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# Giacometti

The Museum of Modern Art OCTOBER 11, 2001 - JANUARY 8, 2002

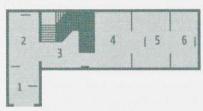


## **FLOOR PLANS**

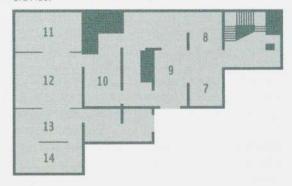
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Archine MoMA

#### ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

Alberto Giacometti has been credited with the invention of "a whole new tribe of people." Even for those only slightly familiar with twentieth-century art, an image of Giacometti's tribe leaps to mind. It is dominated by frail, elongated, impossibly slender representations of figures: standing women and walking men with kneaded, gouged, and palpably animated surfaces, modeled in clay or plaster and then cast into bronze. First created in the late 1940s in Giacometti's tiny, cramped studio in Paris, a city then still reeling from the devastating impact of World War II, these figures continue to haunt the popular imagination whenever Giacometti's name is invoked.

There are, however, other sides to Giacometti. Chief among them is the young artist who began making elliptically erotic, essentially abstract sculptures in the late 1920s-sculptures that, within a few short years, would catapult him to the forefront of the Parisian Surrealist avant-garde. There is also Giacometti the painter-sculptor-draftsman, an artist who moved between mediums with a fluidity unseen in any of the other modern masters of the past century, with the exceptions of Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. The present retrospective—the first to be held in a New York museum in over a generation—aims to redress stereotypical notions of Giacometti and to show his artistic achievement in its true richness and diversity. The exhibition affords the opportunity to see Giacometti's sculpture in its full developmental range (from 1919 through 1965), and reveals his great gifts as a painter and draftsman. It features some ninety sculptures, forty paintings, and sixty drawings, many of which-in particular the fragile plaster, wood, and terra-cotta works of the artist's pre-World War II. or avant-garde, period-have rarely been seen in New York.

Giacometti made his first lasting impression on an American audience in 1948, with a retrospective exhibition of his work at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York. Including his new, attenuated figures, this show was accompanied by a catalogue containing an essay by the influential existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, and marked the inception of interpretations of Giacometti's work as revealing the anxiety and alienation of twentieth-century life. Even today, over half a century later, while readings of the artist's work have multiplied, this "existentialist" view of his artistic achievement continues to exert a powerful hold. Giacometti, however, characterized his project in very different terms. He saw himself as a realist, attempting the "impossible"

project of representing the appearance of things as he saw them, in a manner acknowledging that our comprehension of the perceived world is never fixed but constantly subject to change. His preoccupation with what he described as "rendering my vision" led him first to radically reimagine the forms of modern sculpture and subsequently to return to drawing, painting, and sculpting from the model, rendering these most conventional aspects of academic discipline powerful in important new ways.

Alberto Giacometti was born near Stampa, in the remote valley of the Bregaglia, in the southeastern Swiss Alps, on October 10, 1901. His parents, Annetta Giacometti-Stampa and the Post-Impressionist painter Giovanni Giacometti, came from families with deep ties to the region. Despite their relative isolation, they were on the friendliest of terms with prominent Swiss artists of the time: Augusto Giacometti, one of the twentieth century's earliest adventurers into abstraction, was a cousin of both; the Fauvist painter Cuno Amiet was the godfather of their firstborn. Alberto; and the Symbolist painter Ferdinand Hodler of their youngest, Bruno. Alberto's bouhood years attached him firmly to the valley of his birth, and his first experiences of art meshed seamlessly with a close family life. Many happy hours spent in his father's studio provided the boy with an early and natural training. If Alberto's vocation as an artist was never in doubt, it yet posed a quandary in his late teens: how to choose between sculpture and painting.

After some cursory formal training in Geneva and travels in Italy, Giacometti would seem to have resolved his dilemma when, in January of 1922, he enrolled in Émile-Antoine Bourdelle's sculpture class at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, in Paris. With the exception of three wartime years, Giacometti would henceforth live in Paris until his death in 1966, although he would make frequent and sometimes lengthy visits to Stampa. These two vastly different places were the vital points of Giacometti's life, at the center of his energies and creativity.

## 1/2 FROM STAMPA TO THE EARLY YEARS IN PARIS, 1918-27

Giacometti's extraordinary natural gifts, together with his early training, had made him an accomplished artist even before leaving high school in the spring of 1919. The sculpture, drawings, and paintings he produced in Stampa between 1918 and his arrival in Paris in 1922 reflect his close contact with contemporary Swiss modernism as well as his serious study of traditional European art. In one pair of drawings from 1918 of himself and his mother, he turns the faces to a three-quarter view and cultivates stylistic traits that recall at once Albrecht Dürer and Nicolas Poussin; in a second pair, the faces are frontal and subjected to a treatment strongly reminiscent of Hodler. A small, exquisitely modeled head of his brother Bruno from 1919 is classically traditional but infused with a sweet gentleness that is close to the Gothic.

Dramatic in concept and execution, Giacometti's *Self-Portrait* of 1921 reveals much about the young artist. In this, the largest painting he would make until 1947, Giacometti drew together all that he had learned from his father in an image of himself as master of his trade. The sure touch of brush and the flattened patterning of bright, densely packed tonal values show his easy control over the paternal Post-Impressionist style. Intensely self-aware, the pose, set against the background of the father's studio, is bold, and so mindful of the borders of the canvas that the figure strategically escapes their bounds. Literally and metaphorically, the picture reads as a declaration of the artist's intent to move beyond the familiar world of his youth. Whether



Self-Portrait, 1921. Oil on carryas, 321/x 281/4" (82,5 x 72 cm). Alberto Gracometti-Striftung, Zürich

Giacometti knew at the time of its execution that it would be one of his last serious adventures into painting for many years is questionable: in hindsight, though, the painting signals his move to Paris and his imminent shift toward sculpture. Self-Portrait points significantly to the future in another sense also: to be assessed as a whole, the painting wants the viewer to look at it across the plane of its surface. but to engage fully with its

subject, the painting demands that the viewer stand squarely in front of the figure, in an exchange of gaze. Giacometti would frequently strive for this obligatory reciprocity of looking in the 1920s and 1930s, and would come to pursue it with obsessive passion in the postwar years.

