

JAUME PLENSA CAN YOU HEAR ME?

PLENSA STUDIO BARCELONA
GALERIE LELONG NY
GRAY GALLERY CHICAGO/NY
MALLERICH FILMS PACO POCH
PRESENTS

A PEDRO BALLESTEROS DOCUMENTARY FILM

PRESSBOOK

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POCH**
CINEMA

PLENSA STUDIO BARCELONA
Galerie Lelong & Co.

GRAY

Mallerich
Films-Paco Poch

JAUME PLENSA
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GRAY

INTRODUCTION

Jaume Plensa is one of the most outstanding artists on the international scene. His enigmatic, powerful and unmistakable sculptures can be found in museums, galleries and public spaces all over the world.

Can You Hear Me? is the fullest documentary depiction to date of Jaume Plensa; of his thought, his poetics, his way of understanding art as a generator of beauty, and his understanding of public space as a place of encounter with the community.



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SYNOPSIS

Can You Hear Me? is an in-depth exploration of the work and personality of the sculptor Jaume Plensa.

Together with Plensa we visit some of his most representative pieces, sited in public spaces in Spain, France, Sweden, the US, Canada and Japan, on a series of trips that also take in the ideas that nurture his works.

We also witness the genesis and construction of a major project for the lobby of a New York skyscraper, the preparations for a retrospective of his work at the MACBA in Barcelona, the inauguration of a major open-air exhibition in Stockholm, and the siting of large sculptures in Madrid, the island of Porquerolles and, once again, New York.

Making the most of the access and intimacy provided by one of the most important artists active on today's art scene, this documentary deals with the mechanisms leading to artistic creation, the questions that arise from our engagement with it, and how art, that thing which has no use, can transform our ways of seeing and being in the world, if only for an instant.



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EL PROJECT

Can You Hear Me? is a 75 minute-long documentary produced by Mallerich Films Paco Poch in coproduction with the Plensa Studio Barcelona and associate production by Galerie Lelong in New York, Gray Gallery Chicago/NY and Galerie Lelong in Paris.

The documentary is the result of an ambition to create a brand-new audiovisual piece providing the viewer with total access to the artist, his surroundings and his work process.



His works are so complex that every time he makes a new sculpture, he has to devise the way to build it, move it and assemble it, always involving an additional engineering challenge and mobilizing a huge amount of people.



The film follows the process of the creation and construction of “Voices, 2019”, a large-scale work comprising 11 spheres, each measuring between two and five metres in diameter, located in the lobby of a newly-built skyscraper in the Hudson Yards complex in New York.



While in America we visit Plensa’s best-known work, the renowned “Crown Fountain, 2004” in Chicago, where he created a world-famous icon and laid the foundations for his later work, as well as a spectacular human figure that draws people in to the city of Montreal.

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We will attend the opening of his exhibition of sculptures in the royal gardens of Djurgarden in Stockholm, and travel to a remote sculpture park in an isolated corner of Sweden, near Goteborg, where “Anna, 2015”, one of his female heads, rises in solitude above the captivating landscape.

We will travel to Japan, origin of his work in public spaces, and after seeing two of his most important pieces in Tokyo, we will follow him to the tiny island of Ogijima where he built a delicate pavilion to welcome travellers to the port.

We will also see him install, with the aid of helicopters, three bronze heads on the island of Porqueroles in France, and then see him work in his studio and hear how he has returned to the technique of cast iron after a break of several years.



Back home, we will show an intense reunion with his own country with two interventions in Madrid – one in Plaza de Colón and the other in the Crystal Palace in the Retiro Park – and a large exhibition in the MACBA in Barcelona.

His pieces are immensely complex; each new sculpture requires a plan for its manufacture, transport and installation, as well as the effort of a great number of people for it to arrive safely to its final destination. We will witness this process in Plaza de Colón in Madrid, Hudson Yards, and in New York’s 5th Avenue, where we will follow the installation of two of his female heads and his spheres of letters and all the internal tension this creates for their creator.

