130 Orchard Street
New York, NY 10002

Tuesday - Saturday
10am - 6pm



JR, *La Caverne du Pont Neuf,* 2026. ©JR. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

JR

IN THE MAKING: LA CAVERNE DU PONT NEUF

October 28 — December 19, 2026

Perrotin New York is pleased to present an exhibition by JR dedicated to the making of *La Caverne du Pont Neuf*, the artist's monumental public art project which was on view in Paris from June 15–28, 2026.

Opening Reception
Wednesday, October 28 | 5–8 PM

Artist Talk
5PM

Artist Book Signing
6–7PM

Join us at Perrotin New York for a conversation between JR and Vladimir Yavachev, nephew of Christo and Director of Projects at the Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation, as they discuss *La Caverne du Pont Neuf*, the legacy of *The Pont Neuf Wrapped*, and the enduring possibilities of large-scale public art.

The original installation transformed the Pont Neuf, Paris's oldest bridge, into a 120-meter-long cave of printed fabric. Conceived in homage to the 40th anniversary of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *The Pont Neuf Wrapped* (1985), *La Caverne du Pont Neuf* continued JR's longstanding engagement with large-scale trompe-l'oeil interventions.

This Fall, JR brings the experience of his Parisian intervention to New York. The second in a series of exhibitions, following *Les esquisses de la Caverne* at Perrotin's Paris gallery in June, *In the Making: La Caverne du Pont Neuf* will bring together preparatory sketches made in anticipation of the project, alongside never-before-seen archival photographs from its completion. Presented as works in their own right, these materials offer insight into the making of *La Caverne du Pont Neuf*, while extending the life of an ephemeral public artwork beyond its original site.



JR, *La Caverne du Pont Neuf, Esquisse #18,* 2026. Color print on paper, pasted on zinc, charcoal, anti-reflect & anti-UV 70 % glass, walnut frame. 49 x 90 x 3 inches. Photographer: Claire Dorn. ©JR. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

The following essay was written by art historian Paul Ardenne to accompany the project:

Forty-one years after Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *The Pont-Neuf Wrapped* (1985), *La Caverne du Pont Neuf* continues JR's tradition of large-scale trompe-l'oeil projects, which in recent years have adorned the Louvre, the Paris Opera, and the facades of Italian palaces. Inspired by Plato's allegory of the cave and debates on perception (What does it mean to see? Does seeing evoke a sense of truth or imagination?), these works explore the nature of illusion, deception, and art's extraordinary power to reshape the world. They carry consciousness into unprecedented, uncharted universes while their public dimension fosters collective experience and a sense of shared living. With *La Caverne du Pont Neuf*, JR once again transforms the urban landscape of Paris. Through the magic of art, a still-in-use historic landmark of the City of Light becomes a passage resembling a mountain tunnel, brought to life by a score from Thomas Bangalter, formerly of Daft Punk, and an interactive program to heighten the senses. "It's a step into the unknown," says the artist, "a journey. I designed the crossing of the Cave as an experience where fullness and emptiness exist in balance." A guaranteed break from everyday life.

The works in the gallery are deliberate thematic extensions of the Pont Neuf project, much like the preparatory drawings Christo and Jeanne-Claude created in anticipation of their own installations. Forward-looking and descriptive, they form the very foundation of the project: a documented history of its step-by-step development, reflecting both a mental blueprint and the meticulous labor of design and arrangement.

The preparatory sketches, works of art in their own right, are crafted through a consistent technique that weaves together multiple media. The process begins with photography: JR "shoots" the Pont-Neuf from various angles and selects his images. It then moves into drawing: in his studio, the artist sketches and cuts out the mineral-like shapes for the actual *La Caverne du Pont Neuf*, drawing inspiration from landscapes observed in mountainous or underwater sites, prefiguring its final form. Another medium, zinc sheets, serves as the substrate onto which the photographs and drawings are assembled through collage. Salvaged from fragments of Parisian rooftops still bearing the marks and traces of time, they lend a contextual dimension to these works, giving them an unmistakably 'Parisian' character. To this process of collage and assembly, reminiscent of Robert Rauschenberg's *Combine Painting* technique in its accumulation and juxtaposition of disparate elements, JR adds a final gesture: deliberate crumpling. The aim is to puff them up and give them volume. Photography, drawing, collage, and manual manipulation converge to create a seamless blend of two- and three-dimensional forms, once each element has been 'mounted' on the zinc base. The result is a construction plan conceived not so much as a technical diagram but as a reverie of the finished work, the completed *La Caverne du Pont Neuf* as it will appear to the visitor-viewer.

For the past quarter of a century, JR has accompanied his public artworks with a lighter aesthetic approach, such as his collages or what he himself calls *Dé-compositions*. Intended for private contemplation, these photographs or lithographs are unified by their focus on montage and the juxtaposition of visual fragments. In JR's symbolic vision, the raw world is a jumble of distinct, separate, isolated forms. It falls to the artist to recompose what reality pulls apart: to gather these fragments together in a spirit of reconciliation, reunification, and harmony. It is as though he were orchestrating our universe, so full of discord and solitude, for our own well-being, aiming for harmony and the elation of the unexpected.

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