

Press Release



Alberto Giacometti/ Ali Cherri ENVISAGEMENT



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Alberto Giacometti / Ali Cherri ENVISAGEMENT

23.01.2024 24.03.2024 Press visit Monday 22.01.2024 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.



Ali Cherri
Melancholy box, 2023
Prothèses oculaires en verre,
bois, acier, pâte epoxy,
enduit.
24×30×18 cm
Collection of the artist



Alberto Giacometti
Sall bust of a man
c. 1950
Painted plaster
17,3×17,3×10 cm
Fondation Giacometti

Summary



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Alberto Giacometti / Ali Cherri **ENVISAGEMENT**

The exhibition "Envisagement" presented at the Institut Giacometti places the work of the artist and film maker Ali Cherri in dialogue with the work of Alberto Giacometti, one of the great masters of modern art.

Sharing with Giacometti a special interest in the representation of the human head, the artist explores the notion of "envisagement", a term referring to both the act of envisaging something and the evocation of the face (visage). This double meaning finds a particularly striking echo in the sculptures and paintings of Giacometti in which the human face is the motif of a relentless search as much as a creation in the making. An original and creative scenography, specially designed for this exhibition, offers a new interpretation of the space.

This exhibition will display new pieces by Ali Cherri, most of them specially created for this show.

These original works will be presented alongside a rich selection of paintings, sculptures and drawings by Alberto Giacometti from the collection of the Fondation.

23.01.2024 24.03.2024

Institut Giacometti 5, rue Victor-Schœlcher 75014 Paris

institut-giacometti.fr

President Catherine Grenier

Director Françoise Cohen

Curator Romain Perrin

Scenographer Éric Morin

Follow us on social media#CherriGiacometti











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



Ali Cherri The Tall Woman, 2023 Male head with ball hairstyle (Egypt, Low Age, c. 664-32 B.C) Clay, sand, pigments, steel 50 × 12 × 8 cm Collection of the artist

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Three questions to Ali Cherri by Romain Perrin, exhibition curator

(extract from the catalogue)

RP – The exhibition is called "Envisagement". Why that title?

AC – The question of the face (visage) is central to my sculptural work but also to several of my films, for cinema also means looking at a face. I'm interested in the way a face is revealed, but above all, how it is read. It is not just a shape, a nose, two eyes, ears, it goes beyond. It can be deciphered. It tells us something else. The reading of a face follows a very old tradition. There was even a science in the Arab world, and that's before Islam, that purported that a face could be deciphered to learn about the past, the story of a person's life, but also to predict their future (...).

RP – This invitation by the Institut originates in a commission by the Fondation Giacometti (...). Compared to your experience at the National Gallery in London in 2022 and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Marseille in 2020, what has been different here?

AC – (...) With the invitation by the Fondation, I think I let myself be wholly taken by the pleasure of entering into a dialogue with another artist. The big difference with my previous collaborations, is that here, I'm facing a monographic collection. Usually, the collections I've worked with include several types of objects, art works, archaeological objects, sometimes spread over long periods of time, coming from various civilisations. Here, before it is an encounter with a collection, it is an encounter with an artist. It is about comprehending the way he reflects, understanding his creative act, from where it originates (...).

RP – How do you consider Giacometti in the perspective of contemporary art?

AC – First, I think we have to learn how to forget what we know about Giacometti, that is the images of works we have seen again and again, and that make us believe we know his work well. We don't do him justice looking at him like that. There is much fragility, tenderness, baring and a lot of himself in his work, and those aspects are not the first things that come to mind about Giacometti. Even his bronze sculptures, at times so slender, have something of that fragility. I am very happy to have discovered a very humble aspect, if I dare to say, in his work. (...)

The artist talks about the choice of his works:

When I see some of Giacometti's œuvres, I notice that there are two stages. There's first the stage of the creation of the head, that is, for him, famously asking himself "what is a head?". Then there's a second stage in which he questions again his sculpture by adding marks in pencil, paint or by making cuts with a penknife, lines that give the character a face. The head becomes the support that helps bringing out something else and revealing things that didn't exist without those lines. I thought it was a little similar to my way of working with some of my sculptures. I begin with something that exists, an object, generally an antique that I purchase, for example at an auction; then I graft on it various elements and, without erasing what that object was in the first place, I make a new sculpture of it. The object existed before me and will exist after. It will also have a second life: instead of going in a history museum, it will enter a museum of contemporary art. It opens itself to new possibilities, other interpretations but it is still there, identified, and even mentioned in the wall labels.

