

GALERIE LELONG

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For immediate release

Jaume Plensa
In the Midst of Dreams
September 10 – October 24, 2009
opening reception: Thursday, September 10, 6 - 8 pm

Three resin heads of women, illuminated from within with white neon and rising out of a blanket of white marble stones covering the floor, make up the central work in Jaume Plensa's upcoming exhibition *In the Midst of Dreams* at Galerie Lelong. The exhibition will open to the public on Thursday, September 10 from 6 to 8 pm. The artist will be present.

Since Plensa's last exhibition at Galerie Lelong in 2006, he has been exploring the idea of what portraiture means in an increasingly diverse world community. Using computers, Plensa begins from a true subject from life, often a woman, and then alters her face so that race and sometimes gender are indeterminate. As in his series *Soul*, previously exhibited at Galerie Lelong, Plensa works the form to find a commonality expressing the inner presence that emanates from every man and woman. The heads are overlaid with texts related to various states of being. In one, Plensa refers to a text Oscar Wilde wrote in prison, detailing the abusive punishments of hunger, insomnia, and disease that were prevalent. The references to these emotional and physical deprivations express a darker side of the human condition.

By contrast, a related series of alabaster heads emanate a serene presence. The works bear female faces that emerge softly from within the stone. For these sculptures, Plensa used a photographic source and laser-cut stone, uniting a craft that goes back to Classical Greece with 21st-century technology. *In the Midst of Dreams* expresses Plensa's vision of a universal, global humankind, where race and nationality are superseded by a common need for spirituality and dreams.

In the Midst of Dreams is Plensa's fourth solo exhibition at Galerie Lelong. Monographic museum exhibitions were presented recently by the Institut Valencia d'Art Moderne; Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Nice; and Frederick Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. He is represented in numerous public collections, including the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, and North Carolina Museum of Art. Plensa is active in creating public commissions worldwide—most recently, he was selected to develop a site-specific installation for the Burj Dubai, the world's tallest structure upon its completion this year. Other celebrated public works include *Crown Fountain* in Chicago's Millennium Park and *Breathing* at the BBC Broadcasting Tower in London. In January 2010, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas will present *Jaume Plensa: Genus and Species*, an exhibition of 9 large-scale sculptures and installations.

Exhibition: Jaume Plensa, *In the Midst of Dreams*
Dates: September 10 – October 24, 2009
Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 am - 6 pm
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Forthcoming exhibition: Sean Scully, October 29 – December 12