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MEIJER GARDENS ANNOUNCES LARGEST EXHIBITION BY JAUME PLENSA

*Renowned Public Artist Featured October 3, 2008—January 4, 2009
Keynote Speaker During International Sculpture Conference*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — July 24, 2008— Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, the most significant sculpture and botanic experience in the Midwest and an emerging cultural destination on the national scene, is honored to welcome Spanish artist, Jaume Plensa, for his largest exhibition in the United States to date.

Best known in America as the creator of Chicago's iconic *Crown Fountain* in Millennium Park, Plensa is one of the most innovative and profound public artists on the contemporary art scene. This exclusive presentation centers on Plensa's distinct interpretation of the human form and use of text, through eight sculpture installations and 18 drawings, many of which never before seen in the United States. This examination of Plensa's work is open October 3, 2008 through January 4, 2009.

"The focal point of Plensa's work is the universality of humankind through the context of public sculpture and installation, which can be seen in dozens of permanent works around the world," said Joseph Becherer, Director of Exhibitions and Curator of the Sculpture at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. "His work is significant for Meijer Gardens because it directly addresses the connection between art and life, and how each fit within the natural world."

"Guests are undeniably drawn to Plensa's sculpture. He purposefully selects materials and sites in graceful harmony that entices participation and encourages contemplation—a flawless match to our gardens."

Plensa integrates a variety of materials into his work such as metal and glass; air and water; light and darkness; audio and video technology and written text to take advantage of the viewer's entire sensory experience. This effect often immerses viewers, making his pieces more interactive and extending their importance.

"My work has tried to reconcile opposites. It is perhaps inside that friction of dualities where I can raise the big questions in a more suitable way and, in their own impossibility, find the path of emotion," said Plensa.

The opening of Jaume Plensa at Meijer Gardens coincides with the 21st bi-annual International Sculpture Conference, October 2-4, 2008 in Grand Rapids. The conference will focus on sculpture in public places, including a keynote presentation from Plensa on Thursday, October 2nd. The three-day event will bring together artists, arts administrators, curators, patrons, museum directors, educators and students for dialogue and networking events focused on issues related to public art.

About Jaume Plensa

Born in Spain, Plensa's cutting-edge work reflects his Catalan origins. With their contextually diverse, layered and dualistic nature, Plensa's works demand participation to enhance and extend their significance. Though Barcelona is his home base, he has also lived and worked in Berlin, Brussels, England (at the invitation of The Henry Moore Foundation), and France (at the invitation of the Atelier Alexander Calder). The winner of

many national and international awards, his work is exhibited in major museums and galleries, including the Galérie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris; the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust in Halifax, England; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Museum der Modernen Kunst, Vienna, and in New York, Chicago and Tokyo. Outdoor and public sculpture is an equally important aspect of Plensa's output, with numerous installations in North America, Europe, and Asia, including his famed *Crown Fountain* in Chicago's Millennium Park.

About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

One of the nation's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park serves more than a half-million visitors annually. The 132-acre grounds feature Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children's gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens; and a 1750-seat outdoor amphitheater, featuring an eclectic mix of world-renowned musicians every summer. The internationally acclaimed Sculpture Park features a permanent collection including works by Rodin, Oldenburg, Moore, Bourgeois and Plensa among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with recent exhibitions by Picasso, Degas, di Suvero and Chihuly. For additional information, please visit www.meijergardens.org.

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JAUME PLENSA EXHIBITION PROGRAMMING

- **C. Schoenknecht & W. Paul Sculpture Lecture**

Thursday, October 2, 7:00 PM
Members Only, Media RSVP required

Artist Jaume Plensa will provide an overview of his career and trace the development of his work, including the major sculptures on display in this exhibition and Chicago's Millennium Park. The fourth annual C. Schoenknecht & W. Paul Sculpture Lecture is the keynote address for the International Sculpture Center Conference held at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park on October 2 – 4, 2008.

- **Art About Ideas: "Conceptual" Art 101**

Sunday, October 19, 2:00 PM

Lisa Van Arragonz of Calvin College gives an informative lecture on contemporary art history.

- **Communication and Humankind: A Panel Discussion**

Thursday, October 30, 7:00 PM

Join panel members Reid Gough of Davenport University, David Alvarez of Grand Valley State University, Mike Lloyd of the Grand Rapids Press, and Sue Eberle of Kendall College of Art & Design. Experts of communication, they will share their insights on technology, classic literature, marketing and advertising, and the language of visual art, respectively.

- **Curator's Choice**

- **Striking a Chord: Jerusalem, Song of Songs**

Tuesday, November 4, 7:00 PM

Joseph Becherer, Director of Exhibitions and Curator of Sculpture gives an up-close tour of the exhibition.

- **Poetry on Plensa: Presenting Grand Rapids Poets**

Poetry Reading on Tuesday, November 11, 7:00 PM

Throughout the exhibition, poems inspired by the Plensa exhibition and other works from the Sculpture Park will be available in our galleries. In collaboration with the Humanities Council of Grand Rapids, these poems were written by local poets Miriam Peterson, Linda Nemeč Foster, Patricia Clark, Bob Vander Molen and David Cope.

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