A photograph of a cluttered office desk. The desk is covered with stacks of papers, folders, and various office supplies. A blue office chair is visible in the background. The text 'PAPER PUSHERS' is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, stylized font. The background shows a wall with a whiteboard and a 'DANGER' sign.

PAPER PUSHERS

Paper Pushers

Richard L. Nelson Gallery

University of California, Davis

September 29 — December 11, 2005

Curated by Renny Pritikin

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Nicole Fein

Tom Friedman

Midori Harima

Jason Jägel

David Miles

Stephanie Syjuco

Jill Sylvia

Christopher Taggart

Yuken Teruya

PAPER PUSHERS

A recent wall text* about Richard Tuttle discussed the artists' earliest work (small cardboard cubes circa the late 60s) as taking a material that was and is traditionally utilized for its surface, for drawing, and transporting it into the sculptural realm by the mere act of folding. It is in the spirit of that act that *Paper Pushers* was organized. This exhibition of nine artists includes work that participates in a range of ways to torment paper that includes cutting, hanging, piercing, laying on the floor, molding, wrapping, making dioramas, and building ephemeral objects. The larger goal, in the spirit of Tuttle, is to find ways to create new meaning using such a modest and commonplace material.

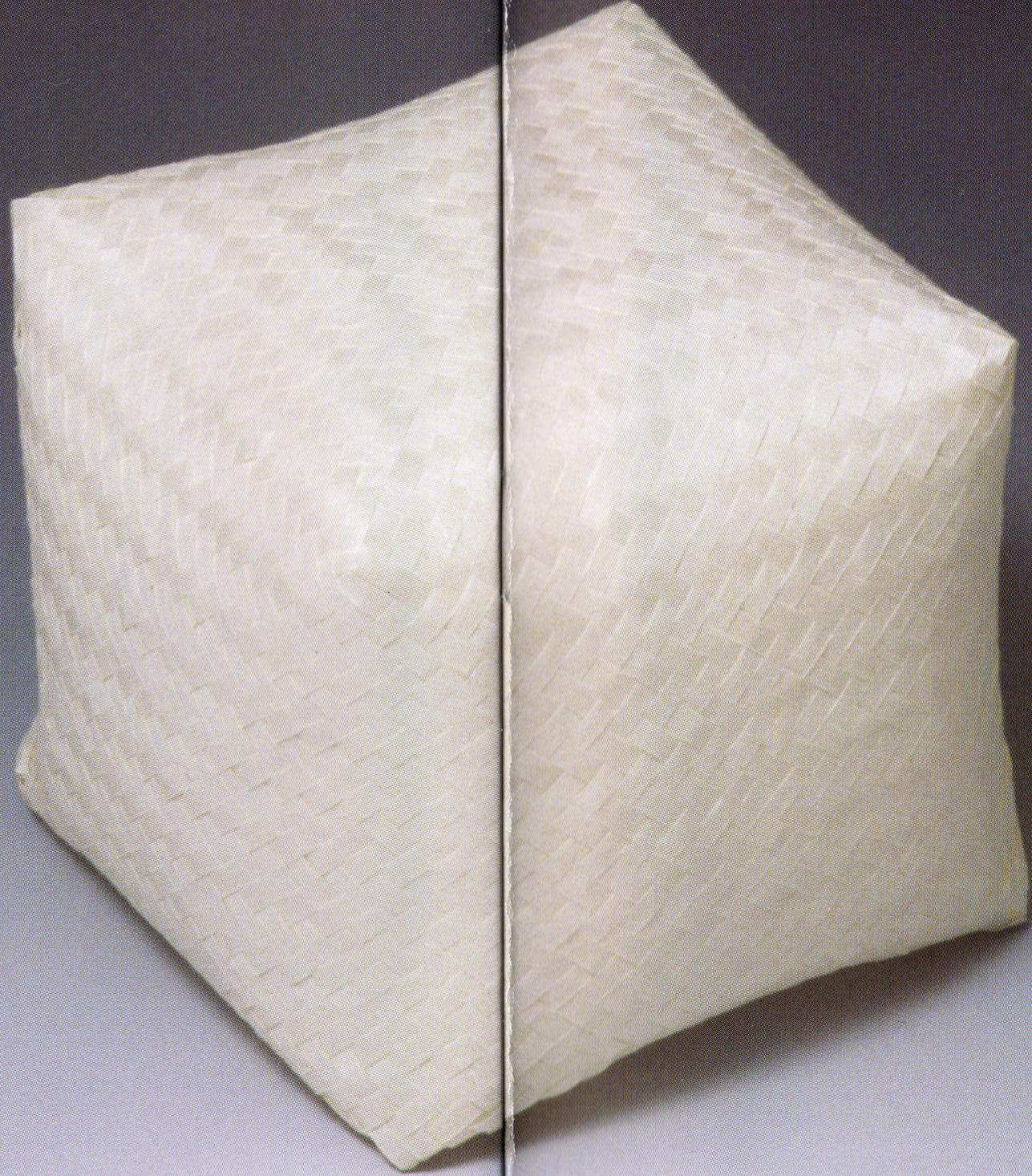
Paper Pushers includes artists who work exclusively with paper, others who do frequently, and some who use it only in this instance to solve a specific problem. The work extends over a range of practices that place emphasis variously on: the end product or the process and techniques employed; a celebration or a deliberate disregard of the preciousness of the medium; pursuit of differing understandings of beauty, from the immaculate to the rough; a conceptual (David Miles challenges himself to tell a story in pictures in 3 dimensions) or an object (Nicole Fein wants to see what a box or pillow of paper would look like) orientation.

