



jr

b. 1983, Paris, France

lives and works in Paris and New York, USA

After finding a camera on 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 having been seen. JR has conceived films, installations, interventions, and other works in different media. Also, JR has collaborated with 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. JR's works and projects have taken form in an array of different forms including photography, films, installations, and interventions.

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selected solo exhibitions and projects

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 institutional collections

The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, United States

Château La Coste, Aix-en-Provence, France

Hong Kong Contemporary Art Foundation, Hong Kong

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, United States

Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, United States

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tehachapi

2019–2020

As he continues to be aware of and engage with social problems, JR recently turned to the issue of mass incarceration. After getting permission to work in a maximum-security prison in Tehachapi, California, United States, the artist met and photographed 28 prisoners. During these encounters, JR invited the individuals to tell their stories freely to the camera. Former prisoners and the prison staff also participated in the initiative, generating a total of 48 portraits and accounts with different perspectives on the correctional system. Two weeks later, JR returned to the prison to install his work. With support from his team, prisoners, and prison staff, he pasted 338 strips of paper on the prison yard.

To learn more about the project and listen to every participants' stories, download the free JR:murals app for iPhone, [here](#), and Android, [here](#).

Tehachapi, Yard, 2019
California, USA

→
Tehachapi, Yard, 2019
California, USA
Photo © Marc Azoulay









In the following year, in 2020, the artist returned to the site to carry out a new intervention. JR installed images of the mountains surrounding the prison complex onto the yard's concrete walls. With this, it seemed as if the walls had dissolved, as the landscape around the prison became visually accessible from the inside—through the image, he erased the obstructing walls that separate the people from their environment.

*Tehachapi, Mountain, February 7, 2020,
6.27p.m., U.S.A., 2020*



illusions and interventions

2016–today

JR is internationally renowned for his largescale 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, once again using the pyramid as the main theme. This time, instead of erasing it, he laid out a visual composition onto the surrounding floor, which gave the illusion of a massive excavation around the glass structure, creating a dizzying abyss.

JR au Louvre, La Pyramide, 7 Juin 2016, 21h45 © Pyramide, architecte I. M. Pei, musée du Louvre, Paris, France, 2016

→
JR au Louvre et le Secret de la Grande Pyramide, 29 Mars 2019, 18H08 © Pyramide, architecte I. M. Pei, musée du Louvre, Paris, France, 2019



More recently, JR took over the Louvre again, as well as the Trocadéro in Paris, and later on the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence. All of these installations present a common use of illusions working like an anamorphosis—indeed, when observed from a specific viewpoint, the installation appears to have the building crack open as a wound. At Trocadéro, JR displayed a photographic collage that spread from the floor through to a construction fence. Behind this structure, one could see the Eiffel Tower, while the composition depicted an imaginary city in the underground, which became apparent through the ‘wound’, repositioning the famous tower in a strange balance between two rocky canyons. At Palazzo Strozzi, the ‘wound’—it is worth noting the work is titled *La Ferita*, wound in Italian—brought the building’s interior to the streets—the colonnade in the courtyard, an imaginary exhibition hall and a library—breaking the separation between public and private.



Trompe l'oeil, Les falaises du Trocadéro, 18 Mai 2021, 21h07, Paris, France, 2021



La Ferita, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence,
Italie, 2021
scaffolding installation



In addition, taking over the stands of the Pacaembu Stadium, in São Paulo (2020), JR installed a 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.

