

The Museum of Modern Art

West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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PRESS PREVIEW:

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A major retrospective of the works of ALBERTO GIACOMETTI will be on view in the first floor galleries and Sculpture Garden of The Museum of Modern Art from June 9 through October 10, 1965.

Directed by Peter Selz, Curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions, the exhibition consists of 70 sculptures, 35 paintings and 35 drawings ranging from the 64-year-old artist's surrealist sculpture of the '20s and '30s to the development of his characteristic style after World War II. The most recent works in the show will be a group of three plasters done earlier this year.

In his introduction to the catalog for the exhibition,* Mr. Selz writes, "For young painters and sculptors Alberto Giacometti occupies a position apart from that of all other living artists. His work, neither imitated nor slandered, is out of competition. ... His linear paintings, nervous mobile drawings, and sculptures of petrified incompleteness, testify to a great artist's struggle to find an equivalent for the human phenomenon."

Alberto Giacometti was born in Stampa, Switzerland, in 1901. At the age of 21, he went to Paris and entered Antoine Bourdelle's class at the Academie de la Grande-Chaumiere. He has lived in Paris in the ensuing years, though at least once each year he deserts the small dust-covered studio he has occupied since 1927 to return to Stampa, where the Giacometti family has lived since the 1300's.

During the '20s, Giacometti engaged in a series of highly original and imaginative experiments. Subject to various influences: primitive and Egyptian sculpture,
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*ALBERTO GIACOMETTI, introduction by Peter Selz, with an autobiographical letter by the artist. 120 pages, 112 illustrations (16 in color). Hardbound \$7.95; paperbound \$3.95. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc.

Concurrently the Museum is also publishing:

James Lord, A GIACOMETTI PORTRAIT. 80 pages, 12 illustrations showing the portrait at different stages. Paperbound, \$1.50. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Doubleday & Co., Inc.

as well as current Cubist work, he nevertheless affirmed a personality entirely his own. The exhibition includes the bronze "Torso" (1925), "The Spoon Woman" (1926) and "The Couple" (1926) from that period.

From 1929 to 1936 he was loosely associated with the Surrealists. His first show in America was held in 1934 at the Julien Levy Gallery, which, at that time, was a focal point of surrealist art. From that period, Giacometti's painted bronze "Reclining Woman Who Dreams" (1929) from The Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection; "Suspended Ball" (1930-31) from a private collection; "Woman with Her Throat Cut" (1932), collection of The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.; the marble, wood and bronze "No More Play" (1933) from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Julien Levy; the wood, glass, wire and string construction "The Palace at 4 A.M." (1932-33), collection of The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.; and "Disagreeable Object" (1931) from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson Sweeney, will be shown. Of the last work, the artist has said, "Objects without pedestals and without value, to be thrown away."

For many years, Giacometti refused to exhibit his work. Finally, in 1948, he permitted Pierre Matisse to hold a one-man show of sculpture and painting at his New York gallery. This was the period in which Giacometti created his small plaster figurines, two of which are in the show. Giacometti has written of these works, "... I began to work from memory again ... to my terror the sculptures became smaller and smaller, they had a likeness only when they were very small, yet their dimensions revolted me, and tirelessly I began again, only to end several months later at the same point. ... A large figure seemed to me false and a small one equally unbearable, and then often they became so tiny that with one touch of my knife they disappeared into dust. But head and figures seemed to me to have a bit of truth only when small."

Also from this period are the bronze "Head of a Man on a Rod" (1947) from the collection of Mrs. George Acheson; "Man Pointing" (1947), collection of The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.; and "Hand" (1947) from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Peralta-Ramos.

In 1956, he exhibited a series of monumental female figures at the Biennale in Venice and had a one-man show at Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland. In 1962 he was awarded the Grand Prize for sculpture at the Venice Biennale and at the Pittsburgh International Exhibition. Last year, Giacometti was given the Guggenheim International Award for painting.

Among works completed in the last decade, the exhibition will include almost a dozen portraits of his brother, Diego, done in bronze, plaster, oil and ball point pen; another half-dozen portraits of his wife, Annette; as well as oil portraits of the critic David Sylvester and novelist James Lord and pencil portraits of Jean-Paul Sartre, Henri Matisse and Igor Stravinsky.

Giacometti's outstanding contributions to art will be celebrated in England as well as the United States this year. The Tate Gallery in London is installing a large retrospective exhibition of his work during the summer months. The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition, installed by Wilder Green, will be seen at The Art Institute of Chicago after leaving New York at the end of October and will then travel to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Lynn Traiger, Assistant Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.