly produced video showing masked male and female terrorists in a sinister love connection. Larger pipe bombs and the politically charged posters *Sorry About All the Torture and Everything* (2007) line the walls of the dingy space, creating an atmosphere that is finely balanced between mockery and dread. Despite the initial feeling that one has seen installations similar to Kirk's before, the conceptual rigour and felicitousness is spot-on. Both a social critique and satirical presentation, the artist sums up the precarious situation we face in the throes of a major economic recession. *Chris Bors*

3.11.09 – *The Gallery as Gated Community*

Topics: *Invisible-Exports, Kisa Kirk, Maison des Cartes*

First flooding displaced 90 percent of southeast Louisiana. Now some ten million homeowners are “underwater,” and many may simply abandon ship. See a pattern? Before global warming raises sea levels on the Lower East Side, Lisa Kirk wants you to get a piece of the action. At *Invisible-Exports*, you have until March 29. Better act now.

So what’s NEW!Your first challenge is, literally, to get in on the ground floor. Her House of Cards packs snugly into the gallery’s already tunnel-like space, where it took ten days to assemble. A beach chair rests by its door, for what passes as leisure. From there, watch the abandoned tires on the roof, bend your head, and duck inside. A real-estate agent, available weekends or by appointment, will be happy to assist you.

The real-estate office has space out back, displacing the gallery owners. Clearly art and housing share the same bubble. You might sneak a peek at the manual that Kirk has prepared for her three-person staff, anticipating your every need—or, more likely, objection. It will teach you not to say much, but no matter. Grab a business card, look out for your wallet, and take a tour. On opening night, the diminutive but formidable head agent herself took charge, nonstop.

Kirk has constructed the monstrous shanty from found parts, including everything but playing cards. Rather, the title refers, among other things, to the unit’s fifty-two shares. Former construction barriers form the living-room table. Orange plastic netting serves as a hammock—no, excuse me, bedroom furniture—able to accommodate a six-foot resident. Lisa Kirk’s *Maison des Cartes* (*Invisible-Exports*, 2009)And she has photographs to prove it. Besides, now that the Madison Square Tree Huts have come down, those displaced by Lower East Side art may not have many choices.

Eventually, shareholders will each carry away a fragment as a “unique artwork,” assuming they and it survive that long. Which piece? Co-op boards are facing more and more disputes these days. First, though, the private residence will migrate to the Brooklyn Navy Yard—a gated community, of course. While the artist had planned to make the time share ready for occupancy after the show’s closing, she landed a site almost at the last minute. Those going into real estate had better think quickly and be ready to deal with homelessness.



Kirk has a history of art about capitalism, seen as a system for branding is own decay as luxury goods. Only shareholders get a peek at an additional installation—below the floorboards but not, I hope, underwater. It recreates, she lets on, a combination terrorist cell and shop for “custom-made” perfume, previously at P.S. 1. There the elaborate messages swamped the work and something of her sense of humor. This time the work’s bulk and conceptual layers could swamp almost anything, except its perfect timing. She needed capitalism to catch up with her.

ARTCAT

Bienvenue à la maison des cartes. Can I interest you in a found object?

By Jessica Loudis | Features, Reviews | March 2, 2009



Lisa Kirk at Invisible-Exports, documentation photo via gallery.

House of Cards

Lisa Kirk

Invisible Exports - 14A Orchard Street, New York NY

20 February - 29 March 2009

One of the most provocative pieces in *Revolution*, Lisa Kirk's self-described "fragrance lab and terrorist headquarters" exhibited last summer at P.S.1, was a commercial for a product dubbed "Revolution: the Fragrance." Shot in the style of an overaestheticized Nike ad, the short cut between stylized Manhattan street scenes and two sets of runners (joggers? Thieves?) sprinting down the sidewalks of the Lower East Side. At the commercial's end, a bomb explodes, and with no shortage of gravitas the camera pulls back to expose two black-clad figures slowing to meet each other. Masks come off, a detonator is revealed, and the logo: *Revolution... the fragrance*.