By January 1922, some six months after the completion of Self-Portrait, Giacometti was in Paris, enrolled in Bourdelle's highly reputed sculpture class. Training comprised modeling and drawing from life with occasional comments and corrections bu Bourdelle. Although their temperaments and aesthetic views were much at variance, the five years Giacometti-at times sporadically-attended classes were of fundamental importance to him. His first three years in Paris were a period of apprenticeship for the once supremely self-confident young artist. The process of learning, unlearning, and absorbing took place only partially in Bourdelle's studio. Paris was rich with possibilities-among them the Musée de l'Homme and its collections of tribal and Oceanic art. the Egyptian rooms at the Louvre, and the presence of contemporary sculpture by Constantin Brancusi, Aleksandr Archipenko, Henri Laurens, and Jacques Lipchitz, all of whom had to a greater or lesser degree assimilated Cubist principles into their art. Only a few experiments in sculpture survive from Giacometti's early student years in Paris, and these were made in Stampa, to which the artist would regularly return for a month or more at a time. His life drawings and notebook comments, however, reveal the problems he was having finding a style of his own.

In Torso (1925), Giacometti established the roots of his work to come. A small, intensely compelling piece, Torso has justifiably been related to almost all of the constellation of Parisian presences enumerated above, as it has with equal justice been universally recognized as stamped by Giacometti's own personality-his first unequivocally modern sculpture. Torso's stereometric asymmetry most immediately recalls Fernand Léger's series of paintings Contrast of Forms (1913-14), and its inner vitality brings to mind certain of Brancusi's sculptures, thus accomplishing in its own way Giacometti's increasing desire to effect a union of the geometric and the organic. Made during a time when Giacometti felt compelled to return to the origins of the human expressive need, Torso is possessed of an uncannu sexual allure and wholeness at odds with its truncated parts. Like many of the sculptures that would follow, Torso provokes surprising associations. Its two contrapuntal movements, the

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Torso: 1925. Plaster, 22 %x x 9 %x x 9 %" (58 x 25 x 24 cm). Alberto Glacometti - Stiftung, Zurich

descending body and the ascending legs, have been variously interpreted: the female body as phallic obelisk; the body assuming a treelike aspect (as though reenacting the nymph Daphne's arboreal metamorphosis); an arrow plunged into the earth, solidly anchored by a pedestal set on the bias. Another reading of *Torso* interprets the legs as opening and rising, creating a concave space between

thighs and trunk that, together with the pronounced notch of the right hip, models not only the sculpture but also the space around it. Here, as is even more evident in his figures of women that would come after World War II, Giacometti shows himself to be an artist who works as much with light as with mass.

The creation of *Torso* coincided with Giacometti's mounting anxieties working from life in Bourdelle's class. Even though he did not definitively leave until 1927, his attendance became more and more fitful as he devoted himself with energy to working out of his own head. Of the series of works that followed, some seem predominantly influenced by Cubism, others by tribal art, and yet others (such as the painted terra-cotta *Dancers* of 1927) combine the two genres in startling, unexpected ways. Common to his use of both idioms was a tendency to structure his sculptures as virtually two-sided reliefs, thus perversely accentuating their eccentric profiles. Almost all of the works of this period have to do with abstracted metaphorical bodies, and are dense with intimations of the sensations of physical encounter.

Giacometti's most famous and imposing piece of the second half of the 1920s is the monumental *Spoon Woman* (1926–27). Her figure combines planes and volumes derived from Cubism with a concept based most probably on spoons used by the Dan tribe in central Africa. The largest sculpture Giacometti had yet made, *Spoon Woman* has a vast concave belly surmounted by a tiny waist and sharply geometric bust and head. Set on a pedestal combining the curved and the rectilinear, she yields dramatic frontal and rear views and a literally breathtaking profile. The

figure's great, spoon-shaped belly inevitably associates woman with nourishment, hunger, pleasurable sensation, and fertility. The first in what two decades later would become a procession of standing female figures, Spoon Woman, for all her massive presence and reproductive promise, anticipates important characteristics of her younger, thread-thin sisters of the 1940s and 1950s in her insistent symmetry, hunched, almost Etruscan shoulders, and slender, if more emphatic, profile. Beyond this, Spoon Woman shares with the later attenuated figures the creation of a notional distance from the spectator. Her proportions somehow manage to imply that she is very near. The effect forecasts Giacometti's postwar efforts to bend the illusionistic effects of painting to sculpture, and it reflects his view that the physical incongruities of African figures, with their large heads and short legs, were not, as prevalent assumption had it, conceptual. Instead, he said, they represent what one actually sees when standing opposite and close to another person: the head, facing one's own, is enlarged, while the legs appear to diminish. Only fifty-seven inches high, Spoon Woman seems monumental, endowed with ritual, elemental force.

# 3 REPRESENTATION AND ABSTRACTION: PORTRAIT HEADS, SUMMER 1927

When Giacometti returned to Stampa in the summer of 1927 after having produced *Spoon Woman* and various other sculptures in which he had explored the boundaries between abstraction and representation through forms born of the imagination, he set himself a task of more perplexing order. By definition, the portrait bust is representational; but those Giacometti made of his mother and father in the summer of 1927 interrogate that definition—how, and how far, could he take an abstracting stylization and yet preserve likeness. And the question poses itself: why attempt such a perverse endeavor? The answer lies in Giacometti's obsessive will to render his "vision"—to capture visible presence (for which representation would do nicely) and at the same time to grasp the ungraspable essence or core of human encounter (which style alone could attempt).

Giacometti began by working before his models while at the same time easing tentatively toward distortions of naturalistic representation. The subsequent busts of his mother and father retain the characteristics by which we recognize the subjects, although their rendering strays far from the traditional. In a

bronze of Giovanni—*The Artist's Father (flat and engraved)*—the front half of the head is sheared flat, his features engraved onto its surface. In a marble—*The Artist's Father*, the most radically abstracted of the series—the head is also a flat triangular plane, barely interrupted by the exquisitely delicate relief indications of mouth, nose, and eyes. Although scarcely inflected by sculptural incident, this small marble mass bears an unmistakable likeness to its sitter, and, in certain lights, its very materiality seems to speak of the immaterial—of ephemeral, vanishing presence.

A relatively realistic bronze of Annetta, *The Artist's Mother* (1927), plays with Giacometti's already demonstrated penchant for the two-sided low relief sculpture, but here there seems an inclination to fool the spectator. Although the bust is virtually stripped of front-to-back mass, the modeling of the head, when viewed frontally, seems to promise a greater three-dimensionality than its plaquelike depth provides.

