

# JAUMIE PLENSA

Être là

9 NOV.  
2024



4 MAY  
2025

**An exhibition**  
Musée de Valence

**A work for  
the public realm**  
Place des Ormeaux,  
Valence

**IVI** Musée  
de Valence  
art et archéologie



# **Contents**

Introduction  
**3**

An Exhibition  
**4**

An Acquisition  
**8**

Interview with Jaume Plensa  
**9**

The Catalogue  
**11**

The Artist  
**12**

The Musée de Valence  
**15**

The City of Valence Support  
Policy for Visual Arts  
and Art in Public Spaces  
**16**

Patrons and Partners  
**17**

Available Visuals  
**18**

Practical Information  
**21**

---

# Introduction

## Jaume Plensa in Valence, Celebrating an Anniversary, 1994 – 2024

In 1994, upon the City of Valence's invitation, Jaume Plensa was the artist in focus for the third edition of the biennale "Un sculpteur, une ville" (One Sculptor, One City). He was 39 years old and lived in Barcelona, but his career had already taken him to France, Berlin, Brussels, New York and Tokyo to exhibit his work. As the City of Valence offered him to use public spaces and the museum's galleries, the artist only opted for off-site locations, preferring a direct connection with the urban buildings, nature and the inhabitants. Distributing 21 cast-iron doors in iconic sites of the city and introducing his sculptures in the windows of 21 shops in the city centre, he responded to the city's invitation with appropriateness and discretion.

Thirty years after the first invitation, the City of Valence is delighted to announce the inauguration of the artwork *Le Messenger* (The Messenger). This stainless steel sculpture, designed for a public space, is part of a family of works that intertwine world alphabets. Over a 4-metres height, letters and ideograms compose a welcoming silhouette that suggests a human body as much as a universal community. Installed on Place des Ormeaux, between the Saint-Apollinaire cathedral and the museum, among trees and vegetation planted to cool this city-centre space, it is a valuable addition to the collection of artworks that already exist in the public spaces around Valence.

Alongside the installation, the Musée de Valence – art et archéologie presents *Jaume Plensa. Être là* (Being here), an exhibition celebrating a major international contemporary artist. With some sixty works, the event is conceived as a poetic wandering to encounter drawings and sculptures made over the past thirty years. Chosen among Jaume Plensa's iconic series, the exhibits were made with the artist's favourite materials, from bronze to alabaster, through to steel, and graphic arts. They are an invitation to stroll between the multiple installations designed for Valence in 1994 and the *Messenger* sculpture, unveiled on 9 November 2024.

# An Exhibition

## Jaume Plensa. Être là – being here.

An exhibition  
at the Musée de Valence –  
art et archéologie

9 November 2024 –  
4 May 2025

In the early 1980, Jaume Plensa started to exhibit cut and welded metal-sheet volumes, cast-iron sculptures, then sculptural installations using increasingly varied techniques and materials. Steel met bronze, the contours were more mimetic and the artist ventured to make small-sized works. He borrowed from literature, poetry, sometimes his own, and blended words and quotes to the sculpted or drawn material. In the 1990s, light was added, with electric light bulbs, to the heavy sculpture materials while transparency, with glass and resin, joined the new concept of the human body and its scale. The artist gave it shelters and interiors before focusing, in the new millennium, on its envelope and universal design. A group of anonymous and meditative silhouettes, moulded in resin, then stainless steel, inhabit his world today and welcome the long marble, wood, bronze, alabaster or basalt faces of young women with closed eyes.

With some sixty works displayed chronologically, the Musée de Valence exhibition is designed as a free wandering between the 1994 multiple installations and the artwork created for Place des Ormeaux in 2024. Some of the doors made in 1994 are now displayed inside, while a selection of the sculptures shown in the windows around the city-centre lets the visitors appreciate the shapes and thoughts the artist focused on in the early 1990s. The visit is also punctuated with sculptural and graphic productions that place the commissioned work *Le Messenger* in a corpus that time constantly enhances, connects and adjusts. In each of the eight exhibition galleries, an iconic series of Jaume Plensa's production welcomes the visitors, such as *Nest* (2022) in alabaster, *White Forest* (2015) in bronze, *Shadow* (2010-11) and *Face* (2008) in mixed media on paper.

The exhibition devotes a large part to the artist's graphic production, from the large and evocative, geometric and abstract 1990s drawings to the recent and monumental *Paysages* (Landscapes). Alongside and before his sculpture practice, Jaume Plensa developed a substantial number of drawings and prints. These works are closely connected to the three-dimensional presences and bodies that he creates in space, through their subject but also through the use of paper support, the materiality and volume of which is meaningful to the artist. The large sheets are alcoves welcoming anonymous beings that the artist associates with words by the greatest poets and playwrights – Dante, Baudelaire, Shakespeare, etc. – or from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

By celebrating the fundamental similarities that connect individuals beyond languages and cultures, and by focusing on the body, a single common body, on its immersion in the lands of the living as well as in the worlds of thoughts, Jaume Plensa bears witness to a collective, shared and resilient beauty.

Thus, he presents a resolutely humanist work, which this new exhibition wishes to reflect.

