

Chronology

The following abbreviated text is based on the work of Reinhold Hohl, whose essential monograph of 1971 has served as a foundation for subsequent scholarship; see Reinhold Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1971). For additional material, see James Lord, *Alberto Giacometti: A Biography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1985); Hohl in *Alberto Giacometti* (Berlin: Nationalgalerie, 1987); Christoph Doswalds in *Alberto Giacometti 1901–1966* (Vienna: Kunsthalle, 1996); and Hohl, ed., *Giacometti: A Biography in Pictures* (Ostfildern-Ruit: G. Hatje, 1998).

1901 —————
Alberto Giacometti is born on October 10 in the mountain hamlet of Borgonovo, near Stampa in the Grisons (Graubünden) canton of Switzerland. His father Giovanni Giacometti is a Post-Impressionist painter; his mother Annetta Giacometti-Stampa is the daughter of one of the valley's landed families. Augusto Giacometti, an important Symbolist painter, is a second cousin of both parents.

1902 —————
Birth of brother Diego (d. 1985).

1904 —————
Birth of sister Ottilia (d. 1937).
In the late fall the family moves to Stampa, to live in the Hôtel Piz Duan operated by Giovanni's father.

1906 —————
The family moves into the second floor of a house opposite the hotel. Giovanni makes an adjacent shed into a studio.

1907 —————
Birth of brother Bruno.



The Giacometti family (Alberto, Diego, Bruno, Giovanni, Ottilia, and Annetta), 1911
Photo: Andrea Garbald

1911–15 —————
Alberto begins to send crayon and pencil drawings to his godfather, Cuno Amiet, the Fauvist painter and close family friend. (These

survive from nearly every year of his childhood.) In 1913 Alberto produces his first oil painting in his father's studio, a still life with apples on a folding table. Shortly after Christmas 1914 he models the heads of Diego and Bruno in Plasticine.

1915–19 —————
Alberto attends the Evangelical School in Schiers, near Chur, where he is given a small studio.

1919 —————
Alberto spends the spring and summer in Stampa and nearby Maloja, where he draws and paints in a divisionist style. In the fall he begins studying art at the École des Beaux-Arts and École des Arts Industriels in Geneva. Painting (under the pointillist David Estoppey) comes easily to him, and in modeling (under modern sculptor Maurice Sarkisoff) he is allowed to do as he likes.

1920 —————
At the end of March Alberto spends some ten days with Amiet in Oschwand.
In May Giovanni, a member of the Swiss Art Commission, takes Alberto with him to the Venice Biennale. He discovers the paintings of Jacopo Tintoretto in Venice and visits Padua, where he sees Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes. From late summer on, Alberto works in Geneva before setting out for Florence in mid-November. His main impressions there are provided by the Archeological Museum, where he sees Egyptian art.
He arrives in Rome on December 21.

1921 —————
Alberto lives in Rome with the family of Antonio Giacometti, a cousin of his parents. He falls in love with the oldest of the six children, the fifteen-year-old Bianca, and attempts to model a bust of her. He takes a small studio in the Via Ripetta, visits museums and churches, and makes drawings after the Old Masters. He also attends operas and concerts, and reads ancient and modern writers, who inspire him to draw. At the end of March or beginning of April he travels to Naples, Paestum, and Pompeii; in July he returns to Maloja.
On September 3 he travels from Innsbruck to the remote mountain village of Madonna di Campiglio with Pieter van Meurs, a sixty-one-year-old archivist. On the following day, van Meurs has an attack and dies that night with Giacometti at his side. Giacometti, not yet twenty, will never forget this death and never again sleep without a light on. He returns to Stampa by way of Venice.

1922

On the morning of January 9 Giacometti arrives in Paris. He enrolls in a life drawing class and in the sculpture class of Émile-Antoine Bourdelle at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Bourdelle's teaching consists of weekly critiques with long lectures amid modeling stands. Giacometti attends the Académie until 1927, though with frequent month-long absences.

From August to October he trains with the Alpine Infantry in Herisau.

1923-24

In the Montparnasse quarter of Paris, the center of the art world, Alberto makes drawings of a skull for an entire winter.

He fraternizes mainly with other Swiss artists, among them Serge Brignoni, with whom he shares an interest in tribal art and in Surrealism. He rents a spacious atelier at 72, avenue Denfert-Rochereau.

