

WHO ARE YOU, NAPLES?

As part of the JR. CHRONICLES project
Gallerie d'Italia – Naples, Intesa Sanpaolo Museum in Naples
Naples Cathedral
22 May, 2025 – 5 October, 2025

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE HERE: [JR. Chronicles](#)

Naples, 21 May 2025 – **Gallerie d'Italia bring to Naples the French artist JR**, one of the most prominent figures in contemporary art, internationally renowned for his projects that blend photography, public art, and social engagement.

The new project "*Who are you, Naples?*" was presented today at the **Gallerie d'Italia in Via Toledo**, the Intesa Sanpaolo museum in Naples. This marks the eighth chapter of the '*Chronicles*' series, which—following Clichy-Montfermeil (2017), San Francisco (2018), New York (2018), Miami (2022), Kyoto (2024), three U.S. cities (Dallas, Saint Louis, and Washington DC) with a mural on the theme of gun violence in America (2018), and fifteen cities across Cuba (2019)—now arrives in Naples with the first installation of its kind in Italy, created under the patronage of the Municipality of Naples.

The site-specific work by JR will be unveiled today, May 21, at 7:00 PM on Via Duomo, on the façade of the “Cathedral of San Gennaro” (Naples’ Duomo), which has been transformed into a mosaic depicting local faces. The installation captures the community spirit, resilience, energy, and multifaceted soul of the city.

The inauguration, open to the public, will take place in the presence of the artist; Michele Coppola, General Director of Gallerie d'Italia; the Mayor of Naples, Gaetano Manfredi; Monsignor Gennaro Matino, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Naples; and Father Antonio Loffredo, Vice President of the Napoli C'entro Foundation. The collaboration with the Archdiocese of Naples, through the Napoli C'entro Foundation, was essential in enabling the installation of the work on a sacred site for the city, acknowledging the social and symbolic value of JR's project.

In September 2024, JR began a deep exploration of Naples' complex cultural identity. Over the course of one week, from 23 to 29 September, the citizens of seven neighborhoods took center stage, with photoshoots set up in Piazza Sanità, Piazza Dante, Fuorigrotta, Mergellina, San Giovanni a Teduccio, Piazza Cavour, and the Borgo di Sant'Antonio.

During this intense period, **portraits and stories of 606 Neapolitans from diverse social and cultural backgrounds were collected**, capturing the very essence of Naples. Had the project taken

place a week earlier or later, it would have been entirely different. It is made of the people who were there at that moment.

The result of JR's work is a monumental photographic collage on the façade of the Naples Cathedral, and its composition is narrated in an exhibition at the **Intesa Sanpaolo's Gallerie d'Italia in Via Toledo**, where visitors can also experience the "behind the scenes" of the project. The exhibition will also feature three murals from the 'Chronicles' series, created in France (*Chroniques de Clichy-Montfermeil*), Cuba (*Las Crónicas de Cuba*), and the USA (*The Gun Chronicles: A Story of America*), showcasing how JR's art can spark conversation and create a powerful visual impact.

Naples with its contrasting character—refined and rough, poetic and chaotic, suspended between the sea and the volcano – has proven to be an ideal setting for this collective narrative. The women and men who took part in the project—pizza makers, firefighters, police officers, priests, writers, musicians, tourists, grandmothers, students, and even the mayor—chose how they wanted to be portrayed and told their stories in either Italian or Neapolitan. All portraits were taken with the same lighting, giving equal dignity to each participant. Audio recordings are available at jrchronicles.net.

JR has a personal connection with Naples and its culture: his studio in SoHo, New York, is just a few blocks from Mulberry Street, the heart of the Italian-American community and home to the Feast of San Gennaro. In 2014, he created *Unframed* on Ellis Island, pasting historical images of immigrants – many of them Neapolitan – on the walls of the island's former hospital. With the short film *Ellis*, starring Robert De Niro, JR paid tribute to the many who left Naples in search of a new life in America.

Through *Who Are You, Naples?*, JR invites everyone to reflect on how they would like to be remembered. This work—blending art and participation, past and present—aims to spark new conversations, foster unexpected encounters, and offer the city a portrait in which every resident can recognize themselves.