Lisa Kirk, in other words, is no stranger to exploring and mocking the perversities of late capitalist society. With *Revolution*, she dissected popular culture's urge to fetishize and commodify transgression, and now, with *House of Cards*, her latest show currently at Invisible-Exports, she examines a related theme: the tension between capitalism's values and its increasingly rapid decline.

House of Cards (or *Maison des cartes*, as the promotional material sneers) is, at first glance, a stark aestheticization of poverty. A shanty within a gallery, the viewer enters the space through walking into a tin shack with tires framing the roof and door. Once inside, the house is fully equipped with a kitchen (stacked tires and a metal bowl) a bed (scrap materials next to a 1964 encyclopedia) and a bathroom (a hole in the wall thoughtfully accompanied by a hanging roll of toilet paper). While ostensibly a critique of commercialism, with its ironic pragmatism and DIY feel, *House of Cards* departs from the frontal approach of *Revolution* and takes a slightly different tact. Appealing to freegans aesthetically and consumers directly -- "Invest in who YOU are and what YOU stand for" -- the show implicates everyone within the market economy by suggesting first that capitalism is headed to the favelas, and second, that in hard times, the revolutionaries and the rich start to look awfully alike.

Advertised as a "shanty timeshare," the work itself is composed of 52 different pieces of found materials, and can actually be rented or purchased through one of three different payment options. Under the basic option (an all-time low of \$199.99!) the timeshare owner is granted a deed and a week in the shanty, and under the silver and gold options, the owner buys a week, a deed, and a piece of the shanty itself. In order to avoid the confusion of running a timeshare out of the gallery space (although it seemed to work rather well at the Guggenheim) come early March, the shanty will take up residency in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. At the end of the year, the pieces will be disassembled and distributed to timeshare owners "as 52 separate and unique artworks." If you have any questions, you can consult the realtor. His office is directly behind the shanty.



Lisa Kirk at Invisible-Exports, documentation photo via gallery.

As Kirk's press release points out, *House of Cards* is more than just a satire of consumerist society. It's also an invocation of one of the most powerful images in contemporary global politics. As Mike Davis famously argued in *Planet of Slums*, poverty is not only one of the most entrenched and overlooked social problems in the world, it's also one of the fastest growing, metastasizing at a rate that far outpaces those working against it. In *House of Cards*, Kirk calls upon this history, but in tying the image of the shanty to Western materialist values, she casts a darkly ironic light on one of Davis' central questions: "Are the great slums, as a terrified Victorian middle class once imagined, volcanoes waiting to erupt?"

Not anymore. They're waiting to be sold to the highest bidder. And if you're looking for revolution, it can be found downstairs, where parts of her P.S.1 show are on display.

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Current Shows

Lisa Kirk

INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, NEW YORK, USA



Lisa Kirk, 'House of Cards' (2009), installation view. Photograph: Tom Powel Imaging

Carsten Höller's *Revolving Hotel Room* (2008) installation was a great publicity coup for the Guggenheim. Shown as part of 'theanyspacewhatever', the museum's recent Relational Aesthetics survey, visitors could pay a few hundred dollars for the privilege of staying the night on the rotunda. Inevitably, journalists arrived like dogs summoned by whistles; fashionable couples followed. Coming in its wake, 'House of Cards', Lisa Kirk's exhibition at Invisible-Exports, a gallery that opened last September on the outskirts of Chinatown, is a salty satire. She has constructed a shanty dwelling in the narrow gallery space with a range of found objects: orange road barriers have been joined to form a table in the 'dining room'; faded vinyl covers a day bed in the 'lounge'; old tyres support a bowl in the 'kitchen'; and part of a transparent door is nailed to the wooden wall to create a 'bar'.

