



FONDATION-
GIACOMETTI
-INSTITUT

exhibition

7 October
2023
7 January
2024

Alberto Giacometti The Nose

Press kit



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Alberto Giacometti The Nose

07. 10.2023
07.01.2024

Press visit
Friday 06.10.2023
11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.



Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, 1949
Bronze
81x 78,1 x 38,5cm
Justin Sun collection

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Alberto Giacometti The Nose

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Institut Giacometti presents an innovative exhibition focused on the artist's iconic work "The Nose", bringing together all the versions of the sculpture reworked over several years by the artist. One of them, too fragile to be moved, will be shown by means of a virtual device, introducing a form of experimental mediation.

Other sculptures, drawings and archives will be presented alongside the exceptional sculpture to draw attention to the multiple facets and interpretations of one of Alberto Giacometti's most enigmatic pieces.

Through a dialogue created with works by four major contemporary artists - Annette Messager, Rui Chafes, Hiroshi Sugimoto and Ange Leccia - Institut Giacometti sheds new light on the sculptor's work.

The exhibition has been organized thanks to an exceptional partnership with the APENFT Foundation and the Tron company.

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An innovative theme and new discoveries

The Nose (1947-1964), which has been created in several different versions, is both a grotesque figure evoking the popular character of Pinocchio and a vision of death, a recurrent theme that takes oblique and often paradoxical forms in the artist's oeuvre. The exhibition underlines the multiple cultural foundations of these sculptures which recall at the same time the Vanitas and anamorphoses of art history, the carnivalesque figures of popular culture, and some African and Oceanian traditional objects, such as New Guinea masks.

An extensive selection of sculpted portraits also reflect Giacometti's special relation with anatomy, as the artist focused his attention countless times on the nose of his model. The place of caricature in his imagination, illustrated with a selection of drawings never exhibited before, will also be brought to the fore in the exhibition. In the same way, the reappearance of surrealist fantasy and humour, in a period dominated by his research on reality

and his obsession with an unattainable resemblance, brings another dimension.

The exhibition gathers together for the first time five versions of *The Nose*; of these three different models are in plaster and are kept at Fondation Giacometti and Centre Pompidou (1947-49-64), two are in bronze (1964), with one of them being on loan from the Justin Sun Collection. The entirety of the drawings and archives relating to this emblematic sculpture is also presented. The exhibition also comprises iconic works introducing the artist's reflection on death, the famous *Point to the eye* (1932), *Head skull* (1934) and *Head on a rod* (1947). A selection of busts, in particular, of his brother Diego (1955-1956) show the very particular contrast the artist introduced in perception of seeing the full face and in profile, with the Nose being the ultimate expression of this. Lastly, the reference to non-Western art is introduced with an exceptional loan from Musée du Quai Branly.

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Contemporary resonances

This exhibition also presents the powerful impact that this iconic work of modern art, which heralded the advent of contemporary art, has on artists nowadays. Four major international artists working across different media, have created artworks in response to Giacometti's sculpture.

Annette Messenger reinterprets the sculptor's emblematic work with her sharp eye and characteristic humour. Rui Chafes surrounds one of the fragile plaster versions of *The Nose* with

a gigantic iron mask whose sharp protrusion recalls the inherent erotism and violence in Giacometti's model. Hiroshi Sugimoto, in a subtle theatre of shadows, highlights the spectral aspect of the sculpture by projecting its image into an empty space. Ange Leccia, on the other hand, obliterates the anamorphic composition with his light installation. Four brilliant creations that each confront Giacometti's work in an extremely personal way.



Rui Chafes
The Night, 2018
Metal, plaster, with
Giacometti's *Nose*
(1947 - 1950)
81 x 28,5 x 287 cm
Fondation Giacometti



Hiroshi Sugimoto
Past Presence 090,
The Nose,
Alberto Giacometti, 2018
Print on paper
94 x 75 cm
Fondation Giacometti

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An exceptional partnership

On the occasion of the exhibition "The Nose", Fondation Giacometti announces an exceptional partnership with APENFT Foundation and the Tron company. This financial Partnership, supporting the important research programmes of the Foundation, has contributed to the organisation of the exhibition and the research around it.

Justin Sun, born in 1990, is a Chinese entrepreneur who, after completing his studies in the universities of Pekin and Hupan, has developed multiple ventures in the digital field.



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Technology to help enhance visitor experience: An animated hologram of *The Nose*

The Fondation Giacometti is incorporating for the first time technology developed for holograms to help enhance visitors' experience of the exhibition.

The model of *The Nose* in painted plaster created in 1947 (part of the Giacometti Stiftung collection, on loan at the Kunstmuseum in Basel), which is too fragile to travel, will be represented virtually and shown with subsequent versions of the work. This is the first time a Proto hologram device has been part of a museum exhibition.

This crucial version of *The Nose*, conceived in plaster by Alberto Giacometti for the first time in 1947, was reworked repeatedly for almost 17 years, reflecting the importance of the work to the artist.

The combination of the PROTO hologram device and archived documentary material will give the visitors a better understanding of the process of creation of *The Nose* by Giacometti, from its origins in 1947 to the bronze model of 1964.

This innovative system, which is by no means an attempt to replace the work's physical presentation, will help viewers see it differently by showing the genesis of the work.

Thanks to a high-definition 3D scan presentation using the latest technologies in the field, this device will make it possible to look at the work from all angles and in detail.

It will also help grasp the important complexities of perspective and movement in the work of Giacometti.

A technological partnership

This presentation of Giacometti's *The Nose* is designed in partnership with the PROTO communications platform – the original creators of interactive hologram machine and systems, based in Los Angeles – and utilizes the PROTO M device.

PROTO is frequently used to present objects that are too delicate or valuable to be shipped and to beam people around the world for live interactive experiences, and is active in telecommunications, education, sports, music, retail and healthcare. Previously, PROTO has been used globally by Christie's, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, at Art Basel Miami and by artist Takashi Murakami.



Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, 1947
Painted plaster, rope,
metal, wooden plate
82 x 40,5 x 88,5cm
Alberto Giacometti-
Stiftung, Zurich, on
permanent loan at
Kunstmuseum Basel

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Anatomies “ Front and profile ”

“Front and profile”, as Michel Leiris, Giacometti’s friend, wrote, is essential in Giacometti’s practice, to apprehend the human face, sometimes even bordering on obsession. Giacometti declared in 1962: “If I look at your face from the front, I forget your profile. If I look at your profile, I forget the front of your face, it all becomes fragmented”. This mechanism of vision is essential in *The Nose*, and highlights the unexplored link between his work and anatomy.



Caricature

Is *The Nose*, itself a work of excess and distortion, a caricature? Probably not, but it was inspired by the history of caricature, in which the nose plays an important part. This is demonstrated by the presentation of Giacometti’s caricatural drawings, many of which have never been exhibited before.



