

Rui Chafes and Alberto Giacometti

Gris, Vide, Cris

18 May
— 18 Sept 23

 CENTRO DE ARTE MODERNA
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Co-organization:

FONDATION-
GIACOMETTI



Press Kit

Rui Chafes and Alberto Giacometti

Gris, Vide, Cris

Curator:

Helena de Freitas

Exhibition design:

José Neves

Graphic and catalogue design:

Pedro Falcão

«*Gris, vide, cris*» three words selected from a poem by Alberto Giacometti bring together in this exhibition two artists separated in space, in time and in the forms of their sculptures. This might lead us to question the meaning and nature of this meeting. In fact, the artists never met. Rui Chafes was born in the year of Giacometti's death, 1966, and there are no biographical or historical details that compel us to follow a model of dialogue. From its inception, the exhibition has therefore simply been conceived as an *encounter*.

Through an awareness of the differences between them, but also, and especially, of the potential resonance between the works of the two artists, the project developed with an investigative energy to explore a territory of images and meanings.

How to stem from matter, the point of immateriality and transcendence? How to represent the invisible? Alberto Giacometti and Rui Chafes take autonomous paths in this research: Giacometti in an exasperated dematerialization, Rui Chafes, challenging iron to the limits of weightlessness.

As part of the 2018 exhibition at the Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian in Paris, the Fondation Giacometti provided access to Giacometti's first plaster study for "Le Nez" (1947-1950) and made possible for Rui Chafes to devise a structure from which to suspend this piece, thus forming a sculptural work bringing together two artists, also to be shown in Lisbon.

Without deviating from the nature of his own research, Rui Chafes allows a unique approach to Giacometti's work, a sensitive experience where silence and solitude are imposed, as well as a rupture in the spatial relationship of the visitor with the work.

According to Helena de Freitas, “the path that leads us to view Giacometti’s works through the inside of two of Chafes’ sculptures is not an easy one, travelling through a constricted space, echoing the exasperating process that tormented the Swiss artist for years as he attempted to represent what he saw. And this brings us back to one of the fundamental aspects of the construction of this project: vision. But for us to receive that experience of vision and revelation, we must enter a sensitive space, where emotion is possible. We face the darkness, the imbalance and the unknown, we hear the sound of footsteps, we can sense the smell of iron and the contrast of scales, we can touch the sculpture, or at least feel it like a wrapper or skin, which introduces a sensory dimension to this otherwise strictly formal experience. And indeed, this can be found in the senses present in its title: *gris, vide, cris.*”

The body, in its infinite possibilities, is the centre of the exhibition, the bodies created, the bodies of visitors and the space that exists between them.

Five years after the initial presentation, at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s Delegation in France (2018), the works of Rui Chafes and Alberto Giacometti are now exhibited together again at the Foundation’s temporary exhibitions gallery in Lisbon, united by the same words, in a larger, different space, and with additional works.

The time that has elapsed between these two moments has allowed us to incorporate the history of this encounter that has expanded, in time and in geography, beyond the limits previously envisaged.

Opening to the public on International Museum Day, the exhibition in Lisbon integrates the images and memory of these two exhibitions, presenting more than 30 works, adding 10 works to the first edition, held in Paris. The immense generosity of the Fondation Giacometti in Paris has allowed not just to keep all the most essential sculptures in the exhibition, but also to add a further four, which make this version even denser and its web of relationships more complex. For this exhibition Rui Chafes created six new sculptures.

Besides the guided tours, the activities program includes workshops for families and guided tours with the curator and the artist. Some of the guided tours have interpretation in Portuguese Sign Language.

The exhibition will open on May 17th at 6:30pm and will be on display at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation until September 18th, 2023.

«Both sculptors – the internationally recognised younger was born in 1966, the last year of life of the older, inducted long before into the pantheon of art history – work with emptiness as their sculptural element. In their sculptures the void serves as substance, as presence, as experience of space. »

Doris von Drathen, historian, and art critic

«The ambivalence between opposing forces is, without doubt, what most connects the work of the two artists, each in its own way, with a constant play on the duality between contradictory feelings, mixing violence and desire, light and darkness, strength and fragility, emptiness and fullness, the minuscule and the monumental, lightness and heaviness. »

Christian Alandete, head of exhibitions and publications at the Giacometti Foundation
until 2020

«When Rui Chafes's universe encounters Alberto Giacometti's, it seems as if the artists were walking in the woods together waiting for the *Lichtung*, the Heideggerian unveiling. Their sculptures reveal themselves less as art objects than as an awakening of energies dispersed in a space that knows no limits. »

Virginia Marano, PhD researcher at the University of Zurich

Co-organization Fondation Giacometti Paris

**FONDATION-
GIACOMETTI**



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Pictures available for the press

[Download pictures here](#)

These pictures are aimed to release the exhibition *Rui Chafes and Alberto Giacometti. Gris, Vide, Cris*, taking place at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, from May 18th to September 18th, 2023.