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Published on 18/03/09
by *Morgan Falconer*

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Kirk has been exhibiting, and frequently curating, for about a decade. Her last project, *Revolution!*, installed at P.S.1 in 2007, was a perfumery-cum-bomb factory, and 'House of Cards' shares its spirit: it's a slum as the smart set might design it. This time, though, Kirk is giving the beautiful people the opportunity to try it for a week by selling time-shares, which can be redeemed when the show closes and the shack is reinstalled for a year in Brooklyn Navy Yard. To promote the shares, Kirk has also created a mock real-estate office in the gallery, with photos of incongruously happy, solvent couples enjoying the slum experience. At weekends, actors manning the desk deliver a sales pitch for the so-called *maison des cartes* (2009), a pitch that is high comedy but which also has a level of satire in that, like most artists staging a commercial show, Kirk does want to sell her work.



A faded poster inside the shack shows a policeman in riot gear, and his nametag, Sgt Guy Debord, says much about how Kirk considers her shack; it also, unfortunately, highlights the fact that her critique, with its collage of violent contrasts and spectacle, has a shop-worn feel – even if it is as valid as ever. As a satire on the art market, however, it has power and subtlety, for it's no doubt true that some wealthy collectors savour the slumming that can come with their entry into the lower tiers of the market. Moreover, these days, when gallerists are biting the nails in their own backrooms now that no one wants to buy the hype outside, Kirk's critique has a wicked timeliness.

Morgan Falconer

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L'UOMO / About

Da Vienna a Venezia, da New York all'Islanda le ultime mostre offrono una rilettura dell'eredità di questi popoli. E, nella nostra società, si diffonde una voglia iconoclasta

The INVASION of today's barbarians

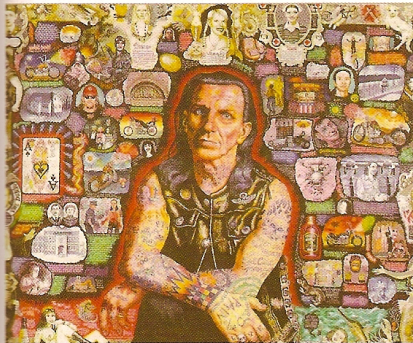
di Caroline Corbetta

Invasioni, vandalismo, degenerazione culturale. Nell'immaginario comune il termine "barbaro" evoca queste ed altre apocalittiche suggestioni. Al cinema lo ha recentemente ribadito il cineasta canadese Denys Arcand che, dopo "Le invasioni barbariche" del 2003, affresco del caos contemporaneo, ha sfornato recentemente "L'età barbarica" dove dà oramai per assodata la crisi: i barbari hanno vinto. La dissoluzione della civiltà occidentale con i suoi valori illuministi è compiuta. L'unico rifugio possibile è nella fantasia. Intanto a



My friends' accomplishments make me sick

un art-world dominato dalle regole di mercato oggi si manifesta come una forza agitatrice e selvaggia che, però, dal sistema prende il meglio che esso può offrire e a sua volta lo rivitalizza con nuove energie. Un po' come fecero i veri barbari con l'Impero Romano. Oggi i nuovi barbari dell'arte arrivano dalla strada, dalle periferie turbolente delle grandi città. Come il giovane francese Cyprien Gaillard che eleva a soggetto artistico i casermoni popolari o mette in scena azioni di land-art in cui invade di fumo idilliaci paesaggi dando corpo, così, a oscure minacce ("Real Remnants of Fictive Wars"); oppure arrivano dalle province più re-



Venezia, una nutritissima mostra propone una rilettura dell'eredità barbarica, oltre gli stereotipi. A Palazzo Grassi fino al 20 luglio l'esposizione "Roma e i barbari. La nascita di un nuovo mondo" oppone alla visione popolare che vede nelle orde distruttrici la causa di un lunghissimo periodo di decadenza dell'Impero d'occidente, le prove (quasi due-mila manufatti) di un fecondo incontro-scontro culturale che ha dato origine a nuove forme estetiche e culturali (www.palazzograssi.it).

