



nara roesler

jr  
o papel da mão  
nara roesler são paulo

opening  
march 25

exhibition  
mar 25 – may 20, 2023

**o papel da mão**  
**[the role of the hand]**  
marcello dantas

The human hand is one of the oldest images recorded by mankind. Found in prehistoric paintings around the world, from Lascaux and Chauvet in France to Serra da Capivara in Brazil, early representations of the hand ushered in the first era of human creativity. Under the light of fire in caves and gorges, the first visual media for storytelling appeared. These hand images signaled to future generations that the artist existed. In this way, the hand is our first self-portrait.

JR is an artist who emerged at the point of transition from analog media to social networks and their developments. His art first appeared as graffiti on the streets of Paris, and then, by astutely seizing moments of opportunity, JR's work evolved to capture narratives that linger in our imagination, far beyond the ephemeral nature of his artistic rite.

With his work, JR highlights the small actors of everyday life within large contemporary contexts. He talks about others more than about himself: his raw material is human stories that, when amplified, translate the spirit of a time and of our human condition.

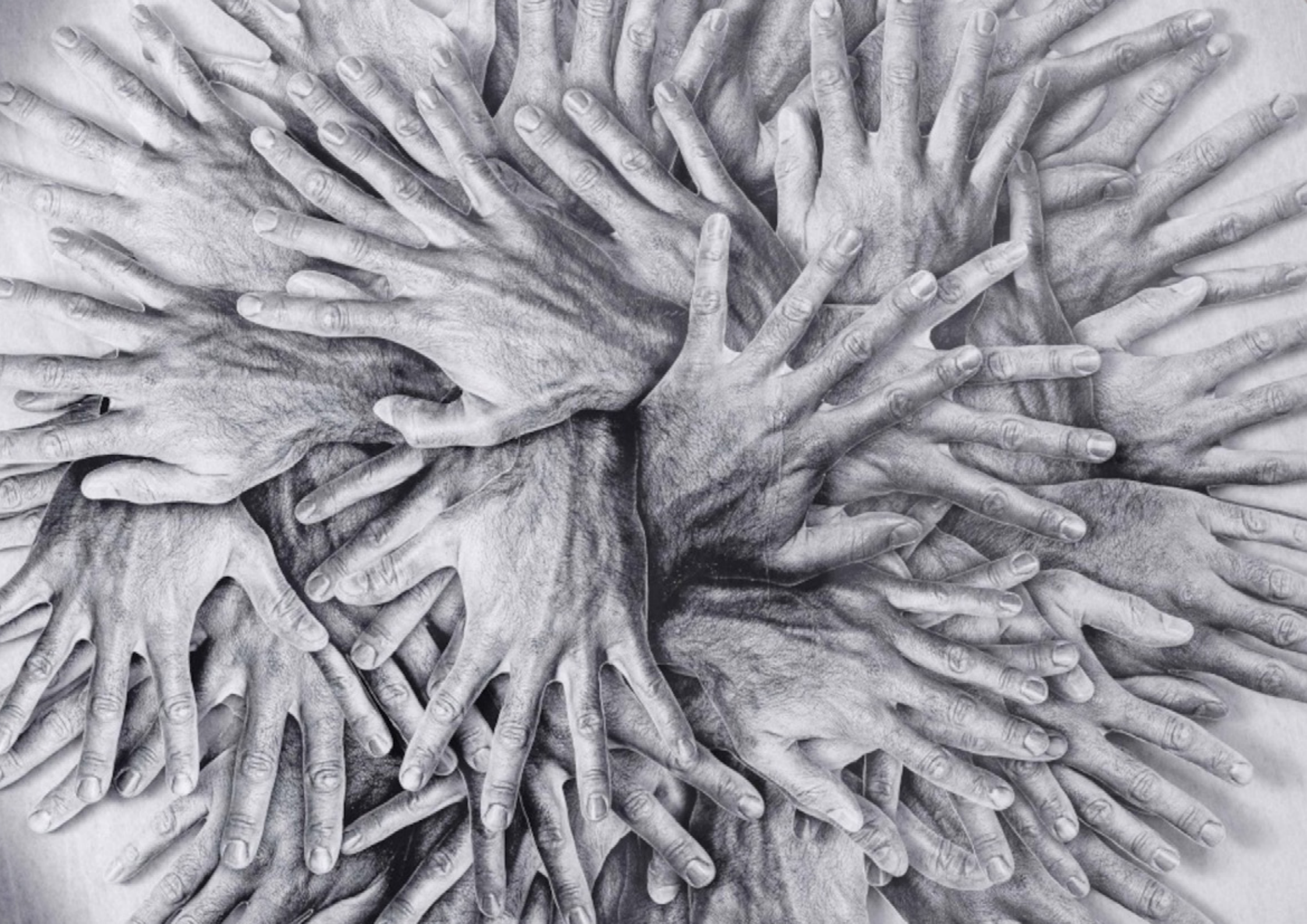
Whether through making the pyramid at Louvre Museum disappear (2016), setting up a picnic table on the border between the United States and Mexico (2017), or occupying a square in Lviv, Ukraine with a 45-meter image of a young

Ukrainian refugee during the beginning of the Russian invasion (2022), JR is always looking for possible voids left in the wake of power feuds. He is an artist who is able to engrave an indelible memory onto everyone's conscience.