Eye Estádio do Pacaembu,
São Paulo, 2020
pasting

→→
JR au Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France,
2020





giants

2016–2018

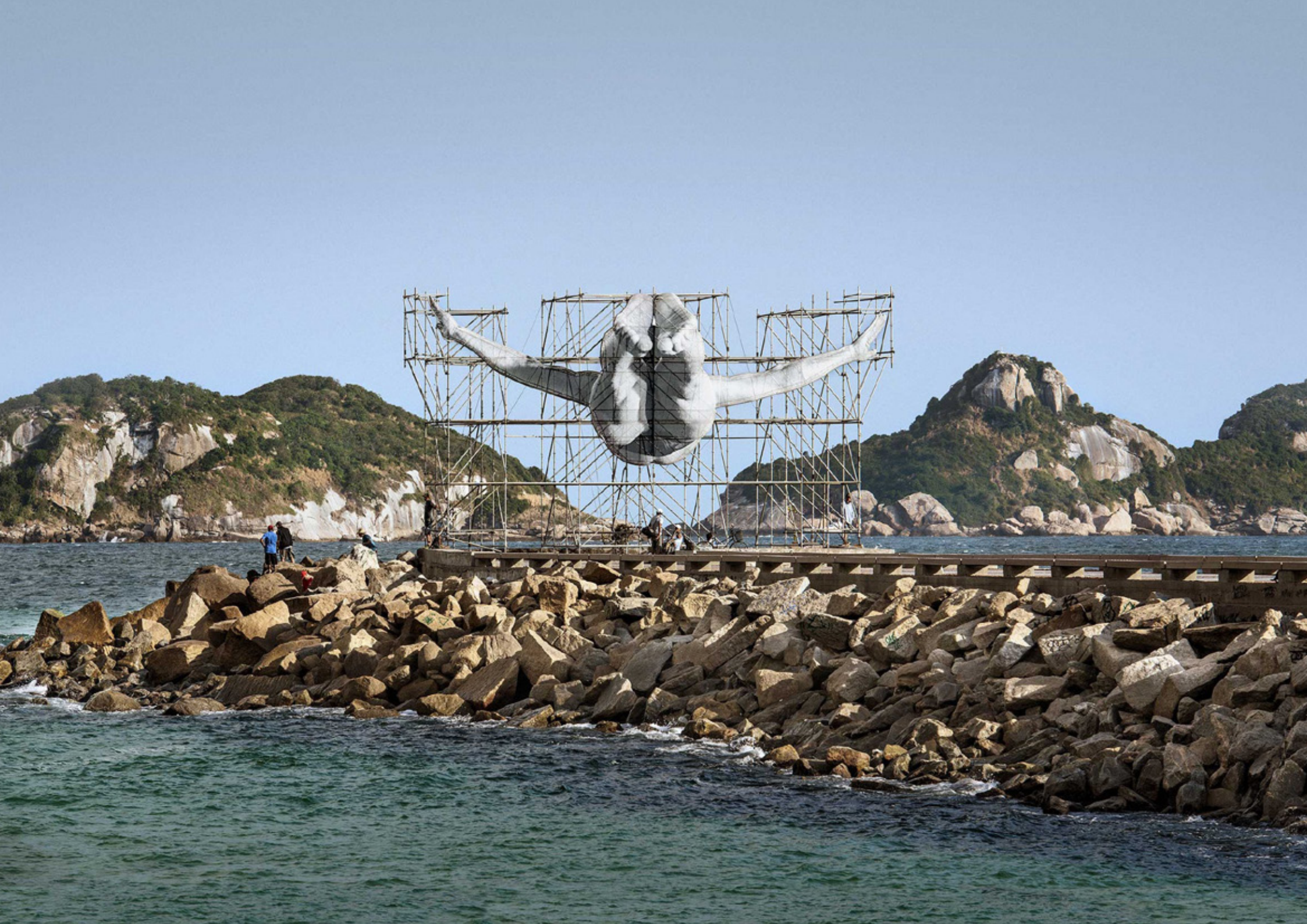
On the occasion of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, JR was invited to produce works to celebrate the competition. The artist created a series of interventions to honor the competing athletes. In different parts of the city, on the beaches of Barra da Tijuca, Botafogo, and Flamengo, JR installed monumental structures with black and white photographs. The images featured athletes performing movements related to their sports, such as jumping or swimming. Instead of choosing famous athletes, JR portrayed those lesser-known but no less competent in their categories. This way, the artist sought to value the extraordinary efforts of these individuals, who dedicate their lives to the sport, celebrating their identities and work.

GIANTS, Mohamed YOUNES IDRISSE from Sudan, Flamengo, Horizontal
© Comité international Olympique,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016
scaffolding installation

→
GIANTS, Léonie PERIAULT from France, Botafogo © Comité international Olympique,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016
scaffolding installation









In the following year, in 2017, JR followed the same process of enlarging a person's image to produce an intervention with social and political implications. Thinking about the immigration crisis, especially the project to build a wall at the border between the United States and Mexico, the artist created an installation right on the fence that divides the two countries. On the Mexican side, he installed a large structure with a portrait of Kikito, a child living in the region. When seen from the American side, it gives the illusion that Kikito is looking over the wall, turning it into nothing more than a failed division. At the end of the exhibition period, JR organized a simultaneous event on both sides of the fence. Besides sharing food during a picnic, two bands played on both sides, symbolically erasing the division between the two countries.

