



Press Release

Jaume Plensa: In small places, close to home

18 June – 30 October 2022

The Weston Gallery and Chapel

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) presents an exhibition of drawing by internationally renowned Catalan artist Jaume Plensa.

“As a sculptor, I always need to collaborate with other people to bring my work to life, but when I draw, my work flows directly from my brain and my heart onto my hands and the paper. Drawing is an incredible laboratory where you can develop intuitions – I feel much more free than when I am working with sculpture. Drawing is a place for freedom.”

In small places, close to home comprises two complementary installations of drawings that convey the richness of Jaume Plensa’s drawing practice. It highlights the artist’s devotion to a medium that embraces many materials and processes including collage, etched glass, industrial paints and solvents, and extends into three dimensions via wire drawings in space. Like his sculpture, Plensa’s drawing investigates the human condition and dreams of more progressive and united global futures, exploring opposing concepts such as language and silence, darkness and light. The exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Picasso Museum, Antibes, and Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, and alongside a survey publication of Plensa’s drawings published by Skira.

Works displayed in The Weston Gallery reflect Plensa’s belief in the importance of embedding human rights in political systems and of unifying diverse cultures, ages, genders, faiths, and ethnicities. *Face* (2008) is a series featuring portraits of people from across the globe, taken from the artist’s collection of old geography and anthropology books. Their images are melded with excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Plensa describes as “the most beautiful poem in the world” as it expresses a human desire to be better despite our imperfections.

Shown in real life for the first time is *April is the Cruellest Month* (2020-21), a group of 28 drawings made during lockdown, that addresses universal psychological reactions to the pandemic, such as panic and anxiety, through an intensely personal lens. Like a visual diary, together they offer an intimate view into the artist’s thinking and fragility during this unprecedented period. Plensa also explores adding volume to drawing with etched bodies onto 3.7-metre-long layered glass slabs in *Continents I & II* (2000), and the suspended wire heads of *Invisibles* (2016) that he says “embolden the presence of the drawings on the walls”.

The exhibition continues in the 18th century Chapel where it resonates with its qualities as a spiritual and meditative place. Facing each other in silent communion in the nave are two sublime marble sculptures of girls’ heads with closed eyes that imply optimism for a world community and hope for a shared humanity. Their skin is covered with letters from different world alphabets, a motif that Plensa often uses to suggest the importance of togetherness whilst retaining their own richly unique cultural identities.

Adorning the walls are the dark forms of *Anònims* (2003), a series of 16 large-scale drawings. Shadowy, almost human-sized bodies with unknown faces stand as ciphers for generations, a community of souls. On the altar wall, works from the *Continents* (2003) series portray bodies as maps and geographies, and

in the Chapel Garden visitors can walk inside the four-metre-high sculpture *White Nomade* (2021), its body made up of a fretwork of letters.

Visitors to YSP enjoyed Jaume Plensa's hugely popular exhibition in the Underground Gallery and outdoors in 2011, and the ongoing presence of *Wonderland* (1993) on the exterior wall of the Visitor Centre, which was joined in 2017 for YSP's 40th anniversary by the stunning seven-metre-high *Wilsis* (2016) overlooking the Lower Lake. This new exhibition marks a welcome return for the much-loved artist after over a decade. Known for his monumental public art projects across the world, including London, New York and Seoul, Plensa has a long career creating inclusive and meaningful interactions between art and audience.

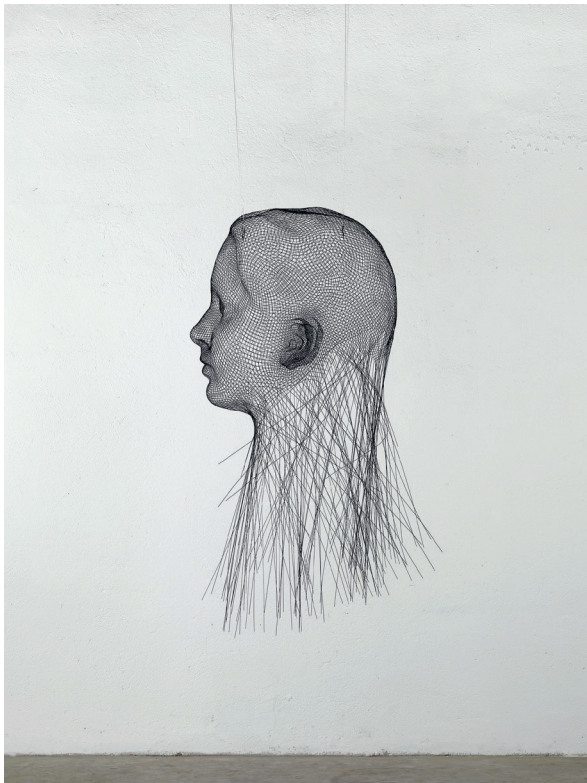
An illustrated publication which documents the project as well as some of the seminal works by Plensa that YSP has shown since 2011 will be available shortly after the opening.

The exhibition is supported by Galerie Lelong & Co and GRAY, Chicago/New York.