Alberto Giacometti
Head with a large nose,
1958
Bronze
51,6 × 14,1 × 15,4 cm
Fondation Giacometti

Alberto Giacometti
Zoomorphic Heads,
Project for Jeux
d'enfants, 1932
by Boris Kochno
pencil on notebook page
12,7 × 7,9 cm
Fondation Giacometti

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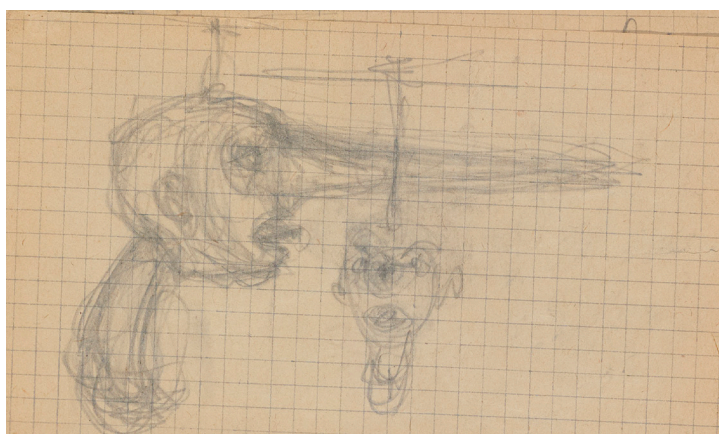
A boundless desire - Carnival and the scopic drive

Defined by its excess, *The Nose* recalls the demons by Bosch, carnival masks as well as those worn by doctors during the plague, the latter became intertwined with representations of death. Pinocchio's tale is just another avatar of those extreme figures. The story of the unfortunate king of Austria in the *Engandine Fables*, illustrated by the artist's father, Giovanni Giacometti, when he was five years old, anchored in his imagination the mythology of the nose, turning it into an archetype. Giacometti used mythology in his work at a turning point in his career, when he revisited innovative works such as *Suspended Ball* (1930-1931) and *Point to the eye* (1932).



Anamorphoses

Giacometti was familiar with the "depraved perspectives" which plays on dual forms, thereby revealing anamorphoses. A drawing by the artist sheds light on the anamorphic view of the nose which, seen from the front, disappears to make the skull visible. This work plays on illusion and dual forms, a practice Giacometti himself adhered to, and which Ange Leccia emphasises in his installation.



Alberto Giacometti
The Nose in Plaster (First Version) in the Studio, 1963
Photo: Ernst Scheidegger
Archives Fondation Giacometti

Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, front (anamorphic view) and profile, 1946-1947
pencil on notebook page
10,7 x 16,2 cm
Fondation Giacometti

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An image of death

Similar to *Head on a rod* (1947), created at the same time as *The Nose*, Giacometti transposes the traumatic sight of the death of Pieter van Meurs during his sojourn in the Alps in the autumn of 1921. That image of death had already been transcribed in 1946 in the founding text of his personal mythology, "The dream, the Sphinx and the death of T." *The Nose* therefore becomes a receptacle of this highly productive fear-of-death, which Rui Chafes' extension of *The Nose* exacerbates.

A work in motion

The Nose is a work constantly in motion, not only in its form but also in its evolving conception by the artist. At first modelled in plaster by Alberto Giacometti in 1947, *The Nose* has been reworked many times over seventeen years. This sustained effort and constant reworking demonstrates the importance of the piece for the artist, who considered it to be in perpetual motion.



Alberto Giacometti
Head on a Rod, 1947
painted plaster
54 x 19 x 15 cm
Fondation Giacometti

Giacometti Modeling
with *The Nose* in
the Studio, 1948
Photo: Richard Winther
Archives Fondation
Giacometti

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Summary

"Like a breach in life"
Hugo Daniel

The Nose, a sculpture in motion
(Chronology)

Anatomies: front and profile

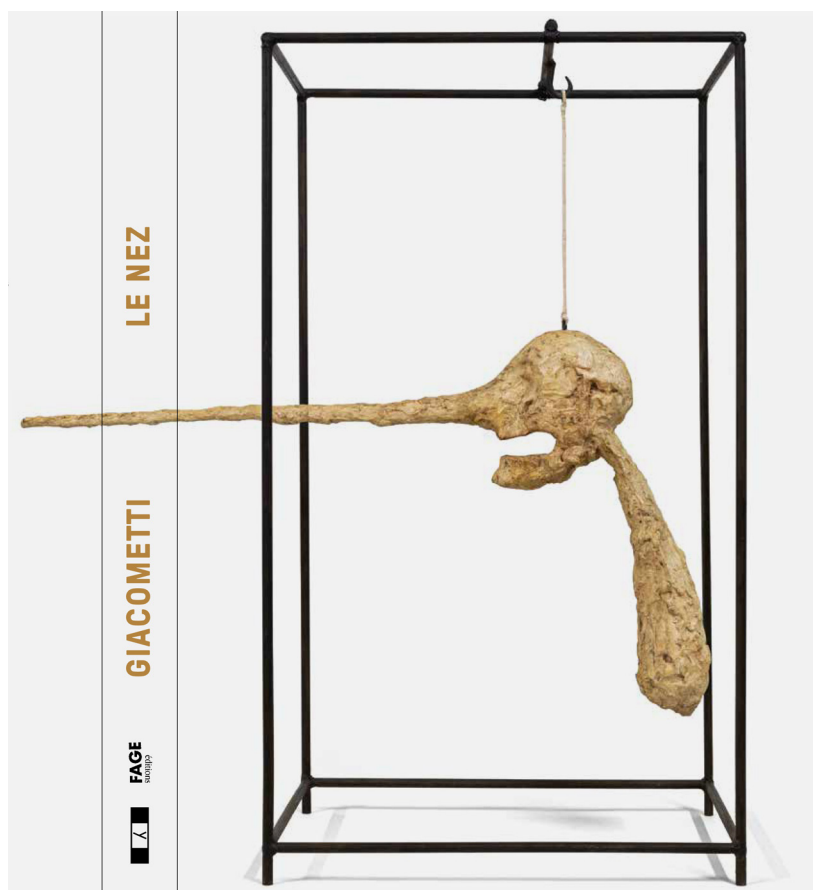
"Like the nose in the middle of the face"
Martial Guédron

Caricature

A boundless desire: the scopic drive.

"The Nose: that 'impossible'"
Agnès de la Beaumelle

Anamorphoses: an image of death



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The Nose, like a breach in life **Hugo Daniel**

"The distance between one side of the nose and the other is like the Sahara, no limits, nothing to fix, everything is slipping away."¹

Alberto Giacometti, 1947

To place between the two sides of the nose, not the vanishing point of perspective and an indefinite emptiness but a precise, though never seen, desert, located though boundless (the Sahara) is a vision whose hallucinatory character expresses the whole obsession Alberto Giacometti had for that part of the human anatomy. The fixation is peculiar. It designates an absolute emptiness at the place where one perceives rather a projection, and that, thanks to Cyrano de Bergerac, in Edmond Rostand's play, we are used to seeing as a "rock", a "peak", a "headland". It opens a gap, a "breach" to take up the artist's own words, which replays in his mind, the horror of the lack of grasp on reality.
[...]