The reproduction of these pictures is given until the end of the exhibition, exclusively for articles about it.

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The pictures should be fully reproduced (without cropping it) and no element can be overlapped. In online press pictures should be used in low resolution.

Rui Chafes

«I believe that art is always about the possibility of awakening in the viewer a presentiment of another world. »

Conversation between Doris von Drathen and Rui Chafes (2001), in Rui Chafes, *O Silêncio de...* Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2006, p. 157.

«Nothing interests me more in sculpture than turning a stone into a wing, a piece of iron into a breath. »

Speech by Rui Chafes at the AICA award ceremony, 21 October 2022.

Rui Chafes was born in 1966 in Lisbon, the city where he currently lives. Between 1984 and 1989, he completed a degree in Sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon and, from 1990 to 1992, studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf with Gerhard Merz. During this latter period, he translated *Novalis' Fragments* from German into Portuguese, an edition published by Assírio & Alvim in 1992. Chafes' work has been exhibited in Portugal and abroad since the mid-1980s. In 1995, together with José Pedro Croft and Pedro Cabrita Reis, he represented Portugal at the 46th Venice Biennale, and did the same in 2004 at the 26th São Paulo Biennale with a joint project with Vera Mantero. In 2013, he was one of several international artists invited to exhibit at the Pavilion of the Republic of Cuba at the 55th Venice Biennale. He has held solo exhibitions in galleries and museums throughout Portugal and in several countries abroad, and his work is represented in various institutional and private collections. His works are on permanent display in public spaces in several countries. In 2011, he held a solo exhibition at the Sassi di Matera in Italy. In 2018, he exhibited large sculptures in various public spaces in the city of Bamberg, Germany. In the same year he held an exhibition 'in dialogue' with Alberto Giacometti at the Fondation Gulbenkian in Paris. In 2020, he made a permanent sculpture in the garden of the Fondazione Centro Giacometti in Stampa, Switzerland. In 2022, he held an exhibition with Pedro Costa and Paulo Nozolino at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and a solo exhibition at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves in Porto. In 2004, he received the Robert-Jacobsen Sculpture Prize from the Stiftung Würth in Germany. In 2015, he received the Pessoa Prize, awarded by the Expresso newspaper. In 2021, he received the International Association of Art Critics Award.

Alberto Giacometti

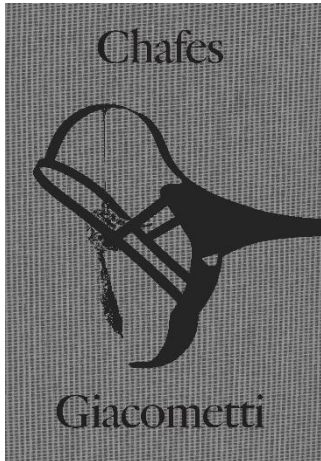
«Giacometti's path of negation, of reduction, of austerity and asceticism, of discretion, led him to the creation of a scorched space. Space is the matter of his sculpture: more than empty wrappers, his figures are spaces or impossibilities of occupying space. Here he presents evidence of the Human stripped bare of individual qualities, the Human made into a locality, a place, a space. The Human destroyed, pierced, dissected, drained.»

«Talvez», in Rui Chafes, *O Silêncio de...* Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 2006, p. 59.

