

nara roesler

**frieze los angeles**  
**viewing room**  
jr and  
virginia de medeiros  
july 29 – august 1, 2021



On the occasion of Frieze Los Angeles Viewing Room, Nara Roesler is proud to showcase a two-person presentation with works by French artist **JR** and Brazilian artist **Virginia de Medeiros**.

The selection foregrounds how, despite having widely different oeuvres, the artists have come to coincide in their mutual interest in bringing focus to marginalized communities through photography. Indeed both have recurrently delved into the universes of individuals who live in societal peripheries, are consistently undermined, overlooked and neglected, striving to bring visibility to their existence.

The online booth includes works from Virginia de Medeiros' most recent series of photographs *Alma de bronze* [Bronze soul], alongside works from the series *Women are Heroes*, *Unframed*, and *The Wrinkles of the City* by JR, echoing each other's engagement with figures that act as pillars of their communities, undeterred by their disproportionate hurt. In using photographic portraiture, both JR and Virginia de Medeiros have worked to bring attention to the individual stories of those living within the margins, foregrounding the individuality of each of their subjects, and forcing the public to confront the difficulties, and importance, of their realities.

[access our online booth](#)

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Virginia de Medeiros  
*Joana Pereira da Conceição, Guerrilheiras,*  
*from Alma de Bronze series, 2017 [detail]*



*Women Are Heroes* emerged as a reflection on the fact that conflict zones are often controlled and overpowered by men, while women are cornered, undermined and intimidated, despite their critical roles as pillars of their communities. Though they often form the backbone of their social groups, offering care and support to those around them, women remain the greatest victims of violence. Having been struck by this dissonance, JR created *Women are heroes*, particularly focusing on violence stricken communities in Brazil, India, Cambodia, Kenya, Liberia and Sierra Leone, in hopes of underlining the pivotal role of women in society and foregrounding their worth. Thus, JR photographed the women of each chosen community individually, giving them full autonomy on their portraits. He then pasted their images on the walls and roofs of the slums, as well as on the sides of buses and trains running through them, giving a voice—with global reach—to life stories that are rarely heard.



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JR  
*28 Millimètres, Women Are Heroes, Action dans la Favela Morro da Providência, Maria de Fatima, day view, Rio de Janeiro, Brésil, 2008*  
color print mounted on dibond  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
125 x 181 x 7 cm | 49.2 x 71.3 x 2.8 in







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JR  
*28 Millimètres, Women Are Heroes,*  
*Downtown Monrovia, Liberia, 2008*  
color print mounted on dibond  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
125 x 188 x 7 cm | 49.2 x 74 x 2.8 in







This iteration of JR's *Unframed* series, took place in the abandoned Immigrant Hospital of Ellis Island, in Ellis Island, New York. The island is located next to the Statue of Liberty and functioned as the passageway for approximately twelve million immigrants that arrived in the United States between 1892 and 1954. Ever since 1954, the building was left unoccupied and deserted, progressively turning into a historic site home to remnants of millions of forgotten stories. As is characteristic of *Unframed*, the artist did not use his own photographs, but rather delved into the archives of the building, extracting specific images that embody the space's unique history. JR subsequently created large-scale installations throughout the building, pasting archival portraits onto the walls of the abandoned site. With this, the artist sought to revive the memories of Ellis Island, foregrounding the importance of the millions of individuals who passed through the place, as they left their lives behind in search for a better, yet uncertain future, and who together, have come to shape modern America.

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JR

*Unframed, Czech grandmother in Ellis Island*  
revu par JR, courtesy of National Park Service,  
Statue of Liberty National Monument, USA, 2014  
color print mounted on dibond  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
125 x 182 x 7 cm | 49.2 x 71.7 x 2.8 in





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JR

*Unframed, Immigrants about to head back  
to their starting point revu par JR, courtesy  
of the Ellis Island Museum archives, U.S.A., 2014*

color print mounted on dibond

edition of 3 + 2 AP

125 x 187 x 7 cm | 49.2 x 73.6 x 2.8 in





The *Wrinkles of the City* first began in 2008, and is characterized by a focus on the importance of elderly citizens within communities. Throughout the various iterations of the project in Cartagena, Istanbul, Berlin, Havana, Los Angeles and Shanghai, JR photographed senior members of the communities, printing the images in large format, and pasting them on facades, roofs and other structural surfaces in the cities. With this, the artist brought the elderly into focus, bringing their existence to the attention of passersby, and reminding them to value the experiences and memories of past times. In Havana, JR collaborated with American-Cuban artist José Parlá, together photographing twenty-five senior citizens who had lived through the Cuban revolution, and mounting the portraits across the city, which Parlá then complemented with palimpsestic calligraphic writings and paintings. With this, the installations foregrounded the invaluable nature of personal experiences and chronicles in forming collective identity, while echoing the idea of passing time, and warning against forgotten stories.



