

Le temps de Giacometti 1946 - 1966

Exhibition from 22 September 2023 to 21 January 2024
at Les Abattoirs, Musée – Frac Occitanie Toulouse

In collaboration with the Fondation Giacometti

FONDATION-
GIACOMETTI



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Alberto Giacometti
Walking Man II, 1960
Plaster – 188.5 x 29.1 x 111.2 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti / Adagp, Paris 2023

Cover:

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

Fondation Giacometti © Succession Alberto Giacometti / Adagp, Paris 2023

Alberto Giacometti, *Heads of a Man and a Woman on Les Temps Modernes*, n° 187, December 1961; blue ballpoint pen on magazine

Fondation Giacometti © Succession Alberto Giacometti / Adagp, Paris 2023

Le temps de Giacometti (1946 - 1966)

From 22 September 2023 to 21 January 2024

Les Abattoirs, Musée – Frac Occitanie Toulouse

The exhibition *Le temps de Giacometti (1946–1966)*, held at Les Abattoirs in collaboration with the Fondation Giacometti, gives visitors an unprecedented look at the art and life of artist Alberto Giacometti in the context of the post-war years up until his death in 1966.

The artistic journey of Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966), an iconic twentieth-century artist, was quite unique. In the 1920s he joined the Cubist movement, then in its closing years, before going on to become the embodiment of the ultimate surrealist sculptor. After the war, however, as abstraction was gaining ascendancy on both sides of the Atlantic, he held to his own approach (which he shared with a few others) – that of figurative art. His was an extraordinary path. He was greatly esteemed for his famous portrayals of humankind, both wounded and undergoing change; he was in tune with existentialist thought; and he was the creator of an art that reflected recent history with its war, massacres and anxiety over the nuclear threat.

He was a humanist, totally absorbed in his work, but he was also a man of his time, a social creature whose creative work must be read in the various contexts that surrounded him: the circle of artists, writers and philosophers he frequented, the younger generation that visited him, the photographers that took his picture, and the galleries he exhibited in and for which he developed the staging design, such as at the Galerie Maeght in 1951. This exhibition aims to bring to the fore all these aspects, which came together in his response to the great artistic and philosophical questions of his time, from late surrealism to the beginnings of existentialist thought.

Including some of his great masterpieces and combining sculptures, paintings, engravings, photographs, and archival documents, the exhibition gives visitors a wide-ranging view of the 1950s, essential to understanding the artistic and intellectual transformations that occurred after the war. The exhibition is primarily composed of works loaned by the Fondation Giacometti, which preserves artworks that the artist retained throughout his life. It brings together some one hundred emblematic works such as *Women with Chariot* (ca. 1945), *The Cage* (1950), *Walking Man II* (1960), and *Tall Woman I* (1960), as well as a collection of paintings, drawings on magazines, photographs and archival material, thus creating a vast account of the artist as a key actor in the post-war world, through his artworks, connections with the intellectual and artistic world of the time, exhibitions and writings.

In a continuation of the exhibition, a contemporary section generates encounters between Giacometti and artists of today, around the action of the “Walking Man”, exploring its downfalls but also the hope it continues to hold.

In addition to the main exhibition, *E.R.O.S (1959): The Story of a Surrealist Exhibition through the Daniel Cordier Collection* takes visitors on a journey to the eighth Exposition internationale du Surréalisme, which was presented in Cordier’s gallery in 1959 and in which Alberto Giacometti participated.

Curators:

Émilie Bouvard and Annabelle Ténèze, with the help of Audrey Palacin

Exhibition Visit

The exhibition *Le temps de Giacometti (1946–1966)* occupies all the exhibition rooms on the ground floor, as well as the Picasso Room (Les Abattoirs basement).

Curators:

Émilie Bouvard,
director of collections and scientific programme,
Fondation Giacometti

Annabelle Ténèze,
head curator and director of Les Abattoirs

with the help of Audrey Palacin,
research associate

Scenography:

Pascal Rodriguez



Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Alberto Giacometti installing his exhibition at the Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1961, 1961*
Photograph © Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos

Nef - Giacometti et son temps

In the Nef, a dialogue is created between three of Giacometti's masterpieces dating from 1960: *Walking Man II*, *Tall Woman I* and *Large Head* – forms that the artist had been preoccupied with since the late 1940s at least. Although his first moving figure was a *Woman Walking*, dating from 1932 and created during his surrealist period, the tall and slender shape of the *Walking Man* became the artist's most recognised in the post-war years. Thanks to Annette Giacometti (1923–1993), it was even installed at the UNESCO headquarters. Touching as it does on the theme of demise but also reconstruction and a renewed search for humanism, this sculpture seems to give substance to an entire era – that of the years following the Second World War.