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Around the exhibition

A richly illustrated **catalogue** in a French/English bilingual edition, coedited with Fondation Giacometti, Paris and FAGE éditions, Lyon, accompanies the exhibition.

A cultural programme is offered to the public for the duration of the exhibition.

Guided visits in French

Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. and Friday, Saturday, Sunday from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

During the school holidays in zone C, from Tuesday to Friday, from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. from Tuesday to Sunday from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Guided visits in English

Saturday from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Family visits

Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday from 11 a.m. to 12 a.m. during the school holidays in zone C.

Architectural visits

Sunday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Creative workshops

Workshops for children on Saturday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. $\,$

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. during the school holidays in zone C.

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Introduction

Romain Perrin, exhibition curator

The exhibition "Envisagement" is the result of a carte blanche given to the Lebanese artist and filmmaker Ali Cherri who is presenting works not previously exhibited which resonate with a selection of Alberto Giacometti's sculptures and paintings

Cherri worked with the collections of several museums (National Gallery in London, Musée des Beaux-Arts in Marseille) by showing the history of objects and questioning the various ways they are displayed. At the Institut Giacometti, he sets up a dialogue with Giacometti around the representation of the human head, the main theme in their works.

Cherri shares with Giacometti a passion for the art of ancient civilisations, especially the Mesopotamian from which both artists draw inspiration. By bringing closer their imaginary worlds, Cherri invites us to go beyond our cultural and temporal limitations in order to understand what Giacometti wrote in 1965: "All the art of the past, of all eras, of all civilisations, suddenly appeared before me, all was simultaneous, as if space was taking the place of time".

Planned like a travelling shot around a gathering of sculpted heads, the scenography gives him the opportunity to explore in an original and dynamic manner the notion of "envisagement". This term comes from the verb "envisager" which defines the fact of regarding or anticipating something, but it is also used to mention the act of looking at a face. This double meaning is particularly relevant with regards to Giacometti's sculptures and paintings, the representation of the human face being a motif behind his continuing research.

An original scenography created for the Institut

Cherri thought about the exhibition space of the Institut as a film maker and sought to offer the spectator the experience of a new visit. The exhibition trail is not organised in sections following a logic of progression or narration but in various sequences, all connected by the theme of envisagement that the visitors are free to go through in the order they wish.



Ali Cherri
The Man with Tears, 2023
Stone head from the
14th/15th century, carved,
with flat and smooth
eyes to evoke the ancient
tradition of depositing a
coin in the eyes of a dead
man, patinated silver,
plaster, steel
49×41×31 cm
Collection of the artist



Alberto Giacometti
Head of Isabel, 1937-1939
Plaster with highlights in
pencil
21,6 × 16 × 17,4 cm
Fondation Giacometti

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Two very long tables present a gathering of heads, some made by Giacometti, others by Cherri, around which it is possible to turn as in a travelling shot. The perspective of that succession of heads gives the spectator the feeling of being stared at by the sculptures, reversing the usual relationship of perception of an artwork.

The projection of the film Retrouver la face on a mirror creates another distortion of the gaze: the visitors expecting to see their own reflection appear in the mirror find themselves facing that of an actor or actress on which has been superimposed the face of a sculpture by Giacometti.

From the head to the face. To sculpt. To rework. To reveal.

For Giacometti, art was a matter of gaze, a way of better understanding what he saw, even though to represent the complexity of a human face seems to him unreachable. The artist was famous for long sitting sessions during which he scrutinised his models. In his works, the gaze of the sculpture is very present and holds the attention of the viewer. Giacometti, who modelled his sculptures in clay, liked to cast original models in plaster, reworked with a penknife in paint or pencil. For Cherri, who selected some of Giacometti's original heads and busts in plaster only, those painted cuts and lines reveal the transition from the head to the face, from a generic volume to an individualised representation. He notes how the details of the faces are the result of a continuous work on which Giacometti returned again and again, as if the vision he had of his model permanently evolved, his sculptures never seemingly completed but still in the making.



Ali Cherri
The Walking Head, 2023
Glazed stoneware, concrete,
coating
27 × 11 × 11 cm
Collection of the artist



Alberto Giacometti
Head of a man on a double
base (study for the Head of
Colonel Rol-Tanguy), 1946
Plaster
9,2 × 4,6 × 4,7 cm
Fondation Giacometti



Alberto Giacometti
Head of man, 1962-1965
Clay
15×6×8,5 cm
Fondation Giacometti



Ali Cherri Mudhead, 2023 Wood, steel, sand, clay, pigments 42×21×19 cm Collection of the artist



Alberto Giacometti Head of woman, (Rita) c.1935 Wood and pencil 17,6×7×8,6 cm Fondation Giacometti

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Poetics of fragile bodies

In his own works, Cherri, starting with a head, combines heterogeneous elements belonging to various cultures which fascinate him in a strange manner in order to create new compositions. Using fragments that in the past formed a complete object, he reveals their potential within those new compositions that he calls "hybrids" or "grafts".