Between working on the anatomic look since his days at the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière (it's worth recalling that in those classes the "nose" was also a measure of the face, corresponding to three-quarters of the latter), and the hallucinatory obsession that was added to the symbolic associations, the nose, in Giacometti's work, is situated between the observation of what's real and the vision of a more complex reality. It also creates a connection between the artist's different periods and various art registers. In that respect, it is surprising that his relation to the anatomic nose, the real nose of his models, which he captured "full face and in profile" to take up Michel Leiris' expression, has been little studied. The artist regularly mentioned it though, and developed a quasi-obsessive fixation about it. The anatomical protuberance, often on its own, constantly comes back in portraits and in countless caricatures. He also made it the subject of sculptures that are very close to caricature like *Head with a big nose* (1958) and *Bust with*

a big nose (1958).
[...]

The Nose, of course, is also among the most famous and the most astonishing of the artist's works, as Giacometti, for more than seventeen years, from the end of 1947 to 1965 (that is till the end of his life, really), chose to make new versions, adjustments and re-workings² of the initial sculpture. From his first solo exhibition in 1948 at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York³, the work, in its different variations, has been abundantly shown in the artist's exhibitions

Made at the same time as *Head on a rod*, the first version of *The Nose* takes on its expressiveness and its tension. It is enhanced with the same rust-colour paint, wrapped around the appendage in a half-grotesque half-dazzling twist and gives the impression that the horn of a narwal had been stuck on the head before it was hung on the gallows of a cage. Unlike *Head on a rod*, the wide-open mouth, more elaborate, is of a more undefined nature, caught between terror and laughter, and its tongue, enhanced with carmine paint, hovers between carnal realism and the grotesque.

Unbridled and defined by the excess, the work is reminiscent of Jérôme Bosch's demons and the carnival masks, those of Basel and Venice that the artist saw when he was young, as well as the mask with a beak worn by the plague doctors in the 17th century and whose imagery evokes death. Pinocchio, that Giacometti had every reason to have in mind at the end of the 1940s for the story of the puppet was read to his nephew Silvio during the war⁴, is just one avatar of those figures. Closer to him, the nasal misadventures of the king of Austria in Engadiner Maerchen had been illustrated by his father Giovanni Giacometti when he was five years old. Those images grounded even more deeply still in him a mythology of the nose making a true archetype of the suggestive appendage.

Among the sources of the work, the masks of New Guinea occupy first place. They were

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omnipresent in the artist's life: in the collections of the musée de l'Homme, that Giacometti had already visited in 1925, in the studio of his friend Serge Brignoni in Paris⁵, at André Breton's home, illustrating the publications he read. The expressiveness of those heads with a prominent nose, wooden or woven, undoubtedly made an impression on him. We are amazed to see a sketch of a nose having at its tip a kind of blown-up trumpet similar to the fibres that finish the Sepik mask reproduced in 1929 in *Cahiers d'art*⁶. When it was presented in 1936 in the exhibition of surrealist objects at Charles Ratton's gallery, *Suspended Ball*, the obvious precursor to *The Nose*, was topped by two of those masks. Impossible not to notice how the extraordinary expressiveness of those masks, made to be seen at distance, helped the artist to reflect on a relationship between the head, the skull and their possible interaction in the visual device of the cage.

Besides, *Head on a rod* is the transposition of a vision of death of which *The Nose* would be an extrapolation. In 1946, for the magazine *Labyrinthe*, Giacometti had given a transcription of a real-life episode that had become symbolic for him: "The dream, the Sphinx and the death of T." "T" is the alter-ego of Van Meurs, a Dutch librarian with whom Giacometti became friendly on the train during his stay in Italy in spring 1921. When he met up with him again in the autumn for a trip from the Alps to Venice, Van Meurs suddenly died in their guesthouse. Throughout the night Giacometti witnessed his agony, which marked him as an "atrocious" ordeal [...] Thus this vision: "I looked at Van Meurs' head transforming, the nose more and more accentuated, the cheeks hollowing, the open mouth almost still, barely breathing⁸." [...]

But *The Nose* can't be limited to a simple shaping of a traumatic episode from 1921, nor to an illustration of the narrative from 1946. It explicitly relates to the works of the surrealist period. By setting it in motion, it would almost be like activating the work as an "object with a symbolic function", of which *Suspended Ball* (1931) is the first model. When the artist took

back from the latter the scenic device it initiated (a cage with a board) it was impossible for him not to consider *The Nose* with the latter: the *Suspended Ball* was present in the studio at the same time as shown in a photo by Brassai taken in November 1947 and the artist reworked it for the purpose of casting it for the exhibition at the Pierre Matisse Gallery. The structure of *The Nose* strikes through its similarities with that of *Suspended Ball*, from 1947. That work, made for the first time between 1930 and 1931, was the first to introduce the cage, but also the principle of suspension and finally, in a different way from Alexander Calder⁹, the actual movement in sculptures.

In that thinking process through forms, material (anti-idealist) as Georges Bataille would have said, a friend of Giacometti since 1929¹⁰, *Point to the eye* is a determining milestone. I'll mention that the latter was also in the studio in 1947, for the artist was restoring its plaster for his exhibition in New York. First called "disaggregating relations"¹¹ the work, as much because of its profile view as because of its definitive name, is reminiscent of Pinocchio ("occhio" is "eye" in Italian and it is designated like that in the artist's sketchbooks¹²). The disproportionate tip that recalls the crescent of *Suspended Ball* and the sting of Embryon threatens a small head-skull perched on a flimsy skeleton, the entire piece placed on a board scored, as is a dissecting table (the artist sometimes designates it under the term "tombstone"). As for *Suspended Ball*, there is no contact: the orbital cavity threatened by the tip is only brushed against. The phallic spindle embodies the male perforating violence, but seen from behind the head-skull, that energy is turned into scopic power.

The anamorphosis is essential to understand the work. In one of his sketchbooks, Giacometti drew the frontal view of *The Nose* while defining the view in an anamorphosis which then doesn't simply flatten the relief, but hollows out, at the place of the nose, a gap. Wanting to find that view on the sculpture is to see a skull coming out, with the illusion of the usual nasal cavity. The piece, in that transition

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from a view in profile to a frontal view, reproduced the terror of the transformation of a head into a skull, an inert object. As an optical artifice the anamorphosis had in a significant way, often been used to distort faces, and sometimes more specifically the eyes in the course of its history. The archetype the most often used to illustrate the process, is a Vanitas: like the distorted skull that appears between the two characters in the painting *The Ambassadors* (1533) by Hans Holbein the Younger. [...]

As has already been emphasised, Giacometti was familiar with the "depraved perspectives"¹³. In the studio of Jacques Lipchitz that he visited in 1926, he could well have seen two anamorphoses dating from the 16th century, Charles Quint's Anamorphic portrait (1533) whose nose points, and an "anamorphic painting" (circa 1535) representing Saint Anthony of Padua, which was reproduced in the same issue of *Documents* as Leiris' first article on Giacometti¹⁴. The double images, capitalised

on by Dalí and which the Surrealists were particularly fond of, were regularly used by Giacometti at the time he was working on *Point to the eye*, in *Head-landscape*, for example (1932); in the same way as he imagined, in a drawing, the *Project for a square* (1932) as an upside-down face.