## The Exhibition in a Few Works



1

In 1994, the City of Valence invited Jaime Plensa for the third edition of "Un sculpteur, une ville", a contemporary art biennale organised thanks to a convention signed with the French Ministry of Culture. Jaime Plensa decided to use the streets, buildings and parks in Valence in order to refresh the residents' gaze on their city. He made 21 cast-iron doors that he distributed around the city, sometimes in complex locations such as the Crussol cliff. The motif had already been part of his vocabulary a year earlier in an installation made of 38 cast-iron doors that he had entitled *Wonderland* in reference to Lewis Carroll's book. For *Valence*, he created new versions of these doors and turned them into beacons lit up at night. Symbolic and bright, they challenged the passers-by's willingness to cross thresholds and their ability to see the city differently, while the words that accompanied them invited them to delve into their imagination.

1

Jaume Plensa, Valence, 1994,  
cast iron and electric light,  
21 element, 297 x 84 x 5 cm each,  
artist's studio  
© CAC Málaga, photo José Luis Gutierrez  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024.

2

Jaume Plensa, *Silent Rain*, 2003,  
steel, various dimensions,  
courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co, Paris  
© Cheekwood Estate & Gardens,  
photo Dean Dixon  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024



2

The importance of text and its visual effects in Jaime Plensa's work is particularly exemplified in the letter curtains he made in the 2000s, such as *Song of Songs*, *Twenty-Nine Palms* and *Silent Rain*. The words that pour into space, like raindrops, can be read vertically and are borrowed from poems that Plensa likes and has read multiple times. These are texts by William Blake (*Proverbs of Hell*), William Shakespeare (*Macbeth*), Goethe (*Faust*) and Charles Baudelaire (*The Litanies of Satan*). Shaken up by the movements of visitors, the metal letters clash and produce a random sound, testifying to the artist's interest in the vibrations of matter and the flow they generate.



3

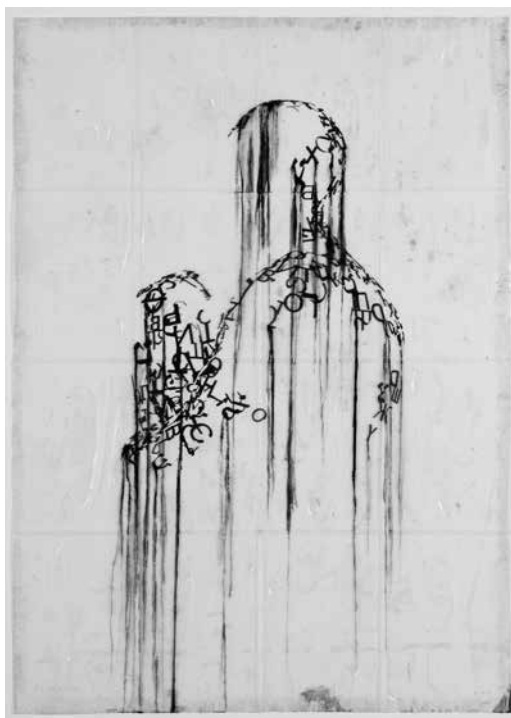
The series *Face* is a fundamental milestone in Jaime Plensa's work. The artist uses collage on unusual formats, denying paper its status as a support for sketches, presenting it as a work of art in its own right. The faces are based on photographs, from old geography and anthropology books, to which the long exposure confers a kind of solemn intensity. The texts in this series use the English version of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, which the artist considers to be one of the most beautiful poems in the world. While humanity is imperfect, it is a statement of its will always to do better and its relentless attempts to do so.

3

Jaume Plensa, *Face IV*, 2008,  
mixed media, collage and enamel paint  
on paper, 220 x 200 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024



1



2

The works that comprise the series *Shadow (Study)* are made with shiny black enamel paint and various solvents to give an impression of fluidity and transparency. The human silhouettes, with shadows more or less interwoven with letters from various alphabets, continue into long drips. They relate directly to *Le Messenger*, installed on Place des Ormeaux, made with a metal mesh of letters and symbols that extends as strips and roots itself into the ground. The lettering, both present and evanescent, makes tangible the artist's concept that our body is made up of invisible tattoos, traces of our life experience.

1  
Jaume Plensa, *Shadow (Study) XXXIV*, 2010,  
mixed media and enamel paint on paper  
158 x 112 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris 2024.

2  
Jaume Plensa, *Shadow (Study) LXVIII*, 2011,  
mixed media, collage and enamel paint  
on paper, 158 x 112 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

3  
Jaume Plensa, *White Forest (Laura)*, 2015,  
bronze, edition of 5, 196 x 103 x 103 cm,  
artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024



3

Despite an apparent similarity, the faces that compose this *White Forest*, like a "procession of heads" with closed eyes that seem to float in space, are actual portraits. The features borrowed from very young women are deliberately stretched and set at a fleeting moment in life – childhood or adolescence. They are initially scanned, then shaped to become wood figures that are later transposed to bronze. Finally, they are covered with a matt white patina that lends them serenity and softness and amplifies a sense of completeness. "If their eyes are closed, it is in order to better stress the inner voice, the soul that lives in the darkness of our bodies", explains the artist.

