

JAUME PLENSA

*Silent Diary*

May 9 – June 29, 2024

Opening Thursday, May 9, 2024, 6:00pm – 8:00pm



Jaume Plensa, *WAVES LIKE WORDS*, 2023.

Galerie Lelong & Co., New York is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Jaume Plensa, *Silent Diary*, highlighting new works on paper and premiering a sculptural form entirely new to the artist's oeuvre. Best known for his monumental public-facing works in portraiture, drawing has long been a rich part of Plensa's practice and was the focus of two recent institutional solo exhibitions: *In small places, close to home* at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, UK (2022) and *La lumière veille, dessins 1982-2022* at Musée Picasso, Antibes, France (2022). New drawings referencing influential poets will be on view, complemented by a selection of sculptures, the forms of which are comprised of characters from various alphabets, highlighting

language and poetry as recurring sources of inspiration in the artist's practice.

Plensa's works on paper often combine mixed media and collage, imbuing the works with a sculptural quality. In large scale drawings, Plensa geometrically arranges clippings of poems by masters of the genre—among them T.S. Eliot and Charles Baudelaire—merging the literary and visual arts. These collages are accented by shadowing and reliefs of abstracted portraiture, bringing depth to the two-dimensional forms. The artist has likened his approach to drawing and collage to the human body, bringing many individual elements together to form a more important whole. Plensa's practice is guided by a desire to create unity through connections of the body and collective memory, and with these drawings offers an expression of a reflective inner world.

In the small gallery space, a series of drawings that reference Shakespeare's *Macbeth* will be on view. The story has long fascinated Plensa, who in 2023 contributed stage direction, costumes, and set design to a new staging of Giuseppe Verdi's *Macbeth* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona, Spain. In this new collection of drawings, Plensa considers the theme of sleeplessness in Shakespeare's play, crafting dark and difficult to discern works that invoke the ominous paranoia of the story's protagonist. In *SLEEP NO MORE* (2023), Plensa pairs imagery of wire busts, a common form in his sculptural practice, with text of the iconic phrase for which the work is titled. The heads appear back-to-back, seemingly morphing into one, while shadows obscure Shakespeare's words to varying degrees, rendering some nearly illegible. Here, Plensa's exploration of what the viewer sees—or does not see—recalls the role of Birnam Wood in *Macbeth* and the illusion of the advancing forest.

The large-scale sculpture *UTOPIA* (2024), will be on view, marking the debut of an entirely new sculptural form in the artist's practice. Rendered in Cor-Ten steel, the sculpture reads "utopia," the state of being from which it derives its title. With each letter composed of an amalgamation of characters from various alphabets, this work celebrates the diversity in our shared humanity and envisions a more beautiful world characterized by this unity. While Plensa has often incorporated language in his sculptures, *UTOPIA* is the first sculpture to do so in a horizontal means; this is also the artist's first alphabet-based work to be rendered in Cor-Ten steel. With this work, Plensa

demonstrates the continued innovation of his sculptural practice and his ongoing commitment to discovering the perfect material and technology for each individual work.

## About the Artist

Jaume Plensa is internationally recognized as one of today's leading contemporary sculptors. Over the past 35 years, he has created sculptures and installations that unify individuals through connections of spirituality, the body, and collective memory. Literature, psychology, biology, language, and history have been key guiding elements throughout his career. Using a wide range of materials including steel, cast iron, resin, paraffin wax, glass, light, water, and sound, Plensa lends physical weight and volume to components of the human condition and the ephemeral.

Underlining Plensa's practice is an ongoing pursuit to evoke the beauty in simplicity, encouraging points of convergence for viewers of the work, which range from architectural landmarks bridging local communities to intimate sculptures. Plensa's long career with public-facing artworks—seen all over the world from Seoul to Dubai—originates from his belief in the ability of art in public spaces to create inclusive, transformative experiences for a diverse and extensive audience.

The artist's celebrated works can be seen at The Shard, London, UK; Newport Pier Park, Jersey City, New Jersey; Hudson Yards, New York City; Bonaventure Gateway, Montreal, Canada; Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois; Olympic Sculpture Park, Washington; Burj Khalifa, United Arab Emirates; BBC Broadcasting Tower and St. Helens, England; Pearson International Airport, Canada; Daikanyama, Toranomon Hills, and Ogijima Japan; Shanghai IFC Mall, China; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, New York; Rice University, Texas; Bastion Saint-Jaume, France; Raoul Wallenberg Square, Sweden; Pérez Art Museum Miami, Florida; among many other sites worldwide.

*Jaume Plensa: JANUS*, a solo exhibition organized by Fondazione Berengo, is currently on view at Chiesa di San Gallo, Venice, Italy, through September 2024. Solo museum exhibitions have been held at Musée d'Art Moderne de Céret, France; MACBA-Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas; Musée Picasso, Antibes, France; Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, UK; and the Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Finland. *Jaume Plensa: Together* was presented at the Basilica San Giorgio Maggiore in Italy as a collateral event of the 56th Venice Biennale. The artist was honored at the Hirshhorn New York Gala in 2019 and received the Velázquez Prize for Plastic Arts from the Ministry of Education and Culture, Madrid, Spain, in 2013, among other accolades. In 2024, the artist will receive an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from Notre Dame University, Indiana. A documentary feature of the artist's life and work *Jaume Plensa: Can You Hear Me?* was released in 2020.

The artist was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1955, where he currently lives and works.

## HIGHLIGHTS



**Jaume Plensa**  
*UTOPIA*, 2024  
Cor-Ten steel  
Overall: 96 x 392 in (243.8 x 995.7 cm)



**Jaume Plensa**  
*THE BURIAL OF DEATH*, 2023  
Mixed media and collage on paper  
74  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 98 in (190 x 249 cm)



**Jaume Plensa**  
*THE HYACINTH GIRL*, 2023  
Mixed media and collage on paper  
74  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 96  $\frac{7}{8}$  in (190 x 246 cm)



**Jaume Plensa**  
*SLEEP NO MORE*, 2023  
Mixed media on paper  
11  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 16  $\frac{1}{2}$  in (29.5 x 42 cm)



**Jaume Plensa**  
*MACBETH*, 2023  
Mixed media on paper  
11  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 16  $\frac{1}{2}$  in (29.5 x 42 cm)