ALBERTO GIACOMETTI – PETER LINDBERGH
SAISIR L’INVISIBLE
22 January 2019 - 24 March 2019

Curator: Serena Bucalo-Mussely

Peter Lindbergh Karen Elson, Los Angeles, 1997. © Peter Lindbergh (Courtesy Peter Lindbergh, Paris)

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The Institut Giacometti presents the unreleased photographs of Alberto Giacometti’s works taken by Peter Lindbergh, one of the most important photographers of his generation. A selection of Giacometti’s plasters, bronzes and drawings selected by Lindbergh are presented alongside his photographs. This face to face gives us the opportunity to show the very intimate dialogue that took place between the photographer and the sculptor's works, while revealing countless similarities in their ways to apprehend the representation of reality.

The exhibition, curated by Serena Bucalo-Mussely, offers to the public more than sixty works by both artists.

Settled in Paris since the 1970s, Peter Lindbergh has become the pioneer of a new realism in fashion photography. His approach to photography has considerably modified the standards of that genre. He collaborates with the biggest international magazines (Vogue, Harper’s Bazaar, Vanity Fair, The New Yorker, Interview, etc.). His unusual photographs privilege the personal dimension of his models, contributing to the phenomenon of popularity of some top models in the 1990s. His portraits of Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista, Kirsten Owen and those of famous actresses like Julian Moore, Uma Thurman, Jeanne Moreau and Nicole Kidman, whose apparent fragility he reveals, convey a feeling of melancholy. Simply photographed, in black and white, in unaffected attitudes, the women seen by Lindbergh regain the human nature that the codes of fashion photography had previously occulted.

Fascinated from a young age by the work and personality of Alberto Giacometti, Peter Lindbergh was invited in 2017 to take photographs in the storeroom of the Fondation Giacometti in Paris. With a strong emphasis on close-ups and large prints, Lindbergh uncovers, through photography, aspects of Giacometti’s sculptures impossible to perceive with the naked eye. Associating works from different periods in his compositions, he establishes between them a dialogue through periods and styles.

In the exhibition, the journey of our gaze between the photographs of one artist and the sculptures and drawings of the other, give us the opportunity to discover Giacometti’s work from another angle. Under the camera lens, the sculptures appear to become alive, revealing their details and textures. Behind the beauty of these works, Lindbergh succeeds in capturing the disquietude that characterized Giacometti and his endless search for reality. Both involved in a creative process that aims at representing the “truth”, focused on the representation of the human body, Giacometti and Lindbergh give great importance to the question of the gaze. In all their portraits, the gaze is considered the real access door to the interpretation of the model’s personality.

For this exhibition, the Institut Giacometti’s cabinet of graphic arts has gathered an important collection of photographic portraits of stars by Lindbergh and previously unseen drawing portraits by Giacometti of his favourite models. These drawings were made on various supports including pages of notebooks and books.
ALBERTO GIACOMETTI (1901-1966)

Born in Stampa, Switzerland in 1901, Alberto Giacometti was the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a renowned postimpressionist painter. He was initiated into the visual arts in the studio of his father and made, at 14, his very first works: *Still life with apples*, an oil painting, and a sculpted bust of his brother Diego.

In 1922, Giacometti left to study in Paris and entered the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière, where he took classes with the sculptor Antoine Bourdelle. At that time, he learned the technique of drawing from a model, and became interested in avant-garde compositions, the post-cubists, among others. His oeuvre was greatly influenced by African and Oceanic sculpture. In 1929, he started a series of flat women that drew the attention of the surrealist art scene. In 1930, Giacometti joined André Breton’s surrealist movement, and made his “objects of symbolic functions”.

From 1935, he distanced himself from the surrealist group and went back to practising sculpture in the studio from a real model. He focused particularly on the representation of the human head that was to remain his main subject of research throughout his life.

He spent the war years in Switzerland (1942-1945) where he made a series of sculptures of very small dimensions. On his return to Paris, he developed a practice of making portraits of his friends and a few favourite models. He tirelessly represented his closest and nearest, Annette, his wife since 1949 and Diego, his brother and assistant. Parallel to that, he moved away from portraits to search for the universal character of the human figure in works like *Man walking*, *Woman standing*, his cages, places.

Parallel to his sculptures, since before the war, he resumed a painting practice that places him among the most important figurative painters of his generation. He was also, from a young age, practising drawing assiduously, and as such was celebrated by his peers.

Alberto Giacometti died in January 1966 in the Hôpital de Coire, in Switzerland.
PETER LINDBERGH

Peter Lindbergh is one of the most influential photographers of our times. Born in 1944 in Leszno (which was then part of Germany) he spent his childhood in Duisburg (North-Rhineland-Westphalia). At the beginning of the 1960s, he worked as a window dresser in a department store of the region, which he left to enrol in Berlin’s Fine arts Academy.