1

Jaume Plensa, *Slumberland XXXIII (Alexandra)*, 2015,  
graphite on paper, 143 x 113 cm,  
artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adapp, Paris, 2024

2

Jaume Plensa, *Martina (Nest)*, 2022,  
alabaster, 142 x 39 x 111 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adapp, Paris, 2024



1

Stretched and deformed, the faces in the series *Slumberland* evoke the anamorphosis process and in this way relate to the sculpted portraits of the series *White Forest*. Devoid of volume or outline, these flattened faces, suggested more than depicted, are difficult to describe as the graphite's lightness and fragility make them look immaterial. Although Jaume Plensa was able to make these portraits directly on the wall for previous exhibitions, here they are displayed on paper. As with most of his drawings, the artist made them in a very large format. This monumentality frees them from their status as preparatory sketches that could be attributed to them.



2

As a sculptor, Jaume Plensa does not limit himself to one material, such as iron or cast iron in his early career, or steel or bronze, which he uses for many of his works. Polymer resin meets metal, while wood and stone are also part of the artist's vocabulary, as are basalt, marble and even alabaster which he chose for his series entitled *Nest*. Carolina's, Juana's and Martina's young features, initially photographed, emerge from the stone like subjects that, following a classic notion in sculpture, would already be contained in the matter. These gentle and calm faces, with closed eyes, bear a resemblance with the simple harmonies of sleepers that Rodin in 1894, and later Brancusi in 1908, cut into marble and entitled *Sleep*.

# An Acquisition

## *Le Messenger*

An Original Creation  
by Jaume Plensa



1

To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Jaume Plensa's visit to Valence, the City commissioned him for an artwork in a public space. While the choice was leaning towards a large stainless steel silhouette comprising the world's alphabet, the artist liked the harmonious proportions of Place des Ormeaux. As a result, he chose this historical site and determined the scale of his work, about 5-metres high, in harmony with the surrounding buildings: homes, museum, cathedral.

The human body became part of Jaume Plensa's art in the 1990s. This focus evolved over a decade before leading to hollow covers, in the early 2000s, outlined by metal letters. He initially used Latin letters, then randomly interlaced letters and symbols from various languages. Those of the *Messenger* combine Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, Chinese, Japanese, Cyrillic, Hindu and, for the first time, Armenian alphabets. Squatting and connected to the ground via a network of strong strips, this *Messenger* shows a welcoming and protective appearance. Its body is lit from within and invites passers-by to nestle there to discover, through the letter mesh, the buildings and life around. Deliberately left in a raw state, the steel's surface reflects some of the colours from the trees and vegetation around, thus creating a fusion of art and nature.

This acquisition was a commission from the City of Valence. It was the subject of a public contract for the creation of an artwork, concluding a process that began in May 2022, when the artist came to Valence on the invitation of the municipal team. The acquisition project was presented to the Conseil national des œuvres dans l'espace public – a Ministry of Culture body, which contributed to its funding.



# Interview Jaume Plensa

**Ingrid Jurzak: What memory of Valence did you have when you designed *Le Messenger*?**

**Jaume Plensa:** This exhibition at the Valence museum and the work for Place des Ormeaux are very moving because they invoke the memory of a project, thirty years ago, that was very important to me and for my work from then. At the time, I was working on a project at the Moore Foundation in England, and I was invited to Valence; it was a very special combination, very intense and very interesting. I think about it each time I look at Place des Ormeaux and the Valence museum.

**IJ: The design of the planned sculpture for Place des Ormeaux is unique. Yet the work seems to belong to a family. Can you tell us more about it?**

**JP:** Yes, it is a big family. The choice was made in a fairly self-evident way with the City's elected representatives. We all agreed that a sculpture related to this family of works would be ideal for Valence. I was offered several locations and I chose Place des Ormeaux. I thought it was the most appropriate site, that its scale and proportions were ideal, that there was a close link with the museum. I also understood that this small square was a privileged location in the city's geography as you can see the cathedral, the entrance to the old town and not least the museum. It is important to me to favour such places. Everyone I talked to accepted the idea. ...

This family of work is fundamental to me. I have developed it in numerous parts of the world: Tokyo, Montreal, San Diego... It is a great illustration of something close to my heart: the roots we all share with the earth, this essential connection between the earth and us. These strips made of letters are like the aerial roots of mangroves that dive into the soil; to me, they contribute to the emotion conveyed by the piece. It is also an open sculpture that invites passers-by to come inside; it is like a grandmother hugging you; it offers a symbolic protection. It is like a shelter, where you can take refuge. It is the protection of words, the protection of language. It is the notion that we are beings of communication. I find that very beautiful. And from the inside, you can see the city around you; nothing stands in the way through all these metal openwork characters.

**IJ: It is often written that your sculpted silhouettes are more body-shaped covers than actual bodies. Could we say that it is a permeable membrane that allows fusion between what is inside and what is outside?**

**JP:** I remember, when I was setting up *Le Nomade* in Antibes, I refused to have the work lit on the outside and I decided to install lights inside the seated figure. Since then, I have always placed the light inside my letter sculptures. To me, the work must not be lit up, it is the art that ought to light life up. So it is the sculpture that must light up the square, and not the other way round. There is no necessary connection between a sculpture and immobility. The viewer must move. ...

I think it will be very beautiful in Valence. I would like *Le Messenger* to be a place for an exchange of energy with and between people, one that people may go in and from which they may see life totally differently, because the alphabets offer a completely different reading of the world.

