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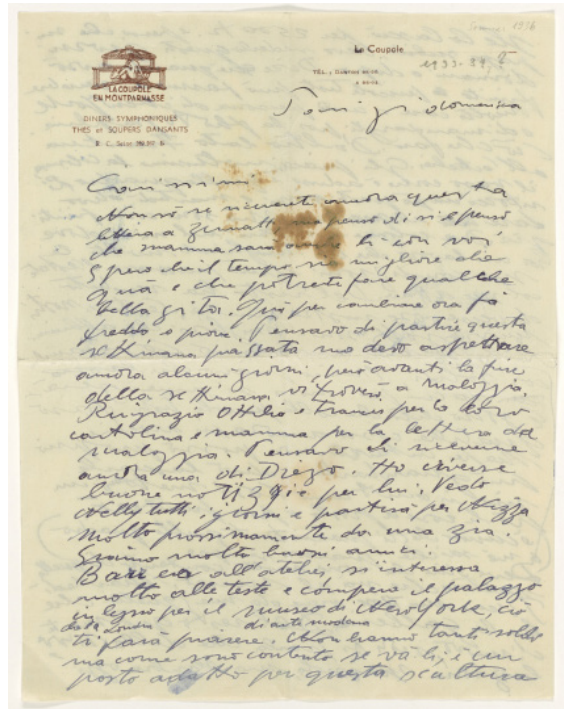
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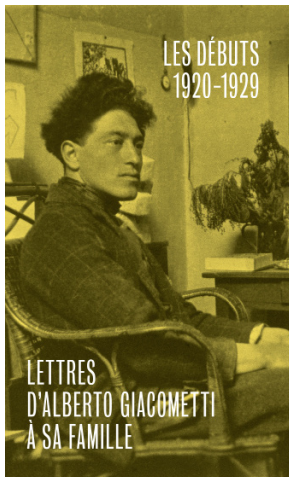
## Letters of Alberto Giacometti to his family

Editions Fondation Alberto Giacometti and Bernard Chauveau éditions  
Publication: September 2021

THE GIACOMETTI FOUNDATION IS RELEASING A NEW COLLECTION OF BOOKS ON THE UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE OF ALBERTO GIACOMETTI (1901-1966). THE THREE FIRST VOLUMES ARE DEVOTED TO THE PROLIFIC CORRESPONDENCE ALBERTO GIACOMETTI MAINTAINED WITH HIS PARENTS. THIS SELECTION OF LETTERS PROVIDES US WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER THE ARTIST'S INTIMATE WORLD AND FOLLOW HIS ARTISTIC JOURNEY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING TO HIS RECOGNITION.

Edited by Serena Bucalo-Mussely, curator at the Fondation Giacometti, these three illustrated books of 88 pages each present a selection of letters that Alberto Giacometti exchanged on a regular basis with his family throughout his life and career. Translated from Italian to French, this correspondence gives access to the intimate universe of the artist, making us discover remarkable and original details on his art practice and his environment. Each volume is illustrated with photographs of his family and works by the artist.

VOLUME 1  
THE BEGINNING  
1920-1929



*From his trip to Italy at the age of 19 and his arrival in Paris to study sculpture (1922), to his first exhibitions, the correspondence between Alberto Giacometti and his family illustrate the warm richness of the dialogue within an artist's family. Opening his heart, the young Giacometti shares his first questionings on art, then his discovery of the avant-garde.*

Chosen letters

Letter of Alberto Giacometti to his family, 8 April 1921

"Dear all,

Did you receive my letter from Naples? I hope so.

I am back in Rome and I resumed work today. That trip was marvellous, I'm so happy I made it, I saw splendid things one can't find anywhere else. The frescoes in Pompeii are extraordinary and I find it strange that they are so little known, as they are among the most beautiful things that exist. We were also able to admire the latest discoveries that were made there of human scale figures on a red background, whose radiance and formal modernity are somewhat reminiscent of Gauguin, but more accomplished still. I have a reproduction I'll show you. The whole of Pompeii is awe-inspiring, but what impressed me the most was the beautiful light, the ideal location and the air, which reminded me a little of the air in the mountains. In the distance, we could see the sea and the islands in a crystal clarity. What impressed me even more though was Paestum and its temples, and some beautiful trees here and there. The most ancient temple is very well preserved, of a monumental size and bronze colour, it is a marvel and a revelation. It embodies a different vision of Greek art, of extraordinary gravity and solemnity, and from it emanates more religious fervour than in all the Christian churches of Italy. It is a sublime but rare art, of a unique strength and simplicity. For a few days now I've only been thinking of that temple, in the sunset that tinged it with gold. All in all, it was a journey that will leave me forever with beautiful memories, and which I will tell you all about. [...]"

