



Giacometti : pure presence

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Mr. Paul Moorhouse

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192 pages

Revue de presse

Extraordinary paintings and sculptures. In each is a profoundly moving connection between one person and another; this show captures that unique bond beautifully. --Evening Standard, 13 October

In Giacometti's greatest art, the human essence primitive, unadorned, and somehow still vital after the most violent years in human history becomes a totemic image of some final desperate hope: a slender chance...

Giacometti gets people just right, as they are, without pretence. Out of that honesty he created the most truly universal art of the past 75 years. This meeting with Giacometti the man makes his achievement all the more moving. --The Guardian 13 October

This exhibition succeeds triumphantly in immersing us in Giacometti's compulsive world view --Daily Telegraph 14 October Présentation de l'éditeur

Since his death at the age of sixty-four in 1966, Alberto Giacometti has become recognised internationally as one of the most important artists of the twentieth century and sales of his sculptures now achieve record-breaking prices. Belonging to no particular artistic movement, he developed through cubist and surrealist phases and later attained a mature, individual idiom whose preoccupation with the depiction of a human presence in an enveloping space may be seen in relation to contemporary existentialist concerns with defining the place and purpose of man in a godless universe. Taking its title from Jean-Paul Sartre, who described Giacometti's endeavour to give sensible expression to pure presence, the book explores the artist's work in relation to existentialist ideas. Spanning painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking, Giacometti's oeuvre ranges from idiosyncratic surrealist objects to intensely observed images of the human figure, with images of particular individuals at the centre. This book, like the exhibition it accompanies, looks at the various phases of the artist's career and explores in detail his depiction of his main sitters, including his mother; Diego his brother; his wife Annette; Jean Genet the playwright; Caroline, a prostitute; and his friends Yanaihara and Lotar. Early drawings, paintings and sculptures of members of his family and his own image demonstrate Giacometti's awareness of post-impressionist and divisionist styles. After moving to Paris in 1922, until the late 1930s he made progressively abstracted images of a range of sitters. From 1946 Giacometti resumed painting and depicting an individual human presence became central to his work. After 1954, when he began making sculpture from life, increasingly his portraits evolved as the outcome of an ongoing dialogue between painting and sculpture. Giacometti subjected the human image to a radical process of interrogation and transformation in which the exploration and representation of flesh, presence, distance and space are vital, interacting elements. As a result, a human presence seems poised between being and non-being, providing the basis for Giacometti's reputation as one of the most innovative artists of the last century.

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