Conscious or intuitively aware of facial recognition technologies, JR maintains tight control over his image and identity. For almost 20 years, he has consistently worn sunglasses and a hat, which simultaneously make him recognizable and camouflage him. Similarly, the hand is also two-fold—the back of the hand says little about our individual uniqueness, while the palm reveals everything about us, from our fingerprints and the state of our health to palmistry. When he showed me this series of work, I asked him, 'Whose hands are these?' And he replied, 'They are all mine.' Was this a self-portrait of the artist? Paying closer attention, I realized that none of the images show the entire palm of his hand.

The purpose of our hands is to hold, grasp and move with precision, but our hands also allow us to tell our own story and determine the mark we leave on the world. As such, there is a fetish in the arts about the artist's hand. With his irreverent way of shifting ideas, JR presents us with his hand while maintaining the enigma surrounding his existence. Pondering the role of the hand brings up a question that persists since prehistoric times when artists first imprinted their hands on stone: What does it mean to be human?









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*Hands, Composition # 9, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on birch  
wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
94,5 x 94,5 x 6,5 cm  
37.2 x 37.2 x 2.6 in









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*Hands, Composition # 8, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on birch wood,  
scroll cutting, walnut frameunique  
94,5 x 94,5 x 6,5 cm  
37.2 x 37.2 x 2.6 in



Women Are Heroes, Paris exhibition,  
Pont Louis-Philippe, France, 2009











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*Hands, Composition # 7, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on birch  
wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
82,6 x 104,5 x 6,5 cm  
32.5 x 41.1 x 2.6 in







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*Hands, Composition # 10, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on  
birch wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
124,5 x 94,5 x 6,5 cm  
49 x 37.2 x 2.6 in





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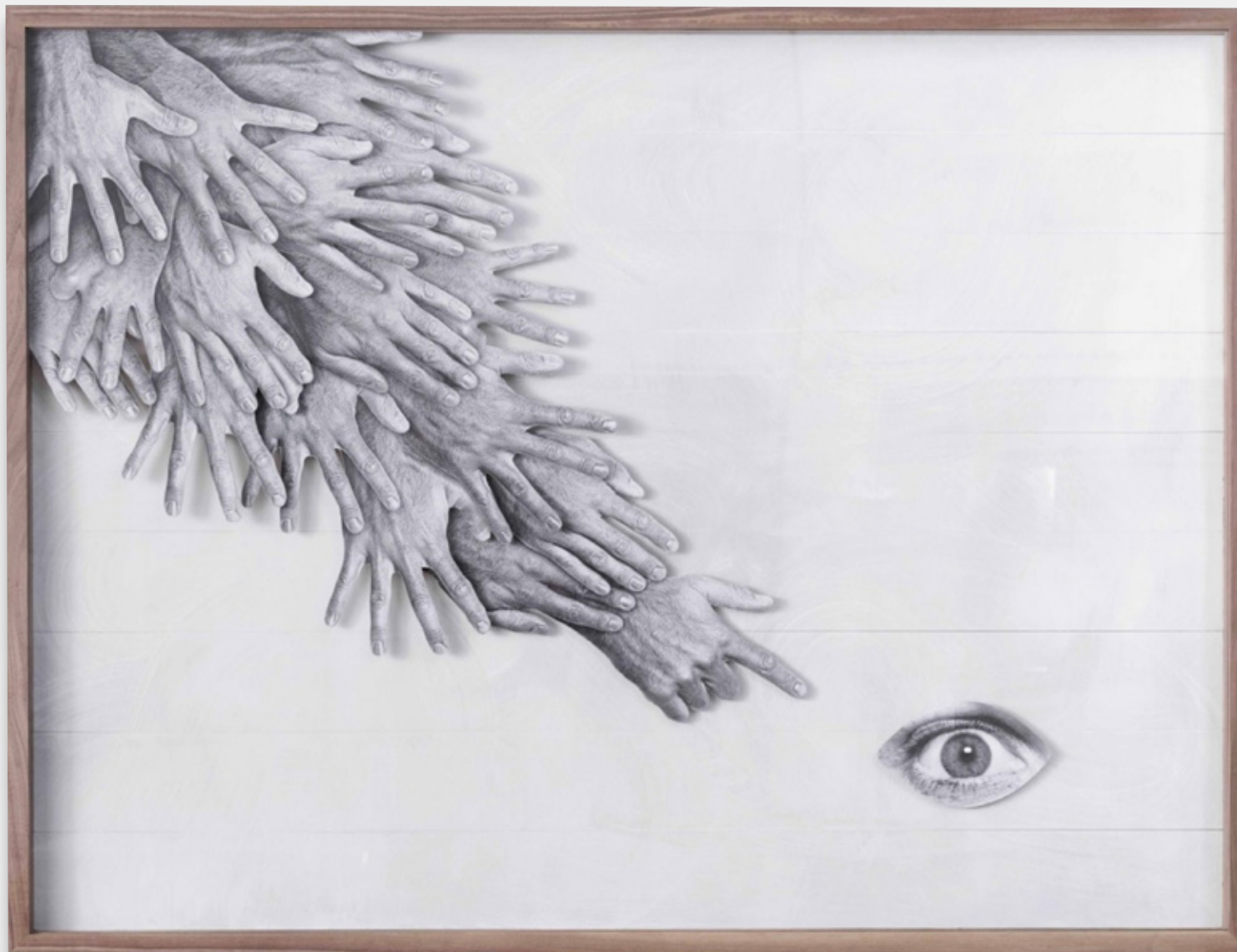
*Hands, Composition # 5, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on birch  
wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
124,5 x 94,5 x 6,5 cm  
49 x 37.2 x 2.6 in



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*Hands, Composition # 4, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on  
birch wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
124,5 x 94,5 x 6,5 cm  
49 x 37.2 x 2.6 in