Indeed, within this family of works, the metallic membrane opens up on to two circuits at once: inside/outside and outside/inside, all the time. This is a way of freeing the work from being an "object-sculpture". On the contrary, body becomes space and space becomes body, because a human being is a space that moves around; it is a moving landscape. I stand by that.

# The Catalogue

A catalogue is published  
by Éditions Liénart.

Designed as a bilingual – French/English – reference book on Plensa’s work, its retrospective approach presents an analysis of the work between the two temporary events of *Valence* in 1994, and the public commission of *Le Messenger* in 2024. The aim of the book is also to accompany the sculpture permanently installed in Valence’s public space.

Under the leadership of Ingrid Jurzak, the exhibition curator, it includes contributions from Damien Aubel, Nathalie Bondil and Martine Heredia.

## **Damien Aubel, *Rediscovering the Myth* (extract)**

To Jaume Plensa’s art must be applied a term that has unfortunately been overused and deprived of its meaning, but which takes on its full strength here: “initiatory”. With his curtains, with his meshed surfaces, with his play on transparency, Plensa makes each viewer, each visitor partake of a mystery – in front of everyone, he lifts a corner of the veil, opens up something – to everyone he grants the possibility of a revelation. And this is how we may reconnect with lost mythology: through revelation.

Not that Plensa ever puts on the somewhat grotesque trappings of priestly dignity: there is nothing of a high priest with obscure knowledge about him. There is nothing of those spiritual despots, those gurus who prosper and assert their ascendancy by relying on an occult fund. There is in his work something akin to a dialectic of light, an obsession with irradiation, which prevents this suspicious opacity, something reminiscent of these words by José Lezama Lima: “to seek that which is manifest yet elusive”, or to “seek the occult in the exposed, and in the secret that which rises towards the light so that it can give it form<sup>1</sup>”.

Nets, ghosts, initiatory veils: this is how Jaume Plensa operates. What does he bring back in his fishing trap, what spectres does he create, what does he discover? Well...

## **Martine Heredia, *Embodied Sculpture: When Space Becomes Body* (extract)**

Jaume Plensa’s artistic production testifies to his interest in poetry and the recurrent use of the word or letter. With a literary sensibility and surrounded by many books in the family home, he has visited poetic texts that have inspired him with multiples images; he talks of having received “a visual training of texts<sup>2</sup>”. He discovered Baudelaire, Dante, Blake, Shakespeare, many poets who would later be a source of inspiration for his work throughout his artistic journey. On pieces of solid material such as copper and bronze, the artist has often chosen to engrave – words, verses, excerpts from poems by William Blake in particular, a poet he is fond of namely because, he says, he was able to “unite low and high culture<sup>3</sup>”. Such an approach enables him to understand that materials, language included, are only means of accessing poetry.

Yet, he progressively steps away from compact pieces and poems by dissolving matter as well as words, only to keep the essential, a kind of sensory asceticism that approaches matter through transparency, words as letters free of form and meaning, in a primitive, original state, hinting at a multitude of possibilities.

23 x 26 cm in portrait format

128 pages

21 €

1

José Lezama Lima, *Paradiso*, translation from Spanish to French, Didier Coste, Paris, Seuil, “Points” series, 1984.

2

Dialogue with Jaume Plensa, MAMC Saint-Étienne Métropole, 27/11/2017, <https://youtu.be/GOXAa3YUPFY>, visited on 12/02/2020.

3

Dialogue with Jaume Plensa, MAMC, *op.cit.*

### **Nathalie Bondil, Jaume Plensa, Nomadic Artist, Global Artist From his No Man's Land studio to Édouard Glissant's Whole-World (extract)**

Plensa thinks that "in public spaces, people need an emotional shock"<sup>1</sup>. Hence he encourages a tactile, almost sensual, connection to literally bring his artworks to life<sup>2</sup>. Touched, stroked, hugged – this sensitive mediation, an emotion expressed through every pore of the skin and each of our senses, reinforces our mirror neurons' empathic circuits. As sensation carriers, they share their soul with whoever claims them: "sculpture is the link between the material and the immaterial, what brings together our tangible humanity and our intangible souls"<sup>3</sup>.

Plensa does not make public art but art for the public. His aim is not so much to make artworks than to facilitate inclusive relations, to create a community. His work is about creating beauty as well as do good: "I realised that it was important to make people smile. It is a way of celebrating life, it is the flow of life"<sup>4</sup>. He takes part in a sort of urban therapy with a universal language, for the sculptor is not afraid of stressing his quest for beauty – a rude word for many contemporary artists. Because, according to the artist, "in a world full of injustices, disasters and suffering, to talk of beauty may seem mundane, shallow even... I am convinced that beauty has the incredible power to regenerate"<sup>5</sup>.

#### **The authors:**

**Damien Aubel** is a writer and a journalist. He is the author of literary and art critiques in the magazine *Transfuge*. He has published three novels; his latest, *Je suis le Feu*, was published in 2023 by Marest Éditeur.

**Nathalie Bondil** is a heritage curator, art historian, museologist and exhibition curator. She specialises in the 19th and 20th centuries, intercultural relations, public engagement and museum therapy. She is the former Vice-Chair of the Canadian Arts Council and Director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and is now the head of the museum and exhibitions at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, and an elected member of ICOM France.