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JR

*The Wrinkles of the City, Action in Shanghai,*

*Cao Minja, Chine, 2010*

color print mounted on dibond

edition of 3 + 2 AP

125 x 186 x 7 cm | 49.2 x 73.2 x 2.8 in







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JR

*The Wrinkles of the City, La Havana,  
Alicia Adela Hernandez Fernández (artwork  
by JR, project between JR & José Parlá),  
ink on wood, Cuba, 2017*

ink on wood

unique

104 x 104 cm | 40.9 x 40.9 in



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**jr**

b. 1983, Paris, France

lives and works in Paris, France and New York, USA

After finding a camera in a subway in Paris in 2001, JR decided to travel around Europe to meet individuals who expressed themselves on walls and facades, taking photographic portraits of them and exhibiting them in the streets. With his large-scale interventions in public spaces, the artist gives visibility to phenomena and people we usually ignore. He creates radically simplified portraits featuring inquiring, poignant, observant, and solemn expressions that catch our attention and remain in our consciousness long after seen. JR has conceived films, installations, interventions, and other works in different media. The artist has collaborated with the New York City Ballet, OSGemeos, Agnès Varda, Robert De Niro, and many other artists

Through his process, JR strives to involve local communities in the development of his projects. The artist draws the attention of an audience beyond typical museum visitors by exhibiting his works in buildings on the outskirts of Paris, on walls in the Middle East, on broken bridges in Africa, or in Brazilian favelas. In each of his projects, he serves as witness to a community whose residents not only see the artworks but also take part in their creation. Elderly women become models for a day, and children become artists for a week. JR's practice does not separate actors from spectators and promotes the encounter between the subject/protagonist and the passerby/interpreter, raising questions, creating social bonds, bringing communities together, and increasing public awareness.

[learn more about the artist](#)

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#### **selected solo exhibitions**

- *JR: Chronicles*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK (2021)
- *JR: Chronicles*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, United States (2019)
- *Momentum. La Mécanique de l'Épreuve*, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France (2018)
- *Chroniques de Clichy-Montfermeil*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2017)
- *Kikito*, at the border between Mexico and the United States (2017)
- *JR at the Louvre*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (2016)

#### **selected group exhibitions**

- *JR, Adrian Piper, Ray Johnson*, Museum Frieder Burda, Berlin, Germany (2019)
- *Refuge*, 21c Museum, Bentonville, United States (2019)
- *Post No Bills: Public Walls as Studio and Source*, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, United States (2016)
- *Tu dois changer ta vie*, Tripostal, Lille, France (2015)

#### **selected collections**

- Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, United States
- The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, United States
- Château La Coste, Aix-en-Provence, France
- Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation, Hong Kong
- Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, United States

# virginia de medeiros



Virginia de Medeiros' series *Alma de Bronze* began in 2016, when the artist enrolled in the Residência Artística Cambridge, an artistic residency program based in a squatted building in the center of the city of São Paulo, Brazil. As a participant, de Medeiros moved into the Ocupação 9 de Julho, which is also the home of the members of the Frente de Luta por Moradia (FLM, or Battle for Housing Front) of the city's Movimento Sem Teto do Centro (MSTC, the Downtown Homeless People's Movement). The artist spent three months residing there, living and documenting the everyday life of the women leading the Front. During this time, de Medeiros created a body of photographs and videos that portrayed the women, and recorded their statements as each responded to the open ended question: 'Do you consider yourself to be a contemporary guerrilla fighter, a victorious woman?'