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*Hands, Composition # 2, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on  
birch wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
94,5 x 124,5 x 6,5 cm  
37.2 x 49 x 2.6 in

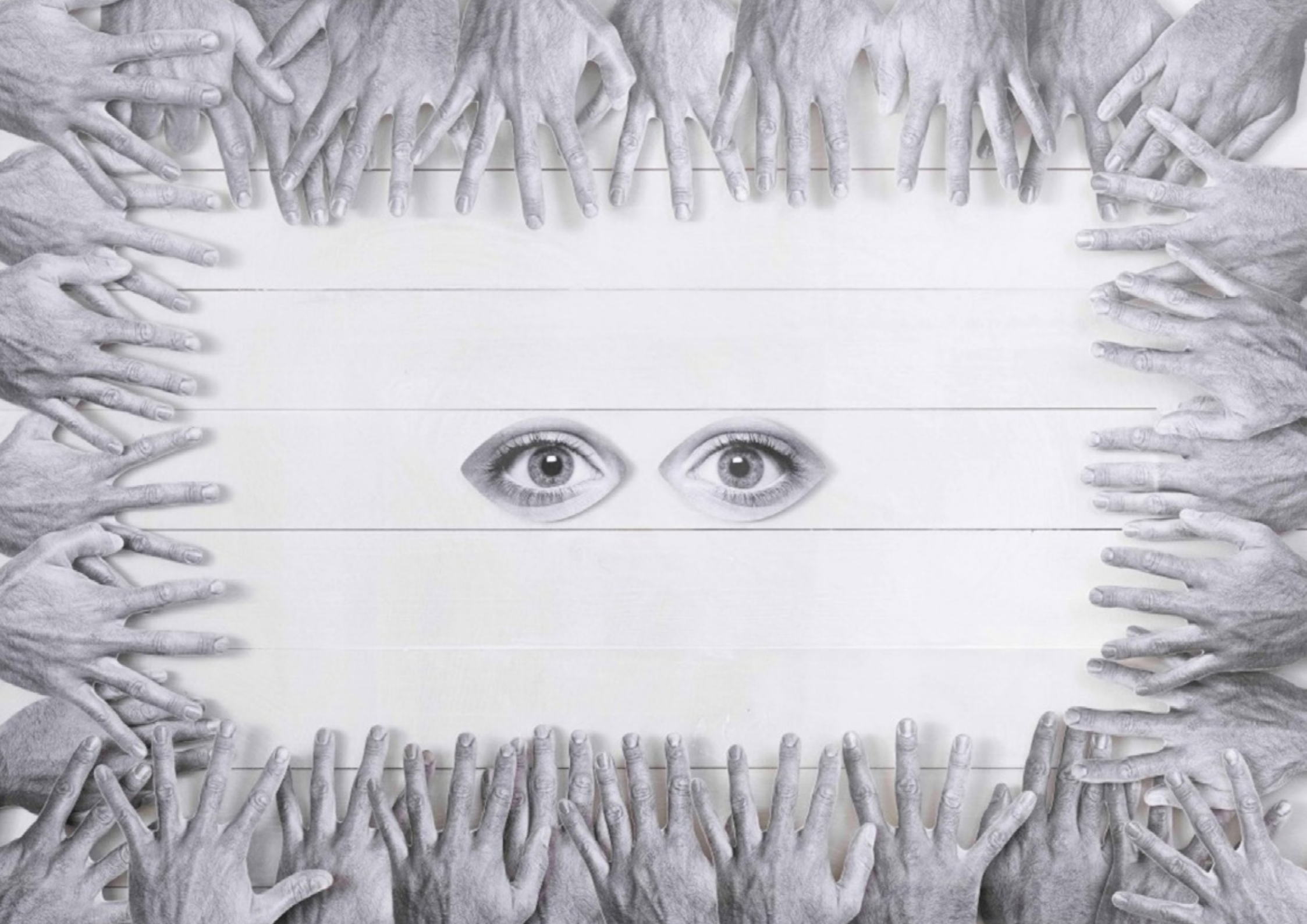


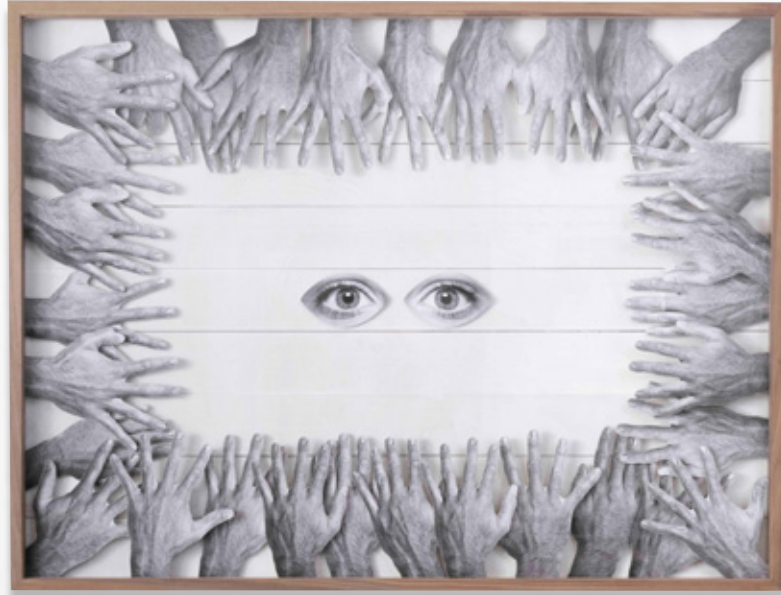
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*Women Are Heroes, Favela action*  
Morro da Providência, Rio de Janeiro, 2008





