

Art Now LA, April 16, 2026

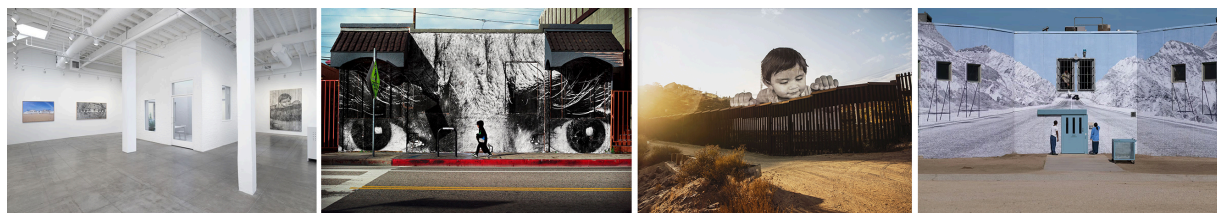
JR

Horizons: *Embracing Distortion and Perspective*

Perrotin Los Angeles

March 12 - April 25, 2026

by Jody Zellen



The Paris and New York City-based interdisciplinary artist JR has been creating photographic interventions for many years. His practice asks the public to have a heightened awareness to their locations and surroundings. JR often works with the people who inhabit the communities he visits. The results are a collaboration between the artist and numerous non-artists. At the end of each project, JR's gigantic tiled black and white photographic images cover large areas of urban space. While they are created from numerous fragments, they cohere as jarring portraits.

The focus of his Los Angeles exhibit *Horizons* is projects created in California. It was conceived as an examination of the multi-faceted concept of horizon — be it the line between sea/earth and sky, a range of vision, or something far off in the distance. On view at Perrotin are numerous large-scale color photographs created between 2011 and 2022 that document some of JR's California-based installations. While he often has permission to poster the facades he uses, his works are meant to be temporary and are best viewed (if possible) in person. Extensive documentation from street and sky perspectives gives viewers the opportunity to see and understand his interventions on a more legible scale.

Three images from the series *The Wrinkles of the City, Los Angeles* are the earliest pieces on view. They include *Jim Budman, Venice* (2011), *Robert Upside Down, Downtown* (n.d.) and *Lovers on the roof, USA* (2012). For this project, JR shot close-up photographs of the wrinkled and worn faces of elderly individuals and then enlarged the images to building size proportions. The shot of Jim Budman is severely cropped and shows his face from above his brow to below his eyes. It is positioned on a building so the eyes sit just above the sidewalk while the brow covers the boarded-up windows of the structure. The rest of his face is not included. The color photograph that documents JR's artwork captures a boy passing by whose stride parallels the image of the walker on a cross-walk sign located toward the left of the scene. The boy appears unaware that a giant wrinkled face now occupies the front of the building directly behind him.

In 2017, JR traveled to Tecate, Mexico and created a work about the border with the United States. Here, a giant image of a toddler peers over the border wall forcing

viewers to think about the relationship between a child's playing peek-a-boo over the wall versus the loaded issue of immigration. For another California-based series, JR collaborated with the correctional facility in Tehachapi (located two hours north of Los Angeles) where he photographed inmates, as well as recorded their stories. During return visits, he worked with the inmates to create large murals. *Tehachapi, The Road, Anamorphosis, #1, USA* (2022), depicts a receding road that suggests a way out of prison. In *Tehachapi, Picnic, Ruett Foster, USA* (2022), a pair of giant eyes — belonging to the victim of a violent crime — that when seen from the sky, serves as the background during a picnic celebrating the participants of the project. In *Giants, Death Valley, Billboard, Mars 5, 2017, 9:46 am, California, USA* (2017), a black and white photographic mural that depicts the contour of the “real” mountains behind it. It is placed on top of a gate in the barren desert landscape, so the documentation allows for perfect alignment.

JR's imagery embraces distortion and perspective. He is well known for creating pieces that engage with community and are social interventions meant to expose humanitarian issues. His images have covered Brazilian favelas, city buildings and museum facades. JR also founded the *Inside Out Project* (2011), a platform that helps communities stand up for what they believe in and spark global change that has organized more than 2900 group actions. (As a side note, I participated in one of these actions in New York City in 2024. JR's crew set up a temporary photo booth in Chelsea and passersby were invited to step inside and were photographed picking up a phone to “make the call” in support of equal rights. The images were later adhered to an adjacent wall and became a visual call to action).

I was delighted to see my image alongside the other participants in real time and this gave great credibility to JR's work. I was able to understand the power of community, the power of speaking out and the power of art. Though JR's exhibition at Perrotin is only documentation of his ambitious projects, it invites discussion about community involvement, expanding horizons and the framing of the man-made landscape.

<https://artnowla.com/2026/04/16/jr-horizons/>