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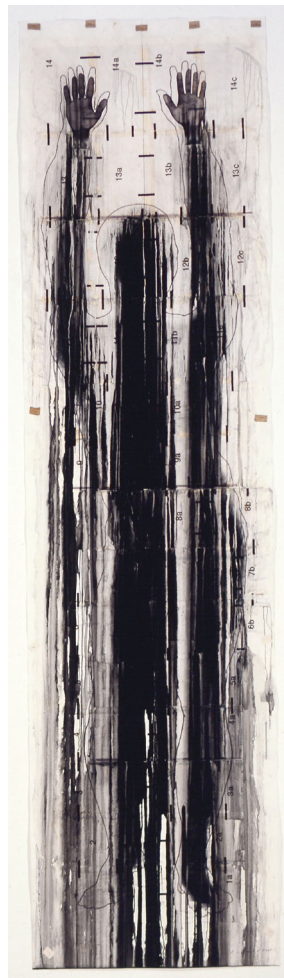
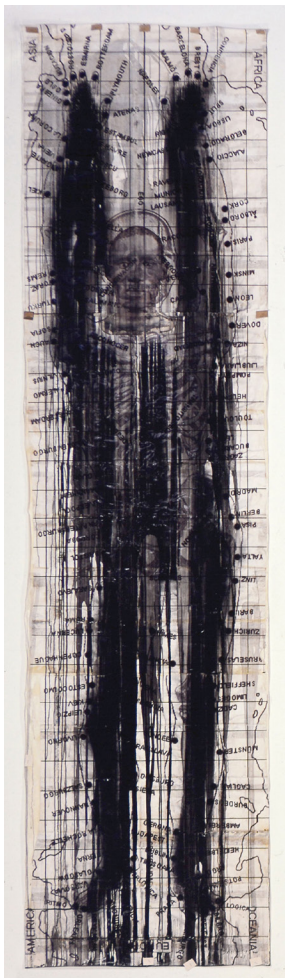
Jaume Plensa, *Face II*, 2008. Courtesy the artist.
Photo: Gasull Fotografia © Plensa Studio Barcelona.



Jaume Plensa, *Invisible Anna*, 2016. Courtesy the artist.
Photo: Gasull Fotografia © Plensa Studio Barcelona.



Jaume Plensa, *Shadow (study) XXXII*, 2010. Courtesy the artist.
Photo: Gasull Fotografia © Plensa Studio Barcelona.



Jaume Plensa, *Continents I,II,III,IV*, 2003. Courtesy the artist.
Photo: Gasull Fotografia © Plensa Studio Barcelona.

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Download images at [ysp.org.uk/media](https://www.ysp.org.uk/media)

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Open seven days a week, except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Booking essential, via [ysp.org.uk](https://www.ysp.org.uk)

Social media

Instagram and Twitter: @YSPsculpture

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#ArtWithoutWalls #YSPSculpture

About Jaume Plensa

Jaume Plensa is internationally recognised as one of today's leading contemporary portrait artists. 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, Seattle, Washington; Burj Khalifa, Dubai, United Arab Emirates; BBC Broadcasting Tower and St. Helens, England; Pearson International Airport, Canada; Daikanyama, Toranomon Hills, and Ogijima Japan; Shanghai IFC Mall, China; Albright Knox Art Gallery, New York; Rice University, Texas; Bastion Saint-Jaume, France; Pérez Art Museum Miami, Florida; among many other sites worldwide.

Solo museum exhibitions have been held at Musée d'Art Moderne de Céret, France; Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russia; MACBA–Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas; Musée Picasso, France; Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 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 honoured 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. 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.

About Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) is the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture. Welcoming around 500,000 visitors each year pre-pandemic, YSP is an independent charitable trust and registered museum situated in the 500-acre, 18th-century Bretton Hall estate in West Yorkshire.

Founded in 1977 by Sir Peter Murray CBE, YSP is the largest sculpture park of its kind in Europe. It is the only place in Europe to see Barbara Hepworth's recently restored *The Family of Man* in its entirety, alongside a significant collection of sculpture, including bronzes by Henry Moore, important pieces by Phyllida Barlow, Roger Hiorns and Ai Weiwei, and site-related works by Katrina Palmer, Andy Goldsworthy, David Nash, Sean Scully and James Turrell.

YSP mounts a year-round temporary exhibitions programme including some of the world's leading artists across six indoor galleries and the open air. Recent highlights include exhibitions by Fiona Banner, Anthony Caro, Tony Cragg, Amar Kanwar, KAWS, Joan Miró, Henry Moore, Annie Morris, Giuseppe Penone, Jaume Plensa, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Sean Scully, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Chiharu Shiota, David Smith, Joana Vasconcelos and Bill Viola.

Across its 45-year history, YSP has worked with over 1,000 artists from more than 40 countries, on varied projects from short-term residencies to major surveys. YSP supports artists at vital stages in their careers and is rare in having the accommodation, workshops and expertise to enable open-ended and risk-taking practice, giving artists space, time and support to think and to develop new ideas.

Over this time, YSP has sought to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture, especially with those for whom art participation is not habitual or familiar. It enables open access to art, situations and ideas, and continues to re-evaluate and expand the approach to considering art's role and relevance in society. Supporting 40,000 people each year, pre-pandemic, through YSP's learning programme, this innovative work develops ability, confidence and life aspiration in participants.

YSP's core work is made possible by investment from Arts Council England, Wakefield Council, the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation and Sakurako and William Fisher through the Sakana Foundation. YSP was named Art Fund Museum of the Year in 2014.

Creative Case for Diversity

Yorkshire Sculpture Park was founded in 1977 to enable fairer cultural access and opportunity and we are committed to being part of change towards a fairer world. We do not tolerate discrimination in any form and are proactive in our programme, policies and behaviours to address inequalities locally, nationally and internationally. We recognise that economic, social and cultural disadvantage is complex and intersectional and shape our activity accordingly. Diversity and equality are crucial to the arts because they release the true potential of our nation's artistic talent – from every background. At YSP, we support Arts Council England's mission – great art and culture for everyone. We share ACE's commitment to promote and embed diversity in our workforce and cultural programme. This is called the 'Creative Case for Diversity