Tra stereotipi e nuove ricerche, l'idea del barbaro come "altro", straniero che irrompe in una realtà già resa fragile da cause endogene, nel tormentato presente spaventa e affascina come non mai. Certamente nel mondo dell'arte si nota una diffusione di atteggiamenti "barbarici": stanno cioè aumentando i gesti anticonvenzionali se non addirittura iconoclastici da parte degli artisti. Quella che dovrebbe essere la vocazione dell'arte - ovvero mettere in discussione lo status quo - in

I nuovi "vandalisti" arrivano dalla strada e dalle periferie delle grandi città e irrompono in realtà tormentate. Come il francese Cyprien Gaillard, che eleva a soggetto artistico i casermoni popolari



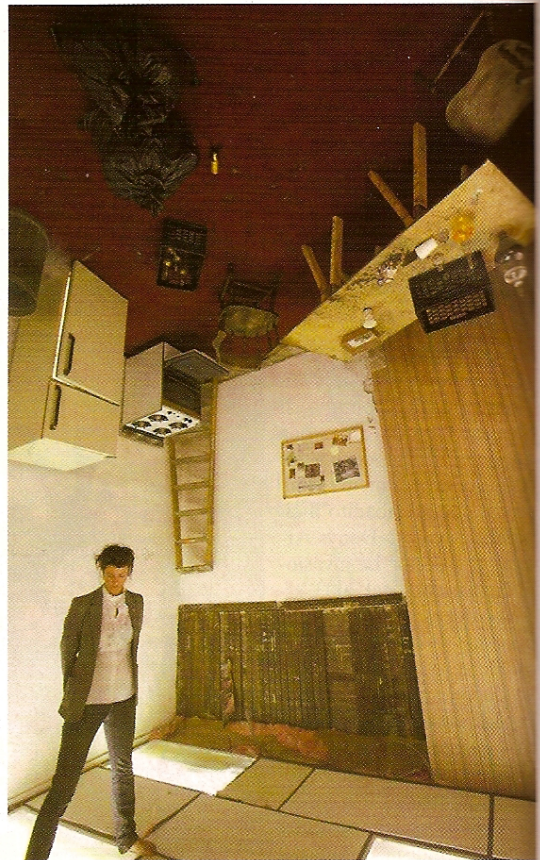
mote "dell'Impero", come il vichingo Ragnar Kjartansson che porta l'energia primigenia della sua terra, l'Islanda (di cui sarà il rappresentante ufficiale alla Biennale di Venezia 2009), in una serie di performances furiose e irresistibili (www.ragnarkjartansson.com). Da New York sta mettendo a punto la sua "calata" sul mondo dell'arte Ivano Atzori, meglio noto come Dumbo, il famigerato writer milanese. Il quale tenta il salto dalla strada alla galleria con un'energia sediziosa e metaforica da vero "barbaro romantico" che sa prendere le distanze dalla violenza reale: «Sono attratto dal kaos», spiega Ivano, «dai riot, dagli scontri allo stadio: mi ricordano le battaglie medioevali, armature e cavalli, sassi e molotov, giovani contro giovani, preparazione e tecnica. Questo

/About

in fondo è l'essere umano da sempre. Partecipare sarebbe una sciocchezza, un errore, ma non guardare mi risulterebbe difficile». Sempre a New York Lisa Kirk, dallo spazio no-profit Participant Inc., sfida le convenzioni estetiche – ancora ben salde nell'immaginario collettivo dopo oltre un secolo di provocazioni avanguardistiche – lanciando il suo

culture diverse possano nascondere linguaggi originali. Al centro di una delle due gallerie Gagosian di Londra, fino al 23 del mese, si erge un enorme cuore trafitto e sanguinante composto da una miriade di pulsanti e coloratissime lampadine. Si tratta di "Sacrificial Heart", scultura rotante, alta circa 3 metri e caratterizzata da un decorativismo estremo che

artisti (di successo) disincantati e pure strafottenti (www.gagosian.com). Intriganti paralleli tra la cultura contemporanea e quella punk (tra i neo-barbari più celebri del XX secolo) vengono tracciati nella mostra "Punk – no one is innocent. Style Rebellion, Art Attack and Social Subversion" alla Kunsthalte di Vienna (www.kunsthalle-wien.at) dal 16.05 al 7.09. Analogamente a "Eclipse. Art in a Dark Age" al Moderna Museet di Stoccolma, dal 31.05 al 24.08 (www.modernamuseet.se), la mostra racconta le inquietudini, ma anche le speranze di questo presente neo-barbarico. Un sentimento apocalittico diffuso anche in letteratura, come racconta Francesco Muzioli nel suo libro "Le scritture della catastrofe" (Meltemi editore). Le invenzioni (o, sarebbe meglio dire, descrizioni?) di mondi distopici, scenari in cui le cose potrebbero andare molto