Cherri grew up in Lebanon during the civil war (1975-1990). His sensibility to the fragility of bodies and objects as well as to fragments comes from that experience. He finds that same fragility in the plaster works that Giacometti considered artworks in their own rights, just like bronzes. Among Giacometti's works that he selected, some fragments kept by the artist match those he himself acquired, assembled and reworked to give them a new lease of life in original sculptures.

Retrouver la face, an unreleased video by Ali Cherri

To the principle of superimposition of painted, drawn or cut lines practised by Giacometti on his sculptures, Cherri responds by superimposing images of those works onto sequences from old films. Giacometti's sculpted heads appear thus to modify and distort those of actors made unrecognisable, offering a new interpretation of the film. In the same way Cherri's sculptures are assembled from heterogeneous elements, the sequences reworked appear to us both familiar and strange. Ali Cherri



Ali Cherri Divination 2023
Female marble face (17th century); marble draped fragment from Roman period; pair of hand-shaped clappers in the New Kingdom or 3rd Intermediate Period style; steel, wood.
77×25×22 cm
Collection of the artist



Alberto Giacometti Small head of Diego, c.1936 Plaster 7,6×5,2×6,5 cm Fondation Giacometti



Alberto Giacometti Small head of man, c.1950 Clay 9,7 x 5,1 x 6,6 cm Fondation Giacometti

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Tree of life: a sculpture opening on a shared imaginary

Both Giacometti and Cherri share a fascination for the art of archaic antiquity. At The Louvre, that Giacometti regularly visited in his lifetime, there are Mesopotamian ornamentations from the palace of king Saron II (8th century BC) discovered in the middle of the 19th century on the site of Dur-Sharrukin, in today's Iraq. Among the many motifs, that of the "Genie holding a poppy in front of the tree of life" captivated Cherri. He kept in mind the motif of the tree of life that he reproduced in a large sculpture in the round, Tree of life, cast in bronze for the exhibition.

Three sculptures by Giacometti, *Tall Figure II* (1948), *Standing Woman (Woman of Venice X)* (1956) and *Tall Woman* (1958) seem to approach that tree to have a better look. That ensemble recalls the motif of the bronze doors that Giacometti made in 1958 for the tomb of the American businessman Edgar J. Kaufmann, in which two figures are seen, each at the foot of a tree. As for the reliefs of those doors, *Tree of life* plays with the symbols of various myths (tree of life, of knowledge, of the world), opening up the imaginary by enabling each visitor to draw from those shared references.



Catalogue



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The richly illustrated exhibition catalogue has been designed as an artist's book. It reproduces for the first time Ali Cherri's sculptures specially created for this show. In shot-reverse shot they enter into dialogue with Giacometti's oeuvres. In an unpublished interview, Ali Cherri gives the keys to the interpretation of the notion of "envisagement" through his work displayed in the exhibition. A series of photographs as well as graphic design art specially imagined like cinematographic sequences for this book by Cherri feed a reflection on what it is to represent a face and to stare at it.

Summary

Preface

Romain Perrin, exhibition curator.

Conversation with Ali Cherri by Romain Perrin

Catalogue of exhibited works

Antonin Artaud « The woman face »

Letter from Pierre Matisse to Alberto Giacometti

Alberto Giacometti, You ask me what my artistic inntentions are, 1959

Face Off, original photographs at the Polaroïd by Ali Cherri



Catalogue co-edited by Fondation Giacometti and FAGE éditions, Lyon, bilingual French/English.

112 pages, 75 illustrations
Format 16,5×23,5 cm
Hardback, price: €24
ISBN: 9782849757673

Biography



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Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966)

Born in Stampa, Switzerland, Alberto Giacometti was the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a post-impressionist painter of renown with whom he discovered painting and began to sculpt. At the age of 13, Giacometti made his first watercolours: mountain landscapes around his family home in the village of Stampa. In 1922, he left his native valley to settle in Paris and attend the classes of the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle at the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière where he worked with models. In 1925, he became interested in the avant-garde, among them the cubist artists.

In 1929, he started a series of sculptures called "flat women", close to abstraction, that had him noticed in the art milieu.



In 1930, he adhered to the surrealist movement of André Breton, of which he became an active member. His sculptures, especially Suspended Ball, played an essential part in the definition given by Dalí of the "surrealist" objects with a "symbolic function".