# 4 PLAQUE SCULPTURES, SIGNS IN SPACE: THE BEGINNINGS OF SURREALISM, 1928–30

Returning to Paris in 1927, Giacometti and his younger brother Diego moved into the tiny, ramshackle studio at 46, rue Hippolyte-Maindron that the artist would occupy until his death in 1966. That winter he spent working on a series of flat sculptures whose contours are very like those in the previous summer's portrait of his mother. Highly suggestive of Cycladic art, these plaque sculptures (as they have come to be known) are close to wholly abstract, yet they project an uncanny sense of human presence. The most telling piece is Gazing Head (1928): from a flat, gently undulating plaster surface, two eyes-soft, elliptical indentations, one vertical, the other horizontal-gaze out. Looking back at these blind eyes, the viewer's sight is arrested as though encountering a mute wall. But the insistent viewer who looks directly into the eyes of this silent head will find that it has switched into a profile. Gazing, it allows no return of gaze, in an eerie reversal of the roles of spectator and object.

The marvelous qualities of *Gazing Head* immediately attracted the attention of Surrealist artists and writers when it was exhibited in 1929 at the Galerie Jeanne Bucher. At the suggestion of the eminent critic Carl Einstein, Michel Leiris wrote the very first, still spellbinding article on Giacometti, for Georges Bataille's new magazine, *Documents*. Suddenly Giacometti's friends were *tout Paris*—or at least avant–garde Paris. Whether

partisans of Surrealism's pope, André Breton, or of the great dissident, Bataille, the members of Surrealism's pantheon embraced Giacometti.

The year after producing his plaque sculptures, Giacometti began a series of small open-work constructions, sometimes described as signs in space. Where identity in the plaque sculptures is suggested by ideograms impressed onto the compact mass of an opaque surface, the process is reversed in the succeeding group, where the signifying mark is delineated by the open space around it. Giacometti called these pieces "a kind of skeleton in space . . . transparent constructions." One of the most successful of these is *Reclining Woman Who Dreams* (1929). The three vertical posts at each end have just sufficient mass to act as lines of force in an otherwise laterally floating composition; yet they are also the posts of a bed, whose curving undulations suggest at once the form of the recumbent woman and the waves of the dream possessing her. Read as oneiric



Reclining Woman Who Dreams. 1929. Bronze, painted white,  $9\% \times 16\% \times 5\%$  (24 x 43 x 13.5 cm). Alberto Glacometti-Stiftung, Zürich

landscape, her head, at the left, becomes the moon above moving water, and the thrust of the three diagonal elements the penetrating substance of the dreamer's dream.

Such "perforated" sculptures, in Leiris's words, as Reclining Woman Who Dreams and Man (Apollo)—also of 1929—were critical to the evolution of a concept of cagelike construction that the artist would further elaborate throughout his life. One of the first and best-known of these is Suspended Ball (1930). Exhibited in the Galerie Pierre Loeb in the spring of 1930, the object caused a furor in André Breton's circle. Surrealism's most exciting new recruit, Salvador Dali, described it as "a wooden ball, stamped

with a feminine groove . . . suspended by a violin string over a crescent the wedge of which barely grazes the cavity. The spectator finds himself instinctively compelled to slide the ball up and down the ridge, but the length of string does not allow full contact." As Dali notes, *Suspended Ball* is a tease. Like other sculptures to come, it creates an expectation that its movement will achieve a certain end, and that expectation is then thwarted.

Another preoccupation that would prove to be of long duration emerged in the first two years of the 1930s in the form of models for environmental sculptures. The first (and most astonishing) is Project for a Passageway (1930), realized only as a plaster model. Its structure and whiteness reminded Bruno Giacometti of the houses his brother had constructed out of snow as a child-roofless, they were strung together in boxes as though part of a game. The adult Alberto's plaster passageway has its own playlike aspects—a metaphor for the interior of a woman's bodu, it is intended, at full scale, to be entered and negotiated. The potent erotic charge of the model is manifest even before its abstract parts cohere in the viewer's eye and solicit an imaginary voyage. Beyond its compelling presence, Project's horizontality and its potential viability as an object without a base have given it historical importance in the innovations Giacometti brought to twentieth-century sculpture.

# 5/6 SURREALISM, 1930-34

By the end of 1930, Suspended Ball had established Giacometti as the new star of Breton's faction of the divided Surrealist group; his allegiance was not, however, total, and he never fulluaccepted its doctrines. Suspended Ball has been credited with launching the Surrealist voque for object making, and has also been seen as an avatar of notions of the "formless" as advocated by Surrealism's great anti-Bretonian, Bataille, The contradictory flexibility of Giacometti's position undoubtedly owes to an inflexibility inherent to his own creative nature. For all that both branches of Surrealism appealed to his temperament, he was a sculptor whose commitment to plastic integrity was too independent, too ingrained to be fundamentally altered by Surrealism's strictures of whatever stripe. Giacometti's unique achievement was to demonstrate that Surrealism and modern sculpture need not be mutually exclusive domains. His works from the early 1930s are radical on many levels, including the history of modern sculptural form. Ranging from portable objects.

to works with movable components, to models for environments in which the spectator was intended to move about, the work reconceives the relationship between art and audience.

Point to the Eye (1932) recasts the terrain of sculpture as a horizontal game board or playing field. Here Giacometti confronts an impassive skull-like head mounted on part of a rib cage with a slender, tapering blade whose stiletto point thrusts directly toward an eye socket. The implied menace is unmistakable, but the fictive action in this ritualized drama of violation and death can no more be completed than the ball and crescent wedge can meet in Suspended Ball—the blade, supported by a large pin, can only swivel on its pivot. On one level Point to the Eye symbolically rehearses the tense relationship between the subject's and artist's seeing eye and the reciprocal gaze of the object and world seen; on another, it is a pawn in the artist's ongoing attempt throughout the Surrealist period to make sculpture that will incite active, if only imaginary, participation—that will pull the beholder into its spatial continuum.