From the 1950s onwards, Giacometti was asked to participate in several projects, including major events and exhibitions (Venice Biennale, Documenta Kassel, etc.). In 1958, on the initiative of his American dealer Pierre Matisse (1900–1989), he formed a group of his three preferred sculptures – the silhouette of a walking man, a giant standing female figure, and a monumental head – for a commission in the plaza in front of the new Chase Manhattan Bank skyscraper in New York. Although the project was eventually dropped in 1961, Giacometti's research into this design continued with his participation in the 1962 Venice Biennale and then the opening of the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence in 1964, where the artist himself installed a version: the three sculptures inhabit a courtyard in the Fondation building, which was designed by architect Josep Lluís Sert (1902–1983).

Exhibition Visit

Room 02 – Alberto Giacometti the Existentialist

Alberto Giacometti and philosophers Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) met in 1941, just a few months before Giacometti left France for Switzerland where he remained until the end of the war in 1945. Paris was under occupation: the notions of freedom, being politically conscious and the relationship between the individual and the world took on an often tragic intensity. Moving away from the surrealist movement, in 1935 Giacometti once again started working from models, concentrating on a search for scale and reflecting on the very limits of figurative art. At this time he was sculpting tiny slender figures, set into a cube-shaped base. Giacometti fine-tuned his style in Switzerland before returning to Paris after the Liberation, where he reconnected with his intellectual friends: Sartre, who in 1946 published *Existentialism Is a Humanism* and with whom Beauvoir had founded the journal *Les Temps modernes* in 1945, but also Georges Bataille (1897–1962) who started the journal *Critique* in 1946. He made portraits of such figures as the Communist resistance fighter Henri Rol-Tanguy (1908–2002) and the author Diane Bataille (1918–1989). In 1948, Sartre published his essay “The Search for the Absolute”. This text provided the foundation for the reception of Giacometti’s work after the war; he had moved away from surrealism to become the ultimate existentialist sculptor, able to express the anguish of the human condition.

Room 03 – “Women as Goddesses”?

Alberto Giacometti met poet and film-maker Jean Genet (1910–1986) through Sartre in a Montparnasse café in the summer of 1954. Genet posed for the artist, who made several drawings and paintings of him from 1954 to 1957. In June 1957, Genet published “L’atelier d’Alberto Giacometti” in the journal *Derrière le miroir* for the exhibition *Alberto Giacometti* at the Galerie Maeght in Paris – an important essay that influenced the way in which Giacometti was considered after the war. In it, the artist becomes the inhabitant of a consecrated space, the studio, described by Genet as a “temple”. And yet, the studio that Giacometti had moved into on 1 December 1926, was only 24 m², but with its painted walls and furniture, it was more than a space for creation, it was a work of art in itself.

In Genet’s words, female figures were presented as hieratic “goddesses” that were created from memory or from live sessions with the model: his wife, Annette Giacometti, posed tirelessly for hours. From far away and with their slender, harmonious silhouettes, *Woman Standing* (1957), *Tall Figure II* (1949) and *Woman of Venice V* (1956) look like “goddesses”. Admittedly, the sculptor did carefully study Egyptian-style statues, such as the idols found in the Archaic Greek tradition and the Cyclades. However, as you come closer, the long bodies bear the marks of their creation, their skin a troubled surface. Under his fingers and sculptor’s knife, Annette and the other models did indeed become “goddesses”, but ones made of human flesh.

Exhibition Visit

Room 04 – Giacometti in Photographs

Speaking of Alberto Giacometti, the artist Man Ray (1890–1976) once recalled how “his unusual face and greyish skin, like a medieval statue, made him an excellent subject for portrait photography.” From the late 1920s until his death in 1966, Giacometti fascinated photographers from major journals and magazines, who lined up at his Paris studio to immortalise him while on the job, surrounded by his many artworks.

Although the relationship that Giacometti had with photography is ambivalent – he took no photos himself and often expressed his mistrust of the medium – the photographs that do exist tell us something of the artist’s desire to document, circulate and share his body of work. The unchangeable nature of his studio and his appearance – he was invariably dressed in a shirt and trousers – added to the power of these images, which show us a person entirely devoted to his oeuvre, while leaving space for the creativity of the most renowned photographers of the time.

Sabine Weiss (1924–2021), who photographed him from 1954 onwards, described the atmosphere in the studio when she visited: “In any case, he didn’t mind if we talked, as long as he could keep playing about with the clay – he would spend entire days doing the same movements! He didn’t change anything, that was what he was there to do.” Jack Nisberg (1922–1980) also took pictures of him for American magazines.