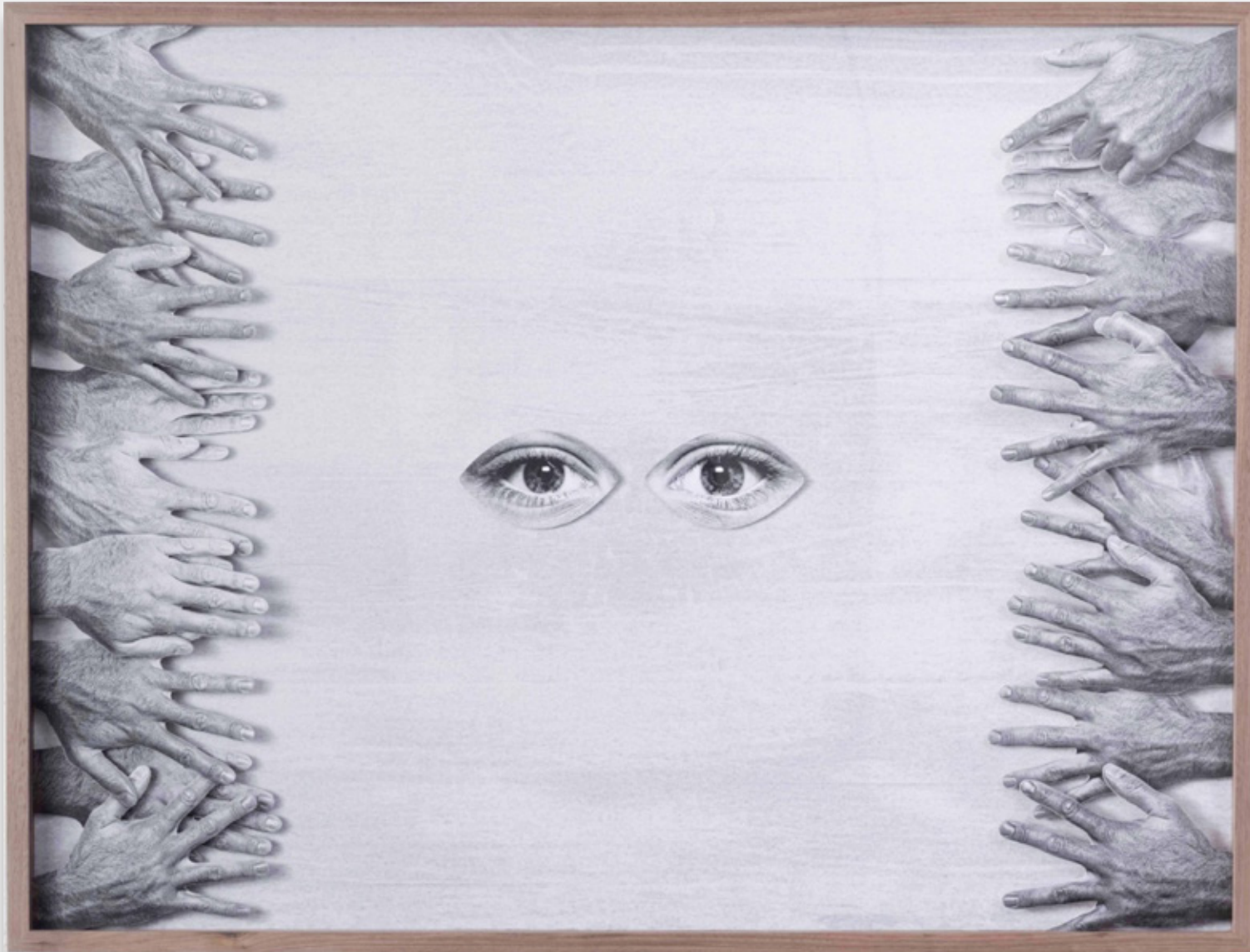




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*Hands, Composition # 3, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on  
birch wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
94,5 x 124,5 x 6,5 cm  
37.2 x 49 x 2.6 in