[...] The anamorphic distortion of *The Nose*, a lethal view, has less to do with the perspective calculation than with its "depravation", closer to the Italian mannerism and to El Greco, a painter who influenced him when he visited the museums in Florence, and to Dalí's paranoiac visions. In his oeuvre, Giacometti gave a sculptural form to the "breach" in life, experienced at the age of 20 in an ordeal that has become initiatory. Even in its anamorphic view, *The Nose* meets the artist's obsessions for the void that separates life from death. A work of excess, *The Nose* catches the viewers in their body and operates "like a breach in life"¹⁵.

1. Alberto Giacometti, *Letter to Pierre Matisse*, December 1947, published in *Alberto Giacometti*, exh. cat. Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, 19 January-14 February 1948. New York, Pierre Matisse Gallery, n.p. 1948.

2. See the chronology of the versions of the work proposed in the catalogue.

3. "Alberto Giacometti", Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York, 19 January - 14 February 1948. It was the first solo exhibition of the artist, where he was able to show for the first time the works he had been making since 1935.

4. Alberto's mother Annetta wrote to him: "Our Silvio is generally a good boy. He's working hard at speaking French properly. For the moment, I have to tell him tales from dawn to dusk: Pinocchio, Snow White, Enrico e Stivali, etc."

5. It was from Brignoni that Giacometti acquired the Kota reliquary visible in a photo of the studio from 1927. But we don't know when the Sepik woven mask entered Brignoni's studio.

6. The copy is in the archives of the Fondation Giacometti. The head presented like a "mask for dance" illustrates Eckart von Sydow's article: "Art primitif et psychanalyse", in *Cahiers d'art*, n° 2-3, 1929, p. 66, fig. 18 and p. 72, ill. 43.

7. Alberto Giacometti, "The dream, the Sphinx and the death of T.", *Labyrinthe*, n° 22-23, December

1946, p. 12 and 13, retaken in *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 68-75.

8. Alberto Giacometti, "The dream, ...", art. cit., p. 74.

9. At the beginning of the 1930s, both men, as well as Joan Miró, Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso were regulars at William Hayter's "Atelier 17", rue Campagne-première in Montparnasse, where they had the opportunity to meet.

10. Giacometti connected with *Documents* from its fourth issue in September 1929, at the same time as Dalí.

11. It was the title given to it in Christian Zervos' article, "Quelques notes sur les sculptures de Giacometti", *Cahiers d'art*, n° 8-10, 1932, p. 341. It was in the letter to Pierre Matisse from 1948 that it definitely became *Point to the eye*.

12. See the sketchbook reproduced p. xx. [2000-0056-12]

13. See Catherine Grenier, "Giacometti et la perspective dépravée", in Catherine Grenier, Christian Alandete and Cecile Braschi, *Giacometti*, exh. cat. [Fonds Hélène et Édouard Leclerc, Landerneau, 14 June-25 October 2015], Landerneau Fonds Hélène et Édouard Leclerc, Paris, Fondation Giacometti, 2015, p. 12-31.

14. See *Documents*, n° 4, September 1929.

15. Alberto Giacometti, "The dream, ...". art. cit., p. 75.

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Extract of the catalogue text by Agnès de la Beaumelle

The Nose: that 'impossible'

"Only death and desire have the force that oppresses, that takes one's breath away. Only the extremism of desire and death enables one to attain the truth."

Georges Bataille, preface to *The Impossible*

Pathos

The fascination that *The Nose* continues to exert on the person looking at it, on us who are so informed about the work (since the comprehensive study written by Jean Clair¹), that fascination is not about to fade. That solitary, extraordinary masterpiece by Giacometti, one of the most moving of the post-war period, that sculpture almost familiar, ultimately, has lost none of its power of provocation and transgression: as if we were in the presence of a truth that disturbs us, even to the point of frightening us. Intensely affected, we assume there is true pathos at work here. And because the work is deeply moving, we are prepared to see in that beribboned nose, a slightly grotesque farce: as always, fear and laughter are not far from one another. In front of which tragic drama or carnivalesque act are we standing? The ambiguity of the work itself makes sense. The nose: a trap for the gaze, as Jacques Lacan would say.
[...]

Fantasies

Facing *The Nose*, aggressive, sharp, obscene, the imaginary, the fantasies of us, the ordinary viewers, are set in motion. Our naive eyes have quickly identified the sculpture with a revolver: neck/grip, head/cylinder and nose/barrel form a continuous whole, the image of a weapon, a pointed gun, trigger ready. The violence and latent cruelty of the sculpture struck us in the same way as most of the works so-called 'surrealists' made in the 1930s in which are expressed intimate dramas - hostilities, sadistic

acts, frights - sexual fantasies on which Giacometti had insisted, recalling, in 1933, his childhood obsessive fear of crimes associated with rapes². More so, our informed eyes are not far (but we are taken along here by Salvador Dalí who, regarding *Suspended Ball* (1930), encouraged us to give free reign to our "erotic imagination³"; Michel Leiris also, who, before Dalí, said he preferred "going into raptures" in front of Giacometti's sculptures "which are the objectified form of our desire"⁴) from seeing in them the common image, in profile, of an erect phallus, the objectivisation of an endless desire that braves the space, goes beyond the limits, stretches into a spiral and which, seen from the front, disappears: that is the sexual drive and with it, the apprehension of lack, of danger, of castration, the agony of death. [...]

Projection of the gaze, scopoc drive: erotic [...]

As any artist close to the surrealist group, he was aware of the Freudian concepts: he read Freud and in particular, for he annotated it with small sketches (of which one shows two noses), *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* centred on the ambivalent erotic drive of childhood, on exhibitionism, sadism and masochism; he certainly had access to other essays such as *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Uncanny*, *Totem and Taboo*, etc. We have also read Lacan, particularly, in *Seminary XI* (1964), his analysis of the scopoc drive: "I see, I am seen, I make myself be seen", in relation to desire and narcissism: "the it shows, comes forward", and his other formula: "there is no sexual relationship".

Since 1933, when Lacan's article, "Motifs du crime paranoïaque⁵" was published in *Minotaure*, Giacometti had been acquainted with the psychiatrist, met through Bataille and Leiris; in 1946, he met up with him again as he moved in the circle of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Pablo Picasso. The sculptor was certainly aware of his central concept of the 'mirror stage', connected to the family complex, enlightening the formation of the I of the child in opposition to the Other⁶ [...]

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A petrified crisis

Cruelty, sexual drive, morbidity, *The Nose*, that paroxysmal, almost 'ecstatic' 'sphinx', that anonymous fragment of a "frightening savagery" (Leiris) with its human, too human 'resemblance' - it reminds us of its contemporary double that is the poignant Self portrait of Antonin Artaud dated 17 December 1946 that Giacometti admired at Pierre Loeb's gallery in July 1947⁸ - is a critical work, a "petrified crisis" (Carl Einstein). It clearly relates to the destructive, anti-idealist, sacrificial and erotic ideology, literally 'harrowing' proposed by Einstein, Bataille and Leiris at the time of Documents. The work decidedly makes use/echoes/evokes the articles of their Dictionnaire critique: "mouth", illustrated with Jacques-André Boiffard's photograph; "eye" with the famous sequence from *Un chien andalou* by Louis Buñuel (the eye slit with a razor blade). It also presents similarities with the beheaded 'open mouth' of Holofernes in *Judith* with the Head of Holofernes by Lucas Cranach the Elder, reproduced to go alongside the article "Heads and skulls". The appendage of the nose, excessively grotesque, could also be the 'pendant' of the cut "big toe" photographed by Boiffard for Bataille's article, fascinating in its phallic disproportion. In 1946, returning from Geneva, Giacometti re-established a true friendship with Bataille, a real intellectual complicity binding them closely. He made a small bust of Diane, Bataille's companion, read and reread *Story of the eye* republished in 1947, that dark fantastical (and equally burlesque) 'novel', suffused with erotic and deadly scopic

tension; he illustrated with three prints *Story of the rats* (journal of Dianus), published in the same year, which is an indecent journal, the account of the expectation of that 'impossible' that death is in life, that 'essential' that Bataille tirelessly pursued.
[...]