The change to colour film suddenly revealed an entirely different studio, like a flamboyant Lascaux cave that we had come to imagine was only black and white.

Room 05 – Giacometti Exhibits. 1951, Galerie Maeght

In the summer of 1951, art dealer Aimé Maeght (1906–1981) opened the doors of his Parisian gallery to Giacometti. For his first exhibition, he only presented his recent works, some of which had never been seen before. The exception to this was a surrealist bronze, *The Invisible Object* (1934–1935), a figure holding a mysterious object that welcomed visitors at the gallery entrance. This exhibition, which was a turning point for the artist, has been partly recreated here in the style of a period room. The photographs show how the design of the space was staged using plaster bases that Giacometti created especially for the event. Some are in the shape of a table, another extends the panel of the sculpture *The Forest* (1950), thus blurring the boundary between the artwork and its means of display. This impression was further strengthened by the juxtaposing of two materials – plaster and bronze. The tall plaster column that was used as a base for the bronze *Small Bust of a Man* (1950–1952) was later used in other sculptures, in particular the *Stelae* series, just as the artist had wished; in 1950 he had expressed to Jean Genet his “desire to abolish the base”. As for the sculpture *The Cat* (1951), it seems to be exploring the exhibition.

Acting as a curator and set designer who chose the artworks and made changes to the hanging right up to the last minute, as documented in his notes and sketches, we can see the great care Giacometti brought to the presentation of his work, which he also described in interviews with art critics of the time.



Alberto Giacometti
The Cat, 1951
Plaster, painted – 32.8 x 81.3 x 13.5 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti /Adagp, Paris 2023

Exhibition Visit

Room 06 – A New Figuration

In 1961, Alberto Giacometti exhibited artworks in Paris, alongside artists of other generations from Jean Dubuffet (1909–1992) to Francis Bacon (1909–1992) and Antonio Saura (1930–1998), in Mathias Fels' (1922–2009) new gallery, who, as the title of the event indicated, was promoting “a new figuration”. Giacometti was himself the son of a painter and painted in his younger years before becoming first and foremost a sculptor. He did some painting between the two wars, but it was from the 1950s that he once again returned seriously to the practice of painting. On his canvases, against an indistinct and dull background painted with large brushstrokes, the most important element was that of the figure, the bust, the faces. Their “expressionistic” and virtually monochromatic treatment conveyed the anguish of the human condition, with some faces almost becoming masks, as in the *Black Heads* series (1956). Giacometti's paintings became increasingly visible in his solo and group exhibitions, as, for example, in the *New Images of Man* exhibition held at the MoMA (New York) in 1959 where both sculptures and paintings were presented.

His body of work fits within the history of painting at the time, from the idea of an existentialist painting found in the landmark text that Jean-Paul Sartre wrote about his canvases (1954) to the debates around “a new figuration” in painting that appeared in the early 1960s, when abstraction in all its dominance began to be rivalled by the return of figurative art and the success of pop art.

Room 07 – A Tree for *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett, 1961

The theatre is clearly visible in the works and life of Giacometti. He was friends with writer-playwrights Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, Irishman Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) and Russian-Armenian Arthur Adamov (1908–1970), who were all living in Paris. Although he had been creating artworks for the stage since the 1930s, Giacometti's interest in the theatre grew after the war, in particular in the early 1950s as he developed his *Places* and *Cages* into real scenes. At this time, in the circles he frequented, the issue of theatre set design was present all around him. In the early 1950s, Giacometti was reading many theatre works, including by Genet and Adamov but also by William Shakespeare (1564–1616), German authors Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) and Georg Büchner (1813–1837) and later that of the socially and politically conscious playwright and artist, Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956). He had already read most of these theatre works before he created his sculptures in the *Cages* series.

The only artwork for the theatre that he actually completed was at the request of Beckett, to create a set for the play *Waiting for Godot* for its rerun at the Odeon Theatre in 1961, for which he sculpted a tree. By using wonderfully economical means, Giacometti conveyed another world, that of the “theatre of the absurd” that Beckett portrayed in his play.

Giacometti's interest in theatre was not focused on the illustration of or search for designs, but it did allow him to question the connections between reality and imagination.



Alberto Giacometti
Caroline in Tears, 1962
Oil on canvas – 100 x 73 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti /Adagp, Paris 2023

Exhibition Visit

Room 08 – A Visitor to the Studio: Isaku Yanaihara

Giacometti's Paris studio became a mythical space where intellectual figures of the day met up, often friends of the artist and neighbours in the 14th arrondissement. It attests to the sculptor's place in a cultural and social milieu that was both that of his time and of the geography of the neighbourhood he lived and worked in. It was essentially his family, friends, artists and intellectuals who visited the 24m² studio, in which Giacometti had been working since 1926 and which he kept until his death in 1966.

