of Farm Security Administration photography almost makes the clas-
sicizing effect of his form more the subject than the subjects themselves.
His compositional decisions bluntly relate the holler dwellers to a cul-
ture of resistance and perseverance that took root eighty years ago. Of
course, Evans and the FSA photographers were depicting what was
prevalent in rural America. What Adams seems to be positing is that
the "real America" in the twenty-first century is one shaped by active
subcultures—including this self-reliant, off-the-grid one, which, how-
ever anachronistically, just happens to be populated by folks who bear
an uncanny resemblance to so many Evans protagonists.
—Nick Stillman

CHICAGO

Jimmy Robert
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Jimmy Robert subjects paper to a series of operations that read like an
ecerpt from Richard Serra's famous Verb List: to rip, to append, to
curl, to stuff, to crumple, to fold, to hang, to lean, to drop. Sturdy ink-
jet prints, various paper stocks, found posters, bits of fabric, masking
tape, and drawn elements appear collaged together or isolated, in ways
that invariably force attention to the sculptural qualities of what we
would normally think of as two-dimensional surfaces. If paper hangs
on the wall, as it did in Robert's recent installation of Untitled (Michael),
2006—part of "Vis-à-vis," the artist's first major museum show in the
US—it curls or folds into space, departing from the vertical plane. In
Untitled (homage to the young boy—...), 2007, the work was appended
so low that it slid onto the floor, to meet several sheets of paper that
were lying flat beneath it. Elsewhere, a handful of elaborately folded or
rolled constructions had been propped up into fragile quasi-figurative
sculptures (all un titled and dated 2010s); that these featured photo-
graphs of the artist's own body only underscored that they were to be
taken as surrogates. However, Robert's "paper objects" (perhaps a
better description than "works on paper") are more than a compen-
dium of materials and gestures. Frequently in his practice, an initial
operation is photographed in its own right, as was the case with Untitled,
2005, which depicts the crumpling of a newspaper photograph of a
pre-scandal Dominique Strauss-Kahn, thereby emphasizing the materi-
ality (and sculptural potential) of the new, unfinished ink-jet print.
Such a process yields a set of art objects that are also events—pieces
that Robert sites between the "work on paper" and performance.

Curated by Naomi Beckwith, "Vis-à-vis" linked the paper objects
of this Guadeloupe-born, Brussels-based artist to his many projects
incorporating bodily movement—frequently his own. Relayed primar-
ily through videos and billboards, these performances likewise nod to many
artist forebears—Yoko Ono, Yvonne Rainer, Bas Jan Ader, and Lorna
Simpson, among others—while also sampling dance, theatre, and pop-
ular culture. In the video Different Gnome, 2006, for example, the artist
creates pieces of paper, using them to stuff his T-shirt until the excess
begins to slide out. At the opening, this was also evident in a reprise of
the 2011 performance Counter-relief (CCS Bard), with dancer Maria
Haasab. For this live piece, the two executed choreographed interac-
tions using elements that had accrued during previous iterations:
wooden slabs, a 16-mm film, and a text. By contrast, Non scène, 2008,
was not put to new use, but stood as a kind of relic: a brown fibreglass
stage supporting a monitor displaying the recording of a performance
(at Wiels Centre for Contemporary Art in Brussels four years earlier)
in which the now-vacant platform had been used. Typical of Robert's
layered references, in the video we see a shirtless, androgynous per-
former drawing in rapid strokes on a vertical wall of the structure while
another calmly recites a meandering reflection on May 1968.
If Robert "reconsiders identity politics," as argued by the curator in
the catalogue, he does so drastically, with almost no trace of the con-
temporary performance art of the 1990s. Instead, "politics" occurs on
the most intimate and minuscule register of specific bodies set in
relation to their immediate environments. He also implies, in the spirit
of political theorist Jane Bennett, the absorption of agency to that which
used to be understood as the artist's "materials" or "media." In Robert's
video Untitled (Folding 2), 2012, two hands fold, unfold, and refold a
photograph of the artist into a work of origami. The traditional folding
technique is not an end, however; there is no finished prod-
uct. A perpetual dynamism is outlined between the body and the ma-
leverable objects around it; in each acts upon, and is acted upon by, the
other.
—Daniel Quiles

SAN FRANCISCO

"Six Lines of Flight: Shifting Geographies in Contemporary Art"
SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A photograph reveals a man sprawled face-down in the street, alone
except for a distant cyclist and the presence of the camera. A send-up
of Yves Klein's infamous 1960 photomontage, this work, Romanian
artist Ciprian Mureșan's Leap into the Void, After 3 Seconds, 2004,
restages Klein's iconic gesture of artistic freedom. On view here, it
served to highlight one of the primary themes of "Six Lines of Flight":
the relationships between as many emergent art scenes and more estab-
lished centers. Mureșan's image is exemplary of the witty, irreptid,
performative practices of the artists selected for this show; a group that
represented a spectrum of geographical points, including Beirut,
Lebanon; Cali, Colombia; Chó-Napoca, Romania; Ho Chi Minh City,
Vienna; Tangier, Morocco; and San Francisco. In the pieces gathered
here, the freedom and exhilaration of working on the periphery of the
art market were evident, yet it was matched by the gravity of recent
forces shaping these locales.