←
*GIANTS, Cleuson LIMA DO ROSARIO
from Brazil, Barra da Tijuca, from the
pier, © Comit  international Olympique,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016
scaffolding installation*

*GIANTS, Kikito, Tecate,
Mexico—U.S.A., 2017
scaffolding installation*



In 2018, JR carried out another iteration of the work at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. To celebrate the national holiday that marks the German reunification, he used archival images of the fall of the Berlin wall made by Iris Hesse in 1989. With enlarged images, he installed a composition on this important landmark of the city, recalling the tensions between both sides.



Giants, Brandebourg Gate © Iris Hesse,
Ullstein Bild, Roger-Viollet, Berlin,
Germany, 2020
scaffolding installation



FREEDOM

HOTEL ADLON



chronicles

2017–today

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 Chronicles of New York
City, 2019*
intervention

→
*The Chronicles of New York
City, 2020*
intervention at Domino Park



The project started following the uprising in Clichy-Montfermeil, a neighborhood in Paris, in 2017. In the following year, the artist was invited to create a cover for the Times Magazine, for which he made *The Gun Chronicles: A Story of America* with over two hundred individuals representing different opinions about gun control in the United States. JR also carried out the project in two other cities, San Francisco and New York. Going beyond offering a tribute to the cities, the work aimed to celebrate their residents. With this in mind, 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,
2018 [detail]
intervention

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





Guns Chronicles: A Story
of America, 2018
TIME Magazine's cover, USA

inside out

2011–today

'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, for which 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 projects, or actions, are presented on an online platform developed especially for the initiative. In addition, JR put together a vehicle that works as a moving photo studio where people can take their portrait and print it in the format of a large black and white poster. The idea is for each individual to subsequently display their photo in the public space. With this, JR disseminated one of his trademark projects: interventions with portraiture printed in grayscale that give autonomy for the public to create their own projects.

*Inside Out au Panthéon, Paris,
France, 2014*







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.

Learn more about the project via the link:
www.insideoutproject.net

*Inside Out, installation in
Hong Kong, September 2012*

→
*Inside Out, 2013
Times Square, New York*



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the wrinkles of the city

2008–2015

The series titled *The Wrinkles of the City* 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, honoring the fact that they carry experiences and hold memories of past times that tend to disappear or be forgotten with them. The locations where the artist chose to paste the photographs were not arbitrary, but rather have historical importance; they are old and often abandoned buildings.

Los Surcos de la Ciudad, Marino Saura Oton, Cartagena, Espagne, 2008

→

The Wrinkles of The City, La Havana, Luisa María Miranda Oliva, (collaboration between JR & José Parlá) Cuba, 2012



On the occasion of the 11th 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.

JR photographed twenty-five senior citizens who had lived through the Cuban revolution, and mounted 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. 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 for that of 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).

The Wrinkles of the City, Los Angeles, Robert Upside Down, Downtown, USA, 2011

→

The Wrinkles of the city, Istanbul, Kadir An Eye's, Turkey, 2015

→ →

The Wrinkles of the City, Berlin, Gustav Meyer allee clock, Lucyna STEINER, Germany, 2013







women are heroes

2008–2014

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*, a long-term project 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.



*Women Are Heroes, Action in Kibera
Slum, general view Nairobi,
Kenya, 2009*

→
*Women Are Heroes, Action in Phnom
Penh, Old Station Habitations,
Cambodge, 2009*





As is common in the artist's practice, JR developed *Women Are Heroes* in collaboration with local communities, seeking to give voice to identities and existences that are often left out. For this, he establishes relationships with the communities, aiming to understand their specificities, while also engaging in direct political and social negotiations when necessary. In the process of producing the photographs, JR grants full autonomy to the portrayed, letting them direct themselves and decide how they want to be depicted.