Posing was a daily job for his brother Diego and wife Annette. In their wake, Japanese art historian, philosopher and poet Isaku Yanaihara (1918–1989) gave an account of these sittings, which were both physically challenging and the opportunity for stimulating discussion. Giacometti met him in October 1955 during one of Yanaihara's trips to Paris. Yanaihara sat for him from October to December 1956 and then returned in the summers of 1957, 1959, 1960 and 1961, which resulted in paintings and two busts. This experience left its mark on Yanaihara, who in his books described creation as a process that relies on the destruction of a work and then its systematic recreation. He recounts the physical involvement of the two protagonists over a number of days, subject to tiredness and emotion. In the books, their relationship appears as the encounter between two mutually encouraging freedoms. Yanaihara also played the role of the go-between, introducing Giacometti's work to Japan. In this room, a multimedia installation invites visitors to immerse themselves in the relationship Giacometti had with his models and the intimacy of his creative gestures as a sculptor and writer.

Picasso Room – The Art of Walking

The sculptor of the *Walking Man* was himself a walker, who paced the streets of Paris by night. Like those flâneurs written and theorised about by Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) and Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), he transformed walking into art. At his death in 1966, Giacometti was working on a collection of lithographs called *Paris sans fin*, of which more than seventy are presented here. These recall the themes of wandering and contemplation, allowing visitors to travel with him through the Paris of the 1950s and 60s.

Although in the 1960s the *Walking Man* sculpture became famous as an embodiment of its time, later generations of artists have revolutionised dance through walking and art through performance and video. The act of walking has now become an artwork, with the body as sculpture. Videos by ten of today's artists are presented here, which reflect on the contemporary figure of those who walk. Walking can be poetic and freeing: the bodily extensions of Rebecca Horn both block movement and increase the body's potential. For many female artists, and as seen in the socially conscious works of Pilar Albarracín, Kubra Khademi and Regina José Galindo, walking can be a quest for access to public spaces that shines a spotlight on the inequality, insecurity and even violence that some women face on a day-to-day basis. These artworks underline the introspective yet activist nature of walking, reflecting the debates taking place in our society today. Esther Ferrer, to the rhythm of Antonio Machado's verses (1875–1939), creates a line of free paths. Mona Hatoum, with two shoes tied around her ankles, continues to move forward despite the obstacles. Walking by whichever means possible: Hiwa K re-enacts a path of exile and his departure from Iraq. Éric Pougneau repeatedly falls. Claude Cattelain walks for hours, without progress, sinking into the sand. In José Alejandro Restrepo's artwork, people cross a forest on the backs of "porters": are these people being helped forward or do they have the power to make others carry them? Migratory walks, walks of equality, walking through a landscape in transformation, walking with oneself... A multitude of questions raised by such an apparently simple movement, reconciling us with the reality but also the complexity of our human natures.

Artist Biography

Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966)

Born in 1901 in Borgonovo, near Stampa in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, Alberto Giacometti was the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a renowned post-impressionist painter from whom he learnt painting and began the art of sculpture. At the age of thirteen, Giacometti painted his first watercolours: mountain landscapes surrounding his family home in the village of Stampa and the first sculpted portrait of his younger brother Diego.

In 1922, he left the valley of his childhood and moved to Paris to attend the classes of sculptor Antoine Bourdelle at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière where he worked from models. From 1925, he became interested in the avant-garde, in particular Cubism.

In 1929 he began a series of almost abstract sculptures entitled *Flat Women*, which brought him to the attention of the artistic community. In 1930 he joined André Breton's surrealist movement, becoming an active member. His sculptures, and especially *Suspended Ball*, played a key role in Dalí's definition of objects that are "surrealist" with a "symbolic function".

He then distanced himself from the surrealist group; even though his artworks from the early 1930s continued to be presented in exhibitions held by the group.

In 1935 he devoted himself ardently to the representation of the human figure, a subject that would absorb him for the rest of his life. His younger brother Diego, who had joined him in Paris a few years earlier, was one of the models that Giacometti worked with throughout his life. After having spent the war years in Switzerland, Giacometti returned to Paris and continued his work, primarily working from models. Annette Arm, whom he married in 1949, was another model who appears throughout his body of work. Giacometti also returned to painting, and in the early 1950s, reconnected with landscape as a subject.