Considered a pioneer in fashion photography, he created a new form of realism while redefining beauty standards with his timeless images. His humanist approach and idealisation of women sets him apart from other photographers: Lindbergh is above all else interested in the soul and personality of his subjects. At a time when one is used to retouching images excessively, he is convinced that the interest of a subject lies elsewhere than in her age, and, in that respect, he disrupts the norms of fashion photography.

In 1988, Lindbergh’s series showing still unknown models, dressed in white shirts, was immensely successful on the international scene and launched the career of that new generation of top models.

Since the end of the 1970s, Lindbergh has been working for the most prestigious brands and magazines, among them the American and Italian editions of Vogue, the American edition of Harper’s Bazaar, as well as the magazines Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, Wall Street Journal Magazine, Visionaire, Interview and W. In 2016, he photographed the 2017 edition of the Pirelli Calendar, being the only photographer to have accomplished that three times.

His work, collected by several museums, has been exhibited in the main international institutions like the Victoria & Albert Museum (London), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the MoMa PS1 (New York). He has had solo exhibitions in Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin), Bunkamura Museum of art (Tokyo) and Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts (Moscow). The exhibition A Different History of Fashion brought about by the Kunsthal Rotterdam in September 2016, was presented in Munich’s Kunsthalle as well as Turin’s Reggia di Venaria. In 2017, he took part in the exhibition Alberto Giacometti Beyond Bronze (Kunsthaus, Zurich).

Peter Lindbergh made various films and documentaries: Models, The Film (1991); Inner Voices (1999), winning the prize for best documentary at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in 2000; Pina Bausch, Der Fensterputzer (2001); Everywhere at once (2007) with the participation of Jeanne Moreau, presented at the Cannes Festival and the Tribeca Film Festival.

He shares his time between Paris, Arles and New York.
CATALOGUE


Alberto Giacometti / Peter Lindbergh
Saisir l’invisible

Editions Fondation Giacometti, Paris and Fage, Lyon
Bilingual French-English edition
112 pages
24 euros

Summary

Interview with Peter Lindbergh
Catherine Grenier

When the immaterial becomes visible
Serena Bucalo-Mussely

Lindbergh’s Invisible Objects
Emmanuelle de l’Ecotais
Interview with Peter Lindbergh
by Catherine Grenier

(...)
CG: In your work, I have the feeling that behind beauty, there’s always anxiety...
PL: I don’t know if it can be called anxiety. This year I made a calendar for Pirelli, and the idea was to take women actresses whom I’ve known very well for a long time, and to explain that for the project, I was going to photograph them as themselves, not playing a part. I told them, you come as you are, and we’re not going to add anything, or take anything away. For me the only reason to make a portrait is to develop a true relationship at that precise time, and to try capturing that. And of course it frightens people a bit, they feel invaded, they don’t know how much they want to give or not. Perhaps the anxiety comes from that.

CG: Do you take photographs of daily life, family snapshots?
PL: Yes, I take photographs on my iPhone of things that don’t matter, and it interests me a lot. When I work I’m very aware, I give much importance to details, and so it prevents me doing light things, accidental things. With iPhone, normally, you can’t do anything because of the quality, so I use it in relaxed moments, while my mind is on something else, and it makes for wonderful pictures. Incredible pictures, much freer. I don’t think beforehand, I take the picture and I look after. For two and a half years I kept all those images on my iPhone, and I downloaded them all in one go onto my computer. It took three hours. While it was downloading, I could see small images in the middle of the screen, and I was sitting in front of it, fascinated. Almost two years and a half of my life were passing before my eyes. One moment I’m walking in the Namibian desert and then suddenly I’m in New York, then elsewhere. Those images are magical! Now I have twenty thousand photos on my iPhone, I don’t get rid of anything.

CG: How did the project of taking photographs of Giacometti’s sculptures come about?
PL: The magazine Blau, which is the supplement to Die Welt, called me and said: we’d like an encounter between Giacometti and you. You’ll be able to photograph his sculptures as you want. It was fantastic, I was so excited by the idea. In the room, there was a table, and they covered it with a tarpaulin on which the sculptures were placed one at a time. I was very excited, I thought my heart was going to explode, it was truly an exceptional moment.

CG: The photographs are very staged, the sculptures are placed on a dark and creased material. Did you bring it with you?
PL: Yes, I’ve used the same material on other photos, it’s four metres by six and it can be folded. I’d never seen an ensemble of Giacometti’s sculptures before, generally we see only one figure at a time, and there I had a completely different feeling, it was really exhilarating to see how they communicate with one another. It really was a magnificent process.