**Martine Heredia** is a Spanish professor and an associate researcher at the CRIMIC (Centre for Interdisciplinary Research into the Contemporary Ibero-American World, Université Paris-Sorbonne). She wrote her doctoral thesis on informal art in Spain. Her research focuses on contemporary Spanish art, from the point of view of artistic creation, particularly performance creation, and aesthetics. She is also an author and curator.

<sup>1</sup>  
Quoted in Pedro Ballesteros, *Jaume Plensa. Can You Hear Me?*, documentary, 2020.

<sup>2</sup>  
In public art, we may think of the bronze recumbent effigy of Victor Noir, sculpted by Jules Dalou for his tomb at the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris (1890), its crotch polished over the years by many hands due to the superstitious belief that it would bring fertility.

<sup>3</sup>  
In P. Ballesteros, *op. cit.* note 1.

<sup>4</sup>  
Jaume Plensa, *Le cœur secret. Entretiens*, Paris, Galerie Lelong, 2016, p. 132 (with L.-M. Marco, 2012).

<sup>5</sup>  
In P. Ballesteros, *op. cit.* note 1.

# The artist

## Jaume Plensa.

### Biography

Jaume Plensa was born in 1955 in Barcelona where he studied at the Llotja, Barcelona School of Art and Design and at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Sant Jordi. He has taught at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and has regularly collaborated as a guest lecturer with the Art Institute of Chicago. A significant part of his work focuses on sculptures in public spaces. Installed in cities and towns in Spain, France, Japan, England, Korea, Germany, Canada, USA, his works have received many prizes, including the Mash Award for Excellence in Public Sculpture in London in 2009. In Spain, he was awarded the National Award for Visual Arts in 2012 and the prestigious prize Velázquez in 2013. His work has been shown in many galleries and museums, including for the recent exhibitions *La Part du sacré* at the BAM in Mons (Belgium, 2023); *Poesia del Silencio* at the Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera in Barcelona (Spain, 2023); *Invisível e Indizível* at the Musée Oscar Niemeyer in Curitiba (Brazil, 2023); *Janus*, Church of San Gallo in Venice, (Italy, 2024); and currently *Materia Interior*, Espacio Fundación Telefónica, Madrid (until 4 March 2025). The artist is represented by Galerie Lelong & Co., which has regularly shown his work in Paris and New York for over twenty years. Jaume Plensa has also collaborated on several theatre and opera projects, from set and costume designs to the art direction. In early 2023, he debuted in production with Verdi's *Macbeth* at the Gran Teatre Del Liceu in Barcelona.

#### Solo Exhibitions 2014–2024 (selection)

##### 2024

*Materia Interior*, Espacio Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, Spain

*Silent Diary*, Galerie Lelong & Co., New York, USA

*Janus*, Church of San Gallo, Venice, Italy

*Miroirs*, collages, Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

##### 2023

*La part du sacré*, BAM, Mons, Belgium

*Invisível e Indizível*, Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba, Brazil

*Poesia del Silencio*, Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera, Barcelona, Spain

##### 2022

*Poesia del silencio*, Fundación Bancaja, Valencia, Spain

*Chaque visage est un lieu*, Musée d'art moderne de Céret, Céret, France

*Jaume Plensa*, Château Sainte-Roseline,

Les Arcs-sur-Argens, France

*La lumière veille*, drawings 1982-2022, Musée Picasso, Antibes, France

*Noir & Blanc*, Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

*In small places, close to home*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park Chapel and the Weston Gallery, Wakefield, UK

##### 2021

*NEST*, Galerie Lelong & Co., New York, USA

##### 2019

*Jaume Plensa*, Ciutat de les Arts i les Ciències, Valencia, Spain

*Jaume Plensa*, Galería Pilar Serra, Madrid, Spain  
*Obra Gràfica*, Abadía de Montserrat, Barcelona, Spain

*Talking Continents*, Arthur Ross Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA

*Talking Continents*, Jepson Center for the Arts, Savannah, USA

*Jaume Plensa*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, Russia

*Jaume Plensa*, Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

*Behind the Walls*, Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico, Mexico

*Jaume Plensa*, Musée Beelden aan zee, The Hague, Netherlands

##### 2018

*Invisibles*, Palacio de Cristal, Madrid, Spain

*Jaume Plensa*, MACBA, Barcelona, Spain

*Talking Continents*, The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, USA

*Jaume Plensa at Djurgården*, Djurgården, Stockholm, Sweden

##### 2017

*Die innere Sicht*, Max Ernst Museum, Brühl, Germany

*Jaume Plensa*, Harvard Business School, Boston, USA

*Silence*, Galerie Lelong & Co., New York, USA

*Jaume Plensa* (éditions), Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

*Jaume Plensa*, Abbaye de Fontfroide,  
Narbonne, France

*Jaume Plensa*, Musée d'art moderne et  
contemporain de Saint-Étienne, Saint-Étienne,  
France

*Nocturne*, Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

## 2016

*Jaume Plensa*, Palau de la Música, Barcelona,  
Spain

*Human Landscape*, Toledo Museum of Art,  
Toledo, USA

*Laura with Bun*, Tampa Museum of Art, Orlando,  
USA

*White Forest*, Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

*Jaume Plensa*, Pilane Heritage Museum,  
Klövédal, Sweden

## 2015

*Human Landscape*, Cheekwood Botanical  
Garden and Museum of Art, Nashville, USA