From 1958 to 1961, as part of a commission to create a work for the plaza in front of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York (which did not end up going ahead), Giacometti made a *Tall Woman* and a *Large Head* on a monumental scale, alongside his *Walking Man*. These three works would become icons. In 1962, Giacometti presented an initial version of this sculptural ensemble in bronze and won the Grand Prize for sculpture at the 31st Venice Biennale.

Retrospectives held in 1965 at the Tate Gallery, (London), the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and the Louisiana Museum (Humlebaek, Denmark) provided a consecration of the artist not long before he passed away in January 1966, at the Chur Hospital in Switzerland.

Key Dates

10 October 1901

Alberto Giacometti is born in Borgonovo, a small village in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, the first child of Swiss post-impressionist painter Giovanni Giacometti and Annetta Stampa. Diego, Ottilia and Bruno soon follow.

January 1922

He leaves for Paris to study sculpture at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, in Antoine Bourdelle's studio.

1926

Giacometti moves into a studio at 46 Rue Hippolyte-Maindron, in the 14th arrondissement in Paris, where he will stay for the rest of the life.

1930

His brother Diego joins him in Paris and becomes his artisan assistant. Giacometti joins the surrealists and becomes involved in their activities, publications and exhibitions.

1935

He begins work on a set of heads based on models. This aesthetic turnaround causes his break with the surrealist group.

1941

Meets Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre.

1942–1945

During the war, Giacometti lives in Switzerland and meets Annette Arm (1923–1993), who becomes his wife and model. He spends time with the group involved with the journal *Labyrinthe*, founded by Albert Skira, in which he publishes several drawings and articles.

1947

He does the first version of the *Walking Man*.

Illustrates *A Story of Rats* by Georges Batailles for the Éditions de Minuit.

January 1948

His first solo exhibition since 1934, at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York. Jean-Paul Sartre writes "In Search of the Absolute" as an introduction to the catalogue, which he also publishes in the January 1948 number of *Les Temps Modernes*.

1951

First exhibition at the Galerie Maeght in Paris. He designs the bases for the sculptures.

1954

Meets Jean Genet who models for paintings and drawings until 1957.

Sartre publishes the essay "The Paintings of Giacometti" for an exhibition at the Galerie Maeght.

Key Dates

1955

First museum retrospectives at the Guggenheim Museum (New York), the Arts Council (London) and in Germany.

1956

Giacometti exhibits a group of female figures at the French pavilion at the Venice Biennale, known as the *Venice Women*.

He becomes friends with Isaku Yanaihara, a professor in Japanese philosophy, who begins sitting for him.

1957

Genet publishes the essay "The Studio of Alberto Giacometti" in the journal *Derrière le miroir*, published by the Galerie Maeght.

1959–1960

Begins work on the project for the Chase Manhattan Plaza and creates three versions of the *Walking Man*, four *Large Women* and two *Large Heads*. Abandons the project but presents the artworks in his exhibitions.

Participates in the Exposition internationale du Surréalisme (*E.R.O.S.*, Galerie Daniel Cordier) and in *Documenta II* (1959, Kassel).

Begins working on a collection of lithographs *Paris Without End*, at the request of Tériade.

1961

Creates the set for Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*.

1962

Wins the Grand Prize for sculpture at the 31st Venice Biennale.

His first monograph is published by poet and critic Jacques Dupin.

First retrospective at the Kunsthaus in Zurich.

1964

Inauguration of the Fondation Marguerite and Aimé Maeght in Saint-Paul de Vence, for which he produces several artworks and determines how they are exhibited.

Participates in *Documenta III* (Kassel).

1965

Ernst Scheidegger directs a film about his work.

Retrospectives at the Tate Gallery (London), the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and the Louisiana Museum (Humlebaek, Denmark). Giacometti goes to the United States for the first time.

A group of collectors creates the Alberto Giacometti-Stiftung as part of the Zurich Kunsthaus, after acquiring the G. David Thompson Collection.

11 January 1966

Dies at the Chur Hospital.

The Catalogue

An exhibition catalogue is being published in collaboration with Éditions Gallimard.