CG: Why did you choose to mix bronzes and plasters – to create a contrast?
PL: No. German people like me have the feeling they should always respect a system. But when I saw the pieces, I thought: I’m not going to separate the bronzes from the others, I’m going to mix the materials and the periods to create a motion, an emotion. It’s like a jungle, a jungle of Giacometti’s works. No order, no principle, each sculpture is a moment in his life and there’s no need to put them in order. In a biography everything is in order, but the more one mixes, the more
it creates emotion. If I was asked: what are the five more beautiful days of your life?, that day would surely be among the first three.

**CG:** You made it so that when there are several sculptures, the eyes are drawn to one of them, either because it’s clearer, or because it’s half-hidden and intriguing...

**PL:** It’s done automatically. It’s wonderful that a detail is put forward, a head that catches that particular light, or to complete the image with a horizontal, a vertical; but all that is unconscious. The composition is fabulous because the objects are fabulous.

**CG:** Were you aware that a melancholy feeling emanates from them?

**PL:** Yes, always. For me, melancholy is one of the most attractive feelings. Sometimes, in interviews, people say: Mr Lindbergh, your women are all sad, they never laugh. I reply that it’s not because they don’t laugh that they are sad. I think this feeling of melancholy gives such potential for the act of seeing. We can join in more easily; I find a melancholic face more expressive than a face that’s laughing. Laughing is one expression, we can’t imagine anything else. But with a melancholic stare, the image of a woman who’s looking at the camera in a melancholic way, we can see many things, we can travel. These images are melancholic, yes, but joyful too.

**CG:** You felt an affinity with Giacometti’s universe then?

**PL:** Totally, but I was not even aware to what degree. I’ve always loved him – how can one not love him – but now...! The tiny sculptures made during the war, the post-war years, and all the textures, they’re marvellous! And with photography, the prints make it possible to reveal other things. We can emphasize the spectacular aspect of the bronze, or we can remain very discrete. We discover more things through photography, for when we just see the work exhibited, we cannot examine the details, we don’t see all the textures.

**CG:** Now that you’ve come very close to these works, how would you describe Giacometti’s oeuvre, its atmosphere?

**PL:** What one experiences, I think, is a very strong line that goes through all his oeuvre. We can follow the thoughts of that person in his studio, an artist who must resolve a problem, and concentrates on it instead of doing huge pieces like other artists. For example, Richard Serra, who’s an artist I adore, makes such monumental works. But when I see Giacometti’s sculptures, it speaks of other things altogether, much deeper things. It’s not the desire to make big gestures, here’s a man who’s talking to himself, and I find that beautiful. That’s what I felt about Giacometti, and I was very happy when I saw the photographic results, because I had the feeling that they convey that. He reinvents himself all the time, in each new sculpture, it’s at the same time very similar and so very different. And I feel deeply the fact that everything he creates is completely connected to him; for me that’s the greatest quality that exists in an artist.
When the immaterial becomes visible
by Serena Bucalo-Mussely

Fifty years separate Alberto Giacometti’s oeuvre from Peter Lindbergh’s, and their modes of expression are on the surface very different. Looking at their respective works enables, however, one to perceive much common ground, revealing, above all else, a similar interest for creation at the service of truth.

Confused by the complexity of the world around him, Alberto Giacometti conceived his art practice as a way to understand it. As he wrote several times, the point was to “copy in order to see better”¹. His work was a tool helping him to lay bare, from a realistic representation of the world, the profound soul of men and things, a truth he tried to bring to light by pursuing it with modelling in sculpture and the superimposition of features in painting and drawing.

Peter Lindbergh uses photography in the same manner, as a means to capture life. Revolutionizing the classic way to represent the model, his lens lays bare the personality of the fashion models and celebrities who pose for him.

The expression of human existence which, each in their own way, Giacometti and Lindbergh propose, entails that the artist gets involved. That’s why the works of both artists are infused with interactions between the artist and his model that have happened for the sculptor in his studio and for the photographer in his.

From a young age, when he was still studying at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, Giacometti used to find it difficult to work from a model with whom he was not familiar, always feeling like something was eluding him. Thus, from 1935, he devoted himself to an individual search centred on his work in the studio, forging links with his model in a more intense and intimate relationship. To his dealer Pierre Matisse he wrote later: “It was no longer a question of presenting a figure externally similar, but of living and only creating what had affected me or what I desired”².

Throughout his career, Giacometti held the conviction that the work of art is inseparable from the observation and the understanding of the model. Isaku Yanaihara and Jean Genet³, among many, talked about the sittings as real moments of exchange with the artist, with whom they embarked on long discussions focused, most of the time, on the most simple aspects of life, men, the world, daily life in general. And it is that life one finds in Giacometti’s portraits, in those heads of men and women with a fixed gaze, each of them telling their own story.