1925

In January Giacometti moves into his second, somewhat smaller Paris atelier at 37, rue Froidevaux, with windows looking out on the Montparnasse cemetery. Diego joins him in February.

His circle of acquaintances at the Académie widens to include artists from Italy and Scandinavia, also a few Frenchmen, among them Pierre Matisse, the son of Henri Matisse, and later a prominent art dealer in New York. He enters into an amorous relationship with Flora Mayo, a twenty-five-year-old American, which continues until 1929.

In November Alberto Giacometti shows his work for the first time in the Salon des Tuileries. In the same month he takes part in the *Exposition des Artistes Suisses* in Paris.

1926

His involvement with Cubism and tribal art leads in the winter of 1926-27 to his first major sculpture, *Spoon Woman*. Giacometti exhibits two works in the Salon des Tuileries.

1927

He moves into the barracks-like studio building at 46, rue Hippolyte-Maindron, which has a common water tap and toilet in the courtyard. Diego sleeps in the loft, while Alberto beds down either in the workroom or the nearby Hotel Primavera.

In the summer, in Stampa, he produces several busts of his father. In a show of his work at the Galerie Aktuaryus in Zürich, Alberto exhibits plaster busts of his father, his brother, and a



Giacometti and Flora Mayo. 1927.
Photo: Flora Mayo



Giacometti in his studio, Paris. 1927.
Photo: E. W. Kornfeld

young girl. In Paris he shows the *Spoon Woman*.

1928

In February Giacometti shows six sculptures in the exhibition *Les Artistes italiens de Paris*. In the winter of 1928-29, the *Gazing Head* and other Plaque sculptures evolve.

1929

In June, along with works by Massimo Campigli, the Galerie Jeanne Bucher exhibits two of Giacometti's Plaque sculptures: the *Gazing Head* and *Figure*. They are an immediate sensation among artists and writers, and give Giacometti entrée into avant-garde circles. He becomes acquainted with André Masson, Hans Arp, Joan Miró, Max Ernst, Alexander Calder, Jean Lurçat, and Pablo Picasso, as well as with such Surrealist writers as Louis Aragon and Georges Bataille. At the suggestion of the art critic Carl Einstein, the poet and ethnologist Michel Leiris publishes a first, groundbreaking essay on Giacometti in Bataille's literary journal *Documents*.

The art dealer Pierre Loeb agrees to pay Giacometti a monthly stipend in exchange for his entire year's production or at least the right to show and represent it.

The principle of the Plaque sculptures is further varied and developed into the filigree constructions: *Man (Apollo)*, *Reclining Woman*, and *Reclining Woman Who Dreams*.

In the fall, the art critic and later art-book publisher E. Tériade selects two works for the ambitious *Exposition internationale de sculpture* in the Galerie Georges Bernheim. In November and December the Galerie Wolfensberger in Zürich also exhibits Giacometti's *The Couple* in its exhibition *Produktion Paris 1929*.

1930

Man Ray introduces Alberto and Diego Giacometti to Jean-Michel Frank, a decorator who operates an extravagant interior-design studio. The Giacometti brothers design decorative objects for him: vases, standing lamps, and wall ornaments. Alberto also designs jewelry for the fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, and bronze andirons and a spidery wall relief for the banker Pierre David-Weill. The most important patron of the Surrealists, the Vicomte Charles de Noailles, commissions a large sculpture from Giacometti for the garden of his summer residence, in Hyères on the Côte d'Azur.

In the spring Pierre Loeb presents the exhibition *Miró-Arp-Giacometti* in his gallery at 2, rue des Beaux-Arts. Giacometti's *Suspended Ball* causes a furor in the circle of André Breton, who visits the artist and urges him to join his Surrealist group. Up until the winter of 1931-32 and again in 1933 Giacometti takes part in their demonstrations and séances, but he never fully succumbs to Breton's doctrine. In August, on an Alpine meadow in Maloja, he models three plaster stele figures as maquettes for Hyères. He inspects the site on his return journey to Paris and in December completes the model for the figures, now condensed into a single large statue.

1931

In May Giacometti signs the Surrealists' pamphlet against the *Exposition coloniale internationale*. From May 22 to June 6 the Galerie Pierre shows works of his in the exhibition *Où allons-nous?*, although Giacometti has terminated his contract with Pierre Loeb and is now represented by Pierre Colle.