Introduction :

"Giacometti et son temps" [Giacometti and His Era], Émilie Bouvard, Annabelle Ténèze
"L'éternité qui passe" [The Passing of Eternity], Catherine Grenier

I. 1948

"Giacometti, encore surréaliste ?" [Giacometti, Still Surrealist?], Annabelle Ténèze, Julien Michel
"Giacometti existentialiste ?" [Giacometti, Existentialist?], Émilie Bouvard

II. 1951

"Le métier de Giacometti" [Giacometti's Profession], Romain Perrin
"Giacometti expose" [Giacometti Exhibits], Romain Perrin

III. 1955

"Un visiteur parmi d'autres dans l'atelier : Isaku Yanaihara" [One Visitor to the Studio Among Others: Isaku Yanaihara], Émilie Bouvard
"Giacometti photographié" [Giacometti Photographed], Inès de Bordas

IV. 1956

"Des femmes comme des déesses ?" [Women as Goddesses?], Émilie Bouvard
"Alberto Giacometti dans la nuit" [Alberto Giacometti at Night], Émilie Bouvard

V. 1959

"De la Biennale de Venise à la Documenta de Cassel" [From the Venice Biennale to Documenta in Kassel], Romain Perrin
"Une nouvelle figuration" [A New Figuration], Annabelle Ténèze

VI. 1961

"Giacometti au théâtre" [Giacometti at the Theatre], Hugo Daniel
"Giacometti, dits et écrits" [Giacometti, His Spoken and Written Words], Émilie Bouvard

VII. 1965

"Où marche L'Homme qui marche ?" [Where Is the Walking Man Walking?], Romain Perrin
Volet contemporain : "L'art de marcher" [Contemporary Section: The Art of Walking], Annabelle Ténèze

The Catalogue

Essay extracts (translation):

Annabelle Ténèze and Julien Michel

Giacometti, Still Surrealist?

“1959: The Eighth Exposition internationale du Surréalisme: ‘E.R.O.S.’

Although Giacometti had not wished to take part in the 1947 exhibition at the Galerie Maeght, twelve years later, in 1959, he agreed to participate in the new exhibition that Breton and Duchamp were preparing, which was to be held in the gallery of Daniel Cordier, a former Resistance fighter and secretary to Jean Moulin who had become a renowned international art dealer. Held from 15 December 1959 to 15 January 1960 and advertised with a poster displaying the artwork *Masculin – Féminin* by Mimi Parent (1924–2005), the group’s eighth international exhibition overcame Giacometti’s reluctance as it included three major groups of works. The first presented current works of surrealism, the second opened the doors of the gallery on 8 Rue de Miromesnil to ‘guest artists’, whose work remained closely connected to that of Breton and his peers, and the third was designed to bring together works from past members of the group – including Giacometti. He did not object to his inclusion in the retrospective part of the exhibition and, in his answer to Breton’s invitation, confirmed that the artworks he envisaged would indeed be selected from ‘among the most appropriate’. However, regarding *Projet pour une place* that had been mentioned in the journal *Labyrinthe* and that Breton had asked him to reproduce, he replied that he believed it would be ‘difficult to achieve and [of] little interest’. It was thus agreed that *The Suspended Ball* would be presented: since its acquisition by Breton in 1931, it had been displayed in most of the group’s exhibitions, including the ‘Exposition surréaliste d’objets’ at the Galerie Charles Ratton in 1936. In 1959, among all the ‘retrospective’ works included by Breton and Duchamp, it became one of the event’s most important artworks.”

Émilie Bouvard

Giacometti in His Own Words, Spoken and Written

“There are a great many stories about Alberto Giacometti’s enjoyment of conversation. In her memoir, Simone de Beauvoir speaks of a spiritual, even caustic Giacometti, who held lively discussions in many Parisian cafés. In 1950 for a surrealist game, André Breton described him as being ‘highly communicative with the outside world; radiating the world’ and ‘extraverted – with a sort of desire to devour the world’. Although Giacometti’s life and daily schedule were consumed by his work, which he necessarily did alone, Giacometti was not, for all that, totally on his own. He worked with Diego and Annette, and people came to visit him; he left his studio and had discussions.

His eloquence was clearly visible in both his writing and the interviews he gave, which helped shape his image and guide readings of his work. These words, both spoken and written, are also the work of a message writer who loved the company of poets and authors. Paul Éluard, Michel Leiris, André Breton, Jean Genet, Jacques Dupin, André du Bouchet, Léna Leclerc and René Char were his friends, and he was one of theirs. Giacometti published his first articles in the journal *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*. His prose poems (‘Charbon d’herbe’, ‘Hier sables mouvants’) and calligrams (‘Poème en sept espaces’, ‘Le rideau brun’) depict a sensual world, ranging from fleeting but clear impressions to a surrealist image of surprising beauty, and to the fantasies, dreams and childhood stories we can see echoed in his creations of the time, just as the lyrical ‘I’ expresses it: ‘I try gropingly to catch in the void the invisible white thread of the marvellous which vibrates, and from which facts and dreams escape, with the noise of a stream bubbling over small stones, precious and alive...’”