*Human Landscape*, Frist Center for the Visual  
Arts, Nashville, USA

*Millennium Park*, Chicago, USA

*Jaume Plensa*, Musée d'art moderne de Céret,  
Céret, France

## 2014

*Jaume Plensa*, Kunstverein Villa Wessel,  
Iserlohn, Germany

*Sculptures*, Skulpturenpark Waldfrieden,  
Wuppertal, Germany

*Una trayectoria*, Calcografía Nacional, Madrid,  
Spain

*Drawings and Sculptures*, Van Every/Smith  
Galleries at Davidson College, Davidson, USA

*Mist*, Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice,  
Italy

## Group Exhibitions 2014–2024 (selection)

### 2024

*Probité de l'image*, La Biennale d'Anglet, Villa  
Beatrix Enea, Anglet, France

*Glasstress 8½*, Fondazione Berengo Art Space,  
Venice, Italy

### 2022

*Saison d'art 2022*, Domaine de Chaumont-sur-  
Loire, Chaumont-sur-Loire, France

### 2020

*Field of Dreams*, Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill,  
USA

### 2019

*Jaume Plensa – Kiki Smith – Barthélémy Toguo*,  
Galerie Lelong & Co., Paris, France

### 2018

*Bijoux d'artistes*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs,  
Paris, France

*Dream*, L'arte incontra i sogni, DART – Chiostro  
Del Bramante, Rome, Italy

*Detour*, Artipelag, Gustavsberg, Sweden

### 2017

*Unpacking: The Marciano Collection*, Marciano  
Art Foundation, Los Angeles, USA

### 2016

*Surrealism: The Conjured Life*, Museum of  
Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, USA

*Setouchi Triennale 2016*, Setouchi Triennale,  
Takamatsu, Japan

### 2015

*Glasstress 2015 - Gotika / Collateral Event of  
the 56th Biennale di Venezia*, Glasstress,  
Venice, Italy

### 2014

*Sculptures du Sud*, Fondation Villa Datris,  
L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France

*Borås Internationella Skulpturbiennal 2014*,  
Borås Konstmuseum, Borås, Sweden

## Installations in Public Spaces (selection)

### 2021

*UTOPIA*, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture  
Park, Grand Rapids, USA

### 2020

*Dreaming*, 2017, Richmond Adelaide Centre,  
Toronto, Canada

*Sculpture in the Courtyard*, The State Hermitage  
Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia

### 2019

*A Montserrat*, Museum de Montserrat – Espai  
d'Art Pere Pruna, Barcelona, Spain

### 2018

*Julia*, Plaza de Colón, Madrid, Spain *Pacific  
Soul*, Pacific Gate, San Diego, USA

*Voices*, 30 Hudson Yards, New York, USA

*In My Faith, In My Hope, In My Love*,  
Phønixbrygga, Fredrikstad, Norway

### 2017

*Source*, Bonaventure Gateway, Montreal,  
Canada

*Love*, Stationsplein, Leeuwarden, Netherlands

### 2014

*Set Poetes*, Plaça Lídia Armengol Vila, Andorre-  
la-Vieille, Andorra

*Roots*, Toranomon Hills, Tokyo, Japan

### 2012

*Laura*, Albright-Knox Museum, Buffalo, USA

*Looking into my dreams*, Awilda, Pérez Art  
Museum, Miami, USA

### 2011

*Echo*, Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle Art  
Museum, Seattle, USA

*Mirror*, Campus of the Rice University, Houston,  
USA

*Tolerance*, Harmony Walk, Buffalo Bayou Park,  
Allen Parkway at Montrose Boulevard, Houston,  
USA

### 2010

*Body of Knowledge*, Goethe Universität,  
Frankfurt, Germany

*Alchemist*, MIT-Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology, Cambridge, USA

*Nomade*, Bastion Saint-Jaume, Quai Rambaud,  
Antibes, France

*Ogijima's Soul*, Ogijima Community Hall, Seto  
Inland Sea, Kagawa Prefecture, Japan

**2009**

*Dream*, Sutton Manor, St Helens, Liverpool, UK

**2008**

*El alma del ebro*, Expo 2008 enclosure Ranillas, Zaragoza, Spain

**2007**

*Nomade*, Pappajohn Sculpture Park, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, USA

*Conversation à Nice*, Place Masséna, Nice, France

**2005**

*Breathing*, BBC Broadcasting House, London, UK

**2004**

*Crown Fountain*, Millennium Park, Chicago, USA

*White Twins*, Coredo Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Japan

**2003**

*Talking Continents*, Jacksonville Arena Plaza, Jacksonville, USA

**2002**

*Seele?*, Neanderthal Park, Düsseldorf, Germany

*Bridge of Light*, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem, Israel

**2001**

*Magritte's Dream*, Aino Station, Fukuroi City, Japan

**2000**

*Gläserner Seele*, Neues Palais, Land Brandenburg, Germany

*Seven Deities of Good Fortune*, Daikanyama, Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan

**1999**

*The House of Birds*, Mion Nakasato, Tokamachi, Japan

**1998**

*Capsa de Llum*, Gran Via de Jaume I and Avenida Ramon Folch, Girona, Spain

**1996**

*Blake in Gateshead*, Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK

**1995**

*Islas*, Rambla de Santa Cruz, Tenerife, Spain

**1994**

*Faret Tachikawa*, Tachikawa City, Japan

**1992**

*Born*, Passeig del Born, Barcelona, Spain

**1991**

*Auch*, Escalier Monumental and Place Barbès, Auch, France

**Collections (selection)**

ALTANA Kulturstiftung im Sinclair-Haus, Bad Homburg, Germany

Burger Collection, Berlin, Germany

Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée, La Louvière, Belgium

ARTIUM - Basque Museum Centre of Contemporary Art, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

DA2 - Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, Spain

Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern, Palma de Majorca, Spain

Fundacio Suñol, Barcelona, Spain

Museo Colecciones ICO, Madrid, Spain

Museo Extremeño e Iberoamericano de Arte Contemporáneo, Badajoz, Spain

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain

Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Patio Herreriano - Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Español, Valladolid, Spain

Sala Municipal Robayera, Miengo, Spain

Honolulu Museum of Art, Honolulu, USA Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, USA

Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, USA

Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, USA

Runnymede Sculpture Farm, Woodside, USA

Fondation pour L'Art Contemporain, Claudine and Jean-Marc Salomon, Alex, France

Musée d'Art Contemporain Lyon, Lyon, France

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Caen, Caen, France

Palazzo Forti - Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Verona, Italy

Mie Prefectural Art Museum, Tsu, Japan

Towada Art Center, Towada, Japan

**Complete list on:**

[jaumeplensa.com/biography/solo-exhibitions](http://jaumeplensa.com/biography/solo-exhibitions)

[and jaumeplensa.com/biography/group-exhibitions](http://jaumeplensa.com/biography/group-exhibitions)

Jaume Plensa is represented by  
the galleries Richard Gray (Chicago, New York)  
and Lelong & Co. (Paris, New York)  
[richardgraygallery.com](http://richardgraygallery.com)  
[galerie-lelong.com](http://galerie-lelong.com)

# The Musée de Valence



1

Created in 1850, the Musée de Valence – art et archéologie was established in 1911 in the former episcopal palace, in the heart of the historic centre. It closed in 2007 for refurbishment and extension works by the architect Jean-Paul Philippon (Musée d’Orsay, La Piscine in Roubaix, etc.), and reopened in December 2013. The Musée de Valence is the only fine-arts museum in the Drôme département and is one of the first ten museums of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. It boasts 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space and 45 galleries, along with an exceptional 360° panorama over the Rhône valley, the Ardèche river and the Vercors massif. Visitors can admire over 400,000 years of human history and civilisations, from the Drôme to the mid-valley of the Rhône – with more than 1,500 objects from the Middle Ages to Prehistory, through to the Roman settlement – over a chronologically reversed archaeological visit. The art collection offers several hundreds of artworks, paintings, drawings, sculptures and decorative arts around the theme of landscape. Sophie Calle, Joan Mitchell, Hamish Fulton, Étienne-Martin and Wols are shown alongside André Lhote, Dufy and Derain. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century art schools include Romanticism (Paul Huet, Delacroix, Georges Michel, etc.), Pre-Impressionism (Eugène Boudin, Stanislas Lépine, etc.), the Realist schools and the Barbizon school (Théodore Rousseau, Diaz de la Peña, etc.). The “grande galerie” (great/main gallery) celebrates landscape, from Neo-Classicism to 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century ruin landscapes with Pannini, Fragonard and Pierre Patel. Additionally, along with the Musée du Louvre and the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, the Musée de Valence has one of the largest collections of works by the painter Hubert Robert. As an open and vibrant cultural centre, the museum offers temporary exhibitions and a rich cultural programme, as well as many events, complemented with guided tours and workshops in relation to the exhibitions and collections, as well as readings, stories, shows, concerts and plays that all contribute to bringing the museum to life.

## KEY FIGURES

**4,000 m<sup>2</sup>** of permanent and temporary exhibition space

**100** cultural events a year

**Over 20,000** works, on display or in reserve



2

1  
Cour d’honneur  
© Musée de Valence,  
photo Emmanuel Georges

2  
Belvédère  
© Musée de Valence,  
photo Éric Caillet

# The City of Valence Support Policy for Visual Arts and Art in Public Spaces

The commissioning of Jaume Plensa's artwork *Le Messenger* is part of the City of Valence Support Policy for Visual Arts and Art in Public Spaces. The policy aims to:

- focus and strongly support the museum and the Amis du musée (the museum's friend) association;
- facilitate an exhibition programme at the Bourse du Travail prefiguring the objectives of a contemporary art centre;
- organise events devoted to art in public spaces such as the Wall & Love festival's murals.

This cultural activity programme contributes to an already rich list of events, such as "Sculptez vos balades" (Sculpt your Walks), which, thanks to a partnership with Galerie Bruno MORY, made it possible to exhibit 16 sculptures by 4 artists in the city's parks and Champ de Mars between 2019 and 2022. Four artworks will still be on view until 2025.

In addition to its programming and acquisition policy, the City maintains and promotes artworks in public spaces according to a restoration and emphasis policy with the installation of information plates. An inventory is currently being compiled and a communication document for the general public will soon be published, inviting the residents and visitors of Valence to follow a route of (re)discovery of this heritage.