In December, Giacometti's first published writing, "Objets mobiles et muets," appears in the third issue of Breton's journal *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, along with Salvador Dalí's article on Surrealist objects inspired by the *Suspended Ball*.



Alberto Giacometti, c. 1931.
Photo: Jacques-André Boiffard.

1932

Giacometti turns toward the Surrealist left led by Louis Aragon, and until 1935 contributes a few class-warfare and anticlerical caricatures to the journals *La Lutte* and *Commune*. In May the Galerie Pierre Colle mounts Giacometti's first one-man show. Picasso is among the first visitors. Christian Zervos devotes an article to Giacometti's sculptures in his journal *Cahiers d'art*, illustrated with several photographs by Man Ray. For the Romanian countess Madina Visconti, Giacometti draws two views of his atelier, which present an overview of his work up to that time.

1933

In February and March Giacometti attends Surrealist meetings led by Breton and Paul Eluard; there the *Recherches expérimentales sur la connaissance irrationnelle d'un objet* are staged, as the report on them, with Giacometti's responses, states in the May edition of *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*. On June 20 the Vicomte de Noailles purchases Giacometti's *The (Surrealist) Table* from the *Exposition surréaliste* at the Galerie Pierre Colle. Giacometti exhibits an enlarged version of *Cage* (1930) in the *VI Salon des Surindépendants*. The unwieldy construction is subsequently deposited on the balcony of Max Ernst's apartment, where it remains until it falls apart. Among the other exhibitors in the *VI Salon* are Hans Arp, Victor Brauner, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Joan Miró, Meret Oppenheim, Man Ray, and Yves Tanguy.

On June 25 Giovanni Giacometti dies in the Valmont clinic in Glion, above Montreux. Alberto and Diego arrive the following day. Alberto becomes ill and stays in the Bregaglia valley all summer. He loses his usual compulsion to work and his interest in Surrealist objects and constructions. Between the fall of 1933 and the spring of 1934 he creates his *Hands Holding the Void (Invisible Object)*, *Head—Skull*, and *Cube (Nocturnal Pavilion)*.

1934

In the summer, Giacometti carves the stone for his father's grave in the San Giorgio Cemetery at Borgonovo: on the front is a relief with a bird and a star, on the back a torso of his father. In Maloja he attempts a last Surrealist figure: a tall hollow cone with the inscription "1 + 1 = 3." In the fall, in Paris Giacometti begins to make realistic heads, both without and with models (his brother Diego and Rita Gueffier, a professional model).

The Surrealists consider this change to representation a betrayal. In late 1934 or early 1935 Giacometti is called to account by Breton at a group meeting and charged with disloyalty to Surrealism owing to his design work for Jean-Michel Frank. Giacometti abruptly walks out and leaves the Breton circle. From December 1, 1934, to January 1, 1935, the Julien Levy Gallery in New York presents Giacometti's first exhibition in the United States, together with a Dali exhibition. Among the twelve sculptures in marble, wood, and plaster are *No More Play* and *Hands Holding the Void (Invisible Object)*, which is later acquired by Roberto and Patricia Mattà. Giacometti loses most of his ties to Parisian Surrealist friends, although he does stay in contact with a few, among them Aragon. He turns to other artists: André Derain, Jean Hélion, and especially the young figural painters Balthus, Francis Gruber, Tal Coat, and Francis Tailleux. In the spring he becomes acquainted with Isabel Nicholas, a twenty-three-year-old Englishwoman, who becomes an important friend and model. In the summer Ernst visits Giacometti in Maloja and works on stones naturally rounded by glaciers.

1936

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., founding director of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, shows several of Giacometti's works in the landmark exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, including *Disagreeable Object* and *The Palace at 4 A.M.*, which he acquires for the Museum.

1937

Giacometti begins a conversation with playwright Samuel Beckett in the Café de Flore that continues during countless walks through the night in Montparnasse. He visits Picasso in his atelier on the rue des Grands-Augustins, and they discuss his seemingly hopeless attempts to produce small-format sculptures of people seen from afar. In Stampa, Giacometti produces two successful paintings, *Apple on a Sideboard* and *The Artist's Mother*.

1938

Giacometti is involved in a traffic accident on October 18 in the place des Pyramides, in which his foot is broken. He fails to follow his doctor's advice to stay off his foot until the break is healed, and has a limp for the rest of his life. For a few years he occasionally uses a crutch, then a cane.