One of the great masterpieces of the early 1930s is Woman with Her Throat Cut (1932). Although this extraordinary assemblage of parts does not conform to the Surrealists' interest in the object, nor to their emphasis on spontaneous creation, the sculpture's unprecedented sexuality and violence would have fed directly into their concerns. It represents a woman strangled, her jugular vein cut—but there is scarcely a form without several meanings. Death and the artist have melded the figure into a being that is part woman, part crustacean, part reptile, and part

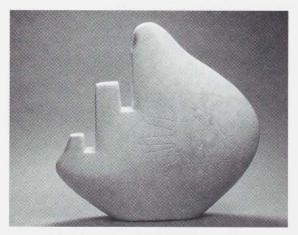
Woman with Her Throat Cut. 1932. Bronze,  $8\times34$   $7\times25$ " (20.3 x B7.6 x 53.5 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase



insect. Yet placed on the floor without a base, as Giacometti intended, the jumble of body parts and splayed legs powerfully conveys the image of a woman who has been raped and murdered. It was Giacometti's wish that the phallic pod, movably attached to the arm bending over the head, be held in the woman's leaflike hand. Dead, the woman is not dispossessed of Freudian menace: in addition to what may be the souvenir that she holds in her hand, the fanged shapes of her rib cage and hip bones impersonate the feared vagina dentata of Surrealist obsession. The iconography of this piece is so powerful that it tends to delay our recognition that its intensity and energy issue from Giacometti's mastery of formal sculptural concerns. It is perhaps relevant, however, to remember his own words: "In every work of art the subject is primordial whether the artist is aware of it or not. The greater or lesser formal quality is never more than a sign of the greater or lesser obsession of the artist with his subject."

Caress (Despite Hands) was probably made somewhat later in 1932 than Woman with Her Throat Cut. In spite of its initial enigmatic, even hermetic appearance, Caress immediately seems to radiate human presence and sensuality. Its prominent convex curvature is usually interpreted as the belly of a pregnant woman, and the staggered cuts opposite as shorthand for the backbone. The incised hands on both sides of the slender (if seen frontally) arched body are those of a man caressing a woman. The silhouettes of the hands seem to be contours resulting from tracing around actual hands (if so, more likely than not, the artist's). The title, image, and form of this sculpture indicate a turning away from violent content toward figures such as the life-size Walking Woman of the following year. Privileged by history, we can see in this development the artist's gradual evolution toward the work of his postwar years.

Hands Holding the Void (Invisible Object), Giacometti's first large, representational image of a whole human figure, appeared in 1934. Highly stylized, a nude female figure balances on a sort of throne, which, together with the pillory-like board covering her shins, appears to form a partial cage restraining her from any action other than the gesture she makes with her hands. These, held in front of her as though holding something, hold nothing. There have been numerous interpretations, none conclusive, of what the held void represents, and the artist himself was deeply evasive on that point. As has been suggested, it may indeed be the void itself that is grasped. Carl Einstein, one



Civress (Despite Hunds), 1932. Marble, 18 "Valx 1916 x 61%" (47,5 x 49,5 x 16 cm). Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompildos: Paris

of Giacometti's earliest and most percipient critics, had written, "The work of art is a protection against the invisible that prowls everywhere and frightens: a barrier against the diffuse animism that threatens." Of whatever it consists or does not, this void seems offered to the spectator who advances into the field of the girl's sightless gaze. Those eyes that stare blankly belong to a head that Giacometti had despaired of ever fashioning; while walking around a flea market with Breton, he had providentially come upon a metal mask that struck him as exactly right for his figure's head. Breton himself had discovered a rather unusual spoon, and made much of the "two finds that Giacometti and I made together," seeing in this marvelous operation of fate evidence of an almost mystical bond between them. Ironically, by the end of the year Giacometti was to shock Breton by suddenly devoting himself to modeling a head from life, and Breton to appall Giacometti by protesting that everyone knew what a head was. Giacometti's ties to Breton's Surrealist circle were subsequently only selectively maintained.

## 7 IN SEARCH OF A NEW WAY OF SEEING, 1934-45

By the end of 1934, Giacometti had become convinced that only by returning to life studies could his art approach an adequate expression of "the totality of life." Remembering this juncture in his career, Giacometti said that "the desire" had come "to make compositions with figures, for this, I had to make (quickly I thought) one or two studies from nature, just enough to understand the construction of a head, of a whole figure, and

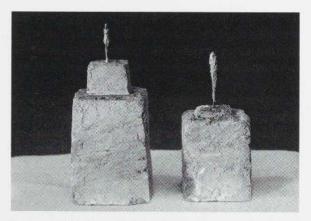


in 1935 I took a model. This should take me two weeks. . . . Nothing turned out as I had imagined." The projected two weeks stretched out to more than ten years of intense activity and experimentation that brought relatively little return until the mid-1940s. During this period, his circle of friends shifted and grew to include Samuel Beckett and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others. Internationally, his reputation was growing, with his first New York exhibition in 1935 and, in 1936, the inclusion of *The Palace at 4 A.M.* in The Museum of Modern Art's *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* exhibition. Purchased by the Museum, the sculpture remained in New York on prominent display.

The long decade of Giacometti's transition to his postwar style included a return to painting. In the summer of 1937 in Stampa and at Maloja, the family summer home, Giacometti produced three canvases that clearly anticipate the many that would come between the late 1940s and the end of his life. Where Giacometti had adapted a form of Cézannian brushstroke in his Self-Portrait of 1921, fourteen years later, in his portrait of his mother and in two still lifes of a single apple on a table, he responded to the earlier artist's technique with a sculptor's eye. The field of perceptual vibrations Cézanne had set up with flecks of color become, in Giacometti's three canvases, a framework of lines of energy and contrasts of light and dark, largely devoid of mass. In each, the beginnings of an internal frame are visible, and traces of rapid execution are combined with an obviously sustained effort.

Giacometti's semisculptural approach to painting was matched by his semipainterly approach to sculpture. But where the attitude had worked in painting, it proved more difficult in sculpture. In the late 1930s, he made his first attempts to sculpt a figure seen in the distance. Observing that a familiar figure seen far away is still recognizable, and affective as a human presence, he focused on adjustments of scale. Making ever smaller figures and placing them on large pedestals, he thought to frame, as in a picture, the illusion of a tiny figure in an expanse of space.

Exactly when Giacometti began making his small-format sculptures is unclear, but it was probably as early as 1936, when he was otherwise devoting hours of each day to working from the model. By the time, however, of his wartime departure for Switzerland, almost his entire attention was given over to these



Two sculptures, each titled Small Figure on a Pediestol. 1946–45, Plaster and metal on plaster base, (left)  $47.4 \times 2.8 \times 7.13.4 \times 2.8 \times 2.00$ ), (right)  $3.7 \times 1.1\% \times 1.1\% \times 1.1\% \times 1.1\%$ . Most a Minimum of Modern Art, New York, Olf to Min and Min. Thomas 8. Heas

figures. Leaving his brother Diego in the rue Hippolyte-Maindron studio, Giacometti set off to visit his mother in Geneva at the end of December of 1941, where he would unexpectedly remain for the next three and a half years. Working in an even smaller space in Geneva than he had had in Paris, Giacometti's concentration on the diminutive figures in no way diminished. On the contrary, his account of his efforts is of an obsession: "But wanting to create from memory what I had seen, to my terror the sculptures became smaller and smaller, they only had a likeness when very small, yet their dimensions revolted me, and tirelessly I began, again and again, to end, several months later, at the same point."

