

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS DUBAI

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JR

FERITA

15/09/2023 - 4/11/2023

Tuesday - Saturday 11.00 - 19.00

Galleria Continua is delighted to present **JR's first solo exhibition** in its spaces in Rome. Gaining momentum in the early 2000s through his **street collages** documenting life in suburban areas of Paris, JR quickly established himself as a **leading figure of the international art scene by investigating the social and economic fabric of contemporary urban landscapes**. Creating art out of action, exhibiting outside the confines of museums, JR perpetuates his **commitment to changing the way people perceive the world through art**. In doing so, the artist **generates porosity between communities, geographies and people**, creating a much-needed space for dialogue and understanding. Since his first wild collages in the streets of Paris, JR has had **solo exhibitions** in prestigious institutions such as the **Brooklyn Museum (2019), SFMOMA (2019) or Palais de Tokyo (2017)**. He was invited to create monumental installations by emblematic museums and historical sites such as the Louvre (2016, 2019), the **Giza Pyramids (2021) or Berlin's Brandenburg Gate (2018)**.

This exhibition gathers for the first time works from JR's biggest and most iconic anamorphosis: **the Breaches, which became viral symbols of the inaccessibility of culture during the pandemic**. Created in Rome and Paris in 2021, **these monumental installations use anamorphosis - the technique of distorting an image in such a way that it becomes recognizable only when viewed from a specific angle - to unveil what is, was or could be hidden from our sight**. We present here the last relics of these bold large-scale collages alongside an exclusive anamorphosis created in-situ for the purpose of this exhibition. Together, these works bring us back to the true **essence of JR's artistic practice**, as he told Hans Ulrich Obrist in 2022 **"The pasting, the preparation, the installation: all of this is the art. The photo is a memory of it: I don't define myself as a photographer"**.

In **La Ferita** (the Wound), JR created a **monumental pasting - 33m tall for 28m wide - representing a gigantic gash breaching the 15th century façade of Florence's most**

recognisable palace: **Palazzo Strozzi**. Installed in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic that so harshly impacted all sectors of culture, the artist materialized the wound that **Covid-19** was inflicting upon all art spaces across the world: the **deprivation of their essence** and the prevalence of uncertainty. Nevertheless, JR's **message was also one of hope**: as the **façade of the monument was being split open**, it revealed the **splendid colonnade of the Palace's courtyard**, an **imaginary exhibition hall filled with Florence's most valuable artworks** - including an upside-down *Birth of Venus* - and the library of the National Institute for Renaissance Studies. Through the wound, confined Florentines were able to reconnect with their heritage and to remember that behind closed doors, the treasures of their city were still alive, all the more reasons to hold on.

A few months later, JR was invited to intervene on another temporarily inaccessible palace of great architectural and historical significance: **Palazzo Farnese, home to the French Embassy in the heart of Rome**. JR took the ambassador's wish to "Open the palace to the public during refurbishment" literally and **ripped the façade of the building open with a collage of even bigger proportions - more than 600 square metres**. From a mineral abyss, **treasures of the Farnese collection emerge from different ages**: from Salviati's frescoes which still adorn the Ambassador's office to the long-gone Farnese Hercules restored in its original place. In this **surreal composition**, the lavish halls of the palace seem to float at the cross-road of spatial and historical

vanishing points - **Punto di Fuga** in Italian, giving its name to the installation.

Ahead of his installation on Palazzo Farnese, JR had already pushed his architectural research a step further by **reshaping the entire topography of Paris's emblematic Trocadero Esplanade**. In lieu of the iconic perspective profoundly anchored in the collective psyche, **Parisians and tourists discovered the Eiffel Tower sitting astride a colossal precipice**, leaving the noise, pollution and crowd of the city at the bottom of a narrow valley. This monumental installation called the urbanization of the French capital in question, challenging the place given to **historical monuments and art in the city's fabric** whilst casting a harsh light on the **issue of socio-spatial segregation in Paris**, one of the most expensive cities in the world.

JR captured these installations and their encounters with passers-by at different times of the day, documenting the ways in which the evolving nature of daylight interacted with the anamorphosis to create **an infinity of unique yet ephemeral sceneries**. Among the rare mementos of these monumental artworks, **these printed pictures were mounted on Dibond - the material used by JR for his collages - as to assert the direct line of descent that connects the photographs to the installation they represent**, two parts of the same total artwork.

Alongside his large-scale photographs, **the artist has created the first Work In Progress pieces from the *Ferita* and *Punto di Fuga* series specifically for this exhibition**. Together,

they unveil the meticulous preparation and stage the essential elements in play for the execution of these monumental installations. **Preparatory drawings, site photos and layout plans are printed,** laser-cut and layered together to form images that open a **window to JR's creative process.**

The works presented in the **Cabinet de Curiosités** allow us to appreciate **the diversity of JR's wider practice, whether in terms of medium or projects.** From his emblematic series *Les Bosquets* to his first large-scale anamorphosis at the Louvre by way of his most recent project *Déplacé.e.s*, **this selection allows visitors to grasp the guiding principles** behind two decades of a unique body of **work** that speaks of commitment, freedom and identity.

JR (1983) exhibits freely in the streets of the world, catching the attention of people who are not typical museum visitors. From the suburbs of Paris to the slums of Brazil to the streets of Istanbul, JR pastes huge portraits of little-known people. In 2011 he received the TED Prize, after which he created *Inside Out*, a global participatory art project that allows people worldwide to receive their portraits as large posters to install in a public space in support of an idea, project, or cause. As of July 2022, over 450,000 people from more than 141 countries have participated by creating their own installations or entering one of the gigantic photobooths. His recent projects include a large-scale pasting in a maximum security prison in California, a *TIME* Magazine cover about guns in America, a video mural including 1,200 people presented at SFMOMA,

a collaboration with New York City Ballet, an Academy Award Nominated feature documentary co-directed with Nouvelle Vague legend Agnès Varda, a huge installation on the Pantheon in Paris, a pasting on the pyramid of the Louvre, a monumental mural "à la Diego Rivera" in the suburbs of Paris, giant scaffolding installations at the 2016 Rio Olympics, an exhibition on the abandoned hospital of Ellis Island, a social restaurant for the homeless and refugees in Paris or a gigantic installation at the US-Mexico border fence.

As he remains anonymous, JR leaves the space open for an encounter between the subject/protagonist and the passer-by/interpreter. That is what JR's work is about, raising questions.

Galleria Continua is located inside the prestigious hotel The St. Regis Rome, with which since 2018 it has presented works by international artists like Loris Cecchini, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Hans Op De Beeck and Ai Weiwei, to name a few. Together they also collaborate with the *Città dell'Arte* Fondazione Pistoletto with which they often host workshops and talks for school-age children. Since 2022 Galleria Continua has been an active part of *Arte di Vivere*, the festival dedicated to art, music and cuisine for the city of Rome organized by the St. Regis Rome, which this year will see its second edition on 22-23-24 November.

For more information on the exhibition and photographs:
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