The 'essential' awaited by Bataille, the expectation of the unknown, of the fleeing 'marvel' as Giacometti did say, is what is announced, in 1946-1947 by that unique oeuvre, *The Nose*, that we can consider as a key work⁹: the last to be fantastical, made of sex and terror, the last to be fully a dream-like vision without a model, before Giacometti succeeded in confronting the real figure facing him, looking at him; before he succeeded in structuring a whole body, existing, cutting through space. Entirely composed of frenzied vital impulse, of struggle against disappearance, mortification, *The Nose* opens what would follow in Giacometti's endless work. It was to be an 'impossible' attempt, an 'expenditure' (in the sense of Bataille) always renewed: a series of destructions and reconstructions, of failures always experienced and precarious conquests, cruelties and ecstasies, that we can bring close to Artaud's deeply moving attempts at seizing the truth of the human face - all his drawings are, he said, "sketches, I mean probing or assaults in all directions of danger, possibility, chance and destiny". An 'impossible' quest which will also and forever be for Giacometti an intimate tearing, experienced as a necessary and salutary battle.

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1. Jean Clair, *Le Nez de Giacometti, faces de carême, figures de carnaval*, Paris, Gallimard, 1992.
2. Alberto Giacometti, "Yesterday, quicksands", *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*, n° 5, 15 May 1933, p. 44-45.
3. "The objects with symbolic function don't leave any chance to formal concerns. They only depend on the erotic imagination of each person and are extra-visual" (Salvador Dalí, "Objets surréalistes", *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution*, n° 3, December 1931). A year later, Dalí insisted: "The object takes the immutable shape of desire and acts in that way on our contemplation [...] the object is subject to modifications." (*This Quarter*, vol. I, n° 1, Sept 1932). Modifications that Giacometti did bring to *The Nose*, which was made in several versions.
4. Michel Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti", *Documents*, n° 4, September 1929, p. 209-210.
5. Jacques Lacan, "Motifs du crime paranoïaque: le crime des soeurs Papin", *Minotaure*, n° 3/4, December 1933, p. 25-28.
6. This paper, given in Marienbad in 1936 and not published at the time, was retaken by Lacan in *Encyclopédie française*, in 1938.
7. Michel Leiris, "Civilisation", *Documents*, n° 4, 1929, p 221.
8. Giacometti attended Artaud's tragic reading performance, on his return from Rodez: "Histoire vécue d'Artaud-Mômo". He mentioned in a letter to his mother the admiration he had for his poems and drawings and his interest in the book *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société*.
9. We direct the reader to the article by William Robinson, "The Nose: the Surrealist Background between Breton and Sartre", in *Alberto Giacometti: Towards The Ultimate Figure*, exh. cat. [Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, 12 March -12 June 2022; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, 14 July - 9 October 2022; Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, 13 November 2022-12 February 2023; Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, 19 March -18 June 2023], Cleveland, Cleveland Museum, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 2022. In my opinion, neither Breton, whom Giacometti approached while keeping at a distance, nor Sartre, whose 'existentialist' interpretation offered in his introduction to the exhibition at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York, "The search for the absolute", the artist quickly objected to, can be considered the two pole figures, or figures of reference between which Giacometti's oeuvre can be comprehended.

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Like the nose in the middle of the face. Martial Guéron

[...]

That all the versions of *The Nose* had for a long time been photographed in profile definitely questions the way we comprehend this work. Giacometti knew it: the face seen from one of its sides presents the paradox of being perceived both as characteristic and incomplete. That is the reason why the profile is used to idealise, for example in the case of medallions. But it is also because it helps to determine the physical characteristics and enables a greater facility of execution, compared with the frontal aspect or the three-quarters, that caricaturists make great use of; from the 17th century, artists like Carracci and Bernini exploited its expressive resources with a few strokes of their pen. Giacometti himself punctuated his notebooks and sketchbooks with rough drawn profiles that were small visual experimentations.

[...]

Giacometti could have practised his drawn graphic digressions as a kind of relaxation compared to the works demanding a higher level of concentration. Consequently, what matters is to differentiate what in his oeuvre relates to the caricatural from what relates to the grotesque. If we were to take up the distinction made by Charles Baudelaire between the caricatures as volatile as the subjects they treat and those which, on the opposite, possess "a mysterious element, durable and eternal, that commands them to the attention of the artists¹", we'll notice that at the beginning of the 1930s, Giacometti did a few anticlerical caricatures and occasionally contributed to *Commune*, revue de l'association des écrivains et des artistes révolutionnaires (AEAR), whose editor was Louis Aragon². However, *The Nose* avoids the purpose of the caricature in the era of its technical reproducibility and diffusion: it doesn't pertain to the vitriolic portrait, nor to

the social type, nor to the satire of social mores. On the other hand, it assimilates some means of the caricatural drawing, that is, to convey it in the words of Rodolphe Töpffer, "that facility offered by the graphic line to suppress some features of imitation that don't suit the object, to only make use of those which are essential to it"³. For the putative father of comic strips, visual ellipses and hyperboles would be able to produce "noses which, as noses, are already calm or melancholic or clever, or sad, or annoyed"⁴.

Giacometti knew that he was not the first artist to transpose some elements of the caricatural language in sculpture. He had moved closer to the dissidents of surrealism who, around Georges Bataille, ran the publication *Documents*, in which Michel Leiris had published the first important text on the artist's work⁵, and he discovered in it an article by the poet and diplomat Jean Bourdeillette on the Austrian sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt, whose grimacing busts, compared to masks, were perceived as under the influence of the Viennese doctor Franz Anton Mesmer, promotor of animal magnetism⁶. Perhaps he was also familiar with the surprising caricatures in plaster of Jean-Pierre Dantan, called Dantan Jeune, on whom Luc Benoist had just written a few lines in his book on French sculpture⁷. And finally, the busts-vitriolic portraits of Honoré Daumier dedicated to the "Célébrités du Juste Milieu" had been exhibited at musée Galliera at the same time as a selection of plates by the prolific lithographer⁸.

To be clear, it was not the political or social accusation but the grotesque, the sinister, the buffoon that Giacometti incorporated into his vision in the piece we are writing about. But why, in the first version already, in which the nose protrudes like an ivory gimlet worthy of a cabinet of curiosities, such insistence on that organ rather than on another part of the head?