Giacometti's only known escape from the tyranny of the tiny figure occurred at Maloja, between 1942 and 1943, with his creation of a nude, standing female figure, nearly four feet high, mounted on a roughly cubic base supported by a small cart. As can be seen in photographs taken before the figure was removed from the studio, Giacometti painted her twin on the studio wall. The sculpture and the painting are only a whisper's length from the work Giacometti would begin after his return to Paris—indeed, they seem a logical break from the reign of the minuscule, the most evident link to his postwar work. But the artist's demons continued to plague him, and it would be another three years before he could build on this initiative.

# 8/9 POSTWAR PARIS, 1947-51

When Giacometti returned to Paris in mid-September of 1945, he famously brought with him six matchboxes containing the

tiny figures that had occupied him over the previous four years, and which would continue to hold his attention for yet another year. Featured in *Cahiers d'art*, they acquired legendary stature as symbols of the hardships of postwar Europe, and of individual, undefeated endurance.

Giacometti credits his break from the thrall of the minuscule in about 1945 to certain hallucinatory experiences and to drawing. In his ubiquitously quoted letter of 1948 to Pierre Matisse, he refers to the past years of struggle: "All this changed a little in 1945 through drawing. This led me to want to make larger figures, then to my surprise, they achieved a resemblance only when long and slender."

In July of 1946, Annette Arm, twenty-four years old and ready to share the primitive living conditions of the artist she had met in Geneva, arrived in Paris; she was to become Giacometti's wife almost exactly three years later and to begin her role as his model almost immediately. More likely than not, she is the figure in several drawings of 1946 and 1947, realized almost coincidentally with the first appearance of Giacometti's thin, elongated sculptures. In each drawing, the nude female figure is a slender, central vertical occupying only a fraction of its support. The expanse of white paper surrounding her illuminates a spatial field whose proportions establish distance between the viewer and subject. The gouged and kneaded contours of the sculptures to come are anticipated in outlines made indeterminate by the abrasions of pencil and eraser.

From the time of these drawings until the end of his life, Giacometti, with few exceptions, limited himself to a very small group of models, principally Annette and his brother Diego. This economy in the use of models extended to his subjects; rarely did he take on any other than the walking man, standing woman, and bust. In 1947, the same year that he initiated these subjectsprobably shortly before-he made three sculptures, The Nose, The Hand, and Head on a Rod, that thematically recall Surrealist works. Of these, the most dramatic is The Nose. Hanging from an open cage, a fantastic, repellent head thrusts its sinister Pinocchio nose far out into the space beyond its frame. Nose, head, and neck of this bizarre pendulum balance in an equilibrium more precarious than that in the earlier Suspended Ball, whose forms it grotesquely echoes. The long blade of the nose recalls the menacing stiletto of Point to the Eue, but its aim is now at the gaze of the spectator; however, unlike the earlier piece.

there is no sense here of sadistic play. Where the skull of *Point to the Eye* was impassive and, ultimately, seen to be engaged in a ritual charade closed off from real space, the death's head of *The Nose* is practically expressionist, distorted by suffering, and a denizen of our own space. In *The Nose* and its companion pieces, *The Hand, Head on a Rod,* and *The Leg* (conceived in 1947 but not executed until 1958), the narrative tease of the earlier works is gone, replaced by a sober, unsentimentally articulate view of the human condition.

"Art," Giacometti said, "interests me greatly but truth interests me infinitely more." He also remarked: "Have you noticed that, the more true a work, the more style it has?" Disregarding the semitautological riddle these two remarks open up, they are useful to an understanding of the underlying principle of Giacometti's postwar work. Truth, as Giacometti understood it, was the totality of experience of a physical thing, and thus by definition contingent and subject to almost infinite extension—in other words, ungraspable. Yet Giacometti had further stated, "The form must be fixed in an absolute manner." Sartre, in his essay for Giacometti's landmark exhibition at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York in 1948, declared that the artist had found a way out of his insoluble dilemma in the discovery that relativity could be considered a standard of the absolute.

Giacometti's first filament-thin renderings of figures-such as the 1947 Walking Man and Tall Figure—crustallize the artist's transient sensations of seeing, and objectify conditions under which that seeing has taken place: he has seen the figure from a certain distance, in a space that uncertainly reveals the boundaries of solid forms, and while seeing, he has known that in the next instant vision will become memory. The slenderness of the figures reconstitutes an experience of seeing across an extended space, an effect partially preserved even if the viewer comes as close as the artist must have done while working on them. Their insubstantiality still leaves space around them, and the elongation of each, increasing in degree from head to feet. creates proportions approaching those that a model standing across the studio would perceptually have. The enlarged feet and relative mass of the bases reinforce the notion of an upright figure seen at room distance.

Close up, the rough, knotted, nervous surfaces of *Tall*Figure and Walking Man impose a conceptual distance between viewer and object, just as they paradoxically exact an intimacy

that solicits the viewer to touch—even if only imaginatively—their uneven bumps and hollows. Jean Genet, a close friend of the artist, recounts how, in touching them, sensations flowed to the ends of his fingertips. "Not one was alike—my hand ran across the most vivid and varying landscape." Each separate movement of the surface he declared to be as necessary as all those notes in Mozart's Magic Flute. The beauty of such sculptures was captured, he thought, in their incessant, uninterrupted coming and going from the most extreme distance to the closest familiarity.

The illusory interpenetrations of mass and space created bu the irregular edges of Tall Figure and Walking Man exemplify Giacometti's almost Cézannesque obsession with the elusiveness of contour. Sharing much, these two figures are nonetheless oppositional, and reveal much about their author. Giacometti's figures of women are always frontal and static, ritualistic in their formalitu: the figures of men largely share these traits but are in movement, usually a sedate, somewhat tentative walking. The heads of the men are also animate, alive with a kind of waru attention; those of the women are impassive, the surface treatment no more than a continuation of the body's. The pace of Walking Man, Giacometti's first large figure of its kind, is closer to the solemnity of Egyptian statues than to nearer precedents in Western art. At least empathically a selfportrait, the figure moves forward cautiously, as if making a first-ever attempt at walking.