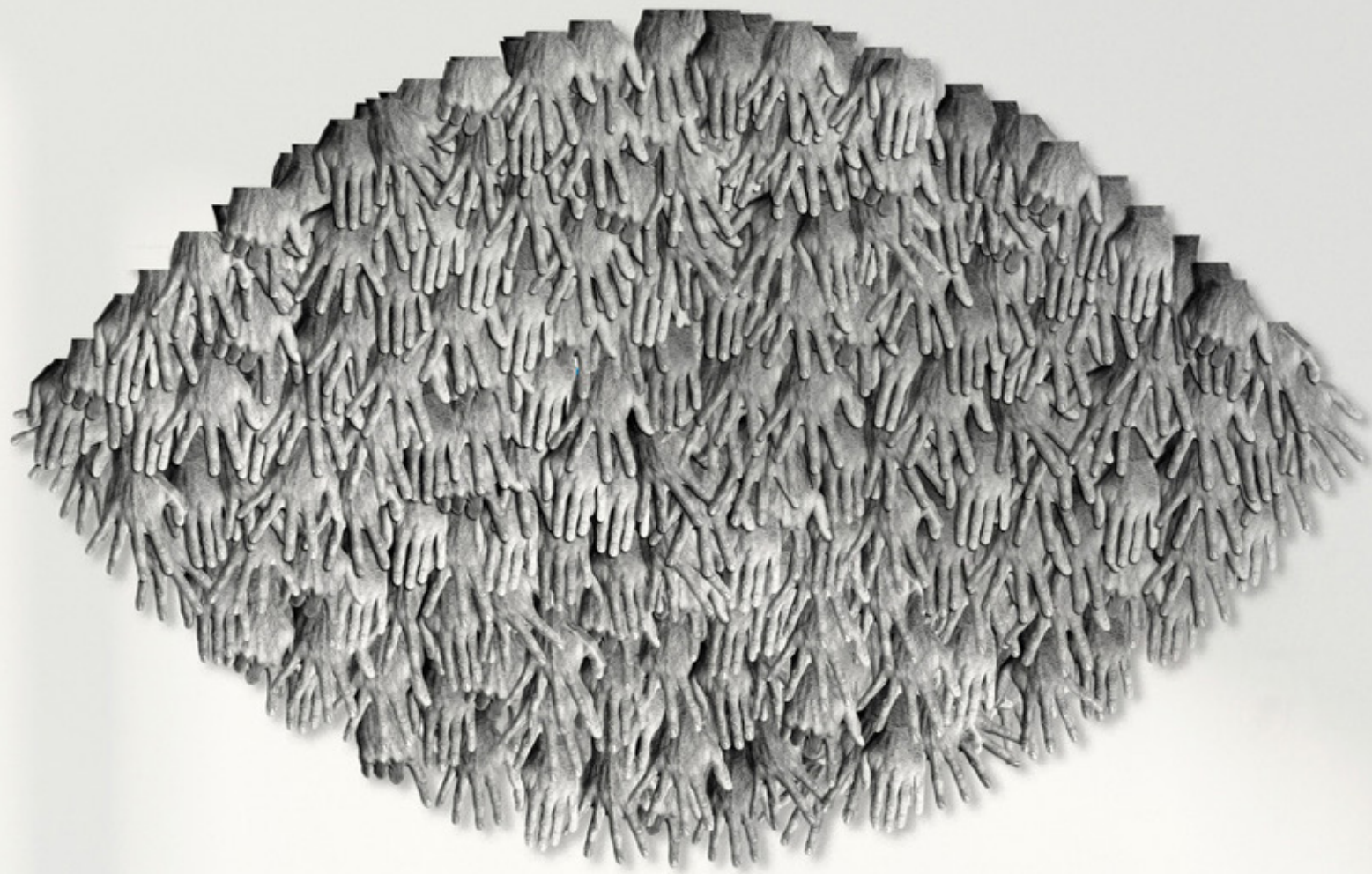
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*Hands, Composition #1, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on  
birch wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
94,5 x 124,5 x 6,5 cm  
37.2 x 49 x 2.6 in









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*Hands, Composition # 11, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on birch  
wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
160 x 250 cm  
63 x 98.4 in



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*Hand # 9, 2022*  
ink on wood  
unique  
99,8 x 259 x 3,5 cm  
39.3 x 102 x 1.4 in







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*Hand # 7, 2022*  
ink on wood  
unique  
215 x 94 x 3 cm  
84.6 x 37 x 1.2 in



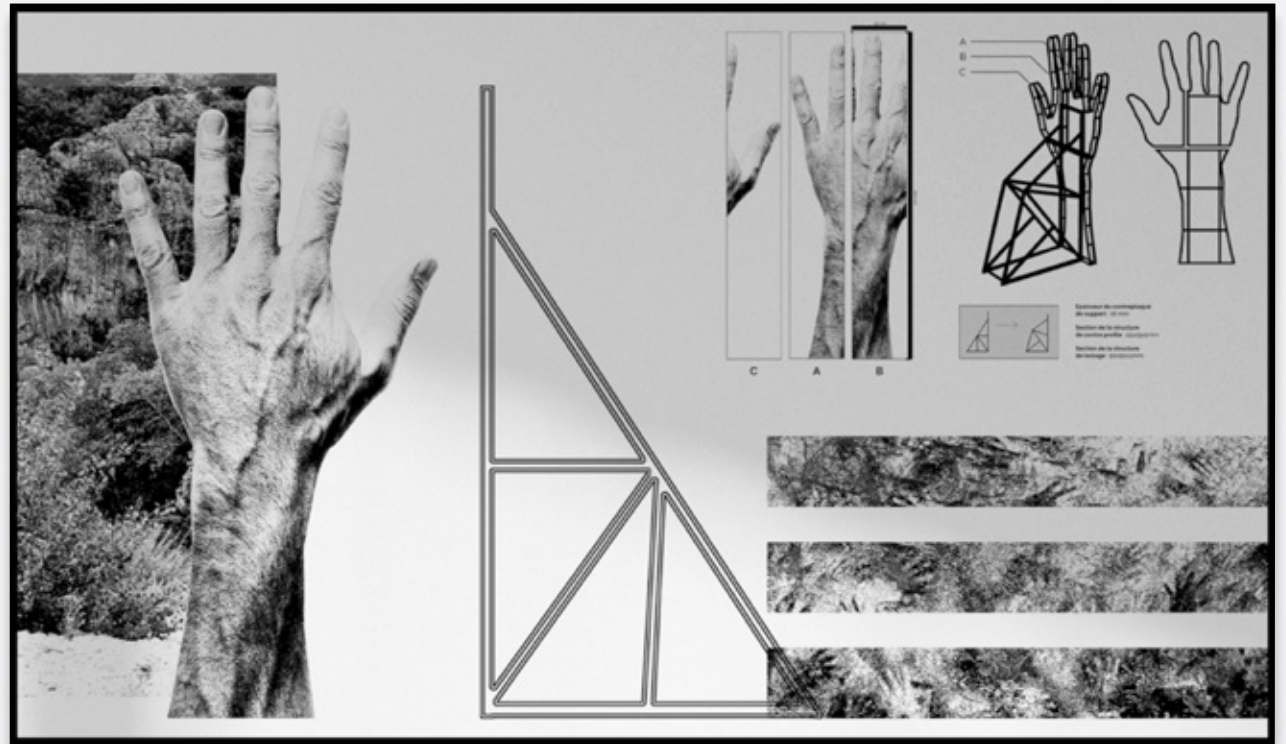
The Wrinkles of The City,  
Invalidenstrasse,  
Berlin, 2013