# Patrons & Partners

The anniversary exhibition *Jaume Plensa. Être là* is supported by the company CROUZET and the Société Générale Auvergne Rhône Alpes.



Media Partners



BeauxArts  
Magazine

arte

The event *Jaume Plensa. Être là* coincides with the 17th Biennale de Lyon - Art contemporain.



The acquisition of the artwork *Le Messenger* was made possible thanks to the financial support of the City's patrons and institutional partners: the State (Conseil national des œuvres dans l'espace public, Ministry of Culture), the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, the Drôme département, as public partners, and the companies RAMPA and ALIZON as patrons..

Public financial support



Patrons



# Available Visuals



1



2



3



4



5



6

1  
In Jaume Plensa's studio, July 2024  
© Inés Baucells

2  
Jaume Plensa in his studio, August 2024  
© Inés Baucells

3  
Jaume Plensa, *Slumberland XXXIII (Alexandra)*, 2015, graphite on paper, 143 x 113 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

4  
Jaume Plensa, *Australia*, 2021, painted steel, edition of 8, 60 x 32 x 40 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

5  
Jaume Plensa, *Shadow (Study) XXXIV*, 2010, mixed media and enamel paint on paper, 158 x 112 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

6  
Jaume Plensa, *Face IV*, 2008, mixed media, collage and enamel paint on paper, 220 x 200 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024



1



4



2



3



5

1  
Jaume Plensa, *Shadow [Study] LXVIII*, 2011, mixed media, collage and enamel paint on paper, 158 x 112 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

2  
Jaume Plensa, *Gran Interior IV*, 1991, mixed media, collage, gouache and graphite powder on paper 210 x 200 cm, Centre national des arts plastiques collection - FNAC 91588  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Samsó-Barenblit  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

3  
Jaume Plensa, *Valence*, 1994, cast iron and electric light, 21 elements, 297 x 84 x 5 cm each, artist's studio  
© CAC Málaga, photo José Luis Gutierrez  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

4  
Jaume Plensa, *Martina (Nest)*, 2022, alabaster, 142 x 39 x 111 cm, artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona, photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

5  
Jaume Plensa, *Silent Rain*, 2003, steel, various dimensions, courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co, Paris  
© Cheekwood Estate & Gardens, photo Dean Dixon  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024



1



2

1

Jaume Plensa, *White Forest (Laura)*, 2015,  
bronze, edition of 5, 196 x 103 x 103 cm,  
artist's studio  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Gasull Fotografia  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

2

Graphic design: La bonne adresse  
Jaume Plensa, *Roots (detail)*, 2014  
© Plensa Studio Barcelona,  
photo Laura Medina  
© Adagp, Paris, 2024

All or some of the artworks listed in this press release are protected by copyright. The works of ADAGP ([www.adagp.fr](http://www.adagp.fr)) may be published under the following terms and conditions:

– For press publications that have signed an agreement with ADAGP: please refer to the terms agreed with them.

– For other press publications:

- › Exemption for the first two works illustrating an article on a current event directly relating to these artworks and of a maximum size of 1/4 page;
- › Reproductions exceeding this number or size are subject to a reproduction or representation-rights fee;
- › Any reproduction on the cover or front page must be authorised by the ADAGP Press Rights Department ([presse@adagp.fr](mailto:presse@adagp.fr));
- › All reproductions must be accompanied, in a clear and legible manner, by the title of the artwork, the author's name and the copyright notice "© ADAGP, Paris", followed by the year of publication, regardless of the source of the image or the place where the work is kept.

These terms and conditions apply to websites with online press status on the understanding that, for online press publications, the resolution of files is limited to 1600 pixels (length and width combined).

MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS LOCATED OUTSIDE FRANCE: All artworks contained in this file are protected by copyright. If you are a magazine or a newspaper based outside France, please email [presse@adagp.fr](mailto:presse@adagp.fr). We will forward your request for permission to ADAGP's sister societies.



**Musée  
de Valence**  
art et archéologie

4, place des Ormeaux  
26000 Valence  
T. 04 75 79 20 80  
musee@mairie-valence.fr  
musee.valence.fr  
valence.fr

Follow us



@musee.valence  
@ville.valence  
#musee.valence  
#JaumePlensa

### Practical Information

#### — Museum opening hours

Wednesday to Sunday 10 am – 12 pm  
and 2-6 pm  
Late opening until 9 pm on the 3rd Thursday  
of the month  
Closed on bank holidays

#### — Museum admission fees

Standard admission € 9 / concession € 7  
Free admission: see admission terms  
and conditions at the museum's reception  
or on the website  
Tickets are valid all day

#### — Getting here

Motorway A7  
junction 15 "Valence sud"  
junction 14 "Valence nord"  
Car parks: Champ de Mars  
and Centre Victor Hugo

### National and International Press Contacts

#### — Morgane Barraud

morgane@annesamson.com  
+33 (0)1 40 36 84 32

#### — Clara Coustillac

clara@annesamson.com  
+33 (0)1 40 36 84 35

### Local and Regional Press Contacts

#### — Émilie Gay

emilie.gay@mairie-valence.fr  
+33 (0)4 75 79 20 19