In City Square of 1948, whose size and format recall the game-board configurations of his Surrealist years. Giacometti arranges a rare tableau in which the male figure appears with the female. When the piece is viewed frontally, the female in the middle displays the hieratic pose observable in her sisters. and the male figure closest to her seems a transposition of the large Walking Man of 1947. One of several pieces to assemble groups of personages in seemingly sterile encounters, City Square derives from modern urban experience. Although it has often been interpreted as expressing the loneliness, isolation, and even alienation of the human being in contemporary society, it may have as much or even more to do with Giacometti's fascination with the scene around him: "In the street people astound and interest me more than any sculpture or painting . . . they form and reform living compositions of unbelievable complexity."



In another sculpture. The Cage (Woman and Head) of 1950, Giacometti sets up a variant confrontation of man and woman, but in a setting at the farthest remove from street encounters. Although vividly fixing a lived moment, The Cage immediately locates its space in the artificial. On a solid platform supported bu a high, tablelike structure, the tinu figure of a monolithically slim woman faces out; to her right, vastly larger in mass and almost equal in height, is the profiled bust of a man whose gaze is directed at a right angle to her own. The two are placed within a space frame similar to those of Suspended Ball and The Nose, which, like the entire construction that elevates them to the expected eye level of painting, announces their removal from the space of reality. Each figure, provided with its own small pedestal, is to be read as a statuette fixed in the realm of art. This artwork within an artwork, like many modern paintings and some of Giacometti's Surrealist sculptures, shifts the construction of narrative from the artist to the beholder. Although The Cage is open to multiple interpretations, it is not difficult to see the work as a metaphor for Giacometti's daily confrontation with his grand subjects: the encounters between men and women, the encounters between life and art.

Of all Giacometti's works from the extraordinarily productive years between 1947 and 1951, The Chariot (1950) may be the most mysterious and arresting. Rising above two high wheels that recall those of Eguptian battle chariots, an elegantly slender figure seems both fragile and dominating. The aesthetic, iconographic law by which the arms of Giacometti's female figures must be bound to their bodies is here broken, and the arms of the figure are allowed their freedom in a gesture that is at once welcoming and forbidding. This goddesslike demeanor is somewhat undermined by the figure's precarious equilibrium, apparently maintained by these same meaningful movements of her arms. Unlike the much smaller wheels supporting Woman with Chariot (1942-43), the wheels of The Chariot are held motionless by their attachment to wood chocks. But, because they are upended, the chocks create an apparent situation that might be described as an accident waiting to happen. The Chariot's intimations of instability set up ambivalent sensations; at one moment the spectator can sense an incipient forward movement, and at another the reverse-a phenomenon observable, if less apparent, in all of Giacometti's female figures of the period.

Walking Man. 1947. Brunze, 66 % x 9 % x 20 %" (170 x 23 x 53 cm). Alberto Giacometti-Stiftung, Zurich

## 10/11 RETURNING TO PAINTING, 1949-65

Giacometti's mid-1930s move toward working before the model brought with it a renewed interest in painting, but one that had only a sporadic hold. Beginning in the late 1940s, however, and up until the end of his life, sculpture and painting gripped him with equal intensity and, as has been observed, the practices of one sometimes slipped over into those of the other. In neither was anything allowed to appear certain, and as a corollary, Giacometti's habitual way of realizing a canvas or a sculpture was through a process of incessant building, effacing, and building again. Giacometti almost always painted from life, whether portrait, still life, or landscape. His sculptural practice was more flexible. Beginning before a model, he was as likely as not to put the work aside after one or two sessions and continue it from memory when the moment moved him. Giacometti told the art critic David Sulvester that afternoon hours he had spent painting from life sometimes came to his rescue when, in the evening, he returned to his attempts to finish a sculpture. This symbiotic interaction aided him in keeping a passage open between the poles of his inspiration, the inner and outer realms of vision.

Giacometti's preferred format in the paintings of 1949-50 was a single figure in an interior, usually seated in the studio. One of the most compelling of these is Annette with Chariot (1950). Giacometti's young bride is posed on a stool in the exact middle of the painting, jostled on her right by the newly executed Four Figurines on a Stand and on her left by the equally recent sculpture The Chariot. A traditional one-point perspective might be said to obtain here, but its usefulness consists in the distortions it allows. The orthogonals establishing the far corner of the studio retreat along such sharp diagonal paths that their convergence pitches the floor forward even as it compresses the space of the picture into the tight confines of a receding triangleitself immediately countered by the forward-thrusting wedge formed by Annette and her flanking sculptures. Looking at the picture, one seems to be standing very near her, yet one sees her proportionally as one would if she were at a distance across the studio. The interior frame that Giacometti almost always drew around his compositions is here only partially indicated along the bottom, upper right, and left edge of the painting in a skewed line that aggravates the picture's forward tilt. Annette is evidently the protagonist of this composition, yet the space she is in is almost as forcefully present, its substance defined by

linear vectors crisscrossing a semitransparent film of gray-brown paint. And everywhere, volume and space are porous. Behind Annette's right shoulder and glimpsed through the bars of Four Figurines on a Stand is the figure of Hands Holding the Void, whose contours are indicated by lines ambivalently describing form and the fall of light.

In Diego in a Plaid Shirt, painted four years after Annette with Chariot, the half-length figure confronts the viewer much as he must have faced his brother while sitting for the picture. Here Giacometti presents his subject almost naturalistically, and allows himself a rare excursion into bright color. Still, he has keyed up the nearness of the figure with the kind of optical perspective of a snapshot, and maintained the visibility of space—less by lines than by a dense, sometimes opaque, sometimes translucent, veil of paint that both surrounds and merges



Annette with Charlot. 1950. Oil on canvas, 281/4 x 1911/411 (73 x 50 cm). Private collection

with the figure. This incursiveness of space is even more pervasive in two portraits of Jean Genet painted shortly after the Diego portrait. In one, based on an Egyptian figure of a seated scribe in the Louvre, the subject again seems very close, his near extremities (the legs) enlarged as if by photographic lens in a manner far more acute than the treatment of hand and thigh in the portrait of Diego. Genet remembers seeing this image in the cramped quarters of Giacometti's studio as "a tangle of curved lines, commas, closed circles crossed by a secant," and the colors as "somewhat rose, gray or black and a strange green—a very fine entanglement he [Giacometti] was making and where no doubt he lost himself." The idea came to Genet to take the picture into the courtuard outside Giacometti's studio. and he recalls the effect as stunning; the further he got from the picture, the more it took form, took on a reality that he found frightening, radiating a living presence not of a single moment but of all the lived moments of its subject. Genet's experiment with distance and form can be reenacted with almost all of Giacometti's elongated sculpted figures; seen close up. the figures disappear and the images dissolve. All that remains is the material comprising them.