1939-41

In 1939 Jean-Paul Sartre introduces himself to Giacometti in the Café de Flore. He and his companion Simone de Beauvoir find Giacometti to be a fascinating conversationalist and an artist "in search of the absolute," as Sartre will call his 1947 essay on Giacometti. For the *Swiss National Exhibition* in Zürich, from May to October 1939, his brother Bruno negotiates commissions for two sculptures. But, instead, Giacometti shows his 1934 *Cube (Nocturnal Pavilion)*.

At the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939, Alberto and Diego are in Maloja. On September 2 they report for duty in Chur, as the Swiss army is mobilized. Alberto is found to be unfit for military service. By mid-November he is back in Paris, and Diego joins him at the end of December. Peggy Guggenheim begins exhibiting and selling his works in New York.

On June 13, 1940, just before the arrival of the German *Wehrmacht* in Paris, Alberto, Diego, and Diego's companion Nelly decide to escape to the south—by bicycle. On June 14, outside Etampes, they witness the bombardment of the city and the strafing of the line of fleeing refugees with machine guns from the air. On June 17 they reach Moulins, where the German advance catches up with them on the next day. They turn around and return to Paris on June 22.

In late 1940 and in 1941 Giacometti meets frequently with Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Picasso.

On December 10, 1941, Giacometti applies for a visa to Switzerland to visit his mother in Geneva. He leaves Paris on December 31. Diego remains at the atelier in the rue Hippolyte-Maindron until September 1945.

1942-45

Giacometti lives and works in Geneva. Initially he stays with his brother-in-law Dr. Francis Berthoud, the husband of his late sister Ottilia, who died in childbirth; his mother lives there as well, raising her grandson Silvio. Later he rents a sparsely furnished room without running water, making daily visits to his mother. Giacometti produces drawings for little Silvio and has the boy model for him. His little figures



Giacometti in his studio in Paris, c. 1946
Photo: Emily Savitry

and heads become smaller, the bases larger. In the Café du Commerce Giacometti regularly encounters Albert Skira, who is building up an art-book publishing business in his hometown. From October 1944 to December 1946, Skira publishes the journal *Labyrinthe*, to which Giacometti contributes ideas, drawings, and articles. Skira also commissions the artist to make decorative vases for him. Other members of his regular circle at the café are the sculptor Hugo Weber; the painters Charles Rollier, Roger Montandon, and occasionally Balthus; the photographer Elie Lotar; the actor Michel Simon; the philosopher Jean Starobinski; and the writer Ludwig Hohl. The geologist Charles Ducloz becomes a close friend.

In October 1943, at a dinner in the Brasserie Centrale, he meets Annette Arm, who has just turned twenty. She is full of life and wishes to break free of her parents.

After Paris is liberated in the summer of 1944, Giacometti applies for the papers necessary for him to return to France, but he does not leave at first, then finally borrows the money for the trip from Annette and sets off alone. On September 18, 1945, Giacometti returns to his atelier, and resumes work there.

In a café on the Champs-Élysées Giacometti soon runs into Isabel Nicholas, who has returned from London. They live together in a rented room in the rue Hippolyte-Maindron for three months. On December 25 she leaves him for good.

1946

In the winter of 1945–46 Giacometti again

takes up his solitary work and his gregarious nightlife in Montparnasse and now Saint-Germain-des-Prés as well.

At first his sculpted figures continue to be tiny, but in February he has an intense experience while watching a movie, which raises his perception of people and things in space to the hyper-clarity of a vision.

By making drawings of passersby on the street he gradually finds his way to the elongated figures that characterize his mature style. Sixteen pages of reproductions in *Cahiers d'art* document this transition.

Projects for monuments initiated by Aragon, including one for Gabriel Péri, never advance beyond the design stage. Some of the new drawings are exhibited in the Galerie Pierre. For the Easter holidays Giacometti travels to Geneva, where he sees Annette. On July 6 Annette arrives in Paris, where she will stay. She gets to know Giacometti's friends and comes to terms with the primitive living conditions in the rue Hippolyte-Maindron.

1947

Giacometti's new concept of the figure coalesces into the so-called Giacometti style of sticklike forms: standing women in hieratic frontality, striding men as hieroglyphs of locomotion. Their rough modeling is developed in sculptures of body fragments. Pierre Matisse offers to cast bronzes for a one-man exhibition and produce a catalogue. This heightens Giacometti's productivity significantly. Toward the end of the year he retraces his artistic career in an eight-page autobiographical letter illustrated with sketches of his works.