*Empreinte, Wip # 3, Chauvet, 2022*  
multilayer print on laser cut cardboard,  
duraclear and plexiglass  
unique  
120 x 70 x 7 cm  
47.2 x 27.6 x 2.8 in





*Empreinte, Wip # 2, Chauvet, 2022*  
multilayer print on laser cut  
cardboard, duraclear and plexiglass  
unique  
70 x 140 x 7 cm  
27.6 x 55.1 x 2.8 in





*Empreinte, Wip #1, Chauvet, 2022*  
black and white paper collage on birch  
wood, scroll cutting, walnut frame  
unique  
70 x 120 x 7 cm  
37.2 x 49 x 2.6 in

*Empreinte, Hand # 1, Chauvet, 2022*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
unique  
153 x 103 x 6,5 cm  
60.2 x 40.6 x 2.6 in







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*Empreinte, Hand # 2, Chauvet, 2022*  
color print mounted on dibond  
and matte plexiglass  
unique  
153 x 103 x 6,5 cm  
60.2 x 40.6 x 2.6 in



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*Empreinte, Hand # 5, Chauvet, 2022*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
unique  
153 x 103 x 6,5 cm  
60.2 x 40.6 x 2.6 in



*The Wrinkles of the city,*  
Istanbul, Turkey, 2015





*The wrinkles of the City, Los Angeles,  
Robert Upside Down, Downtown, USA, 2011*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
edition of 3  
176 x 140 x 16,5 cm  
69.3 x 55.1 x 6.5 in



## the wrinkles of the city

For the 11<sup>th</sup> Havana Biennale (2012) in Cuba, JR produced the fourth iteration of his project, *The Wrinkles of the City*, in collaboration with Cuban-American artist José Parlá. The series began in Cartagena, Spain, in 2008, when JR photographed older citizens, later printing their faces on large posters that he spread on facades, roofs, and other structures in the city. The project sought to celebrate elderly individuals, considering that they carry experiences and hold memories of past times that tend to disappear or be forgotten with them. The selected locations are not arbitrary but have historical importance; they are old and often abandoned buildings.

In Havana, JR selected 25 people, distributing their photos around the city, while Parlá intervened on the images with writings and drawings, creating a palimpsest of meanings. In this case, the work gained even more visibility as, in Cuba, it is not common to find images of individuals in public spaces, except national heroes. *The Wrinkles of the City* also took place in Shanghai, China (2010); Los Angeles, United States (2011); Berlin, Germany (2013); and Istanbul, Turkey (2015).



## inside out

'I want you to stand up for what is important to you by participating in a global art project, and together, we will transform the world...from the inside out,' claimed JR in his TED Talk in 2011. With the presentation, he received the TED Prize, an award for disruptive initiatives that foster a positive impact on the world. In fact, JR started a global project that has spanned over 140 countries and has reached over 400,000 people.

The project's main idea is to empower individuals to share their portraits and accounts of their interests with the world. The actions are presented on an online platform developed especially for the initiative. JR also put together a vehicle that works as a photo studio. In it, people can take their portrait and print it in the format of a large black and white poster to be displayed in the public space. With this, JR disseminated one of his trademarks, interventions with portraits printed in grayscale, giving autonomy for the public to create their own projects.

*Inside Out* has already taken various configurations in different parts of the world. Whether occupying building facades, billboards, walls, or streets, it showcases the faces of the residents of these places, humanizing the spaces. The 2013 Tribeca Festival premiered a documentary that narrates the processes involved in the project.

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*Inside Out, Native American,  
Highline close-up,  
New York, USA, 2012*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
125 x 187,5 x 7 cm  
49.2 x 73.8 x 2.8 in







Inside Out Project, Panthéon,  
Paris, France, 2014





## unframed

*Unframed* is an ongoing project that started in 2009, created from images of famous or anonymous photographers or even from archive images. JR interprets these images and takes them out of their original context according to the place, neighborhood or city in which they are inserted. In this work, JR celebrates cinema and icons of the 1920s through two collages made in the heart of Paris, portraying Charlie Chaplin in the legendary scene from *The Kid*—a film that celebrates its centenary this year—in which Chaplin plays a crooked drifter on the run from the police, accompanied by the character played by Jackie Coogan.

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*Unframed, Charlie Chaplin revu par JR,  
The Kid, Charlie Chaplin & Jackie Coogan,  
USA, 1923, de nuit, Paris, 2021*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
edition of 3  
153 x 103 x 6,5 cm  
60.2 x 40.6 x 2.6 in





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exhibition view  
*The Chronicles of San Francisco*, 2019  
San Francisco Museum  
of Modern Art (SFMOMA)  
San Francisco, USA



## chronicles of san francisco

*Chronicles* is a series of large-scale works inspired by Mexican muralism, particularly the work of the Mexican artist Diego Rivera (1886–1957). The images are made using a digital collage process. JR takes photos of people individually or in groups in his studio. At this stage, the artist usually does not direct the models but lets them express themselves freely. Later on, he organizes the final composition by arranging hundreds of people in a single scenario, generating an ultra-realistic narrative that seeks to celebrate a city or present a debate.

