

GRAY

ARTICLE 19 -
EVERYONE HAS THE
RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF
OPINION AND
EXPRESSION; THIS
RIGHT INCLUDES
FREEDOM TO HOLD
OPINIONS WITHOUT
INTERFERENCE AND
TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND
IMPART INFORMATION
AND IDEAS THROUGH
ANY MEDIA AND
REGARDLESS OF
FRONTIERS.

ARTICLE 20 -
1. EVERYONE HAS THE
RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF
PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY
AND ASSOCIATION.
2. NO ONE MAY BE
COMPELLED TO
BELONG TO AN
ASSOCIATION.

JAUME PLENSA
Forgotten Dreams

GRAY Chicago
Apr 7 - Jun 3, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Forgotten Dreams
Apr 7 - Jun 3, 2023

GRAY Chicago
2044 West Carroll Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612

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“Dreams have always resided at the heart of Jaume Plensa’s practice. Dreams of being more perfect than we are; collective and utopian dreams of paths into a different future... A consideration of these ideas is central to [Forgotten Dreams], which inhabits a dark, shadowy, and contemplative realm away from the constant hum of the external world.”

—Sarah Coulson, Senior Curator, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Widely celebrated for public sculpture that engages the human form, architecture, poetry, and language, Jaume Plensa presents recent work in the exhibition ***Forgotten Dreams*** at GRAY Chicago. For his 10th exhibition at GRAY, the exhibition includes two large-scale works in cast aluminum: a series of twenty-one doors, titled ***Forgotten Dreams***, 2020; and ***Where Are You?***, 2022, a body of freestanding sculptural portraits. Additionally, Plensa displays a series of drawings and two sculptures in granite and marble. The exhibition opens to the public at GRAY Chicago (2044 West Carroll Avenue) on April 7, and will be on view through June 3, 2023.

The central work in the exhibition, ***Forgotten Dreams***, marks Plensa’s return to the use of doors as a universal motif and symbol of the human condition. Installed along the periphery of the gallery, each of Plensa’s twenty-one cast-aluminum doors has been inscribed with the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights (UDHR), a landmark document drafted by representatives of countries from every region in the world. Passed by the United Nations General Assembly in the aftermath of World War II, the UDHR is comprised of thirty articles that set out, for the first time, to define the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

The UDHR includes freedom of movement and thought and rights to security, education, and rest. According to Plensa, “It is one of the most beautiful poems ever written.” Individually lit from a single light source, each of the twenty-one doors in **Forgotten Dreams** displays one or more of the UDHR’s articles. “Plensa often speaks of his belief that sculpture is the best way to ask a question. Perhaps it follows that a sculpture of a door represents the ultimate question,” writes Yorkshire Sculpture Park senior curator Sarah Coulson in her essay for the exhibition. “Each door, or idea, awaits our decision to pass through, reminding us that if we repeat the mistakes of history, not only have we forgotten our dreams, but also the nightmares of our past.”

Plensa’s sculptural portrait series, **Where Are You?** is positioned in the center of the gallery. Also in twenty-one components, the series of painted cast-aluminum portraits is installed within a free-form space delineated by stones as an expression of the artist’s concept that “we are islands linked and separated by an ocean.” A prevalent theme within Plensa’s wider practice, **Where Are You?** presents each portrait as both a unique form in space and a component of a larger grouping, addressing both the collective and the individual. “The reading of the heads as islands in a wider geography is accentuated by their display within an organic expanse of white marble pebbles, drawn from the Earth yet somehow radiant like a pool of light,” elaborates Coulson. “[It] is unusual for Plensa to show heads of this smaller, more life-like size directly on the floor, rendering our view aerial and evoking the sense that we might be looking down on them from a height as we would islands from the sky.”

Also included in the exhibition are a series of drawings, a discipline that Plensa considers an extension of his sculptural practice, and two additional portraits – **Flora Silence**, 2022, in marble, and **Hortensia Silence**, 2022, in granite – from the artist’s **Silence** series.

ABOUT JAUME PLENSA | Over the past forty years, internationally celebrated Spanish artist Jaume Plensa (b. 1955) has produced a multifaceted body of work that speaks to the capacity and beauty of humanity. Conventional sculptural materials like glass, steel, and bronze blend with unconventional media such as water, light, and sound to create hybrid works of intricate energy, psychological weight, and symbolic richness. Frequently incorporating linguistic elements from different alphabets, Plensa’s work does not contain a specific message, but instead uses language as a metaphor. In addition to his interest in language, Plensa finds inspiration in the human figure as a universal symbol. In celebrating the similarities and shared humanity of the world’s seemingly divergent cultures, the artist seeks to connect with his viewers on an intuitive level. By posing numerous dualities, such as interior and exterior, light and dark, and

earth and sky, his works range from intimate, delicate works on paper to monumental public projects, such as the iconic **Laura** in Century City, Los Angeles.

In addition to his international museum and gallery exhibitions, Plensa has completed celebrated public projects spanning the globe, in such cities as Los Angeles, San Diego, Miami, Singapore, Seoul, Dubai, Bangkok, Shanghai, Tokyo, London, and Nice. Installations of his monumental sculptures include **We** at the Shard in London, **Carlota** at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia; **Behind the Walls** at Rockefeller Center, New York City and in the historic courtyard of Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City; **Julia** in Plaza de Colón in Madrid; **Voices** at Hudson Yards in New York City; **Dreaming** in Toronto; and most recently, **Water's Soul** on the Hudson River and **Utopia** at the Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Michigan.

Plensa has received many national and international awards, including an honorary doctorate from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in 2018 and the 2013 Velazquez Prize awarded by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Venues for his solo museum exhibitions have included Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Yorkshire, England; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas; MMOMA–Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; MAMC–Musée d'art moderne et contemporain Saint-Étienne Métropole, Saint-Étienne, France; and Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR, Brühl, Germany. Jaume Plensa lives and works in Barcelona.

ABOUT GRAY | GRAY is a globally recognized team of art professionals devoted to fostering the development of historically important artists' careers and to building outstanding art collections. Founded in 1963, GRAY has built its reputation as a resource for Modern, Post-War, and Contemporary art with prominent private and institutional clients worldwide. Known for producing critically acclaimed exhibitions and programming from its galleries in Chicago and New York, GRAY represents a roster of internationally recognized artists such as McArthur Binion, Jim Dine, Torkwase Dyson, Theaster Gates, David Hockney, Rashid Johnson, Alex Katz, Ellen Lanyon, Jaume Plensa, Leon Polk Smith, and Evelyn Statsinger.

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