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Virginia de Medeiros  
Adriana Ferreira Xavier, *Guerrilheiras*,  
from *Alma de Bronze* series, 2017  
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308  
edition of 5 + 2 AP  
90 x 60 cm | 35.4 x 23.6 in







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Virginia de Medeiros  
*Leonice Penteado Lucas, Guerrilheiras,*  
*from Alma de Bronze series, 2017*  
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308  
edition of 5 + 2 AP  
90 x 60 cm | 35.4 x 23.6 in





exhibition view  
*Alma de bronze*, Ocupação 9 de julho,  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2018



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exhibition view  
*Alma de bronze*, Ocupação 9 de julho,  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2018







For *Alma de Bronze*, the artist delved into and chronicled a process of collective insurgence emerging from the margins, and led by women, producing a body of work that foregrounds the urgency of the matters at hand, as well as the strength and bravery of its frontrunners. The works presented portray thirteen militant women, all of which live in the Ocupação 9 de Julho and fight for their basic needs to be met, while working as housekeepers, cooks, nannies, guards, and university students, striving for what front leader Carmen Silva Ferreira defines as a battle to obtain the most basic necessities required for human dignity. With this, de Medeiros furthered her characteristic practice which, in the words of curators Gabriel Bogossian and Luisa Duarte, has developed 'a form of understanding the artistic gesture as a style, a perspective, a form of inhabiting the world, rather than a production of objects.' *Alma de Bronze* offers a unique body of work that captures both the individual experiences and the collectivity of the women's struggle, through a poetic gesture that denounces and responds to the community's social invisibility in Brazil.

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Virginia de Medeiros  
*Carmen Silva Ferreira, Guerrilheiras,*  
from *Alma de Bronze* series, 2017  
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308  
edition of 5 + 2 AP  
90 x 60 cm | 35.4 x 23.6 in







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Virginia de Medeiros  
*Irene dos Santos, Guerrilheiras,*  
*from Alma de Bronze series, 2017*  
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308  
edition of 5 + 2 AP  
90 x 60 cm | 35.4 x 23.6 in



*Alma de Bronze* was first exhibited in 2018 at the Ocupação 9 de Julho itself. The body of work was subsequently shown at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake on the occasion of the exhibition *Jamais me olharás de lá de onde te vejo*, in São Paulo, in 2019.



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Virginia de Medeiros  
*Joana Pereira da Conceição, Guerrilheiras*,  
from *Alma de Bronze* series, 2017  
inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308  
edition of 5 + 2 AP  
90 x 60 cm | 35.4 x 23.6 in



exhibition view  
*Jamais me olharás de lá de onde te vejo,*  
Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil, 2019



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## virginia de medeiros

b. 1973, Feira de Santana, Brazil

lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil

Virginia de Medeiros uses investigative processes to transgress hegemonic narratives as a means of giving voice and visibility to neglected, or marginalized histories. In order to do so, Medeiros employs methodologies that are common to both, art and documentary work, including displacement, participation and fabulation.

In her work, Medeiros does not seek to capture or represent the *Other* but rather depicts punctual aspects of certain individuals, in order for their condition to become axiomatic. The artist has often employed photography and video to represent and showcase identities and existences that have historically been omitted, such as that of transgenders, transsexuals, women or the homeless. Her work emerges from an intense immersive process, where she familiarises herself and co-exists with her research subject in an attempt to free herself from an ethnographic approach, annulling possible underlying layers of prejudice, and allowing instead for intimacy and organic narratives to emerge.

learn more about the artist

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### selected solo exhibitions

- *Clamor*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- 29º Programa de exposições, Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP), São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- *Studio Butterfly e outras fábulas*, Galeria Fayga Ostrower, Complexo Cultural Funarte, Brasília, Brazil (2018)
- *Jardim das Torturas*, Ateliê Aberto, Campinas, Brazil (2013)
- *Faille*, La Chambre Blanche, Montreal, Canada (2007)

### selected group exhibitions

- 11<sup>st</sup> Berlin Biennale, Germany (2020)
- À Nordeste, Sesc 24 de Maio, São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- Love and Ethnology. The Colonial Dialectic of Sensitivity (after Hubert Fichte), na Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, Germany (2019)
- Histórias da sexualidade, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil (2017)
- Jogja Biennale 14, Indonesia (2017)
- 31<sup>st</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2014)

### selected collections

- Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
- Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil
- Associação Cultural Videobrasil, São Paulo, Brazil
- Centro Cultural Dragão do Mar de Arte e Cultura, Fortaleza, Brazil
- Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil

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**são paulo**

avenida europa 655,  
jardim europa, 01449-001  
são paulo, sp, brasil  
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

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**rio de janeiro**

rua redentor 241,  
ippanema, 22421-030  
rio de janeiro, rj, brasil  
t 55 (21) 3591 0052

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**new york**

511 west 21<sup>st</sup> street  
new york, 10011 ny  
usa  
t 1 (212) 794 5034

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[nararoesler.art](http://nararoesler.art)

[ny@nararoesler.art](mailto:ny@nararoesler.art)