The project started with the uprising in Clichy-Montfermeil, a neighborhood in Paris, in 2017. In the following year, invited to create a cover for the Times Magazine, he made *The Gun Chronicles: A Story of America* with more than two hundred individuals representing different opinions about gun control in the United States. JR also carried out the project in two cities, San Francisco and New York. More than a tribute to the cities, the work aimed to celebrate their residents. In this sense, JR developed an app that allows the audience to delve into the stories of those portrayed. With a cell phone, one can scan the images and hear a short statement from each person.



*The Chronicles of San Francisco,  
Theater, Lightbox, USA, 2018*  
duratrans printing, LED backlight  
edition of 3  
70 x 140 x 7 cm  
27.6 x 55.1 x 2.8 in









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*The Chronicles of San Francisco,*  
*Theater, Close-up, Work in progress, USA, 2018*  
multilayer print on laser cut  
cardboard, duraclear and plexiglass  
unique  
70 x 140 x 7 cm  
27.6 x 55.1 x 2.8 in



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*The Chronicles of San Francisco,  
Balloons, Close Up, Work in  
progress, USA, 2018*  
multilayer print on laser cut  
cardboard, duraclear and plexiglass  
unique  
70 x 140 x 7 cm  
27.6 x 55.1 x 2.8 in









## illusions and interventions

JR is internationally renowned for his large-scale interventions that modify landscapes generating optical illusions. For this, the artist uses black and white posters that, when displayed side by side on a surface—which may be the architecture itself—create a single and hyper-realistic image, capturing the attention of the passersby and altering the way they perceive that everyday scenario.

In 2016, JR developed his first intervention with this language. Over the iconic glass pyramid of the Louvre Museum in Paris, he installed an image that, from a certain point of view, made the structure disappear, letting us see the old palace in its entirety. Three years later, he produced a new work, taking the same pyramid as the theme. This time, instead of erasing it, he laid out on the surrounding floor a composition that gave the illusion of a massive excavation around the glass structure, creating a dizzying abyss field, where the game traditionally happens, but at the sky, dreaming of a better future.

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*JR au Louvre, La Pyramide, close-up angle Nord Ouest @ Pyramide, architecte I. M. Pei, musée du Louvre, Paris, France, 2016*  
color print mounted on dibond and matte plexiglass  
edition of 3  
100 x 100 x 7 cm  
39.4 x 39.4 x 2.8 in





*JR au Louvre, La Pyramide,  
close-up angle Sud Ouest  
@ Pyramide, architecte I. M. Pei,  
musée du Louvre, Paris, France, 2016  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
edition of 3  
100 x 100 x 7 cm  
39.4 x 39.4 x 2.8 in*





JR on Louvre Museum,  
pyramid collage,  
Paris, 2016







LE SECRET DE LA GRANDE PYRAMIDE  
LE 30 MARS 2019

*Les fondations de la Pyramide sont révélées grâce à un procédé d'anamorphose  
et de collage de bandes de papier.*



COUR NAPOLEON DU MUSÉE DU LOUVRE  
6 HEURES 21 MINUTES

*Enfouies depuis des millénaires, leur mise à jour permet de prendre la mesure et l'ampleur  
du chef d'œuvre de Joch Ming Pei.*

*Scigraphie*



JR au Louvre et le Secret  
de la Grande Pyramide,  
30 Mars 2019, 6h21 © Pyramide,  
architecte I. M. Pei, musée du Louvre,  
Paris, France, 2019  
4 color print on paper mounted on  
cotton canvas, aluminum frame,  
offset plate and silkscreen printing  
edition Noir / CMJN  
185,5 x 271 x 6,5 cm  
73 x 106.7 x 2.6 in







La Ferita, Palazzo Strozzi,  
Florence, Italy, 2021







Recently, in 2021, he took over another tourist spot in Paris. At Trocadéro, JR displayed a photographic collage that expanded from the floor to a construction fence. Behind this structure, one could see the Eiffel Tower, one of the main symbols of the city. The composition, in turn, depicted an imaginary city in the underground, repositioning the famous tower in a strange balance between two rocky canyons.

JR also carried out interventions on the facades of the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and Palazzo Strozzi in Florence (2021). In the latter, the artist created the illusion of a large crack in the building's facade. This 'wound'—it is worth noting the work is titled *La Ferita*, wound in Italian—brought the building's interior to the streets, breaking from the separation between public and private. While at Pacaembu Stadium, in São Paulo (2020), JR installed in its stands the monumental image of a young Brazilian's eye that gazes not at the field, where the game traditionally happens, but at the sky, dreaming of a better future.