1948

The new works can be seen for the first time in the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. The catalogue contains photographs by Patricia Mattà (soon to be Mrs. Matisse), Sartre's essay "The Search for the Absolute," and Giacometti's autobiographical letter, along with a list of works. The exhibition establishes Giacometti's postwar reputation outside Europe. The first of his multifigured compositions is *City Square*.

Giacometti rents an additional room next to his atelier as a modest bedroom for Annette and himself. She now poses for him for hours at a time, mainly for paintings.

1949

The fame of the "new" Giacometti spreads across Paris. The dealer Pierre Loeb prevails on the artist to resume making etchings, some of

them for the publications of his old friends Tristan Tzara and Georges Bataille. One of his new friends is the poet Olivier Larronde, whom he assists, as he does others, by contributing graphics for the luxury editions of his books. The mature style now begins to reveal itself in painting as well as in sculpture.

On July 19 Annette Arm and Alberto Giacometti are married at the registry office in the 14th arrondissement. Now Giacometti can take Annette with him on visits to his mother in Stampa and Maloja, where he continues to work from nature.

1950

The gallery of Aimé Maeght, under the artistic directorship of Louis Clayeux, offers him an exhibition in Paris. Giacometti creates a magnificent and varied series of compositions with single figures or figural groupings in different spatial situations.

Encouraged by the French commissioner for the Venice Biennale to show his work with that of Henri Laurens, Giacometti travels to Venice with several sculptures, planning to exhibit them in the French section. When he sees how Laurens's works are overshadowed by those of Ossip Zadkine, Giacometti packs up his figures and leaves.

At the instigation of old school friends from Schiers, Lucas Lichtenhan and Christoph Bernoulli, Robert Stoll presents fifteen sculptures, ten paintings, and twenty-five drawings by Giacometti in the Kunsthalle Basel in May, in a joint exhibition with André Masson. The principal rooms are devoted mainly to Masson, which Giacometti accepts. With funds from the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, the Kunsthalle Basel buys *City Square* and two paintings.

In November a second show is presented at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. It includes sixteen of the complex compositions from 1949 and 1950, all of which are now cast in bronze. These are sold, along with six paintings and a drawing. For the catalogue Giacometti writes the so-called "Second Letter to Pierre Matisse"; the comments on his works contained in this letter provide the basis for titles customarily used from this time on.

1951

Giacometti begins to search for a new direction in his sculpture by working on busts of Diego.

In June and July the postwar works are shown in Paris for the first time in the Galerie Maeght, establishing his fame in Europe as well. Aimé Maeght has Giacometti produce lithographs, in

part for the gallery's journal *Derrière le miroir*. Most of them are depictions of his atelier with sculptures. Michel Leiris contributes the text "Pierres pour un Alberto Giacometti."

In November, on their way home from Stampa, Annette and Alberto Giacometti visit Henri Matisse in Nice and Picasso in Vallauris. Picasso and Giacometti have seen very little of each other since the war, and their meeting leads to an ugly encounter that ends their friendship. Giacometti declines an invitation from the Swiss Art Commission to show his work in the new Swiss pavilion at the 1952 Venice Biennale.

1952-53

In February 1952 the American writer James Lord meets Giacometti in the Café des Deux Magots. Lord's increasingly frequent visits to the artist's atelier and conversations with Giacometti's friends, as well as his friendship with Diego, give him an intimate knowledge of Giacometti's work and his private life. He keeps a journal about him and begins to collect material for the comprehensive biography he will publish in 1985.

Following the period of the important postwar sculptures of 1947-50, Giacometti turns to the task of modeling and painting portraits from life, rendering the models' heads as he sees them from a specific distance during hours of sittings. He is determined to get away from excessive thinness. He begins painting landscapes.

Most exhibitions of twentieth-century art by now include works by Giacometti: in Paris (Musée d'art moderne), in Zürich (Kunsthaus), in Basel (Kunsthalle), and in the United States (Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York). The Institute of Contemporary Arts in London devotes two symposia to discussions on Giacometti, the driving force behind them the knowledgeable art critic David Sylvester. Giacometti produces a portrait of him and also of the English art critic Peter Watson.

In September 1952 the Wittenborn Gallery in New York presents the first show of Giacometti's atelier lithographs, and in November 1953 the Arts Club in Chicago holds a one-man show.