In molti campi questa neo-cultura privilegia un decorativismo che mescola liberamente iconografia occidentale e stili orientali, descrivendo scenari distopici e suggestioni apocalittiche. Per qualcuno tale contesto segna la fine di un'epoca. Per altri ne annuncia l'inizio

Raqib Shaw, "The Garden of Earthly Delights III", 2003. Tim Noble & Sue Webster, "Sacrificial heart", 2007, courtesy dell'artista. Gagosian Gallery. In apertura, dall'alto. Ivano Atzori, "My friend's accomplishments make me sick", 2007, courtesy dell'artista. Joe Coleman, "Indian Larry's Wilde Ride", 2005. Ragnar Kjartansson, "Holy Grail", 2002, performance presso Studio Alaska, Reykjavik.

profumo "Revolution!". Una fragranza "sovversiva" che sa di fumo, benzina, gas lacrimogeno, gomma bruciata e di altri aromi della guerriglia urbana (www.participantinc.org). Per un vero outsider come il "Pittore Apocalittico e Romantico" Joe Coleman, che ha avuto i suoi primi riconoscimenti da importanti istituzioni europee come il Palais de Tokyo di Parigi e il KW di Berlino solo dopo i cinquant'anni (www.joecoleman.com), c'è un giovane poco più che trentenne che da Calcutta, via Londra, ha stracciato ogni record d'asta per un quasi-esordiente: Raqib Shaw. Due storie e due modi di fare arte agli antipodi ma entrambi caratterizzati da un decorativismo che mischia in libertà iconografia occidentale e stili orientali, dimostrando come dall'incontro di

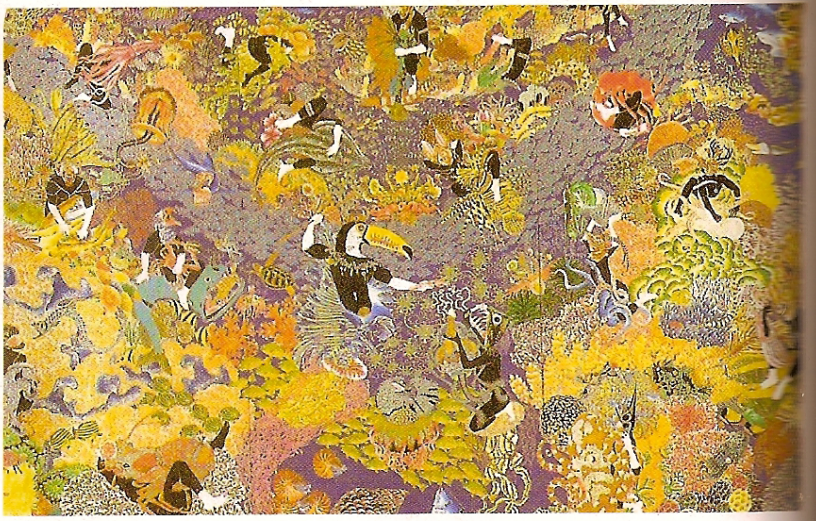
richiama anche antichi rituali pagani, firmato dal duo britannico Tim Noble & Sue Webster, gli stessi che



negli anni Novanta si sovrapposero ironicamente con le sembianze di due primati nella scultura "New Barbarians". Appropriandosi dell'attitudine punk, i due hanno incarnato un nuovo modo di essere

peggio, sembrano prevalere sulle narrazioni utopiche. Per qualcuno è la fine di un'epoca, per altri un nuovo inizio. (in alto, da sinistra e in senso orario. Dall'artista nell'installazione del progetto "Punk – no one is innocent. Style Rebellion, Art Attack and Social

Subversion", opera senza titolo di Linder, 1978, courtesy Stuart Shave Modern Art, London. Lisa Kirk, "Time Suspended", 2007, l'artista nell'installazione del progetto "Punk – no one is innocent. Style Rebellion, Art Attack and Social



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Teems Like Smell Spirit

By Marisa Olson on Tuesday, April 1st, 2008 at 10:53 am.