This documentary has been produced so as to be viewed at its release at the most important documentary festivals around the world, for broadcast on television and also for screening at the various exhibitions the artist has every year in museums and art centres.



THE APPROACH

Since the end of 2017, when Jaume Plensa was commissioned for the creation and installation of *Voices* in a skyscraper in Hudson Yards in New York, a crew directed by Pedro Ballesteros began filming this and other projects he had ongoing.

The main approach of the documentary is based on immediacy. Plensa is an artist who is not afraid to appear before the camera and fully express himself. This has resulted in a lively and free-flowing documentary that affords the viewer a close-up and detailed view of his work and its meaning. The film follows a structure of seven thematic sections where, moving between works and from one country to another, Plensa himself leads us and introduces us to the ideas that feed into his works, displaying his commitment and passion for an art which, in his words, has the ability to illuminate us.

The documentary was filmed with an Arri Alexa Mini and a set of fixed vintage lenses, achieving a spontaneous naturalism and a unique aesthetic that connects with the universe and poesy of Plensa.



JAUME PLENSA

Jaume Plensa was born in Barcelona in 1955. He studied at the city's La Llotja School of Art and Design, and the Sant Jordi School of Fine Arts. He had his first exhibition in 1980 in Barcelona, and since then has lived and worked in Berlin, Brussels, England, France and the United States. He currently lives in Barcelona.

He was a teacher at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and regularly collaborates with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago as a guest professor.

Jaume Plensa has received numerous national and international awards such as the Medaille de Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture in 1993, the Premi Nacional de les Arts from the Generalitat de Catalunya in 1997. In 2005 he was made Doctor Honoris Causa by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2009 he received in London the Marsh Award for Excellence in Public Sculpture for the work Dream in St Helens, near Liverpool. In 2012 he received the National Arts Award from the Spanish Government, and the Velazquez Arts Award in 2013. At the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015 he received the Global Fine Art Award for the Best Public Outdoor Installation for the work Together, and in 2018 he was named Doctor Honoris Causa by the Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona.

Throughout his career Jaume Plensa has exhibited works in galleries and museums such as the Fundació Miró (Barcelona), Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume (Paris), Malmö Kons-



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thall (Sweden), the Kestner Gesellschaft and the Max Ernst Museum (Germany), the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in England, the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, in Russia, the Tampa Museum and the Nasher Sculpture Center (United States). The Galerie Lelong & Co in Paris and New York, and the Richard Gray Gallery in Chicago are the two galleries with which he mainly works at the moment.

A large part of the artist's work has centred on the public space. Over the years Plensa has sited works in countries such as Spain, Japan, England, Italy, France, Russia, Korea, Germany, Canada, Mexico and the United States. In 2004 he created the Crown Fountain in the Millennium Park in Chicago, one of his most complex sculptures, which created a stir in the public art scene.

One of his more notable recent projects is Voices, a large-format piece consisting of eleven spheres made up of letters that is sited in the lobby of 30 Hudson Yards in New York City. It continues the city's tradition of installing artworks in the public spaces of emblematic buildings.

In 2018 Jaume Plensa embarked on three important undertakings in Spain: the exhibition Invisibles in the Palacio Cristal of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid; the installation of Julia in the Plaza de Colón in Madrid; and a retrospective exhibition at the MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani in Barcelona, which marked Plensa's return to exhibiting in the city.



THE DIRECTOR

Pedro Ballesteros graduated in Journalism at the Universitat Autònoma in Barcelona in 1987, and is an experienced producer and director of documentaries.

After finishing his studies he started making videos and has been awarded numerous prizes at national and international festivals. He also started working for various television programmes and as a producer of advertising and music videos. Recently he has worked as a director, producer, camera operator and editor on a number of documentaries dealing with subjects such as art, sport and adventure, fashion, music, social affairs, terrorism and crime. Canal + TVE, TV3, ARTE, Al Jazeera, Tele5, Cuatro, and La Sexta are some of the channels that have broadcast his work.