Starting with a fragmented sense of the past—as after the end of a
restrictive regime or the waning of colonialism and conflict—many of
the featured artists had seized the opportunity to rebuild by proprie-
ating and rearranging the shards of their region's cultural production.
Surprisingly, the works were, on balance, more lurid than melancholic.
For example, humor infiltrated not only Muren's contributions, but also Lebanese artists Joanna Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige's inventive Wonder Bearet, the Story of a Pyromaniac Photographer, 1997–2006, an installation of images depicting the exploits of their (unnatural) titular charac-
ter. Yet recognizing the wonderfully slippery relationship between truth and fiction brings the overwhelming responsibility of charting new paths.

It is no wonder that many of the exhi-
bit's artists work in partnerships or collectives (e.g., the Propeller Group, Helena Padowska). For if working on the periphery is as much about recuperating as decentering, banding together appears to provide a pro-
tected space where ideas and practices can flourish.

San Art is one of those cooperative enterprises, established in 2007 by members of the Vietnamese diaspora who had returned to Ho Chi Minh City. Photographer Dinh Q. Lê is a founder of this group, and though his three-channel video Sound and Fury, 2012, is independently authored, multiple viewpoints character-
stically inhabit the very structure of his piece: Spread across three screens, the imagery devolves from synchronicity into chaos before inverting altogether, requiring the viewer to reconcile segmented experi-
ences in order to grasp the content. Even more interactively, the mul-
timedia installation A Variation on Powers of Ten, 2010–12, by the California-based collective Futurefarmers, had visitors picking up handsets to listen in on fragments of conversations with contemporary thinkers from diverse fields. The lo-fi aesthetic of the listening stations felt a bit arch, but it was hard to shake the impact of the voices that crossed shared territory while never consolidating.

Other works on view investigated shifting notions of geographic centers by primarily visual means. Moroccan artist Yto Barrada's well-
known "A Life Full of Holes: The Strait Project," 1998–2004, for example, probed the liminal territory occupied by Tangier, a port vis-
able from the European shore but technically tied to Africa. Her pho-
tography of architecture and everyday life quietly evidence the numerous colonial exploitations of a city that is both a point of contact between two continents and a marker of their separation. Similarly, Lamia Joreige's diagrammatic Bearet, Autopsy of a City, 2010, and Vietnamese-American artist Tiffany Chung's hand-drawn, electroneurographic conditional notions of place by refusing to resolve into

synchronic perspectives.

The title of this exhibition was borrowed from the language of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose theories offer viewers a lens for reading such subversions. Of course, notions of rhizomes, horizons, plateaus—the relative nature of center and periphery—have long had currency in the art world, and so such terminological scaffolding may not have been necessary for apprehending the work presented here. Yet the exhibition's works, all by artists avidly wrestling with shifting ter-
rain, grappling with the contingency of histories and ideologies, lent substantial courage to those still on the precipice, artists and viewers alike who may similarly harbor hopes of taking flight.

—Elizabeth Mangini

LOS ANGELES
Dave Muller
BLUM & POE

Sometimes in the 1990s, the critical mandate of the prior decade's "appropriation art" underwent a casual revision by an emerging gen-
eration less inclined to feel itself victimized by the "society of the spec-
tacle." Pop-cultural citation would continue apace, but in a less anxious, less clinical manner, one that evoked an element of personal investment. Overall, Dave Muller's work could serve as a case in point, especially his latest exhibition, "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah." Deriving this insistently affirmative title from the Beatles' 1963 song "She Loves You," the Los Angeles–based artist focused on the era of the band's rise to mania inducing superstardom and presented a range of that decade's collectibles, ephemera, and iconography—from notable record sleeves to smirky-face buttons to a portrait of Ed Sullivan.

Muller rendered the imagery with his characteristically light and friendly touch, in watered-down acrylic on paper. Its collective impact, however, was anything but anodyne. For instance, the head-on depic-
tion of a fighter plane in Not Strange always (all works cited, 2012) tips toward critique (perhaps relating to the Beatles' dalliance with the protest song) when placed in dialogue with Little Ed (—the aforementioned Sullivan portrait, which, overwritten with four boldface tears, seemed suggestive of the Fab Four's "conquest of America." Other pieces spoke more obliquely to the cultural moment, including Labyrinths (Forking Paths), a modest triptych that depicts paperback copies of Borges's 1962 volume of short fiction.