Who hasn't had the synaesthetic experience of a scent triggering a memory? Some argue that the sense of smell is among our body's strongest, and yet—"smellivision" aspirations aside—media culture revolves so much more around our eyes and ears. At present, New York's Lower East Side (a piquant sensorium, to be sure) is home to two olfactorily-driven projects. At nonprofit art space [Cuchifritos](#) through April 26th is a group show entitled, "[If There Ever Was](#)," featuring seven "extinct and impossible smells" that have been "re-created" by Koan-Jeff Baysa, Bertrand Duchaufour, Christoph Hornetz, Christophe Laudamiel, Patricia Millns, Steven Pearce, David Pybus, and Geza Schön. Some of these creators call themselves artists while some work as scientists, engineers, or others with a vested interest in "olfactory images." For instance, botanist James Wong created a hyperreal scent equivalent to a bouquet of extinct flowers, calling attention to art's ability to invoke the absent, fantastical, or what cannot otherwise be said or seen. Neighboring nonprofit [Participant, Inc](#) is also supporting artists' exploration of the interface between sight and smell with Lisa Kirk and Jelena Behrend's [Revolution Pipe Bomb](#) project. The work was initially conceived as a fragrance by Kirk, who then approached Behrend to produce it as a special limited edition in the form of "a precious metal pipe bomb to contain a vile of [a] faintly aggressive fragrance." The perfume's core elements were determined after interviews with war journalists, activists, and others who've been on the frontlines of revolutions. It bears hints of "smoke, gasoline, tear gas, burnt rubber, and decaying flesh." Doesn't that make you wish this website was scratch-and-sniff? In all seriousness, this project explores the important subject of the commodification and marketing of violence and like Wong's imagined bouquet, makes the issue "more real than real" by addressing it in the realm of the senses. If you're in New York, follow your nose downtown. - Marisa Olson

Lisa Kirk and Jelena Behrend, Revolution Pipe Bomb, 2007

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WHAT DO WE WANT?

The cash register appears to be on fire. One wall is covered in loud tabloid newsprint. And yet, the voluptuous perfume bottles appear very much at home. At Lisa Kirk's exhibit, "**Revolution**," the artist also shows some paintings made by taking a blowtorch to cosmetics. You're starting to get the picture. Kirk's observance that this country is ludicrously obsessed with gold-plating absolutely everything is actually pretty elegant itself. Her work makes us understand not only that we are knee-jerk branders, but that we're fucking good at it. The perfume is real, and was developed as part of a previous project of Kirk's during which she asked people, possibly with a straight face, what revolution should smell like. She also mocks cops, and who doesn't love that? "Revolution" continues through Aug. 25 at Steven Wolf Fine Arts, 49 Geary (at Market), S.F. Admission is free; call 263-3677 or visit www.stevenwolffinearts.com.

— HIYA SWANHUYSER



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VISUAL ART

Lisa Kirk: "Revolution!"

Placing *activist* before *artist* for more than alphabetical reasons, Lisa Kirk brings a potent political intent and much-needed sense of acute irreverence to the art world. She's protested against the Iraq War by performing pole dances dressed as Rosie the Riveter and, in another recent project, made comparisons between recent museum curatorial processes and the tricks of P.T. Barnum. (More than one successful veteran artist I've interviewed would applaud that idea.) For "Revolution!," Kirk turns a gallery space into a retail environment, where she'll sell the titular perfume, a scent composed of ingredients suggested by living revolutionaries. Intricately decorated oil barrels and paintings created with



makeup and a blowtorch are some of the other goods Kirk will have on offer for consumers and browsers. **(Huston)**

Through Aug. 25
5:30 p.m. reception
Steven Wolf Fine Arts
49 Geary, suite 411, SF
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USELESS

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LISA KIRK LEADS THE WAY TO REVOLUTION ONE PERFUME RIOT AT A TIME

Words: Bengala

Images: Installation views courtesy of MOT

Web: www.lisakirkprojects.com

Web: www.motinternational.org

Ask the average New York art kid about Lisa Kirk and they'll talk about rumors of blown-up museums and perfume riots. Sometimes the words feminist and curator come up. Press them, and most admit to never having seen her work in person, but know that she's cool.