Very close inspection juxtaposed with a reading at conventional viewing distance of Giacometti's still lifes and landscapes will reveal a similar phenomenon of formlessness converting to form. This is not a pictorial technique introduced by Giacometti; it can be seen in various old masters, as, for example, in certain of Rembrandt's self-portraits, where the hands seen close up are an incomprehensible jumble of brushstrokes and become firmly modeled at a distance of a few feet. The modernity Giacometti brings to this old ploy lies in his unabashed display of process.

Aside from the implicit testimony of Giacometti's paintings, we know from the accounts of Sylvester and James Lord (both writers and friends of the artist, as well as sitters for him) that the artist's picture-making process was agonizingly protracted, marked by daily losings and findings and refindings of the likeness he sought. Both report that the innumerable states a picture might go through were often as much finished as the final version; the finality of any one version was frequently established when the sitter became unavailable. All of the portraits of the Japanese philosophy professor Isaku Yanaihara, executed between 1956 and 1961, bear witness to these struggles. The Yanaihara portraits prepared Giacometti for the series

he would make of Caroline, a young prostitute he had met in 1959. A fresh immediacy and intensity of encounter radiate from Giacometti's images of her. In *Caroline II* (1962), the torso, treated in an almost Abstract Expressionist manner, rises before the viewer at a distance that seems at once near and far. The yellow-brown spread of paint surrounding her figure is her own particular space, a kind of ethereal throne that imperially ignores the boundaries marking the interior frame of the picture. The figure's head seems projected forward with near sculptural force. Its built-up, reworked and layered surface stands in relief-like contrast to the rapid, darting lines of the body, which configure themselves into a whitened V shape that leads the viewer's eye up to the face and its unrelenting gaze.

# 12 DRAWINGS, 1951-64/STUDIES OF DIEGO AND ANNETTE: 1950-54

Drawing had always been at the heart of Giacometti's endeavor. He grew up drawing and never ceased. He credited the medium with many of his aesthetic breakthroughs, which came about through the heightened awareness and visual concentration the process brought. Although he might make sketches after his own work, he almost never made preparatory studies for specific sculptures or paintings—the seek—and—find nature of his approach to painting and sculpture would have ruled out such premeditation. During his postwar period in particular, there was rarely a point in the construction of a work when his eye lost its critical edge, when it told him that any one piece was complete—rather, it consistently led him to further and yet further explorations. He worked with a kind of sustained spontaneity that left little room for distinctions between preparation and execution.

Owing to the nature of the medium, a greater range of subjects was available to Giacometti as a draftsman than as a painter or sculptor. Only partially excluding his Surrealist objects, Giacometti's constant sculptural motif was the grand theme of classic tradition, the human figure—varied only rarely by brief forays into the animal world. Although far from a conventional artist, Giacometti as painter took his subjects from the three great genres of the art: the figure, the landscape, and the still life. His drawings add to these only in their greater variation on persistent themes and by the many copies of masterpieces of the past that he made from childhood through old age.

The world Giacometti found himself in was his to draw, and his representation of it was prolific and wonderfully skilled. His use of the white of the paper support fills portraits, landscapes, and still lifes alike with numinous energy. His empathic identification with his subjects radiates from portraits of friends such as those of Genet and Lord, and his nephew Silvio Berthoud, and is especially apparent in *Annette IV* and *Annette V*, done in the last years of his life. Giacometti often made self-portraits, but after the early 1920s they were not sculpted or painted but were always done in pen or pencil on paper. In one especially finely worked self-portrait of 1960, the artist presents himself prematurely aged and fixing the world with a steady, tolerant regard. During



Self-Portrait. 1960. Pencil on paper, 19 "/« x § 2 "/»" (50.4 x 32.8 cm): Klewan Collection

the course of Giacometti's life, his mother was often his subject; among the most poignant of these drawings are two images showing her in 1963, the last year of her life. In one, her gesture suggests that she is sewing, her fragility apparent in the network of delicate lines that describe her head and hands: in the other, she is reading. her head and crossed hands more forcefully presented to indicate a light from above illuminating the book that she holds. Roughly contemporary drawings show a room in the Hôtel L'Aiglon on the

boulevard Raspail in Paris, to which Giacometti had retreated to convalesce from the stomach surgery he had undergone the previous February. The banal objects in the room—tablecloth, table, and armchair—are schematically indicated by variously crisp and fuzzy pencil strokes, which, in magic tandem with Giacometti's eraser, create the shaft of light and the soft breeze that visibly enter the room through the window to the left.

In 1953, after returning to life studies in sculpture, Giacometti began to extend Annette's role as a model, working with her not only for paintings but also for sculptures. The resulting figures, such as *Standing Nude III*, of 1953, and *Nude*,

after Nature and Standing Nude without Arms of the following year, share little other than their frontal postures with their much thinner, "visionary" predecessors of 1947-50. Far more naturalistic in form, they also have less convulsively worked surfaces. As apparent in some slightly earlier busts of Diego, Giacometti's interest had turned toward an expressivity more closely tied to physical appearance. Initially, in his busts of Diego of 1950 and 1951, a naturalism parallel to the figures of Annette of three years later is manifest. While this new tendency did not vanish with the busts of Diego made in 1953 and 1954, they were subject to more radical alterations than the Annettes. For his large, weightier figures, Giacometti gave up the distancing pedestal, transferring its formal and weight-bearing functions to the upper torso, which, in combination with the more traditionally modeled heads, produced a new solidity. To relieve the inert qualities he detected in the more conventional heads, he began to break up the surface even more determinedly than he had in the past. This emphasis on the materiality of the sculpture added a new dimension to an aesthetic device that, when applied to the slender figures of some years earlier, had contributed to a sense, not of substantiality, but rather of material dissolution.

Through the relation of narrow head to imposing body, Giacometti found a means to manipulate perception. In painting, close-up views and those taken at a low angle tend to cause a sense of perspectival retreat. Transferring this principle to sculpture, Giacometti was most successful in his treatment of *Diego in a Sweater* (1953), where the expanse and weight of the body conspire to draw attention to the small, intensely gazing head above. The contrast of tiny head and massive pedestal developed in the minuscule sculptures is here exponentially heightened.