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Prominent in the middle of the face, opening out with the two moist and hairy orifices of the nostrils, made of an osteocartilaginous frame which determines its multiple aspects, it is well-known for being conducive to metaphors and metamorphoses. The seat of the life breath, it is the organ through which the God of Genesis breathed life into his creature; the symbol of intuition, it allows one to sense things, like a sentry put forward to signal any danger. Since ancient times, it is considered the most honest part of the face, its redness and swelling clearly showing deviation in behaviour. That's how it became an indication of lies, what children suddenly understand when the adult tells them their nose is getting longer. All said, the nasal appendage is a strange object: though it doesn't participate much, because of its reduced mobility, to mimic expressions, it gives character, suggests filiation, fixes identities and betrays drives.

Central, hollow and prominent, the nose takes on a sexual dimension that has kept a few scientists busy, like the doctor Charles Féré whose interest was the connections between the arousal of the olfactory organ and that of the genitals. In the same years, Sigmund Freud explained that the repression of the sense of smell was concomitant with the repression in sexuality and the civilising process. A few disciples discovered affinities between nasal erection and sexual erection to the degree of making the human nose the equivalent of the penis. After that, the stereotypes of the psychoanalysing hermeneutics having obviously been applied to the figurative arts, connections were suggested between Giacometti's strange composition and the fact that he had harboured doubts about his virility and shown some sadistic leanings.

With its shape, its volume, its direction, the nose is therefore an object of special attention, which is shown as much by the inferences it awakens in

authors bent on pseudoscientific classifications of the human types as by the metamorphoses it is submitted to in the hands of the caricaturists, especially when, like Grandville, they set out to reveal what's inside humans through their outer appearance⁹. One can refer here to the writings of the painter and theoretician Jean-Baptiste Delestre, first in his book on physiognomy in which there's a chapter that, from the reproductions of a few grotesque heads attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, brings to light some connections between drawn graphic satire and nasal configurations¹⁰. Confirming that the organ is "the least deceptive of all facial features", Delestre mentions the example of the statuettes of Dantan to emphasise that artists and painters don't have the monopoly on caricature. Interested in graffiti, he also observed that the nose plays an essential part in the clumsy and spontaneous caricatures that the children pencil to take revenge on the people representing authority like the school supervisor and the school master¹¹. Maybe it's worth remembering with Thomas Bernhard that man's comic or amusing characteristic appears more noticeably when they are in torment¹². In front of us, *The Nose* takes on its whole poignant and grotesque dimension, with a physiognomy of blurred outlines that betrays exhaustion and dilapidation. That suspended head-skull, at risk of being devoured by the void on all sides, seems to possess the quasi-magical¹³ dimension of a caricature. On its face reduced like that of a mummy, there's nothing left of the solemnity of the mortuary masks at the moment of the passage to the after-life: more than the ultimate imprint of a face with lips and eyes closed forever, it is the lost gaze and the dark gap of the mouth that opens into a hiccup of terror and sarcastic disapproval.

[...]

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11. Charles Baudelaire, "De l'essence du rire et généralement du comique dans les arts plastiques", *Œuvres complètes*, t. II, text established, presented and annotated by Claude Pichois, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, coll. "La Pléiade", p. 524-526.

2. Christian Derouet, Marthe Ridart et Hendel Teicher (dir.), *Alberto Giacometti, retour à la figuration, 1933-1947*, exhibition catalogue [musée Rath, Geneva, 3 July-28 September 1986; musée national d'Art moderne, Paris, 15 October-5 January 1987], Paris, Centre Georges-Pompidou, 1986, p. 87.

3. R.T. [Rodolphe Töpffer], *Essai de physiognomonie*, Geneva, Schmidt, 1845, p. 8.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

5. Michel Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti", *Documents*, n° 4, 1929, p. 209-214.

6. Jean Bourdaillette, "Franz Xaver Messerschmidt", *Documents*, n° 8, 1930, p. 467-471.

7. Luc Benoist, *La Sculpture française*, Paris, Larousse, 1945, p. 233.

8. *Daumier, polémiste*, exhibition catalogue [musée Galliera, Paris, 22 June-31 July 1945], Paris, musée Galliera, 1945.

9. For some illustrated examples, see "Mémoires d'un nez racontés par une bouche" in *Old Nick* [Émile Daurand Forgues] and Grandville, *Petites Misères de la vie humaine*, Paris, H. Fournier, 1843, p. 57-58.

10. If the books on "nasology" published in the 19th century generally adopt a serious tone, an older tradition, from the Netherlands, of "nose books" (*neusboekje*) joyfully combines caricatures of people with remarkable noses and humorous physiognomists comments.

11. Jean-Baptiste Delestre, *De la physiognomonie*, Paris, Veuve Jules Renouard, 1866, p. 223 and 304-309.

12. Thomas Bernhard, *Gargoyles*, trad. Richard and Clara Winston, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1970.

13. On the piercing power of caricature in its relations with the magic potency given to images, see: Ernst Kris and Ernest H. Grombrich, "Principes de caricature" [1938], in Ernst Kris, *Psychanalyse de l'art* [1952], Paris, PUF, 1978, p. 231-250; David Freedberg, *Le Pouvoir des images* [1989], trad. Alix Girod, Paris, G. Monfort, 1998, p. 275-310.

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Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966)

Born in 1901 in Stampa, Switzerland, Alberto Giacometti was the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a renowned postimpressionist painter with whom he discovered painting and learned about sculpture. At the age of 13, Giacometti made his first watercolours: mountainous landscapes around the family home in the village of Stampa. In 1922, he left his native valley to settle in Paris, where he attended the classes of the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle, at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. At that time, Giacometti worked with models and was interested in the avant-garde, in particular the cubist artists. In 1929, he began a series of sculptures called "flat women", close to abstraction, that got him noticed by the art milieu.

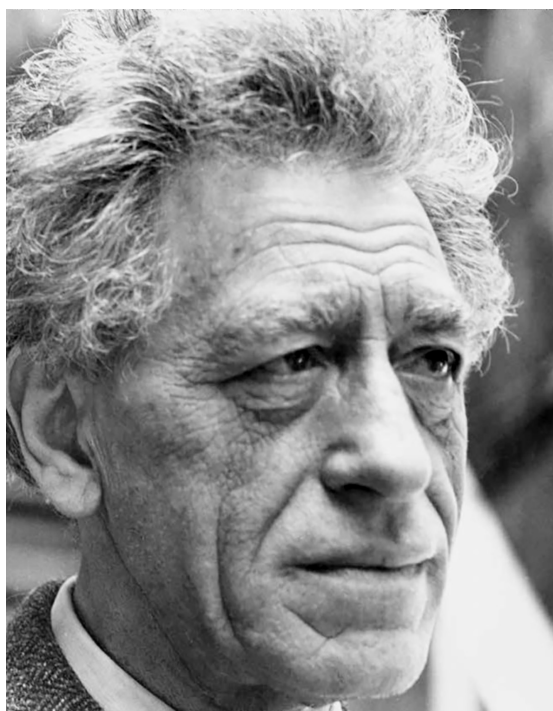
In 1930, he adhered to the surrealist movement of André Breton in which he became an active member. His sculptures, and notably the *Suspended Ball*, played an essential part in Dalí's definition of 'surrealist' objects and with a 'symbolic function'. Giacometti integrated into his creation the principle of double images, for example with *Landscape-Reclining Head*.