This conundrum may or may not drive Kirk crazy, but it makes sense. Most of her work is a critique of the art world. Since 2000, she's thrown acclaimed art exhibitions in her mother's apartment, broken windows as public art, exploded a red velvet cake replica of the Whitney, curated an illegal art show with over 50 artists in public spaces, and more recently created a fragrance designed after the smell of revolution.

Now, she's started Legion, a non-space dedicated to site-specific projects. She's had a show in London's MOT International, where she propagated more mistruths about herself and smashed Molotov cocktails against the gallery's walls.

What exactly do you want to accomplish with REVOLUTION?

REVOLUTION is meant to be a critical response to contemporary cultural apathy and our general lack of political motivation; further, it is an attempt to engage the viewer and the collector in reactionary action. Americans will never participate in any revolution because the government won't allow us - specifically all of this fear-based media, government surveillance, the

Patriot Act. That's what my show in London is about.

But revolution has never really been "allowed" to just happen.

True, but in the past one didn't need to get a permit to speak-out on issues, let alone wear an opinionated tee shirt without being arrested for being a terrorist.

And the centerpiece of this project is the fragrance, REVOLUTION, which comes in Molotov cocktail form?

The bottles are recycled wine bottles, gilt gold or platinum. They're actually painted 14k gold, then fired and a side effect is that they become tempered. They're really hard to break. While installing at the London gallery, I set off and they were bouncing back at me. I pointed my finger caught on fire and would not come out.

When people buy the Molotov cocktails, they agree to smash them at your request. Correct?

The work is not complete until it is destroyed. The gallery or collector a ransom note (based on the Jean Benet Ramesy note) that describes what they are required to do in order to complete the piece.

You also exhibited your slogan as a prop artwork.

Each one of the signs is unique; the text is screened on aluminum or gold-aluminum blasted with a shotgun. They were actually used by a prison guard, my sister's boyfriend, right?

We both agree that revolution is almost an impossibility at this point, so is failure built into the body of work?

It's more about pointing failure out, not necessarily about its own failure. I think that the work is actually more successful than most things in my life....



Kirk has been exhibiting, and frequently curating, for about a decade. Her last project, *Revolution!*, installed at P.S.1 in 2007, was a perfumery-cum-bomb factory, and 'House of Cards' shares its spirit: it's a slum as the smart set might design it. This time, though, Kirk is giving the beautiful people the opportunity to try it for a week by selling time-shares, which can be redeemed when the show closes and the shack is reinstalled for a year in Brooklyn Navy Yard. To promote the shares, Kirk has also created a mock real-estate office in the gallery, with photos of incongruously happy, solvent couples enjoying the slum experience. At weekends, actors manning the desk deliver a sales pitch for the so-called *maison des cartes* (2009), a pitch that is high comedy but which also has a level of satire in that, like most artists staging a commercial show, Kirk does want to sell her work.



A faded poster inside the shack shows a policeman in riot gear, and his nametag, Sgt Guy Debord, says much about how Kirk considers her shack; it also, unfortunately, highlights the fact that her critique, with its collage of violent contrasts and spectacle, has a shop-worn feel – even if it is as valid as ever. As a satire on the art market, however, it has power and subtlety, for it's no doubt true that some wealthy collectors savour the slumming that can come with their entry into the lower tiers of the market. Moreover, these days, when gallerists are biting the nails in their own backrooms now that no one wants to buy the hype outside, Kirk's critique has a wicked timeliness.

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