The question of the human head became the main subject of Giacometti's research throughout his life, and one of the reasons for his withdrawal from the surrealist group in 1935. For him, at that time, the representation of a head which seemed to be an unremarkable subject, was far from being resolved. The head, and especially the eyes are the centre of the human being and of life, whose mystery fascinated him. After Head-Skull in 1934, made after the death of his father Giovanni in 1933, his many variations on the heads show that the subject cannot be exhausted, all the more for it is combined with the question of scale: for Giacometti, representing his vision accurately was also providing the distance which the subject has been looked at.

In the 1930s, the models used for his research on the head were his brother Diego, his English artist friend Isabel (Delmer) and Rita (Gueyfier), a professional model. Isabel, seen from afar in the Latin Quarter, was the subject of one of his very first tiny figurines. After his return to Paris in September 1945, Giacometti showed that the monumental aspect was dissociated with the actual size of the works as he made portraits in small format of important personalities: the patron Marie-Laure de Noailles, the writer Simone de Beauvoir whom he met in 1941, and, at the request of Louis Aragon, Rol-Tanguy, the hero of the resistance.

Between 1958 and 1961, Giacometti made, as part of the commission to decorate the Plaza in front of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, a Tall Woman and a Big Head in a monumental scale, next to a Walking Man. Those three works became iconic. In 1962, Giacometti was awarded the Grand Prix for Sculpture at the 31st Venice Biennal. The retrospectives of 1965 at the Tate Gallery (London), the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and the Louisiana Museum (Humlebaek, Denmark) consecrated the artist just before his death in January 1966, at the hospital of Coire, in Switzerland.

Giacometti in his studio. Photo: Denise Colomb, 1954 Archives Fondation Giacometti

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Ali Cherri

Born in Beirut in 1976, Ali Cherri, a video and visual artist, lives and works in Paris. In 2022, he was awarded the Silver Lion for his participation in the international art exhibition The Milk of Dreams, at the Venice Biennale. Ali Cherri made a long-feature film Of Men and Gods and Mud, which was recently shown in the cinema in France. He was given the Robert E. Fulton's Bursary from Harvard University (2016), the Rockefeller Foundation Award (2017) and was nominated for the Abraaj Group Art Prize (2018). Among his solo exhibitions: Dreamless Night (Frac Bretagne, 2024; GAMeC, 2023), Humble and quiet and soothing as mud (Swiss Institute, 2023), Ceux qui nous regardent (CAC La Traverse, 2023), If you prick us, do we not bleed? (National Gallery, 2022), The Breathless Forest (La Vitrine Beirut, 2019), Tales from the Riverbed (Clark House 2018), From Fragment to Whole (Jönköping County Museum, 2018), Programme Satellite 10: Somniculus (CAPC Centre d'art contemporain de Bordeaux et Jeu de Paume, 2017), A Taxonomy of Fallacies: The Life of Dead Objects (Sursock Museum, 2016).

His works appear in several major collections: Centre Pompidou (Paris), National Gallery (London), British Museum (London), MAC VAL (Vitry-sur-Seine), Les Abattoirs (Toulouse), Jameel Arts Centre (Dubai), MACBA (Barcelona), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York), Sharjah Art Foundation (Sharjah), Sursock Museum (Beirut).



© Boris Camaca, 2024

Institut 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. Alberto Giacometti's mythical 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 online and on site: foundation-giacometti.fr/ fr/billetterie

Price: 9€ Reduced prices: 3 €

Exhibitions



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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

Giacometti / Sugimoto

En scène

5 April - 23 June 2024 Curator: Françoise Cohen



Hiroshi Sugimoto

Tall Figure III

Alberto Giacometti, 2013

5 April - 23 June 2024

© Hiroshi Sugimoto, 2024

In 2013, MoMA in New York invited Hiroshi Sugimoto to take photographs of the masterpieces in the Sculpture garden of the museum. Taking pictures of Tall Woman III by Alberto Giacometti, once in daylight, once at dusk, Sugimoto linked that duality to the

fantastical aspect that innervates the plays of the Noh theatre, bringing to mind the interpretation of Giacometti's sculpture by Jean Genet as an address to the dead.

This commission is the foundation of the series Past Presence which, focused on a selection of icons in modern art, questions the capacity of art to lend presence to a symbolic force in today's world.

Organised around the reconstruction of a scene of Noh theatre enhanced by a selection of Giacometti's sculptures, but also films, sculptures and antique Noh masks from the photographer's collection, the exhibition will shed light on the closeness of the two artists' research in which apparitions and reality come into dialogue.