Lindbergh’s photographs also seem to want to give shape to the immaterial. As soon as he started to work in fashion, the photographer forbade himself from doing an exclusively physical representation of his models, and chose instead to capture the models in natural attitudes that helped him to attain a more intimate identity. Looking at his pictures, one feels the photographer has been in close contact with his models. He goes beyond the simple physical representation and aspires to penetrate their personality. His works reveal the hidden side of his subjects, their sensitivity, their strength and vulnerability. For even though Lindbergh’s men and women are proud individuals whose spare aspect manifests a great strength, their gaze, as in Giacometti’s, betrays a deep-seated fragility. “A portrait artist penetrates as deep as the intimacy of his model; none of his emotions (joy, anger, sadness) and secret thoughts can escape him”⁴, Yanaihara said, touched by Giacometti’s sharpness. His comment could easily be applied to Lindbergh’s photographs.
An access door to the interpretation of the model’s personality and the reflection of the artist himself, the gaze occupies a fundamental place in the representation of reality. In their portraits, Giacometti and Lindbergh often focus on that detail to carry out their research around the human being. In 1962, Giacometti said: “I have the impression that if I succeeded in copying a little bit — approximately — an eye, I would have the entire head. [...] Perhaps the skill consists in locating the pupil, a ‘detail’ [...] in order to comprehend the whole thing.”

Obessed with representing the head as much in sculpture as in painting and drawing, the artist started from the eyes in order to represent the whole, tracing first the orbits, then the pupils and, finally, the rest of the face. It is the gaze that makes a head look alive, and distinguishes it from a skull. Facing the artist’s portraits, Jean-Paul Sartre described the “centripetal force” that pushes the spectator’s gaze to the centre of the figure, always situated at eye level. In his photographs, Lindbergh also catches that vital energy situated in the eyes, the gaze being the highest point at which emotions condense. In the foreground, among other heads or through a mask, the eyes of his models fix the photographer’s lens, forming the focal point of the representation.

(...) 

3. The Japanese philosopher Isaku Yanaihara posed between 1956 and 1961 for many portraits (sculpture, painting and drawing). The writer Jean Genet was Giacometti’s model between 1954 and 1958. Three painted portraits and two series of drawings were made.
INSTITUT GIACOMETTI

The Institut Giacometti is a new permanent place devoted to exhibitions and to research in art history and pedagogy. Chaired by Catherine Grenier, the director of the Fondation Giacometti since 2014, it is a museum on a human scale, enabling the visitor to get close to the works. The Institut Giacometti 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 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. Its ambition 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 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 Schoelcher
75014 Paris

Visits by on-line reservation only at:
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Daily guided visits for individuals and on request for groups

#GiacomettiLindbergh
FONDATION GIACOMETTI, PARIS

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Aurélie Adringa
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EXHIBITION

Curator
Serena Bucalo-Mussely

Scenography
Eric Morin
INSTITUT GIACOMETTI PROGRAMME
2019

Alberto Giacometti -
Teresa Hubbard / Alexander Birchler
FLORA
Curator: Christian Alandete
5 April – 9 June 2019

Alberto Giacometti
HISTOIRE DE CORPS
Curator: Catherine Grenier
4 July – 27 October 2019
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Alberto Giacometti
*Tall thin head*, 1954
Painted plaster
65,5 x 39 x 25 cm
Fondation Giacometti, Paris

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(Fondation Giacometti, Paris + ADAGP, Paris) 2019

Peter Lindbergh
*Alberto Giacometti
Head on a base (called Head without a skull) and other sculptures*, Paris, 2017

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**Alberto Giacometti**
*Crouching Woman*, 1959-1960
Ballpointpen
37 x 26,8 cm
Fondation Giacometti, Paris

© Succession Alberto Giacometti
(Fondation Giacometti, Paris + ADAGP, Paris) 2019

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**Peter Lindbergh**
*Karen Elson*, Los Angeles, 1997
© Peter Lindbergh (Courtesy Peter Lindbergh, Paris)

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**Peter Lindbergh**
*Alberto Giacometti’s studio, Paris, 2018*

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Peter Lindbergh
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Alberto Giacometti
Heads, after 1950
Bellpoint pen
15.3 x 22 cm
Fondation Giacometti, Paris

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Peter Lindbergh
Alberto Giacometti
Standing woman (Model I), Paris, 2017

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*Busts and figurines of Annette*,  
*Paris, 2017*  
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| Alberto Giacometti  
*Bust of Annette IV*, 1962  
Plaster  
59.6 x 25 x 23 cm  
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| Peter Lindbergh, Paris, 2016  
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