A problem that constantly plagued Giacometti—the discrepancy between the front view of a head and its profile (the vexatious fact that neither could be inferred from the other)—was addressed in a series of bladelike heads of 1954–55. In the late 1920s, to solve other problems, he had flattened the head crosswise in his portrait of his mother and the slightly later *Gazing Head*; now, in the mid 1950s, he flattened it from front to back, treating it rather as he had the body in *Caress* of 1932. *Large Head of Diego* (1954) presents a conventional view of shoulders surmounted by a rather unusual head; composed of low-relief profiles set at right angles to the body, the head offers a fleeting frontal aspect—only, however, if the viewer is

stationed nose-to-nose and eye-to-eye with it. An inch or two to the right or left and one eye sees the blade edge of the head while the other registers a profile. Here Giacometti manages to impose his own acute awareness of the contradictory nature of perception on anyone open to another look at the world.

# 13 THE WOMEN OF VENICE AND FIGURES FOR A PUBLIC PROJECT, 1956 AND 1960

The standing female figures Giacometti made in anticipation of an exhibition of his work in the French pavilion of the 1956 Venice Biennale have achieved an almost cultlike status. Between January and May of that year, the artist, using the same clau over the same wire armature, produced some fifteen figures, which, the moment he found them satisfactory, his brother Diego cast in plaster. Ten of these were seen in Venice, and nine were later cast in bronze. The experience gained from making the busts of Diego is evident in these figures in a lateral flattening of their torsos and a front-to-back narrowing of their heads and feet. More emphatically three-dimensional than their predecessors of the late 1940s and early 1950s, these figures synthesize such life studies as the Annettes of 1953 and 1954 with the earlier more visionary nudes. More than likely, the Women of Venice were the subject of a conversation between Genet and Giacometti that went like this: (Giacometti) When I'm walking in the street and see a prostitute completely dressed, I see a prostitute. When she's in a room naked in front of me, I see a goddess. (Genet) For me a naked woman is a naked woman. That makes no impression on me. But in your statues I see the Goddess. (Giacometti) You think that I've succeeded in showing them like I see them?

Giacometti had his Women of Venice in mind when, in response to an invitation to make a public sculpture for the new Chase Manhattan Plaza in New York, he proposed a group of three larger-than-life sculptures: a standing woman, a walking man, and a head on a pedestal. The idea of grouping a number of sculptural forms in a public gathering place went back to Giacometti's *Model for a Square* of 1930–31. Presented with the actual opportunity in 1956, however, he naturally thought of figures that had been the major themes of his work during the previous ten years—the walking man as the symbol of human striving, the head as the site of vision and consciousness, and, most complex of all, the standing female nude as goddess, giver



Bust of Biego. 1951. Bronze, painted, 1374 x 12 x 674 (35 x 30.5 x 16 cm). Collection Jan and Marie. Anne Krugier-Paniatowski.

of life, and, always for Giacometti, the Other. Several versions of the figures were cast in bronze in 1960, although the commission had been, for various reasons, withdrawn. When Giacometti came to New York for his 1965 retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art, he visited the site and concluded that a single standing woman, twenty-five feet tall, would have best suited the surroundings.

## 14 THE LAST YEARS, 1962-65

Other than exhibiting a pronounced interest in the expressive possibilities of the pedestal and a similar rough treatment of surface, Giacometti's portrait busts of Annette from 1962 and those made of his friend the photographer Elie Lotar three years later evidence few common traits. The busts of Annette show her individuality; embodying vivacious personality, they engage the viewer with their lively presence. Those of Lotar are the almost generic presentation of "man at the end of his life"; they are the faces of old men, their piercing gazes no longer appear aimed at the viewer but at some reality beyond. A critic close to Giacometti observed that the busts have little specific

resemblance to Lotar, and conjectured that in their universality as images of a being consciously at death's abyss, they are self-portraits of the artist. The fact that these were the last works Giacometti completed before he died lends them a character of final achievement, an elegiac transcendent aura.

Giacometti's self-imposed, self-defined "impossible" project of capturing lived experience often left him lamenting, if not in some ways boasting, of his failure. He wrote, "The days pass, and I delude myself that I am trapping, holding back, what's fleeting." But his deluding of himself was, as it were, clear eyed, and his repeated pronouncements of failure had an optimistic side to them: "All I can do will only ever be a faint image of what I see and success will always be less than my failure or perhaps equal to the failure." Giacometti's obsessive attempts to achieve that critical equation between success and failure have left us an art that expresses the human condition with a startling and enduring relevance.



Lotar III. 1965. Branze, 254/ex 11 x 14" (65.5 x 28 x 35.5 cm). Private collection

**Public Programs Fall 2001** The following programs will be held in conjunction with the exhibition *Alberto Giacometti*.

**HOW ALBERTO BECAME GIACOMETTI** Monday, October 15 Art historian **Reinhold Hohl** and Giacometti biographer **James Lord** discuss the life and visionary work of Alberto Giacometti.

**GIACOMETTI'S DOG** Monday, October 22 Art critic **Michael Brenson** examines the texture and poetry of Giacometti's work through a sustained look at one of the artist's most beloved sculptures, *Dog*, of 1951.

# PERCEPTIONS AT PLAY: GIACOMETTI THROUGH CONTEMPORARY EYES Monday, November 5

Roxana Marcoci, Janice H. Levin Fellow and Curatorial Assistant, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art, addresses the ways in which contemporary artists such as Janine Antoni, Louise Bourgeois, Robert Gober, Paul McCarthy, Bruce Nauman, and Gabriel Orozco, among others, have kept Alberto Giacometti's legacy operative in their present work.

GIACOMETTI'S GRANDE FIGURE Friday, November 16
Art historian Friedrich Teja Bach considers Giacometti's first monumental outdoor sculpture, Grande Figure (also known as Figure in a Garden) of 1930–32, in relation to the artist's contemporaneous Surrealist objects, and to the problems of site-specificity. Grande Figure is being shown publicly for the first time in this exhibition.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI: AN ARTIST'S PANEL Monday, November 19
A panel discussion with artists Vanessa Beecroft, Vija Celmins,
Richard Serra and William Tucker, moderated by Anne Umland,
Associate Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, The
Museum of Modern Art, and co-organizer of the Alberto
Giacometti exhibition.

All programs begin at 6:30 P.M. and take place at the Donnell Library Center Auditorium, 20 West 53 Street (please enter library by east door). Tickets are \$8; members \$7; students and seniors \$5 and are available at The Museum of Modern Art's Lobby Information Desk. For more information, please call the Department of Education at 212.708.9781.

#### PHRITCATION

#### Alberto Giacometti

Christian Klemm, in collaboration with Carolyn Lanchner, Tobia Bezzola, and Anne Umland

The publication accompanying the *Alberto Giacometti* exhibition is the most comprehensive survey in many years of the work of one of the twentieth century's greatest artists.

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