

Large White Statue Invites People to Stop and Listen

ニューヨークの近くでは、女性の顔をかたどった大きな彫刻が設置され、人々の関心を集めています。その作品は、まるで「静かに」と伝えているかのようなポーズをしているのが特徴です。にぎやかな街の中で、こうしたメッセージはどのように受け取られるのでしょうか。あなたはこの作品をどう感じますか。そして、これまでに公共の場で見たアートの中で心に残っているものはありますか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

A large statue of a woman's head with her finger pressing on her lips now **faces** lower Manhattan, in New York City, inviting the busy area to stop and listen.

The message of Barcelona-based artist Jaume Plensa's work is "to keep silent, ... to listen to the profound noise of the water talking to us," he said recently.

He added, "The water, when it moves, makes a special sound, very special."

The statue, 24-meters tall, is Plensa's biggest work to date. It is called "Water's Soul."

The statue's white head sits in front of tall buildings in Jersey City's Newport waterfront in New Jersey, facing the Hudson River. It stands directly across from Greenwich Village and about six kilometers from the Statue of Liberty.

On a recent morning, Plensa saw the piece fully put together for the first time. Its call for silence **competed** with engine sounds and the cries and laughter of children.

But those are not the kind of noises that Plensa says his artwork is targeting.

"I'm talking about the noise of information and messages to us," he said at New York's Galerie Lelong Co, where a **public** showing of new work will open on October 29.

Plensa, 66, was **hired** to create the piece about two years ago by LaFrak and Simon Property Group. The group has developed the area, including the place where "Water's Soul" stands.

The statue shows a real-life person whose image was scanned. The piece was made from various materials at Plensa's Barcelona studio. It was shipped in 23 containers, each 12 meters long, to Jersey City to be put together.

The sculpture is visible from far and wide. Some local people have watched the piece being put together since August. They wonder why the statue seems to tell people to be quiet, an act known as shushing.

"Why is she shushing?" asked Cleveland Rice, age 63.

"I'm sure there's got to be some kind of meaning behind it," said William Schoentube, age 53.

Huan Yan, age 31, said, "I'd say it's telling New York City to keep this area a secret because we don't want to drive more people to work here."

Miriam, age 46, who did not give her last name, has a direct view of the statue from her apartment window. She does not like it.

"I don't find it fitting in the entire **environment**," she said.

Plensa has been showing his work around the world for more than 40 years. He said it can take time for his art to become accepted into different environments.

"In the public space, the piece is the piece, and it's competing with so many other objects," he said.

Plensa said the sculpture is not sending a message to Manhattan, and she is not "shushing," but silently calling for quiet.

"In many of my pieces I'm asking the viewer: Close your eyes and look inside yourself, because you have an amazing quantity of beauty hidden inside," he said.

"Water's Soul" can best be viewed from the river, he added.

Like many of Plensa's works, including several new pieces at the Galerie Lelong show, "Water's Soul" is the head of a woman with closed eyes.

His pieces mostly show women, he says, because he sees life and the world as female, while "boys are just an accident - a very nice accident, but an accident."

Peter Szekel reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Susan Shand was the editor.

Source: Large White Statue Invites People to Stop and Listen

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. face (v.) to be in the direction of

My apartment balcony faces south.

2. compete (v.) (usually "compete with") to fight or struggle with others to win or to get something

Every day, hundreds of commercials and ads compete for your attention.

3. public (adj.) for all people

In the summertime, my friends and I used to go swimming at the public pool.

4. hire (v.) to give someone a job

We hired a group of college students to paint our house.

5. environment (n.) the natural or built surroundings of a place

Plants grow well in a clean environment.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. Where is the statue located?
2. What sounds does the artist want people to listen to?
3. How did local people react to the statue?
4. Would you like to see this statue in person? Why or why not?
5. Think about the public art you have seen in train stations, airports, parks, and other places. Do you have any favorites?