He created with the *Project for a square* one of the first pieces on a platform, and his first project in a monumental scale.

He then distanced himself from the surrealist group, even though his works of the early 1930s continued to be presented in the group's exhibitions.

In 1935, he devoted himself intensely to the representation of the human figure, a subject that remained of great importance throughout his career. His younger brother Diego, who had joined him in Paris ten years earlier, was one of his permanent models. After having spent the war years in Switzerland, on his return to Paris, Giacometti carried on working, mainly with models. Annette Arm, whom he married in 1949, became another model omnipresent in his work. Giacometti also went back to painting and returned, at the start of the 1950s, to the subject of landscape. At the same time, he created *The Forest* and *The Clearing*, two emblematic sculptures in which a relationship of equivalence was established between the human figure and elements of nature.

Between 1958 and 1961, Giacometti created, within the commission for the Plaza in front of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, a *Tall Woman* and a *Large Head*, on a monumental scale, alongside a *Walking Man*. Those three sculptures were to become iconic works. In 1962, Giacometti was awarded the Grand Prix for sculpture at the XXXI Venice Biennial. In 1965, the retrospectives at Tate Gallery (London), Museum of Modern Art (New York) and Louisiana Museum (Humlebaek, Denmark) consecrated the artist shortly before his death in January 1966 at the Hospital of Coire, in Switzerland.



Alberto Giacometti, 1965
Photo: Gisela Wolbing/
Gertrud van Dyck
Fondation Giacometti

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The Giacometti Institute is the part of the Fondation Giacometti devoted to exhibitions and research in art history and pedagogy. Created in 2018, it is chaired by Catherine Grenier, the director of the Giacometti Foundation since 2014.

A museum on a human scale, enabling the visitor to get close to the works, the Giacometti Institute is an exhibition space, a place of reference for the oeuvre of Alberto Giacometti, a research centre in art history specialising in modern art practices (1900-1970) and a place for discovery accessible to all the public. An exceptional reconstruction of Alberto Giacometti's studio, whose elements, in their entirety, had been kept by his widow, Annette

Giacometti, is on permanent display. Among these elements are several very fragile plaster and clay pieces, some of them not shown previously in public, as well as the furniture and the walls painted by the artist.

The ambition of the Institute is to refresh the way we look at the work of the artist, and at the creative period in which he was involved. The programme for research and teaching, L'École des modernités, is open to researchers, students and art lovers.

Conferences, symposiums and master classes give a platform to art historians and curators who present their works and the current state of research.



Practical information

Institut Giacometti
5, rue Victor-Schœlcher
75014 Paris

Open: Tuesday to Sunday
from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Closed: Mondays

Ticket reservation on line
and on site:
[fondation-giacometti.fr
/fr/billetterie](http://fondation-giacometti.fr/fr/billetterie)

Price: €8,50
Reduced prices: €3

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On permanent display

Alberto Giacometti's studio

Introducing the visitors into the intimate universe of the artist's practice, the studio gathers more than sixty original works and faithfully displays all of the furniture and walls of the studio painted by Alberto Giacometti.

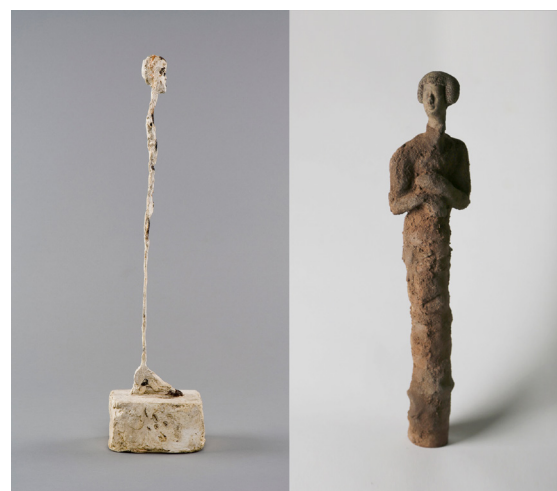


In 2024

Alberto Giacometti / Ali Cherri *Envisagement*

16 January - 17 March 2024

Curator: Romain Perrin,
conservation offi



Alberto Giacometti
Standing Woman,
c. 1961
Painted plaster
46 x 7,6 x 11,2 cm
Fondation Giacometti

Ali Cherri
La Grande Dame, 2023
Head covered with a ball
clay, sand, pigments,
steel
50 x 12 x 8 cm
Collection of the artist

This winter, Institut Giacometti will present a dialogue between the works of the Lebanese visual artist and video director Ali Cherri and the works of Alberto Giacometti, a major artist of the 20th century.

Sharing with Giacometti a special interest in the representation of the human head, the artist will explore the notion of "envisaging", a polysemic term referring both to the action of considering something, and the evocation of a face.

This double meaning is particularly significant when we think about Giacometti's sculptures and paintings in which the human face is the motif of a never-ending search as much as a creation in progress.

This exhibition will present several pieces by Ali Cherri that have never been seen before. These will be exhibited alongside a rich selection of paintings, sculptures and drawings by Alberto Giacometti from the collections of the Fondation.

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About Justin Sun

Justin Sun, a pioneer and practitioner in blockchain and the metaverse, is the founder of the crypto currency platform TRON, a blockchain ecosystem committed to accelerating the decentralization of the Internet through blockchain technology and DApps. In addition, he is a member of the Huobi Global Advisory Board, one of the world's leading crypto currency exchanges.

Founded in 2017, TRON today has over 175 million users worldwide and an industry-leading Total Value Locked (TVL) second only to Ethereum.

Justin Sun describes himself as a digital nomad. He uses technology not only for work but also to socialize and entertain. For him, the importance of digitized art was never clearer than during the pandemic. When in-person exhibitions became extremely difficult, he says "we recognized the importance of institutions' digital exhibitions to enable visitors from around the world to continue to enjoy art".

His keen interest in both physical and digital art led him to start APENFT to bridge the two

worlds of art and digital NFT space. He has acquired and digitized important works by artists such as Giacometti, Picasso, Andy Warhol, Beeple, Pak, and KAWS. These works are now in the collection of APENFT Foundation.

Sun is also actively engaged in philanthropic endeavors. In 2019, he won a bid for Warren Buffett's charity lunch with \$4.568 million, which was earmarked by the Glide Foundation for the homeless. In June 2021, he secured seats on board of the Blue Origin's New Shepard with a bid of \$28 million. The entire amount went to Blue Origin's foundation Club for the Future, which in turn benefited 19 space-based charities to inspire future generations to pursue careers in STEM and help invent the future of life in space.

Sun was named a Davos Global Shaper in 2014 and was on the Forbes 30 Under 30 China and Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia list in 2017. He is the author of Brave New World and Blockchain and the New Digital Age.

Justin earned his MA from UPenn and in 2013 and his BA in History from Peking University in 2011.



