

*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*