

February 8 - Paul Ramirez Jonas

Paul Ramírez Jonas' selected solo exhibitions include The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut, The Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas; a survey at Ikon Gallery (UK) and Cornerhouse (UK); Alexander Gray Gallery (NYC); Roger Björkholmen (Sweden); and Postmasters Gallery (NYC). He has been included in group exhibitions at the Gallery for Contemporary Art Leipzig (Germany); P.S.1 (NYC); The Whitechapel (UK); Irish Museum of Modern Art (Ireland); Künstlerhaus (Austria); The New Museum (NYC); and Kunsthaus Zurich (Switzerland). He has participated in the Johannesburg Biennale; the Seoul Biennial, the Shanghai Biennial; the 28th Sao Paulo Biennial; and the 53rd Venice Biennial. He has been teaching for the past fifteen years at a number of institutions such as Columbia University, New York University, Cal Arts, RISD, and Bard College. He was appointed as an assistant professor at Hunter College in 2007. He holds a BA from Brown University '87 and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design '89.

“I create as I speak. I have always considered myself merely a reader of texts. The pre-existing text can be anything that I can treat as a score: a diary, a plan, an old photo, a footpath, sheet music, etc. The reading can take the form of a performance, a sculpture, a photo, or a video. Thus, a musical score may result in a sculpture, and a travelogue in a video, or the plans for a flying machine in a photo. Therefore, in my artworks, what looks like invention is but re-enactment, and what seems to be exploration is but walking in someone else's footsteps. However, not unlike a musician playing from a score, or an actor performing from a play –the pre-existence of a text does not preclude passion, enthusiasm, humor and new meanings. Reading is a creative and free act. Being a reader, don't I have more in common with the public than with the author? It is that commonality that I find inspiring in working with pre-existing materials. This was the basis of most of my work through out the nineties. I am still working from this heart felt premise. However, I see my role extending beyond being a private reader, and into someone who invites viewers to join in. The result of this shift is the reassertion of a contract between the artwork and its public. This contract stipulates that the works are here for them (you). You must give to receive; the work needs you: even if it is just a penny, a wish, a silent recitation, or the consent in the copying of one of your keys.” -Paul Ramirez Jonas