



Jane and Louise Wilson, *Atomgrad 7 (Nature Abhors a Vacuum)*, 2010, C-print, Diasec mounted with aluminum and Perspex, 71 x 89 3/4". From the series "Atomgrad (Nature Abhors a Vacuum)."

broken doors through an empty room toward daylight, while the foreground appears to be a sea of floor tiles shaken loose and tossed.

A yardstick or ruler appears in each photo, placed there among the rubble by the artists before the shooting began. As the Wilsons point out in the press release, the yardstick was once an instrument of the British Imperial Standard, a now obsolete measuring system developed by an empire that has since declined; it is a relic of power, much like this abandoned Soviet town. Yet these yardsticks signify beyond these explanations. They poke at the conscience. If a measuring tool can be said to have affect, these seem rather resigned. There is nothing left for them to measure.

A pair of photos from a second series, "Toxic Camera, Blind Landing (H Bomb Test Facility, Orford Ness)," 2012, were taken off the southeastern coast of the UK, at a site where the military conducted secret tests during the Cold War. Here, nature encroaches again. One photo brings the unruliness of scrubby plants and muddy puddles to bear on orderly grids of scaffolding, beams, fences, and their shadows. The measuring stick also reappears, reaching from a puddle up through an exposed beam to the sky; it is longer than a yard this time, as though it, too, were overgrown. The toxic camera of the series' title is a Bolex belonging to Vladimir Shevchenko, a Ukrainian filmmaker who traveled to Chernobyl three days after the disaster and eventually died of radiation poisoning. The footage he shot was thoroughly irradiated, so much so that the film showed signs of static interference—it had literally recorded the radiation at the site—and as for the camera, it had to be buried. A bronze cast of the Bolex appeared here as a sculpture. It is a blind object, dark and dense and matte and absorbing all the light around it, a kind of tomb for vision. The measuring sticks, too, made sculptural appearances among the photographs, cast in aluminum and blocking a doorway, plumbing the ceiling, and arranged into the shape of a sculpture by the Russian Constructivist Lyubov Popova.

The Wilsons are drawn to inaccessible sites, places you might wish would stay hidden. They have photographed the old Stasi headquarters and the hotel room where a Mossad assassination took place. Their large photographs of Pripyat and Orford Ness may bring to mind what is glibly called "ruin porn," photographs of abandoned or destroyed places (Detroit is a popular subject) that superficially confer an elemental dignity on those sites, stripping them of history and fixating on the extravagant reach of disaster. In the Wilsons' work, however, there is a darker current. The photos allude to invisible things: nuclear contamination, the lingering aura of empire. Like the formless radiation that crackles on Shevchenko's film, these ghosts are less seen than felt.

—Emily Hall

Phil Collins

TANYA BONAKDAR GALLERY

In 1998, an influential article in the *Harvard Business Review* introduced the phrase "experience economy"; in the years since, billing a product or service as an "event" or "memorable" or "transformative" effect has become the pervasive rhetoric of marketing. In 2011, Phil Collins created the idiosyncratic home-shopping channel TUTBU.TV, offering television viewers an opportunity to purchase and then star in selected experiences as though they were exchangeable commodities. Yet these experiences, when mediated through the hyperbolic theater of TV sales, delivered not only "memories" but perverse forms of catharsis and mortification.

Hosted by a troupe of outlandish pitchmen and pitchwomen, sundry porn workers, and a few laconic musicians, the two-night affair was broadcast live from a Berlin theater on German national television. The first evening consisted of an hour of promotions inviting callers to buy advertised experiences that they then came to live out in the studio on the second night. The first night's pitches offered the opportunity to be interrogated by secret police, to star in a bodice-ripping period porn fantasy, and, finally, to denounce family and friends from one's deathbed. Each pitch was followed by actors staging an interpretation of the event being sold, and a teaser encouraging the television audience to "Call our Customer Centre right now! Our competent operators are at your disposal!"

Despite the proclamations of the ebullient-to-the-point-of-hysterical host, the experiences delivered on the second night contained little of the miraculous, and instead ranged from the mundane to the painfully awkward. One middle-aged gent named Gerd bought the police interrogation and was grilled about his prior run-ins with the authorities. He revealed . . . that he went to traffic school for two hours as a youth. Student Hans paid a mere 7.99 euros for a role in a period porno, yet he was dressed as a corseted lady-in-waiting. Though he gamely assumed character, his dialogue was overdubbed by an offstage female actor, only adding to the ridiculousness. (He was eventually ravished by two women, so he didn't fare too badly.)

Middle-aged Klaus purchased the fantasy of waking up from a coma and cursing the relatives gathered at his bedside. Surrounded by his wife and two of his sisters, he excoriated actors standing in as his father, his son, and another sister for their selfishness and neglect. His three real family members were horror-struck; one wiped away tears as she witnessed Klaus's petty tirade. "And you lost me at the funfair when I was



Phil Collins, *This Unfortunate Thing Between Us* (detail), 2011, production still from a 60-minute color video component of a mixed-media installation.

a kid," he sputters. "Go to hell, bastards!" Because it widened the net of humiliation to unsuspecting relatives subject to the charade, this final episode, in contrast to the previous two scenarios, was wrenching. Reifying family hostilities as though they are commodities, the piece recalls reality television's stock-in-trade—the impossible promise of proceeding from degradation to renewal in a fifteen-minute segment—but communicates the real emotional stakes.

