

# TimeOut

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# ART

## Reviews

### Paul Ramírez Jonas, “The Earth Seen from Above”

LFL, through Feb 22  
(see Chelsea).

Paul Ramírez Jonas soars to new heights—both real and fictional—in a poetic exhibition that mingles optimism with a sense of futility. *Album: 50 State Summits*, for instance, is a series of photographs that recalls the task-oriented projects of early Conceptualism. In large images spread photo album-style across the wall, we see Ramírez Jonas from the back, conquering the summit of a hill or mountain while holding a banner that reads OPEN. In fact, each photo represents the artist standing on the highest elevation in a different state. So far, he has visited only ten, but he will have covered all 50 states once his mission is completed. Inspired by photos of Neil Armstrong on the moon and Sir Edmund Hillary atop Mount Everest, Ramírez Jonas's project reduces their heroic acts into a repetitive, potentially pointless exercise.

The popular radio slogan “You give us 22 minutes...we'll give you the world” comes to mind when viewing Ramírez Jonas's low-budget video *Ghost of Progress*. For this piece, the artist mounted a scale model of a Concorde jet on his bicycle handlebars and pedaled his way through various Third World streets. The all-white symbol of technological innovation is ironically propelled past decaying buildings and an impoverished populace. In this sense, the Concorde—a dated icon in Western society—comes to symbolize a future that's already over.

The technologically bypassed are also given consideration in Ramírez

Jonas's clamorous musical automaton resembling a spacecraft. Titled *Rocinante* after Don Quixote's horse, the sculpture aspires to be a satellite servicing countries without a space program. Two drums, a cymbal, a tambourine and 42 organ pipes, cobbled together with PVC tubing, plus a compound bucket and solar panels, are the components of this mechanical band programmed to play a laughable medley of the Socialist anthem “L'Internationale” and “It's a Small World.” Ramírez Jonas's mariachi sputnik, together with airport monitors displaying timetables that track and count down to the sunrise in 90 cities around the world, help transform LFL's new storefront space into a virtual departure lounge for armchair explorers of our global era.—Paul Laster



Paul Ramírez Jonas, *Album: 50 State Summits, Texas, 2002.*

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: COURTESY LEO KOENIG, INC.; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND LFL GALLERY.