Justin Sun, founder
of Tron
member of the Huobi
Global Advisory Board

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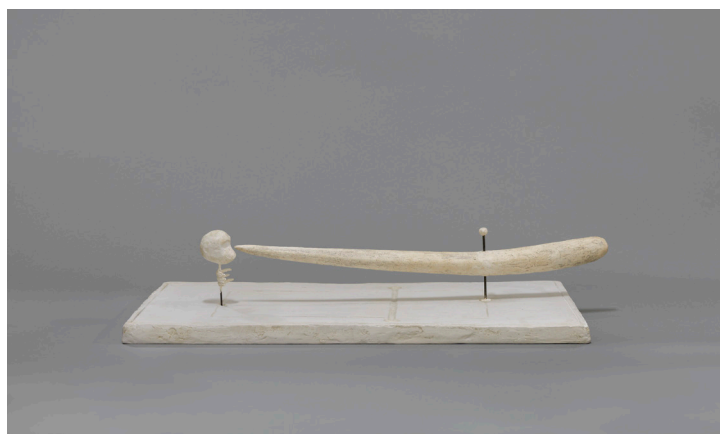
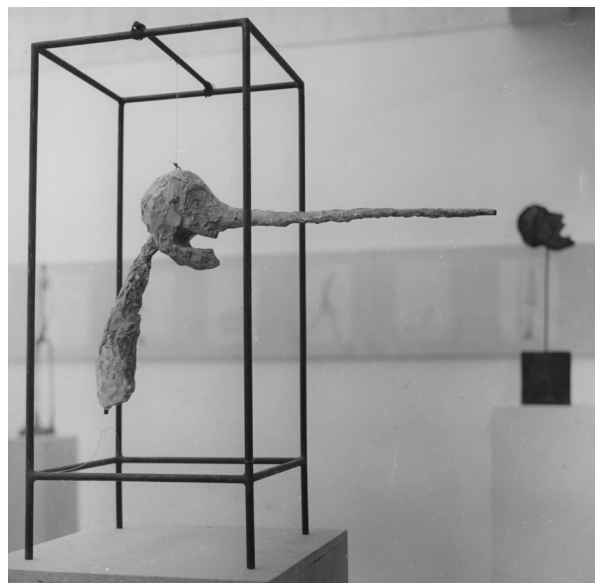
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Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, 1949
Bronze
81,2 × 78,1 × 38,5 cm
Justin Sun Collection
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023

The Nose in the
Exhibition "Alberto
Giacometti"
« Alberto Giacometti »,
Fondation Maeght,
Saint Paul de Vence,
1964
Photo: Bo Boustedt
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
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Alberto Giacometti
Point to the Eye, 1931-
1932
13,5 × 59, × 31 cm
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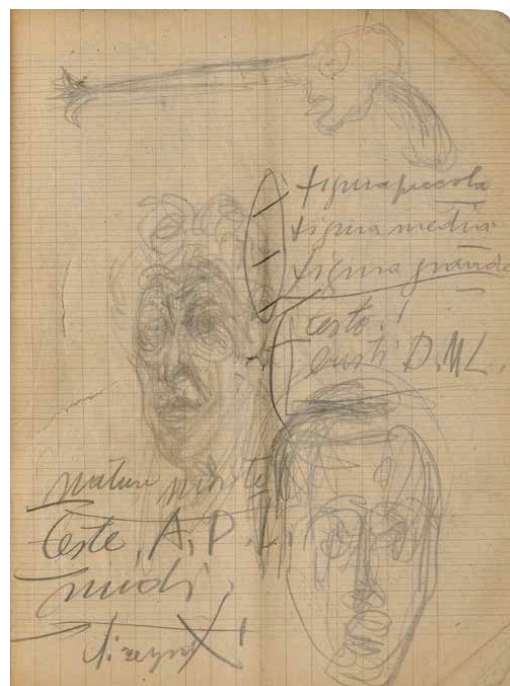
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Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, 1947-1950
plaster
43 × 9,7 × 23 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023

Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, 1949
painted plaster, metal
82,6 × 77,5 × 36,7 cm
Centre Pompidou,
Paris, Musée national
d'art moderne / Centre
de création industrielle
Don de la Succession
Aimé Maeght en 1992
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023

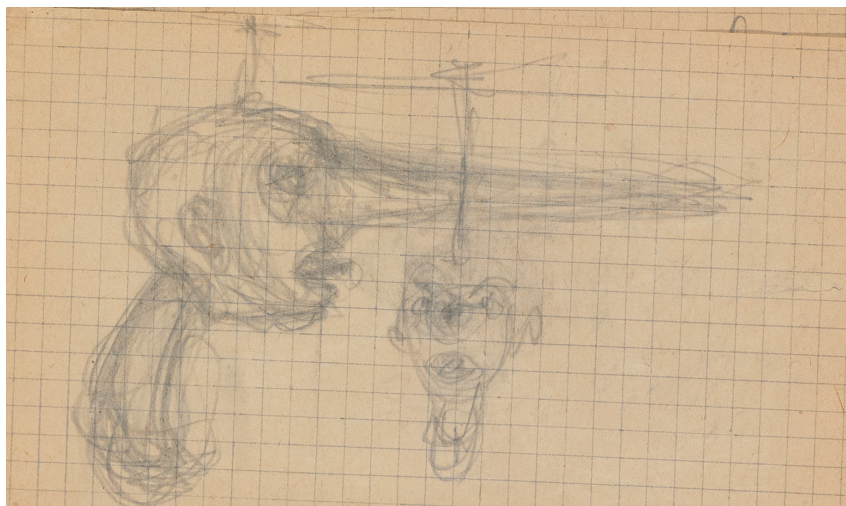
Alberto Giacometti
*The Nose, Heads and
Annotations*, 1947-1950
pencil on notebook page
22 × 17,5 cm
Fondation Giacometti
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Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023



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Alberto Giacometti
The Nose, 1946 - 1947
pencil on notebook page
16,2 × 10,7 × 1 cm
Fondation Giacometti
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Paris 2023

Rui Chafes
The Night, 2018
Metal, plaster, with
Giacometti's *Nose*
(1947 - 1950)
81 × 28,5 × 287 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp, Paris
2023

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Hiroshi Sugimoto
Past Presence 090,
The Nose,
Alberto Giacometti, 2018
Print on paper
94 x 75 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
Head with a large nose,
1958
Bronze
51,6 x 14,1 x 15,4 cm
Fondation Giacometti
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Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023

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The Nose, plaster, 1963
Photo: Ernst Scheidegger
Archives Fondation
Giacometti
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Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023

Alberto Giacometti
Zoomorphic Heads,
1932 *Project for Jeux
d'enfants* by Boris
Kochno
Crayon graphite sur page
de carnet / pencil on
notebook page
12,7 × 7,9 cm
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Alberto Giacometti
Head on a rod, 1947
Plaster
54 x 19 x 15 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023

Alberto Giacometti
Ange Leccia
The Nose.
Cinematographic
Sculpture, 2023
Projector 16 mm,
sculpture
variable dimensions
© Ange Leccia, 2023
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp, Paris
2023

Annette Messenger
Mother with Child, 2018
metal, fabric, rope
125 x 50 x 17 cm
Installation View at the
Giacometti Institute
With *The Nose* by
Giacometti
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2023 © Annette
Messenger / ADAGP, Paris,
2023

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-INSTITUT

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EMERGE

rêver,
créer,
ériger


MOËT HENNESSY • LOUIS VUITTON



 Blackwall Green

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 EYAL & MARILYN OFER
FAMILY FOUNDATION

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