

Palazzo Strozzi in Florence Launches Programme to Celebrate New Contemporary Art with Major Installation by JR titled 'La Ferita'



JR portrait 2019

Palazzo Strozzi in Florence has today unveiled a major new installation by acclaimed French contemporary artist JR, whose site-specific artwork 'La Ferita' ('The Wound') has reinterpreted the façade of the Renaissance palazzo, opening it up to reveal a vision of an interior at once real and imaginary achieved with a black and white photographic collage to trigger a debate on the accessibility of culture in the age of Covid-19.

The installation launches the **Palazzo Strozzi Future Art Programme**, a new initiative to support the production and promotion of contemporary art in Italy including an annual public art commission for Florence. The Programme has been developed by the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi with philanthropist Andy Bianchedi in memory of his mother, Hillary Merkus Recordati, to provide a much-needed catalyst to the arts at a challenging time by creating an important new commissioning platform for works of art in Italy that aims to celebrate creativity and champion accessibility. More details on future commissions and activities will be announced in the coming months.

'La Ferita' Public Art Commission

JR has created monumental photographic collages that have inspired audiences around the world from the favelas in Rio de Janeiro and the Louvre in Paris, to Ellis Island in New York and the top security penitentiary in Tehachapi County, California. This latest work 'La Ferita' imagines the Renaissance palazzo with a deep wound or gash revealing the interior of the building with some of Florence's most iconic artworks occupying the space. Measuring 28 metres tall and 33 metres wide, this monumental photographic collage installation covers the primary façade of the Palazzo Strozzi and works like an anamorphosis, an illusion in which, observed from a specific viewpoint, various areas of the Palazzo Strozzi – the colonnade in the courtyard, an imaginary exhibition hall and a library – open up as a wound.

By including iconic works of Florence's art heritage and directly citing real places such as the library of the Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, JR proposes a direct and evocative reflection on accessibility not only to Palazzo Strozzi but to all cultural sites in the era of Covid-19. Palazzo Strozzi becomes the spectacular stage for a

JR LA FERITA THE WOUND

FIRENZE
PALAZZO
STROZZI

DAL 19 MARZO 2021

symbolic yet painful wound suffered by all cultural institutions both in Italy and abroad: museums, libraries, cinemas and theatres forced either to restrict audience access or to shut down altogether. Looking 'inside' Palazzo Strozzi also has the makings of an act of voyeurism designed to reveal that which cannot be seen: the depiction of a reality that goes beyond what one can customarily behold.

With this latest work, JR also adds a new dimension to his ongoing dialogue with art history by transforming the façade of the Palazzo Strozzi into a 'Trompe l'œil', a reference to architectural perspectives and the painted depiction of illusions which, from the 16th century onwards, allowed artists to portray an illusory depth into the thickness of brick or stone by applying their perspective studies to sheer walling. With this installation, JR also references another important moment in art history termed 'Ruinism', a stylistic trend that proved particularly popular in the 18th century as part of which ancient buildings were presented as testimonials to a glorious past in a dramatic reflection on the fate of mankind.

On the occasion of this project, Palazzo Strozzi also offers a wide online public program, with special events and initiatives for families, schools and adults that will allow them to learn more about the French artist's work and interact with the work even from a distance through lectures and creative activities.

Arturo Galansino, Director General of Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, commented: *"Thanks to the generosity of Andy Bianchedi, I am proud to announce the launch of the new Palazzo Strozzi Future Art Programme, which we hope will play a key role for years to come in supporting, commissioning and promoting contemporary art in Italy. Palazzo Strozzi is unique for its determination to forge a dialogue between the classic and the contemporary through the involvement of artists capable of interpreting the present. So it is apt that we launch the Programme with JR's new work 'La Ferita', a powerful reflection on the difficult conditions surrounding access to culture in the age of Covid-19, but also a symbol of freedom, creative imagination and participation and an opportunity to involve the audience, the public at large, in a totally new way. Amid the current difficulties we all face when seeking opportunities to enjoy art in traditional venues, our decision to create an artwork on the façade of Palazzo Strozzi that everyone can enjoy can be seen both as an invitation to rediscover a direct relationship with art and as an encouragement to explore new forms of sharing and participation."*

Andy Bianchedi commented: *"I am very proud to support the Palazzo Strozzi Future Art Programme which launches with this extraordinary installation by JR. My mother, to whom this initiative is dedicated, loved art and adored Florence; all this is therefore intended to be just the beginning of a long-term collaboration with the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi."*

The project is promoted and organised by Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi and Andy Bianchedi in memory of Hillary Merkus Recordati.

Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi supporters: Comune di Firenze, Regione Toscana, Camera di Commercio di Firenze, Comitato dei Partner di Palazzo Strozzi, Fondazione CR Firenze, Intesa Sanpaolo.

With the patronage of Institut français Firenze. Thanks to Galleria Continua for their support with JR's project.

Press contact:

For International Enquiries:

Fiona Russell

SUTTON

fiona@suttoncomms.com

For Italian Enquiries:

Lavinia Rinaldi

Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi

l.rinaldi@palazzostrozzi.org

JR LA FERITA THE WOUND

FIRENZE
PALAZZO
STROZZI

DAL 19 MARZO 2021

About JR (France, 1983)

Originator of the 28 Millimeters Project which he started in and around Clichy-Montfermeil in 2004, JR continued in the Middle East with *Face 2 Face* (2007), in Brazil and Kenya for *Women Are Heroes* (2008-2011), the documentary for which was presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010 (Critics' Week). In 2011 he received the Ted Prize, giving him the opportunity to make a vow to change the world. He created *Inside Out*, an international participatory art project that allows people from around the world to receive a print of their portrait and then billboard it as support for an idea, a project, an action and share that experience, as the Orchestra Regionale della Toscana recently did at the Teatro Verdi in Florence.

In 2014, working with the New York City Ballet, he used the language of dance to tell his version of the riots in the Clichy-Montfermeil district. He created "Les Bosquets", a ballet and short film, the music for which was composed by Woodkid, Hans Zimmer and Pharrell Williams, and which was presented at the Tribeca Film Festival. At the same time, JR worked in the abandoned hospital of Ellis Island, an important place in the history of immigration – and made the short film ELLIS, with Robert De Niro.

In 2016, JR was invited by the Louvre, whose pyramid he made disappear with the help of an astonishing anamorphosis. The same year, during the Olympic Games in Rio, he created gigantic new sculptural installations throughout the city, to underline the beauty of the sporting gesture.

In 2017, he co-directed with Agnès Varda "Faces, Places", screened the same year in the official selection out of competition for the Cannes Film Festival. The film won the Golden Eye (for best documentary) and was nominated for a Caesar and an Oscar in the same category in 2018. He has received many awards around the world.

In 2013, the first retrospectives of JR's work took place in Tokyo (at the Watari-Um Museum) and the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center, followed by exhibitions at the Frieder Burda Museum in Baden Baden in 2014, and at the HOCA Foundation in Hong Kong in 2015. He exhibited in 2018 at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, and in 2019 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) and the Brooklyn Museum.

In 2019, JR and Alice Rohrwacher, the film director, created the "Omelia Contadina" project in Italy. Thanks to its new collaboration with Galleria Continua, 2020 saw an intense presence of JR in Italy. The project did continue in Venice and San Gimignano.

The first solo show of JR in Italy opened at the Galleria Continua in San Gimignano.

JR is represented by Galleria Continua, Perrotin, PACE Gallery and Nara Roesler.