1954

In the spring the American steel magnate G. David Thompson, from Pittsburgh, visits Giacometti in his atelier. He has already purchased several Giacometti sculptures from Pierre Matisse for his huge collection of

modern art, which includes groups of works by Matisse, Picasso, Fernand Léger, Miró, and Paul Klee. Now he hopes to put together the largest Giacometti collection anywhere, and if possible buy works from the artist himself.

Giacometti lets him have original plaster models from the 1920s and 1930s. Giacometti and the writer Jean Genet meet. Giacometti is fascinated by Genet's personality and adventurous life—also by his round bald head, which he draws and paints. In May the Galerie Maeght holds its second Giacometti show, which contains new sculptures and drawings but also paintings, presenting the artist as an important painter as well as sculptor.

From June 30 to July 7 and again in September Giacometti stays with the bedridden Henri Matisse in Nice. He draws numerous portraits of the lucid old man in preparation for a medal commissioned by the French mint. Matisse dies on November 3.

1955

The first German museum exhibition devoted to Giacometti, comprising fifty-eight works, travels from Krefeld by way of Düsseldorf to Stuttgart. In June and July two extensive retrospectives are presented simultaneously, one by the Arts Council in London, organized by David Sylvester, the other by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

On November 8, in the Café des Deux Magots, Giacometti meets with the Japanese philosophy professor Isaku Yanaihara, who has been asked to write an article on him for a Japanese journal. During Yanaihara's subsequent visits to the artist's atelier a close friendship develops between the two, one that will draw Yanaihara back to Paris each year (except 1958) until 1961.

1956

For his show in the French pavilion of the Venice Biennale, Giacometti works on a standing female figure a little over 3½ feet tall, which he models in many different versions using the same armature and mass of clay. Diego casts each of them in plaster the following morning. Of the more than fifteen states of this *Woman of Venice*, nine will later be cast in bronze. In Venice, at the beginning of June, Giacometti sets up ten of these sculptures in two groups of four and six figures, along with six other sculptures.

He then travels to Bern for the June 16 opening of a retrospective of his work at the Kunsthalle organized by Franz Meyer. In September Yanaihara sits for Giacometti for

the first time, initially only for drawings and paintings. During this visit Annette and Yanaihara become close as well. Yanaihara keeps a record of his encounters and conversations with the artist in his journal, on which he bases the Giacometti monograph he will publish in Tokyo, in Japanese, in 1958. He postpones his return to Japan for weeks. Giacometti is unsatisfied with his painting and experiences a major "crisis" that continues until 1958.

1957

Giacometti's dealers Aimé Maeght and Pierre Matisse arrange for the casting of numerous early works. He is now not only a world-famous artist but also a highly paid one. He passes along bundles of banknotes to his mother, his brother Diego, and various nighttime acquaintances, but allows his wife few luxuries. A second side room in the rue Hippolyte-Maindron is rented and a telephone installed. His own needs, the plaster-spotted clothing, and his habits do not change in the slightest. His first and only meal before midnight consists of hardboiled eggs and many cups of coffee in the early morning in the Café-Tabac Le Gaulois at the intersection of the rue d'Alésia and rue Didot. At night he has his own table in the Coupole.

1958

Giacometti had been invited, in 1956, to create a sculpture for the new Chase Manhattan Plaza in New York, then under construction. The architect Gordon Bunshaft, of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, visits him in Paris. It appears that he will be commissioned to create the open square sculpture, the *Composition with Figures*, that he has wanted to do for twenty-five years. He makes three roughly 4-inch-tall figures—a striding man, a standing woman, and a large head—and experiments with their placement on the architectural model. Genet publishes *Alberto Giacometti's Atelier*, one of the most insightful texts about Giacometti and indeed about the work of any artist.

1959-60

Giacometti executes full-size figures for the Chase Manhattan Plaza in several versions that are cast in bronze in 1960, but the commission has been withdrawn.

In the summer and fall Yanaihara is again Giacometti's constant model. In 1960 Giacometti also models portrait busts of him. Jacques Dupin and André du Bouchet are added to his circle of poet friends. In addition

to graphics for their luxury editions he produces, between 1957 and 1960, fifty-two etchings for Michel Leiris's *Vivantes cendres, innommées*.