Among his most outstanding projects are “Acceso Autorizado” (Serie documental 12x50’ TVE 2018), “Chernobyl, 35 años después” Documental (Cuatro, 2012), “23F Golpe a la española” (Documental Tele5, 2012), “Erase una vez Juan Marsé” (Documental TVE Imprescindibles, 2009), “Chicos normales” Director de fotografía (Película documental 80’ 2008), “Alas sobre el Polo Norte” Operador (Documental La Sexta, 2006), “En la cárcel confidencial” (Documental 2x60’ Cuatro, 2005), “Juicio al 11-S en Madrid” Editor (Documental Aljazeera, 2005), “La verdadera historia de los falsos Dalí” Realizador. (Documental ARTE-TVE 2004), “Alphabet Tapies” Director de Fotografía. Documental 60’ (TV3, 2003) y “Cuando la vida se escapa” (Documentos TV - TVE, 2002).



Prizes

- Grand Prix JVC, XXI Tokyo Video Festival (2000)
- Jury special mention, Locarno Videoart Festival (2000)
- Gold Hugo, XXX Chicago International Film Festival (1996)
- First Prize, Brooklyn Council for the Arts Film Festival (1996))
- Grand Prix Euroregió, XIII Festival Vidéo D’Estavar-Llivia (1996)
- Gold medal, XXXVI Brno Cinema Festival ((1995)
- Grand Prix du Jury, IV Liège Vidéo Festival (1994)
- Premio de Videocreación Festival de Vitoria (1995-1996-1997-2000)
- Premio de Videocreación Festival de Navarra (1995-1996-2000)
- Premio Nacional de Vídeo de la Generalitat de Catalunya (1993)

THE PRODUCER

Jordi Marquès studied graphic and advertising design at La Llotja School of Art and Design in Barcelona.

Since in 1994 he was a production assistant in the documentary “Contigo o sin ti” on Canal +, he has produced more than 40 documentaries between feature films, series and reports, as well as television and advertising programs.

His productions have been broadcast in national and international televisions around the world.



Among his most outstanding projects are, “*O mía o de nadie*” (TVE 1998), “*Las Cortinas del humo*” (TVE, 1998), “*El Viaje de Ibrahima*” (TVE, 1998), “*Juli, loco por el toro*” (Canal+, 1999), “*Y2K, la bomba del milenio*” (TVE, 1999), “*Españolas de Portada, objetivo Nuevo York*” (Canal+, 1999), “*Sueño Latino*” (ARTE, 2001), “*Entre dos dioses*” (Antena3, 2002), “*Francisco Sánchez alias Paco de Lucía*” (ARTE, 2003), “*Futbol Club Barcelona Confidencial*” (BBC/TV3, 2004), “*La Verdadera historia de los falsos Dalí*” (ARTE, 2004), “*Jaume Plensa*” (TVE, 2009), “*Asalto al Banco Central*” (TVE/TV3, 2010), “*España en dos Trincheras, la Guerra Civil en Color*” (DMAX, 2016), “*Patrias, Catalunya manual de instrucciones*” (Euskal Telebista 2017), “*Cria Reza Ama*” (DMAX, 2019), “*NO-DO, La España Soñada de Franco*” (DMAX, 2019), “*Cria, Reza, Ama*” (DMAX, 2019) o “*Generalísimo, la vida de Franco en color*” (DMAX, 2019).

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DATA

Original Title: Can You Hear Me?
Language: Spanish with english subtitles
Genre: Documentary
Duration: 75 minutes
Format: 2K color
Aspect: 16/9
Year of production: 2017 - 2020
Locations: Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza,
Porquerolles Island, Antibes, Nice, Göteborg,
Stockholm, New York, Chicago,
Montreal, Tokyo and Ojijima Island.

CREW

Direction: PEDRO BALLESTEROS
Production: JORDI MARQUÈS
Executive Production: LAURA MEDINA and PACO POCH
Associate Production: MARY SABBATINO, PAUL GRAY and JEAN FRÉMON
Director of Photography: POL ORPINELL
Screenplay: PEDRO BALLESTEROS and AURORA SULLI
Edition: AURORA SULLI
Sound: FRANCESC GOSALVES
Color: ALINE BIZ

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