The bronze of Tall Woman IV in contemplation in front of Baltic Sea Rugen (1996), one of Sugimoto's seascapes, brings to a close the presentation of the exhibition on the minimalist and essential meeting of the horizontal and the vertical

The exhibition will present for the first time in Europe five of Giacometti's works from the series Past Presence as well as a series of polaroids made between 2003 and 2018.



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Ali Cherri
The Tall Woman, 2023
Male head with ball
hairstyle (Egypt, Low
Age, c. 664-32 B.C)
Clay, sand, pigments,
steel
50 × 12 × 8 cm
Private colection
© Ali Cherri

Alberto Giacometti
Tall Figure II,1948-1949
Plaster
173 × 16,5 × 34,5 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2024

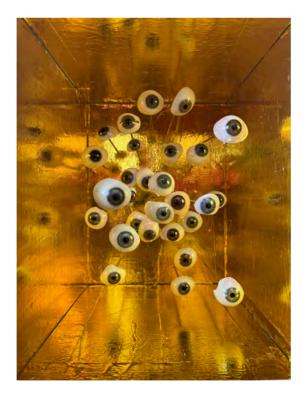
Alberto Giacometti
Standing woman c.1961
Painted plaster
46 × 7,6 × 11,2 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2024



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Ali Cherri
Melancholy Box, 2023.
Prosthetic glass eyes,
wood, steel, epoxy paste
24 × 30 × 18 cm
Collection of the artist
© Ali Cherri

Ali Cherri
Box of gazes, 2023
Prosthetic glass eyes,
wood veneered in
walnut bur, golden
leaf, brass, resin
25 × 20 × 20 cm
Collection of the artist
© Ali Cherri



Alberto Giacometti
Head of child (Simon
Bérard), 1917-1918
Painted plaster
22,7 × 12,6 × 16,4 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2024



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Ali Cherri
Tree of life, 2023
Bronze.
240 × 83 × 74 cm
Collection of the artist
© Ali Cherri

Alberto Giacometti
Doors to Kaufmann's
tomb, 1956
Fondation Giacometti
Bronze.
221×85,5 (×2)×9 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / Adagp,
Paris 2024

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Ali Cherri Water Buffalo, 2023
Terra cotta water buffalo Han period; wood, steel, brass, coating, glazed stoneware 42 × 29 × 12 cm
Collection of the artist © Ali Cherri

Ali Cherri Wandering, 2022
Sandstone acephalic bust of Saint Jean Baptiste (France, late 11th century); alabaster head (France, 18th century); votive feet in terra cotta, brass
47 × 32 × 22 cm
Collection of the artist
© Ali Cherri

Ali Cherri Divination, 2023
Female marble face (17th century); marble draped fragment from Roman period; pair of hand-shaped clappers in the New Kingdom or 3rd Intermediate Period style; steel, wood 77 × 25 × 22 cm Collection of the artist © Ali Cherri



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Alberto Giacometti
Head of Diego,1959-1960
Clay.
11,8×6×8,3 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto
Giacometti / ADAGP,
Paris 2024

Ali Cherri Mudhead, 2023 Wood, steel, sand, clay, pigments 42×21×19 cm Collection of the artist © Ali Cherri



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Alberto Giacometti Head of the father, round II, c. 1927-1930 Plaster 28,9×21,2×23 cm Fondation Giacometti © Succession Alberto Giacometti / ADAGP, Paris 2024 Alberto Giacometti
Head of woman, (Rita),
c. 1935
Wood and pencil
17,5×7×8,6 cm
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Alberto Giacometti
Bust of man in a
frame, 1946-1947
Oil on paper
28,1 × 22,4 cm
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Alberto Giacometti
Head of the colonel Rol-Tanguy on
double base, c. 1946
Plaster
27,7 × 13,1 × 13,1 cm
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Alberto Giacometti
Head of Isabel,
c.1937 - 1939
Plaster and pencil
21,6 × 16 × 17,4 cm
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Alberto Giacometti *Head*, c. 1958 Plaster 28,7 × 23 × 13,8 cm Fondation Giacometti © Succession Alberto Giacometti / ADAGP, Paris 2024



Alberto Giacometti
Head of man on double base
(study for the Head of Colonel
Rol-Tanguy), 1946
Plaster
9,2×4,6×4,7 cm
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The Fondation Giacometti warmly thanks Anne-Dias-Griffin, Franck Giraud, Ronald S. Lauder, M. and Mme. Jeffrey H. Loria, Daniella Luxembourg, Eyal and Marilyn Ofer, the Don Quixote II Foundation and other members of the circle who wish to remain anonymous..

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