DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The cornerstone of our approach to making JR: Life Between Storms, during his ambitious *La Caverne du Pont Neuf* project, was his elemental relationship with art historian Kate Bryan. As an accomplished filmmaker in his own right, JR, who typically directs his own stories, permitted us to make this film based on his trust of and respect for Kate and her ability to interpret his work. So, the decision to put Kate on screen was a deliberate choice, as her presence provided a unique vantage point. It allowed us to ask the questions JR would never think—or choose—to ask himself.

Through Kate's sensitivity, knowledge and expertise, we could look beyond the immediate spectacle of *La Caverne du Pont Neuf* to situate JR within a broader story of French art history—tracing lines not only to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's legendary 1985 *Pont Neuf Wrapped,* which was the inspiration for JRs own Pont Neuf project - but also to the illusions of trompe-l'œil and the French Impressionists who also chose to feature ordinary people in their work, in much the same way as JR.

We anticipated that filming this high-stakes project would mean JR's time would be at a premium. So we decided it would be crucial to film master interviews in order to capture the course of events clearly, but also to add depth and dimension to the work that was unfolding before our eyes. In a nod to JR's own impactful, monochrome visual language, I decided to make this interviews black and white, mark them out from the actuality. The time frames also meant we needed to be alive to any possibility which presented itself to film with JR - however random or fleeting. In this sense, the film is verité in style: unusual for an art film.

While our crew were agile and adaptable and plans changed frequently, what we could never have foreseen was the fluke storm that struck Paris and damaged the installation just days before the opening. The storm injected a real drama and tension into our story rarely seen in art documentaries. From torrential rain, hail and high winds to a punishing, oppressive heatwave, the elements rapidly became a character in the film as both JR's team and our crew battled the elements to capture the story unfolding before us. While we wondered if JR had flown too close to the sun, the sun itself was beating down on Paris and made us envisage the mountain range in Paris as a comment - not only about what's real and what's imagined - but about the very real impacts of climate change.

JR is very clear that none of his work is his alone. He is only ever able to realise his projects thanks to a team of steadfast and loyal collaborators, many of whom he has worked with for many years. I too, have been supported in this making of this film by my own team of kind, generous and creative people, who each bring their own skills and energy to the endeavour- some of whom I have worked with for nearly two decades.

In the film, Kate describes JR's Caverne as a "gift" - and it was. Free for us all to enjoy created at great cost to himself. I hope audiences feel that JR: Life Between Storms reflects this generosity of spirit - it's a film made with love and care. I hope too that they step away from the film with a renewed belief in the transformative power of art, deep gratitude for the visionary artists who refuse to put a price tag on public creativity, and reminded that it is human connections that help us weather all of life's inevitable storms.