E.R.O.S. (1959): The Story of a Surrealist Exhibition through the Daniel Cordier Collection

From 7 July 2023

Since its opening in 2000, Les Abattoirs, Musée – Frac Occitanie Toulouse has housed the Daniel Cordier Collection on permanent loan from the Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris). For the new presentation of this collection, Les Abattoirs is returning to those “eight years of turmoil” experienced by the Galerie Cordier from 1956 to 1964. In 1959 André Breton and Marcel Duchamp were invited to develop a new international exhibition of surrealism. It was to be the eighth of its kind, since the first held in 1936 at the New Burlington Galleries (London) and in keeping with those of 1938 at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts and 1947 at the Galerie Maeght in Paris.

This Exposition internationale du Surréalisme, “E.R.O.S.,” dealt with the subject of eroticism. Although in 1959 André Breton did not focus on carnal love, this was to better celebrate the surrealists’ “fundamental need for transgression”: like Cordier, they too were agitators. Based on a collection of the group’s historical, unexhibited and related works, “E.R.O.S.” was a labyrinth created by Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern, Robert Rauschenberg, Mimi Parent and many of their fellow game-players. As visitors entered what was to be one of the very first event-happenings, they were welcomed by a fragrance with “sexual” notes and the noise of “amorous sighs”.

At the end of the corridor, visitors to “E.R.O.S.” saw *The Invisible Object* (1934) by Giacometti next to Robert Rauschenberg’s *Bed* (1955). Along with *The Suspended Ball* (1931), which was included in the “retrospective” exhibition, those two sculptures marked out the five years he had spent in the surrealist group, from 1930 to 1935.

But not only that, *The Suspended Ball* was the first artwork he made as part of the group, and, according to Salvador Dalí, it was the “prototype of an object with a symbolic function”.

At Les Abattoirs, this presentation of “E.R.O.S.” brings together works from some of the artists who were present but also contemporary works that revisit its intention. Under the aegis of Eros, who throughout the visit acts as the common thread (coloured red for love), the artists work with the body, an evocation of desire pushed to its extreme, connecting human beings to their animal side, but also to plants. From the post-war years onwards, surrealists, poets, and academics helped write the history of sexuality and eroticism: today, its rereading gives a political edge to the poetics of the body.

Curator: Julien Michel, cultural attaché for conservation at Les Abattoirs



Roger Van Hecke, View of the “E.R.O.S.” exhibition at the Galerie Cordier, Paris, 15 December 1959 – 15 February 1960, 1959, print (based on photograph)

Press Images

<https://www.lesabattoirs.org/espace-presse/>



Alberto Giacometti
Simone de Beauvoir, 1946
Bronze – 13.5 x 4.1 x 4.1 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
Head on a Rod, 1947
Plaster, painted – 54 x 19 x 15 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
Walking Man II, 1960
Plaster – 188.5 x 29.1 x 111.2 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
Caroline in Tears, 1962
Oil on canvas, 100 x 73 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023

Press Images

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Alberto Giacometti
Isaku Yanaihara, 1956
Oil on canvas – 81.4 x 65.2 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
The Cat, 1951
Plaster, painted – 32.8 x 81.3 x 13.5 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
Woman of Venice I, 1956
Plaster, painted – 108.5 x 17 x 30 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023



Alberto Giacometti
Large Head, 1960
Plaster, painted – 100.5 x 31.7 x 43.1 cm
Fondation Giacometti
© Succession Alberto Giacometti
Adagp, Paris 2023

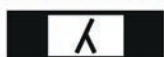
Exhibition Partners

This exhibition has received generous support from the City of Toulouse and Toulouse Métropole



This exhibition was organised in collaboration with the Fondation Giacometti

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The exhibition is sponsored by



This project has received assistance from the State Prefecture of the Occitanie



In media partnership with



About Les Abattoirs

Les Abattoirs, Musée – Frac Occitanie Toulouse opened in 2000 in a nineteenth-century heritage building. It holds modern art exhibitions and presents creations by contemporary artists.

Les Abattoirs is a unique institution created through the merger of the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de la Ville de Toulouse and the Fonds régional d'art contemporain (FRAC), which brings together permanent collections, a media library, a visitor's hall, workshops, an auditorium, a bookshop, and a restaurant in one location. Its collections, as well as works by various artists, are circulated within the Occitanie region, in direct association with the territory's stakeholders.

With an ambitious exhibition programme on its Toulouse site and out in the region, the presence of major and emerging artists in its programming, and the rich diversity of its activities that are aimed at a wide audience, Les Abattoirs remains more than ever a key player in the cultural, artistic, economic, and social life of the Ville de Toulouse and the Occitanie Region and continues to affirm its value on the national and international stage with strong partnerships.

Les Abattoirs is listed as a "Musée de France".