In October 1959 Giacometti becomes acquainted with a twenty-one-year-old prostitute who calls herself Caroline in the bar Chez Adrien in the rue Vavin. Between 1960 and 1965 he will paint countless portraits of her that constitute the culmination of his new way of depicting reality. For Caroline's sake Giacometti endures in his last years any number of sordid experiences and lays out large sums of money. Their relationship is a trial for Annette and Diego.



Giacometti and Isaku Yanaihara, 1960.
Photo: James Lord

1961 —————
Samuel Beckett asks Giacometti to design the set for Jean-Louis Barrault's restaging of *Waiting for Godot* in the Théâtre de l'Odéon in Paris in May. After long discussions, Giacometti finally makes a barren plaster tree.

At the instigation of the publisher Tériade, Giacometti begins a large series of lithographs with views of his Paris milieu, his atelier, the streets, the cafés, and the driveway into the Mourlot printing house. It will finally be published in 1969 along with a text of his under the title *Paris sans fin*.

In August and September Yanaihara visits Paris for the last time. In October Giacometti inspects the galleries in the main Venice Biennale building, where in the following year, by invitation and without any specific national affiliation, he will display his work as both sculptor and painter.

1962 —————
The poet Jacques Dupin, who works for the Galerie Maeght, prepares a first monograph with Giacometti's help. Richly illustrated, it is published by Maeght in early May 1963, though dated 1962. Although Giacometti has given numerous interviews since 1951 and told the story of his career as a kind of autobiographical

epic that has made him an almost legendary personality, he has heretofore resisted book publication.

At the beginning of June, Alberto travels with Diego to Venice to set up his individual exhibition at the Biennale.

Alberto tirelessly revises the placement of the sculptures and changes the heights of their bases. He positions the figures of the Chase Manhattan Plaza grouping in such a way that they can be appreciated independently as well as in the ensemble *Composition with Figures*. As late as the night before the opening he paints certain sculptures to enhance their effect. Giacometti is awarded the state prize for sculpture, though he had hoped to be distinguished as both painter and sculptor with the Biennale's grand prize. Giacometti spends his summer weeks in Stampa, where his ninety-one-year-old mother can no longer leave the house. Here he produces his arresting portrait drawings of the old woman.

A planned one-man show at the Tate Gallery is the occasion for a trip to London in the fall. Isabel Nicholas, now Mrs. Rawsthorne, introduces him to Francis Bacon, who has also painted her portrait.

The Basel art dealer Ernst Beyeler acquires the important collection of G. David Thompson, which in 1965 becomes the Alberto Giacometti Foundation.

In October in Paris Giacometti's stomach is X-rayed, which reveals that an ulcer has developed into a tumor. On December 2, despite his condition, Giacometti attends the opening of his retrospective at the Kunsthaus Zürich, arranged by his brother Bruno and the museum's director René Wehrli. With 300 works from fifty years it gives a full accounting of Giacometti's artistic achievement.

1963 —————
On February 6 Giacometti undergoes stomach surgery in Paris at the Rémy-de-Gourmont Clinic, then recuperates somewhat in the



Giacometti and Samuel Beckett, 1961.
Photo: Georges Pierre

Hôtel L'Aiglon at 232, boulevard Raspail, where he can be more comfortable than in his atelier. He then travels to Stampa. On his return in April he passes through Milan, where he studies Michelangelo's *Rondanini Pietà*. Back in Paris, Giacometti not only resumes his daytime work but also his exhausting nighttime routines—including excessive smoking. He lives each day and undertakes each new work in the shadow of his expectation that the cancer might reappear and cause his death. In February and March the Phillips Collection in Washington presents a Giacometti exhibition of fifty-four works.

From July to September, the 143 Giacometti works from the G. David Thompson Collection are shown in the Galerie Beyeler in Basel and formal steps toward establishing a public Swiss Giacometti Foundation are initiated.

1964 —————
Giacometti spends the first weeks of January in Stampa. On January 25 his mother dies, with her family gathered around her. Since the end of 1963, a new model has been a regular visitor to the Paris atelier, the photographer Elie Lotar. With him, Diego, and Annette as models, Giacometti works his way to the style of his last portrait busts. When Giacometti reads in Sartre's autobiography, *The Words*, an inaccurate description of his own 1938 accident, the story of which he had repeatedly related to Sartre, he breaks off all contact with the writer. In August he also breaks off his relationship with the Galerie Maeght out of solidarity with Louis Clayeux, the gallery's artistic director, who had been unfairly treated at the opening ceremonies of the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence on July 28. This museum near Nice, built by Josep Lluís Sert, contains an important collection of sculptures and paintings, and in its Giacometti Courtyard are the painted bronzes originally meant for the Chase Manhattan Plaza, arranged by the artist himself. From September 8 to 11 Giacometti sojourns in London, where the BBC records an interview with David Sylvester that will later be published.