Volume 2  
The established artist  
1930-1945



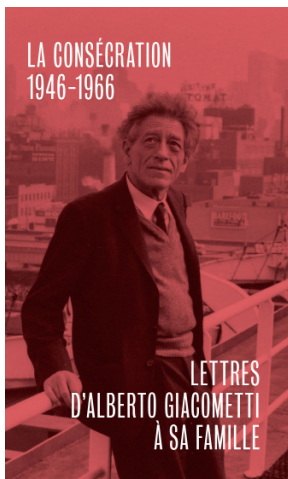
*Meeting the surrealist milieu was a decisive moment for Alberto Giacometti who very quickly gained the recognition of the avant-garde and the collectors. Evoking the crucial years in his art practice, the young artist's letters to his family show his many relationships with artists and intellectuals at a time when Alberto Giacometti's art established itself. His return to sculpture from a live model and his rupture with the surrealists took him on a more solitary journey, his correspondence bearing traces of the issues that preoccupied him at the time.*

Chosen letters

Alberto Giacometti's letter to Annetta Giacometti and Francis Berthoud, 21 February 1938

"My dearests,  
[...] Here I'm lost in work that I have to do and which completely takes over and directs my life; it is reduced to that. It is a very difficult and demanding work and it doesn't leave room for anything else. It's long and on top of that, it must be done as quickly as possible so I can't lose a day. That is the reason why I must adapt everything to my work, and not my work to my life and the difficulties and everything else, otherwise I'll do nothing. Moreover, with all the murky things happening and the continual threats of war, we don't know how long we have still to do what we want and if it goes wrong, then it will be an adventure from which we might not come out (I get angry when people talk about the war as being maybe the only solution): an added reason not to lose any time. When I'll have completed a few sculptures, I will be more at peace. [...] When, three years ago, I started making my heads and my figures while refusing to exhibit, and so many other things, while starting all over again from the basis, I knew it could lead me temporarily to difficult positions and the more I moved forward the more I accepted it, now more than ever; but I feel stronger than ever, I won because I refused, because I had to leave to one side gradually, more than by anything else, and at least I'm starting to see what a form is. You mustn't be worried about us at all. We are working, I'm calm and the rest doesn't worry me. And I again wrote three pages on the same things: I'd like to show and make understand my position and our position from their true perspective. I committed my whole life and Diego agrees with me in that search (for me it's really war every day in what I do) and I want to take it as far as possible at all cost and I'm only happy that way. [...]"

Volume 3  
Recognition  
1946-1966



In the post-war years, Giacometti enjoyed renewed success. He reconnected with his literary and art friends, and created some of his most emblematic pieces. His brother Diego, his young wife Annette and his friends (Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Genet, Isaku Yanaihara, Eli Lotar) came to sit in his studio. Throughout these years and until his mother's death in 1964, he carried on writing to his family, sharing his encounters, his successes, his doubts, and showing a deep and lasting affection towards those closest.

Chosen letters

Alberto Giacometti's letter to Annetta Giacometti, 6 November 1947

"Dear mum,

My studio has become a flow of plaster, I almost have to clear my way with a shovel; we'll have it clean during my holidays. But I've made enormous progress these days, and the bronze I completed barely eight days ago, I won't make them the same again; I really wanted to say that I make progress from morning to night, every day, and that I won't be doing again what I did the day before. Sartre is very enthusiastic and will write a beautiful preface with photographs for the catalogue, and it will also be published in a magazine in Paris. Besides, all those who are familiar with my current work think that I'm going further than the others. I don't say that to boast, but to show you what people think because, for me, it is only the beginning, I can do much more, I'm barely starting.

I'm looking forward to continue on my return, but also, before that, to work in Stampa. Not long ago at my place there were three Italian painters and sculptors, they contended I should exhibit in Italy also. These last days, every night, I made a human scale figure, and often in the morning Diego thought I should leave it like that and cast it in bronze. The bronzes I have, have been made like that.

I'm waiting for the special tarred paper from America for the roof of the house, because it's raining indoors as if it was normal! Soon I will have snow next to my bed! No, the roof will be finished before, but just for one night, I'd like to be in bed and see the snow falling next to me! I've received a beautiful suit from America, I'm still to receive a coat and another suit. Then I'll be ready.

But it's almost midnight and, if I'm not too sleepy, I want to work a little bit more, but tomorrow morning, I must get up at 9 a.m., if not earlier, and so I'm finishing this letter.

Take care, dear mum, see you soon, with kind regards and kisses from your Diego and Alberto."

A marked out digital edition of the “Letters between Alberto Giacometti and his family”, produced by the Fondation Giacometti, under the direction of Serena Bucalo-Mussely and Thierry Pautot, will be available on the website: [www.fondation-giacometti.fr](http://www.fondation-giacometti.fr)

Practical information

Collection “Lettres d’Alberto Giacometti à sa famille”

Three illustrated volumes of 88 pages

Dimensions: bound, 11 x 18 cms

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