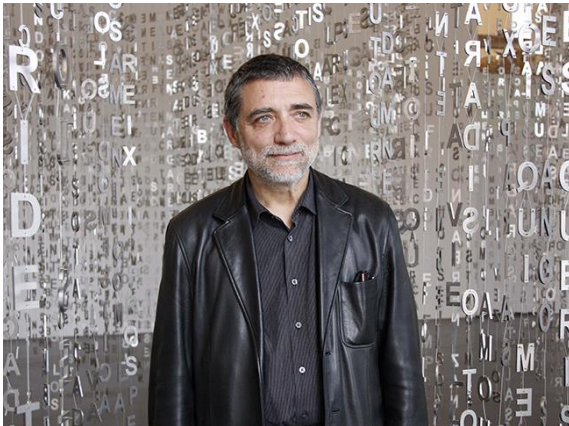


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## VMFA to install *Chloe* in Robins Sculpture Garden

Museum commissions major work by acclaimed Spanish artist Jaume Plensa



Artist Jaume Plensa. Photo courtesy of Gallerie LeLong.

The grounds of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts will undergo a bold transformation with the April 2017 installation of *Chloe*, a 24-foot tall newly commissioned sculpture, which will be visible from both the Boulevard and Grove Avenue in Richmond.

*Chloe* continues a long series of sculptural heads by world-renowned Spanish artist Jaume Plensa (born 1955) that feature young girls, with closed eyes, whose dream-like qualities transform their surroundings. VMFA commissioned *Chloe*—composed of polyester resin, marble dust, and a stainless-steel infrastructure—with endowed funds as part of its five-year strategic plan initiative to add new site-specific pieces to the E.

Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden. The sculpture will be installed in the garden, adjacent to the James W. and Frances G. McGlothlin Wing, during the week of April 10.

“In today’s increasingly cynical culture, Jaume Plensa operates from a deeply held belief in shared human values,” said Alex Nyerges, VMFA Director. “When you view *Chloe*, you will find a sense of calm and contemplation from any angle of this remarkable sculpture. This is an iconic work that defines the level of ambition we will seek in future commissions. We already are in discussions with another acclaimed sculptor for the next site-specific work, and we will continue to seek out leading national and international artists who will draw on their unique skills to create pieces that reflect our strategic vision for our outdoor collection.”

Plensa will be at the museum on Thursday, April 27, 2017, to unveil *Chloe* in the sculpture garden at 5:45 pm. In the event of inclement weather, please check VMFA’s calendar online for updates regarding the unveiling: <https://vmfa.museum/calendar/events/artist-talk-jaume-plensa/>. Plensa will discuss his work in a public lecture at 6:30 pm in the Leslie Cheek Theater. Tickets for the artist talk are \$8 (\$5 for VMFA members).

Although this piece is similar to Plensa’s *Echo* at the Seattle Art Museum and *Laura* at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, N.Y., *Chloe* is the first of these heads to be cast in one piece on such a large scale. While those previous works feature visible seams where separately cast pieces were stacked on each other, *Chloe* will arrive with a smooth, unbroken surface.

In creating *Chloe* specifically for the VMFA grounds, Plensa also distorted her profile by compressing its depth. As a result, viewers will experience unexpected shifts in perspectives as they move around the sculpture, and the marble dust coating the surface will reflect light—adding a glittering, otherworldly dimension.

“Beauty is the big connection with all things and with all people, the vast place which contains all our memories. Something we carry anchored in us, an emotion,” said Plensa, when asked about *Chloe* and its impact on future visitors to VMFA's sculpture garden.

“A sculpture of this magnitude in this outdoor venue offers yet another way for our visitors to engage with contemporary art,” said Dr. Michael Taylor, Chief Curator and Deputy Director for Art and Education at VMFA. “We were honored to work with Jaume in commissioning *Chloe*, which we know will become a popular and iconic addition to our sculpture garden.”

In pursuing this commission, VMFA ensured that the sculpture's proportions complement the scale of the main VMFA museum building. *Chloe's* site is centrally located at the end of the walkway leading from the main entrance into the garden. Plensa visited VMFA in September 2014, and a VMFA delegation met with the artist a year later at his Barcelona, Spain, studio to learn about his process and to view a similar sculpture of about half the size of the proposed *Chloe*.

In advance of the new installation, VMFA moved the *Untitled, Mission Clay Pittsburg Project*—a glazed ceramic sculpture by Jun Kaneko (American, born Japan, 1965)—from that site to its new location by the main museum entrance.

### **About Jaume Plensa**

Over his 30-year career, Catalan artist Jaume Plensa has had exhibitions and commissions in more than 20 countries, from Japan to Brazil. He is perhaps best known in the United States for his 50-foot *Crown Fountain*, which has served as an iconic destination in Chicago's Millennium Park for more than a decade. In summer 2010, Plensa gained critical recognition for his successful six-month installation in New York's Madison Square Garden of a 44-foot sculpture of a 9-year-old girl, *Echo*, now installed permanently at the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Garden. More recently, Plensa exhibited his work at the 2015 Venice Biennale, as well as at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, Tennessee, which organized the comprehensive *Jaume Plensa: The Human Landscape* exhibition that traveled in 2016.

### **About the E. Claiborne and Lora Robins Sculpture Garden**

The museum's 3½-acre outdoor space is comprised of lush gardens, a cascading waterfall, and carefully sited public sculptures. The multileveled grounds afford different views for museum patrons, while the mixture of organic space and contemporary architectural design contributes to the dynamic and ever-changing garden aesthetic. The garden also provides exhibition space for VMFA's permanent and temporary sculpture collections. The sculpture garden—featuring works by such modern to contemporary artists as Henry Moore, Aristide Maillol, and Jun Kaneko—is open and free to the public, as are the permanent collections inside the museum. *Red Reeds*, located in the Anne Cobb Gottwald Reflecting Pool, is the first site-specific outdoor installation by Dale Chihuly to be acquired by an art museum. *Chloe* represents the second piece in the VMFA's outdoor commissioning strategy.

### **About the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, is one of the largest comprehensive art museums in the United States. VMFA, which opened in 1936, is a state agency and privately endowed educational institution. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art, and to encourage the study of the arts. Through the Office of Statewide Partnerships program, the museum offers curated exhibitions, arts-related audiovisual programs, symposia, lectures, conferences, and workshops by visual and performing artists. In addition to presenting a wide array of special exhibitions, the museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience a global collection of art that spans more than 5,000 years. VMFA's permanent holdings encompass more than 35,000 artworks, including the largest public collection of Fabergé outside of Russia, the finest collection of Art Nouveau outside of Paris, and one of the nation's finest collections of American art. VMFA is home to important collections of English silver

and Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, British sporting, and modern and contemporary art, as well as renowned South Asian, Himalayan, and African art. In May 2010, VMFA opened its doors to the public after a transformative expansion, the largest in its 80-year history. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is the only art museum in the United States open 365 days a year with free general admission. For additional information, telephone 804-340-1400 or visit [www.vmfa.museum](http://www.vmfa.museum).

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