From September 12 to October 1 Giacometti paints and repaints in eighteen sittings a portrait of James Lord, who photographs eleven of the various states of the painting and records their conversations. He will publish both in his 1965 *Alberto Giacometti: A Portrait*. In October Giacometti's examination at the Cantonal Hospital in Chur reveals that his cancer has not returned but that the artist is suffering from extreme exhaustion.



Giacometti and Elie Lothar. 1964.
Photo: Giorgio Soavi

In November and December the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York mounts the first exhibition devoted exclusively to Giacometti's drawings—with a catalogue text by James Lord.

1965-66

In his last sculptures of Diego and Elie Lotar, Giacometti mutilates the three-dimensional physicality of the busts but ennobles the heads with visionary gazes. The drawings for the book project *Paris sans fin* become a testimony to his life in Paris.

It is well known that Giacometti is in poor health. Offers of exhibitions, honors, publications, and requests for accompanying texts accumulate.

On June 9, 1965, The Museum of Modern Art in New York opens a comprehensive exhibition that continues until October 10, then travels to Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. On July 17 London's Tate Gallery opens the retrospective *Alberto Giacometti: Sculpture, Paintings, Drawings 1913-1965*. The artist visits this show and also the retrospective in the Louisiana Museum in Humlebaek, near Copenhagen. The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam exhibits Giacometti's drawings. In September, in Stampa and Paris, Ernst Scheidegger and Peter Mürger shoot the film *Alberto Giacometti*, in which the artist paints a portrait of Jacques Dupin and talks with the poet while modeling an imaginary bust.

On October 1 Giacometti embarks on the *Queen Elizabeth* with Annette and Pierre and Patricia Matisse for New York. He not only visits his exhibition in The Museum of Modern Art repeatedly but also, at night, Chase Manhattan Plaza near Wall Street, where he positions Annette, Gordon Bunshaft, and James Lord in various groupings. He finally decides that the site would have been best served by a single standing female figure.

On November 20 the French state honors Giacometti with the Grand Prix National des Arts. At the end of November Giacometti is in Bern, where the university awards him an honorary doctorate and the Swiss president

hosts a banquet in his honor.

On December 1, at the urging of Annette, Diego, and various close friends, Giacometti visits a Paris doctor, who insists that he be hospitalized immediately. Giacometti consents, and selects the hospital in Chur. From December 2 to 4 Giacometti continues to work on busts of Elie Lotar and a painting of Caroline in his Paris atelier.

On December 5 he takes the night train from Paris to Chur, and checks himself into the hospital. Although tests do not show disease, he is treated for exhaustion and heart and circulatory problems. This assessment allows Giacometti to hope he will be able to return to Paris after a period of rest. He soon adapts to the hospital routine, talks on the telephone with his friends, and receives visits from his brothers, Annette, and Caroline; but before Christmas his condition worsens. On January 10, 1966, a pleural tap indicates a serious new diagnosis, pericarditis, an inflammation of the tissue surrounding the heart. Giacometti loses all interest in work and abandons his will to live. The next day Diego arrives from Paris. Once Giacometti sees all his relatives—Annette, Diego, Bruno and his wife Odette—and Caroline gathered around him, he recognizes that the end is near. At 10:00 on the evening of January 11, he dies of complications of pericarditis. On January 12 Diego takes the night train back to Paris for a day to heat the atelier in the rue Hippolyte-Maindron, thaw out the rags around the clay figure of Elie Lotar, and cast this last bust in plaster. He will place the bronze example on his brother's grave. On January 15 Alberto Giacometti lies in state in his studio in Stampa. His coffin is then carried through the frozen winter landscape by horse-drawn cart, followed by a long procession of mourners, to the cemetery in Borgonovo, where he was born. In addition to his relatives, many other people attend his funeral—people of the Bregaglia valley, representatives of cantonal and federal Swiss authorities and the French government, friends from Switzerland and Paris, and museum directors and art dealers from all over the world—and pay him their last respects.