Videos of the broadcasts were shown in the gallery under the title *This Unfortunate Thing Between Us*, 2011, screened inside the kind of cramped hitch campers often used for family vacations. These little caravans, themselves providing a kind of commodified leisure experience, exposed viewers seated within to spectators peering in through the trailers' windows. Two unrelated projects were also part of the exhibition: a short film about an unlikely community of skinheads in Malaysia and a series of listening booths featuring songs based on phone conversations Collins recorded at homeless shelters. Yet it was the frenzied teleshopping culture of *This Unfortunate Thing Between Us* that was most gripping, capturing as it did the manner in which publicized experiences of self-abnegation have come to stand in for personal growth or social transformation.

—Eva Díaz

Mary Mattingly

ROBERT MANN GALLERY

Flock, 2012, the first of fifteen photographs in Mary Mattingly's exhibition "House and Universe," shows two geodesic domes set atop a raft adrift in the ocean. Like Mattingly's *Waterpod Project*, 2009, and her current *Triple Island*, 2013, these domes, part of *Flock House Project*, 2012, have functioned as temporary, self-sufficient shelters in New York's parks and plazas. Various outfitted with hydroponic gardens, water-filtration systems, and buoys, they are public-art prototypes for the small-scale floating communities that Mattingly predicts will become our collective dystopian norm should global warming and corporate privatization continue unabated. Thus, the photograph doesn't chronicle the *Flock House* domes' past installations, but instead stitches them into a projected, distinctly Ballardian future.

As art historian (and *Artforum* contributor) Eva Díaz has noted, Mattingly is one of several artists who have recently resuscitated the geodesic domes patented and popularized by Buckminster Fuller. This new turn in "dome culture," however, jettisons Fuller's oracular ebullience. The aims of Mattingly's shelters instead come closer to those of Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle*, 1988. Wodiczko's souped-up shopping cart was purportedly purely practical, equipped to satisfy the stated needs of New York's homeless population—a bin for collected aluminum cans, an enclosure for secure sleeping, etc.—though the resemblance it bore to a missile on wheels was hardly accidental. Like *Homeless Vehicle*, Mattingly's prototypes are seductive warnings: charming as single units, but foreboding when their proliferation is earnestly contemplated. Whereas Fuller's domes radiated technocratic confidence, Mattingly's betray skepticism toward design solutions that accommodate a deleterious status quo without addressing root causes.

In "House and Universe," Mattingly acted convinced that her imagined future and the present day were converging. Can you blame her? In the context of New York alone, consider the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Sandy; the encampment-as-protest of Occupy Wall Street; or even the trendy ubiquity of sustainable living measures, such as home gardens, solar panels, and dry compost. As if to prepare for imminent catastrophe, Mattingly has been divesting herself of personal possessions by bundling her books, clothes, keepsakes, and electronics into boulder-

like clumps bound together by twine. Two such overstuffed amalgams, *Terrene*, 2012, and *Gyre*, 2013, were presented here as discrete sculptures; in photographs, others appeared in less pristine settings, such as an unidentified shantytown, suggesting a connection between Mattingly's haphazard constructions and the improvised architectures at the outskirts of cities worldwide.

Before parting with her personal items, Mattingly systematically documented them in photographs and 3-D scans, though this component of her project was nowhere in evidence. Overall, "House and Universe" raised anew the question of how the gallery context condenses and filters practices as holistic as Mattingly's (or, say, Andrea Zittel's). Almost to a fault, the photographs bristle with art-historical references: Their square format and centered compositions loosely follow the conventions of Bernd and Hilla Becher's deadpan typologies; titles allude to Robert Smithson and Titian; one photograph was taken in Nevada from the bottom of Michael Heizer's *Double Negative*, 1969, and another, of an overburdened rowboat disappearing into mist, borrows wholesale from Caspar David Friedrich. The elegant, elegiac tone of Mattingly's "art" photography seems at odds with the scrappy, madcap mood of her urban interventions. Then again, there is a grim site specificity to Mattingly's exhibiting work in Chelsea, a district badly damaged by Sandy. Furthermore, *Gyre* points out how even art's discursive apparatus contributes to a culture of overproduction and waste. Tucked behind its twine netting are several bulky periodicals bearing on their back covers the Swiss pastorals and red lettering of Bruno Bischofberger advertisements—unmistakably, old issues of *Artforum*.

—Colby Chamberlain



Mary Mattingly, *Flock*, 2012, C-print, 30 x 30".

Daniel Subkoff

JAMES FUENTES

What unifies the work in Daniel Subkoff's solo debut is an interest in physical deconstruction, in stripping the familiar painterly format back to its bare bones and observing what has been laid bare. This is hardly an original focus—the artist openly acknowledges a debt to Arte Povera—but, as Subkoff demonstrates, it's one that can still yield revelations. It's also a good test of an artist's ability to do a lot with a little; there is not much more than wood, canvas, primer, and drywall in these constructions, but the condition they describe feels expansive.

In *Bygone Began Begin* (all works 2013), the canvas that covers a small panel doesn't stop with the edge of the stretcher but instead continues off its top edge; the strip of canvas, perhaps twelve inches across, extends to the ceiling and continues along it for about twelve feet before dropping back down to the floor, ultimately describing a sculptural rectangle as it rejoins the panel and overlaps its lower half. Most of the canvas is raw; only the top part of the "painting" itself has been given a rough coat of white primer. Where the strip traverses the ceiling, threads of canvas hang down here and there like stalactites. Closely related is *Painting Cave*, consisting of thirteen white canvases placed one in front of the other and cut with an aperture that approximates