Some of the museum's recent major exhibitions

Picasso and the Exodus: A Spanish History of Art in Resistance 03.2019 > 08.2019

Peter Saul: Pop, Funk, Bad Painting, and More 09.2019 > 01.2020

Marion Baruch, Une rétrospective 12.2020 > 09.2021

Revue noire. Une histoire d'arts contemporains africains 06.2021 > 08.2021

La Dame à la licorne. Médiévale et si contemporaine 10.2021 > 01.2022

La Déconniatrie The Art, Exile and Psychiatry of François Tosquelles 10.2021 > 03.2022

Niki de Saint Phalle. The 1980s and 1990s: Art Running Free 10.2022 > 03.2023

Liliana Porter – Reality Play From the 1960s until Today 04.2023 > 08.2023



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Institutional Support

Ville de Toulouse

The Ville de Toulouse has a cultural and historical heritage that bears witness to the extent of its political, economic, religious, cultural, and intellectual influence since ancient times. The city council wishes to bring additional value to this legacy for the benefit of its inhabitants and tourists, by making it more attractive, accessible, and in tune with today's world.

Toulouse is thus aiming to become a platform for modern and contemporary artistic creation, open to all forms of expression: painting, sculpture, photography, graphic arts, design, new media, music, theatre, etc.

The City fully supports modern and contemporary art and to do so, relies on organisations dedicated to creation, such as Les Abattoirs, which plays a prominent role in the circulation of modern and contemporary art forms at a regional, national, and international level, offering its public a vast space housing permanent and temporary exhibitions, artistic experiments, and possibilities for supporting creation.



The Occitanie / Pyrénées - Méditerranée Region

The landscape of contemporary art in Occitanie / -Pyrénées - Méditerranée is extremely rich and dynamic. The Region supports its stakeholders and assists organisations that contribute to circulating works.

There are two Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain (FRAC) in the Region, which are its main regional policy tools for the development of contemporary art.

Over thirty years, the Frac Occitanie Toulouse, as part of the joint association Les Abattoirs, has acquired 1,200 works, while the Frac Occitanie Montpellier has built up a collection of 1,400 works. These collections were acquired by the Region through state funding.

These two FRACs undertake several essential missions: the creation of a collection representing "the art of today", the circulation of this collection throughout the whole regional area, direct support of artistic creation, the raising of awareness, and education for the widest possible audience.

Service presse Région Occitanie / Pyrénées-Méditerranée

-Montpellier: presse-region@laregion.fr

- Toulouse : service.presse@laregion.fr
www.laregion.fr



Ministry of Culture

The Directions régionales des affaires culturelles (DRAC or Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs) is a decentralised department of the Ministry of Culture that implements cultural policies established by the government under the authority of regional and departmental prefects. It supports, advises, supervises, and provides expertise to the cultural partners and territorial authorities in all the Ministry of Culture's sectors of activity: heritage, museums, archives, books and public readership, music, dance, theatre and performance, scientific and technical culture, visual arts, audiovisual and film.

In this capacity, the DRAC Occitanie provides financial support to the joint association that is Les Abattoirs, given its artistic and cultural project of general interest whose aim is the development, conservation, scientific study, and presentation of a collection of contemporary artworks, as well as its circulation and awareness-raising among the public, in accordance with the label Fonds régional d'art contemporain (FRAC or Regional Contemporary Art Fund. Organisations labelled "FRAC", as well as those labelled "art centres of national interest", comprise an outstanding national network contributing to the support and development of contemporary creation in the visual arts domain.

Furthermore, along with the Occitanie Region, the DRAC may contribute to the enhancement of its collections of modern and contemporary art via the intermediary of the Fonds régional d'acquisition pour les musées (FRAM or Regional Acquisitions Fund for Museums), as well as to restoration projects under the framework of the new FRAR measure (Fonds régional d'aide à la restauration - Regional Fund for Help in Restoration). This support is based on two legal texts: Book IV of the Code du Patrimoine (French Heritage Code) and the decree of 28 March 2017 relative to labels and conventions in the domains of live performance and visual arts.



les Abattoirs, Musée - Frac Occitanie Toulouse

Musée d'art moderne et contemporain
Fonds régional d'art contemporain

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or 33 (0) 5 34 51 10 60 (interactive voice response system)

Access

Metro: Line A, Saint-Cyprien République station
Bus: no. 31 and 45, Les Abattoirs stop

Opening hours

Open from Wednesday to Sunday from 12pm to 6pm.
Late-night opening on Thursdays until 8pm (except during school holidays)

Prices

Full price: €12.00
Reduced price: €10.00

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Notes