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*Trompe l'oeil, Les Falaises du Trocadéro,*  
20 Mai 2021, 4h55, Paris, France, 2021  
impressão colorida montada  
color print mounted on  
dibond and plexiglass  
unique  
122,5 x 183 x 6,5 cm  
48.2 x 72 x 2.6 in





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*Trompe l'oeil, Les Falaises du Trocadéro,  
27 Mai 2021, 6h18, Paris, France, 2021*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and plexiglass  
unique  
123 x 183 x 6,5 cm  
48.4 x 72 x 2.6 in







JR au Palais de Tokyo,  
28 Août 2020, 21h06,  
@Pierre Bideau, Concepteur Lumière,  
pour l'éclairage doré de la tour Eiffel,  
Paris, France, 2020  
color print, dibond, mat plexiglass  
unique  
102 x 153 x 6,5 cm  
40.2 x 60.2 x 2.6 in





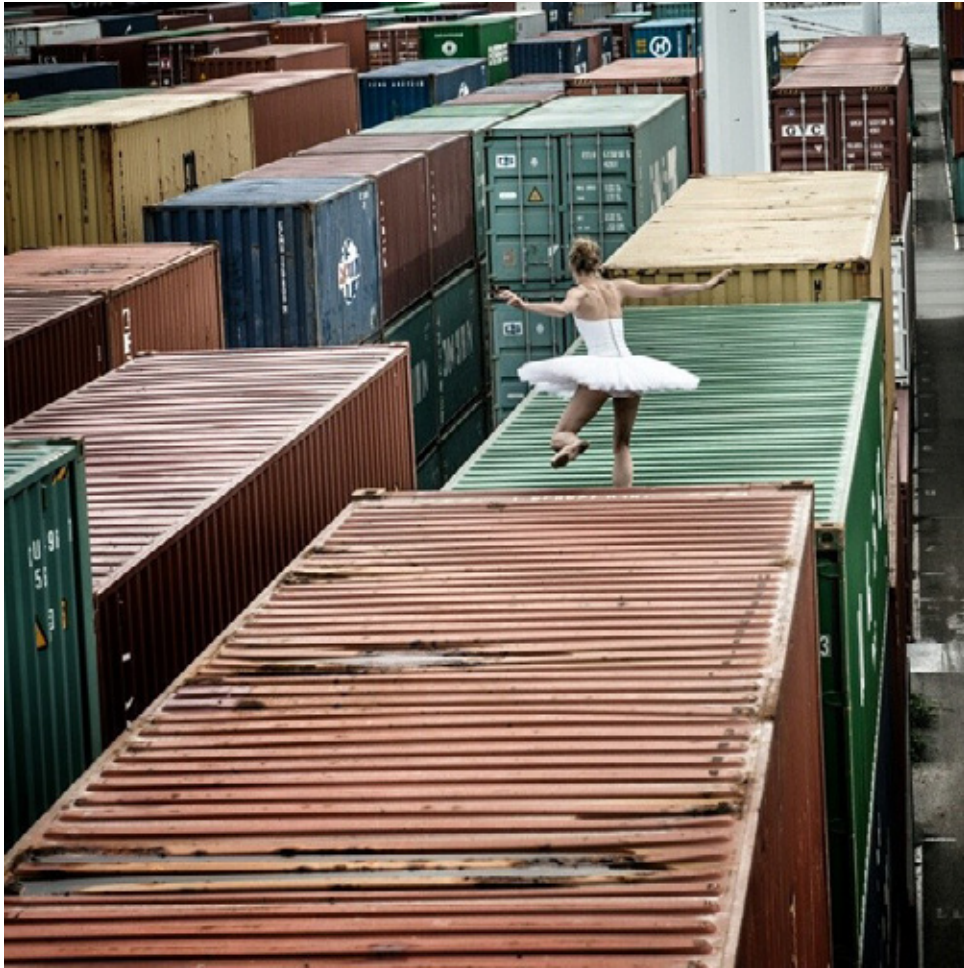




*Ballerina in containers,*  
*Holding tight, Le Havre,*  
*France, 2021*  
color print mounted on  
dibond and matte plexiglass  
edition of 3 + 2 PA  
103 x 153 x 6,5 cm  
40.6 x 60.2 x 2.6 in







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Ballet, Le Havre, France, 2014



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## jr

b. 1983, paris, france

lives and works between paris, france and new york, united states

After finding a camera in the subway of Paris in 2001, JR decided to travel Europe to meet those who express themselves on walls and facades, making their portraits and exhibiting them in the streets. Thanks to his large-scale installation in the streets, he forces us to see phenomena and people that we usually ignore. He creates drastically simplified portraits with enquiring, penetrating, watchful yet solemn expressions that draw our attention and remain in our conscience long after we have seen them. JR has conceived films, installations, interventions, and other works in different media. In addition, he has collaborated with New York City Ballet, OSGemeos, Agnès Varda, Robert De Niro, and many other artists.

Through his process, JR stroves to involve the local population in the development of his projects. JR catches the attention of people who are not typical visitors of a museum, spreading unsolicited works on the buildings of slums around Paris, on walls in the Middle-East, on broken bridges in Africa or the favelas in Brazil. In each of his projects, he seeks to act as a witness for a community. And their members don't just see them, they make them. Elderly women become models for a day; kids turn into artists for a week. JR practice does not separate the actors from the spectators and promotes the encounter between the subject/protagonist and the passer-by/interpreter, raising questions, creating a social link, bringing communities together, making people more aware, always preserving humour.

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### selected solo exhibitions

- *JR: Chronicles*, Kunsthalle, Munich, Germany (2022)
- *JR: Chronicles*, Saatchi Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2021)
- *JR: Chronicles*, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA (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*, Mexico-USA border (2017)
- *JR at the Louvre*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (2016)

### selected group exhibitions

- *Forever is Now*, Giza Pyramids, Giza, Egypt (2021)
- *JR, Adrian Piper, Ray Johnson*, Museum Frieder Burda, Berlin, Germany (2019)
- *Refuge*, 21<sup>e</sup> Museum, Bentonville, USA (2019)
- *Post No Bills: Public Walls as Studio and Source*, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, USA (2016)
- *Tu dois changer ta vie*, Tripostal, Lille, France (2015)

### selected collections

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



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nara roesler

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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  
ipanema, 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 5038

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

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