Once a college-dorm staple, Borges's rites, commonly found on a shelf just above the likewise "trippy" record collection, used to boast a certain coun-
terculural cachet.

But by every indication, cultural products no longer neatly signify this way. Vaporized as concrete things to take up a second life in the cloud, they have only become increasingly inter-
changeable. In the act of reproducing these various relics of the not-so-dis-
tant past, Muller commemorated a time when social identifiers were implicitly territorial. Yet nostalgia here served less to remind us of how things once were than to articulate the way they are now. Of course is Muller's sharp focus on wear and tear. Convincingly, and with hard-won ease and economy, he takes care to depict signs of use—

the creasing of record sleeves, the soft-
ning of book spines, the fading of photographs—causing the objects he recovers in his work to appear suspended somewhere between the auratic and the trashy, their exchange value depreciated, their sign value destined to grow ever more opaque to ensuing generations. As though intended to distress or age these works, Muller's technique involves a liberal application of drys and stains paradoxically, it is this feature that most clearly ties the works to the present, to the artist's own hand and authorship of the work, while suggesting, as well, that all slips out of grasp. Here, pictorial facture functions both as a signature and something akin to a scratch on an EP.

In the last segment of the exhibition, the now-dishabiled Beatles reappear, this time as corporate co-owners. Muller had installed four
RIO DE JANEIRO

Dias & Riedweg
2 CENTRO DE ARTE HÉLIO OITICICA

The exhibition "Até que a Raiz Nos Separe" (Until the Street Do Us Part), installed in exemplatory fashion at the Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica in a commercial district of central Rio de Janeiro, brought together nine video installations and four series of photographs made in the city between 1992 and 2012 by Maurício Dias and Walter Riedweg. Their work demonstrates the relationship between art, politics, and society in the complex urban context that is Rio, from the social cataclysm of the 1990s to the present-day efforts toward "libera-
tion" of the favelas, passing through the empire of drug traffickers.

The video installation Desvotacionalia, 1994–2003, is a moving example of a sociological and collective approach to a desperate situ-
ation. In 1995, the artists took 1,200 molds of hands and feet, which functioned as ex-votos, from children living in the streets, asking them at the same time to express a wish; they recorded close to eighty hours of speech. A decade later, they sought out those same children to hear what had become of those wishes in the intervening years. Half of them, as expected, had long since died, while the other half, now adults, were no longer alive. With Desvotacionalia, however, we are not confronted with the kinds of emotional reductionism or sentimental exhibi-
tionism but testimony to an act of almost religious solidarity, evoking the humble rite of washing the feet of paupers as one of the noblest symbols of humility in Catholicism.

In the video installation Funk Staden, 2007, a funk dance (choreo-
graphed as a pagan ritual) is juxtaposed with a reading of Hesse Staden’s 1557 account of his captivity among the Tupinambá people of Brazil, a pioneering work of ethnology that accentuates the issue of anthropophagy, a concept that has occupied a special place in Brazilian modernism ever since Oswald de Andrade issued his "Cannibal Manifesto" in 1928. The conflict between spoken words and the lan-
guage of bodies is one of the structural components of Dias & Riedweg’s oeuvre and demonstrates that the capacity for sexual expression by people in movement, like those of the youths seen in Funk Staden, takes on a further life in a metaphorical discourse about a body or a community.

But it is in the most recent works—the video A cidade fora dela (The City Outside Itself), 2011, Silvino à noite no jardim (Saturday Night at the Fairgrounds), 2011; O espelho e a tarde (The Mirror and the Afternoon), 2011; and Peladas noturnas (Nocturnal Kickbacks),
2012—that the artists reach a new level of mastery. They no longer seem to feel the necessity of appealing to a brutal social fact, or of providing external political or anthropological references for viewers. Diverse points of view of a single locale, shown simultaneously, gen-
erate a flow of images that superimpose and succeed one another. In The Mirror and the Afternoon, for instance, a young man strolls through one of Rio’s most infamy locales, the Complexo do Alemão, with a mirror under his arm, opening up different perspectives inside a single plane.

With these works, Dias & Riedweg succeed in showing, with sub-
tle calm, what they have seen in the people and places they have known for over twenty years. As the artists explain, they "lead doubt and modesty as supreme subjects of vertuosity." These works open up to lives and gazes that are not our own (and that we can share only until "the street separates us"), demonstrating that the world is an endless flow of images that superimpose and succeed one another but that can suddenly, almost miraculously, become ours for a moment, before they once again escape our grasp.

-Sérgio Martins

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-Alexandre Melo

Translated from Portuguese by Clifford E. Lordes.