Born in 1901 in Stampa, Switzerland, Alberto Giacometti was the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a renowned Post-Impressionist painter. His first lessons in art were in his father's studio and it was there that he produced his first works at the age of fourteen: a still life with apples, painted in oil, and a sculpted bust of his brother Diego. In 1922, Giacometti went to study in Paris and was admitted to the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, where he took lessons from the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle. It was then that he learnt the technique of drawing from a model and became interested in avant-gardist compositions, especially those by the Post-Cubists. In 1929, he began a series of flat female figures, whose novelty got him noticed by the Surrealist artistic milieu. In 1931, Giacometti joined André Breton's Surrealist movement. Surrealist subjects have an important place in his oeuvre: love and death, dreamlike visions, objects with a symbolic function. Meanwhile, he created a number of utilitarian objects, such as lamps, vases and wall lights, for the avant-garde decorator Jean-Michel Frank. From 1935, he broke away from the Surrealist group to focus intensely on the question of the human head, which remained a central element in his research throughout his life. After spending the war years in Switzerland, he returned to Paris, and addressed himself once again to investigating the human figure. His preferred models were those who lived alongside him: Annette, his wife from 1949, and Diego, his brother and assistant. Working from life, he aimed to represent his models as he saw them, in their ever-changing aspects. At other times, his figures become anonymous, placed on plinths that isolate them from the ground, or contained in 'cages' that circumscribe a virtual space. In 1958, he was invited to submit a project for the plaza in front of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York. He chose to reproduce large-scale versions of the three motifs that had haunted his work since 1948: a standing female figure, a walking man and a monumental head. In the end, the artwork was not installed in New York, but Giacometti presented a first bronze version of the group at the Venice Biennale in 1962, for which he won the Grand Prize in sculpture. After the huge success of his retrospectives in Zurich, Basel, London and New

York, Alberto Giacometti, weakened by cancer, died in January 1966 at the hospital in Coire, Switzerland.

Exhibition catalogue



Texts by Helena de Freitas, Doris van Drathen, Christian Alandete, Rui Chafes, and Virginia Marano.

Graphic design: Pedro Falcão

Coedition: CAM - Centro de Arte Moderna and La Fábrica, 2023

Pages: 144

Bilingual: Portuguese and English

Price: 36,50€

Programming

Workshops for families

Pesar a leveza entre as mãos

Supervisors: Rita Luiz e Rui Horta Pereira

Families with children between 8 –12 years

27 may, 3 and 17 jun / 3:00 to 5:00pm

28 may, 4 and 18 de jun / 10:30 to 12:30 am

Guided tours

Supervisors: Carlos Carrilho, Raquel Feliciano, Susana Anágua

M/16

3 and 24* jun, 1* and 15* jul, 16 sept / 4:00pm

25 may, 15 jun, 13 jul, 14* sept / 3:00pm

* Tours with interpretation in Portuguese Sign Language

Tours with the artist

À conversa com a curadora e o artista

Helena de Freitas and Rui Chafes

M/16

20 may / 6:00pm**

16 jun / 5:00pm

**This tour is part of the commemoration program of the International Museums Day

Practical information

Address

Av. de Berna 45 A

1067-001 Lisboa

Schedules

Rui Chafes and Alberto Giacometti. Gris, Vide, Cris

Monday to Friday (Closed on Tuesdays)

10:00am – 6:00pm (last entry at 5:30pm)

Saturday

10:00am – 9:00pm (last entry at 8:30pm)

Tickets

Rui Chafes and Alberto Giacometti. Gris, Vide, Cris – 4€

Prior appointment for group tours

Monday to Friday | 10:00am – 5:30pm

Tel: 217 823 800 | descobrirmarcacoes@gulbenkian.pt

How to get to the exhibition

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is located next to Praça de Espanha, inside a garden with an area of 7.5 hectares. The main entrance is located at Avenida de Berna, 45A.

Subway

The two closest metro stations to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation are São Sebastião (blue and red lines) and Praça de Espanha (blue line).

Bus

Carris: 716, 726, 756 (Av. de Berna), 746 (Av. António Augusto de Aguiar) and 713, 742 (Rua Marquês da Fronteira). Lisbon Sightseeing: Linha Oriente and Linha de Belém.

Train

Entrecampos station is located about a 15-minute walk from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and is connected to the metro network.

Bicycle

You can use the recent network of cycle paths in the city centre, and leave your bicycle in the various stands we have for this purpose.

Accessibility

All spaces at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and part of the Garden, are adapted for visitors with mobility restrictions, namely through lifts, ramps and, in certain areas, tactile flooring. Reserved spaces are available for people with reduced mobility both in the Parking Lot and in the Grand Auditorium.

For any information, the reception team is available to monitor and clarify any question regarding accessibility.

Sanitary facilities

Public access bathrooms are equipped and adapted for wheelchairs and people with reduced mobility.

Ramps

The Headquarters Building has several ramps, outside and inside, which allow the circulation of wheelchairs in all spaces.

Elevator

We have platforms and elevators at your disposal that you can use whenever necessary, with the support of our security staff.

Parking

Working days as of 5:30pm; weekends as of 10:00am. Fee: 2€