By establishing trust with the community, the artist also helps bolster the individuals' confidence and engagement with the project. This phenomenon adds a social dimension to JR's work, motivated by a vital sense of responsibility. For the artist, the work does not solve the issues at hand, but denounces and sheds light on unacceptable situations, which are often the result of political choices. For this reason, JR does not see himself as a political artist, as his practice does not seek to present solutions but to point out problems.

*Women Are Heroes, Gas Station,
Monrovia, Liberia, 2008*

→
*Women Are Heroes, Action in Jaipur,
Holi Fest., Inde, 2009*





Furthering his ambition to establish direct relations between art and underprivileged communities, JR created Casa Amarela cultural center in Morro da Providência, in Rio de Janeiro, where residents, especially children, have access to art workshops, democratizing access to art.

←
Women Are Heroes, Action dans la Favela Morro da Providência, Favela de Jour, Rio de Janeiro, Brésil, 2008

Women Are Heroes, Action dans la Favela Morro da Providência, Escalier, Rio de Janeiro, Brésil, 2008

→
Women Are Heroes, Action dans la Favela Morro da Providência, Arcos da Lapa, night view, Rio de Janeiro, Brésil, 2009







face 2 face

2007

Bearing in mind the long-standing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, JR organized a major photographic intervention. The project, which happened without authorization from official entities, took place on both sides of the walls that separate these two communities. The initiative sought to carry a powerful political message. JR made portraits of individuals on both sides of the border, later printing and placing them on the dividing walls. He exhibited Palestinian and Israeli faces side by side. This strategy aimed to break from the abstract idea of otherness as a threat, showing that those considered enemies didn't look so different. Through his project, JR foregrounded individuality and emphasized the similarity of traits, languages, and customs, inviting the population to face and observe the individuals that were considered each others' antagonists.

*Face 2 Face, Separation wall,
security fence, Israeli side, Abu Dis,
Jerusalem, 2007*

→
*Face 2 Face, Separation wall,
security fence, Israeli side, Abu Dis,
Jerusalem, 2007*



NEED
TO
WALLS OF

FROM
WARSAW
GHETTO

portrait of a generation

2004–2013

In 2004, while searching for public spaces where he could exhibit his work, JR chose the walls of Les Bosquets, a 'ghetto' in Montfermeil, in the suburbs of Paris. This choice was motivated both by affective reasons, as the artist had personal relations with some of the neighborhood residents, and strategic ones, given his interest in bringing art to spaces with little access to it.

Portrait of a Generation invites us to gaze into the eyes of men who are often frowned upon by society. In turn, through their portraits, the individuals return the look to passersby, encouraging the public to question the negative stereotypes around young people from impoverished communities.



*Portrait d'une génération, Collage
Ladj Ly by JR, Montfermeil,
Les Bosquets, 2004
pasting*

→
*Portrait d'une génération, Omar,
Paris, 20ème arrondissement, 2004
pasting in Paris*





In 2013, when he learned that the buildings where he installed the first images from this series would be demolished, JR decided to revisit the project. The artist recovered the original photos, printed them in large-scale formats and pasted them onto the buildings' walls. This action sought to renew the dialogue between the recent history of Paris, its suburbs, and its residents.

*Portrait d'une génération, B11,
Destruction, Montfermeil, France, 2013*





expo 2 rue

2001–2004

In his teenage years, JR and his friends would stroll around the city, writing their initials in various places such as roofs, subway cars, and on building walls. This experience with graffiti was his first authorial contact with artistic manifestations. This language allowed the artist to leave his mark in the urban environment, reaching a wide and diverse audience beyond institutional exhibition spaces. This characteristic would become one of the trademarks of the artist, who sees the city as a large open-air gallery, allowing for direct dialogue with the public.

ici bientôt une Expo ?



Upon finding a camera in a subway in Paris, the artist began to document his interventions and those of other graffiti artists. The images were printed in A4 size and pasted on the city walls. In order to make sure that no one would mistake them as advertisements, JR used spray to draw a frame around the prints, intertwining the different pastings and highlighting their presence. During this time, he also started to travel as an artist, pursuing his artistic process throughout different cities in Europe. The actions happened in broad daylight and busy areas. According to the artist, the more obvious the gesture was, the less attention it attracted. It is also interesting to note, that while the images may have been removed or covered with other posters, the graffiti frame remained, creating a process of gradual ephemerality.



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