Michele Coppola, Executive Director of Art, Culture and Historical Heritage at Intesa Sanpaolo, stated: "*It has been extraordinary to work once again with JR— one of the most magnetic, well-known, and widely followed artists and photographers—on a major collective art project that, from the Gallerie d'Italia on Via Toledo, involves the whole city of Naples. A vast and striking fresco on the façade of the Duomo—one of the city's most iconic landmarks—tells the stories of hundreds of Neapolitans, giving spectacular form to the ongoing dialogue between people, streets, monuments, and art that defines Naples' unmistakable beauty. JR uses creativity as a form of social action and transforms art into a contagious force capable of reaching and uniting people. Who are you, Naples? highlights the public role of Intesa Sanpaolo's Gallerie d'Italia and shows how the cultural commitment of the country's leading bank acts as a bridge between institutions, cultural entities, and artists—bringing to life unique narratives and shared experiences. The Chronicles of Naples confirm the deep bond between the Gallerie d'Italia and the city, especially as we celebrate the third anniversary of the museum's opening in 2022.*"

JR states: "*Naples is one of the most interesting cities in Europe, because its bustling life, its energy cannot be found anywhere else. On the road for instance no one respects traffic law but everyone cares about each other. Technology hasn't disconnected people, who ask for help to each other on the streets. One can wonder how long it can stay like this, but Neapolitans are very proud of their city and to welcome us here. It is a warm and welcoming city, unique, even in Italy where everyone knows there's a truth to this city that every other city has lost. I'm very honored to have been able to create The Chronicles of Naples here and to present it on the Duomo and at Gallerie d'Italia.*"

The Mayor of Naples, **Gaetano Manfredi**, stated: "*Public art holds great cultural and social value for cities, enriching the artistic heritage of Naples, which is already extraordinary in itself. Through*

public art, even places of worship can express new meanings and become vehicles for powerful collective messages. With the work of French artist JR, the façade of Naples' Duomo becomes a kaleidoscope of humanity, reflecting outward the many souls of the city. The portraits—including mine, and it was a beautiful experience to take part—interact with the urban space and leave a mark of the work done, helping to shape the city's identity, made up of real personal stories. At the Gallerie d'Italia, the story of the project will create further opportunities for encounter and dialogue, in continuity with the site-specific installation. Art carries enormous social value, and the union of these diverse stories helps bridge differences and expresses two fundamental principles: coexistence and sharing—across past, present, and future."

Domenico Battaglia, Archbishop of Naples, stated: *"I am happy that the artistic dream of JR and his team is coming to life on the façade of our Cathedral. In the days ahead, the front of our Duomo will not simply be a decorated wall, but a collective breath—a mosaic of humanity reminding us that we are a people on a journey, not an institution gazing at its own reflection, because the Church is not a building to be preserved, but a life to be shared. It is flesh, voice, tears, and hope. It is the People of God—real women and men, with hands soiled by daily life and hearts lifted toward heaven. This work is a sign of that: faces looking out over the city like a blessing, hands intertwined like silent prayers, eyes that speak of the future. We do not hide our fragility; on the contrary, we expose it—because we believe that God does not dwell in perfection, but in love. And the Son of God, by becoming man, took on our very form: humble, shaped by contradiction—like a nativity scene that tells not a fairy tale of one night, but the daily redemption of a people. This is the face of the Church we dream of: an open home, a tent planted among the people—one that does not divide, but welcomes; that does not judge, but walks alongside; that does not impose, but serves. And if today this façade breathes new air, it is because behind every stone are living stories. And we want to keep walking with our people, with our city of Naples—with the Gospel in our hands and hope in our hearts. I sincerely thank JR for sharing his vision and his art with us, and all those who made this beautiful work possible, supporting it so generously. Thank you to those who believed that art could become living word—a bridge between heaven and earth, a mirror of every person's dignity."*

Today, May 21, at 4:00 PM, artist JR will meet visitors for a catalog signing, followed by a free preview opening of the exhibition starting at 5:00 PM.

The exhibition catalog is published by Società Editrice Allemandi.

Along with Gallerie d'Italia in Milan, Turin and Vicenza, Gallerie d'Italia Naples is part of the Intesa Sanpaolo's museum project, led by Michele Coppola, Executive Director of Art, Culture & Heritage at the Bank.

USEFUL INFORMATION

WHERE: Gallerie d'Italia – Naples | Via Toledo, 177 Naples

TIMES: Tuesday to Friday, 10 am to 7 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 10 am to 8 pm; closed Mondays; last entrance: an hour before closing time

PRICES: full €7, reduced €4, free entrance for members, schools, under 18 year-olds, Intesa Sanpaolo Group customers

INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS: <http://www.gallerieditalia.com>, napoli@gallerieditalia.com, Toll free number 800.167619

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Intesa Sanpaolo

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