*From the retrospective at SF MoMA, Summer 2005, by the curator Madeleine Grynsztejn.

Sculptors can call upon a predictable bag of tricks to delight audiences. These tricks include making multiple identical versions of an object, making very big or very tiny versions of familiar objects, or making everyday objects out of surprising materials. Notable about the roster of artists in *Paper Pushers* is their ability to find new formal solutions to the aesthetic problems they set for themselves.

[David Miles](#), an English sculptor, first became recognized for his machines that could facilitate his escape from danger. These remarkable works, which could move him through space and time, were made of cardboard. His new body of work involves the use of black cardstock mobiles that often depict dark narratives of violence through sequential images, often as many as four or five objects forming a non-linear story. They combine his ongoing fascination with quotidian danger—muggings, suicides and the like—with a Kara Walker-like precision in silhouette drawing.

Two artists in *Paper Pushers* are process-oriented, and work with paper to exploit its inherent quality of simultaneous fragility and strength. Their work is also highly labor-intensive, requiring hours of concentrated attention. [Jill Sylvia](#) creates beauty out of the most banal material close at hand: her dad's old accounting notebooks. These ledger book pages are augmented with rigorous—even obsessive—discipline in which she cuts out all the negative spaces, leaving a fragile latticework where the printed lines are. Artwork on paper contains an image on a background, referred to as a figure and ground. Sylvia's objects disturb our expectations of artwork in two dimensions, and become sculpture, by being all figure with no ground. [Nicole Fein](#) explores the poetics of fragility in her intimate and small-scale works. Like Sylvia, she sets up projects that take many hours of repetitive, skilled



Artist Biographies

Nicole Fein was born in Evanston, Illinois in 1974 and lives in San Francisco, California. She holds an MFA from Mills College, Oakland.

Tom Friedman was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1965 and lives in Conway, Massachusetts. He received an MFA from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Midori Harima was born in Yokohama, Japan in 1976 and lives in Queens, New York. She received a BA from the Women's University of Fine Art in Kanagawa, Japan.

Jason Jägel was born in 1971 in Boston, Massachusetts and lives in San Francisco, California. He received an MFA from Stanford University.

David Miles was born in 1970 in Worthing, England, and lives in Brighton, England. He received a BA from the Falmouth School of Art, Cornwall, England.

Stephanie Syjuco was born in Manila, the Philippines, in 1974 and lives in San Francisco, California. She received an MFA from Stanford University.

Jill Sylvia was born in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1979, and lives in San Francisco, California. She holds an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute.

Christopher Taggart was born in Princeton, New Jersey in 1973 and lives in Berkeley, California. He received an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Yuken Teruya was born in 1973 in Okinawa, Japan, and lives in Brooklyn, New York. He holds an MFA from the School of the Visual Arts, New York.

Checklist & Lenders

Nicole Fein
Wave, 2004
8 x 8 x 2"

Cloud, 2002
6 x 6 x 6"
Courtesy of Wanda
Kownacki

Tom Friedman
Untitled, 2004
58.5 x 88.5 x 2"
Courtesy of Feature
Gallery

Midori Harima
Untitled, 2004
44 x 34 x 13.5"

Untitled, 2004
55 x 43 x 17"

Jason Jägel
Fat Flower, Skinny
Stilk, 2005
36 x 16 x 10"

I Like Ice Cream, Too
2005
7 x 5 x 8"

Forget-Me-Nots, 2000
8.5 x 6 x 5"
Private Collection

David Miles
Pact, 2005
16 x 16 x 11"

Kiosco, 2005
19.5 x 19.5 x 9.75"

Milkman, 2005
27.5 x 27.5 x 8"

Girl, 2005
13 x 13 x 8"

Shootout, 2005
18 x 18 x 8"

Alex, 2005
23.5 x 23.5 x 9.75"

Summer II, 2005
31 x 31 x 16"

Stephanie Syjuco
Composite Bamboo
Forest, 2005
7 x 5 x 4'

Bling Bling, 2004
18 x 14 x 18"

Future Shock Nesting
Boxes, 2005
18 x 9 x 4"
Trillium Press edition

Jill Sylvia
Untitled (Month), 2005
5'7" x 6'6" x 1"

Untitled (Book), 2005
11 x 17 x 2"

Chris Taggart
(Virtual) Heart (of a
Pig), 2001
26 x 34.5 x 10.5"
Courtesy of Ace Gallery

(Virtual) Hand, 2000
54 x 34.5 x 10.5
Courtesy of Ace Gallery

Yuken Teruya
Notice-Forest
(www. Grazo3.at), 2003
4.5 x 10 x 13.25"
Courtesy of Shoshana
Wayne Gallery

Notice-Forest, 2002
3 x 4 x 7"
Courtesy of Foster
Goldstrom

Silver Mitten Paper
Bag, 2002
3.5 x 6 x 11"
Courtesy of Dickran
& Ann Tashjian