

HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

## Facing Infinity. Alberto Giacometti & Pablo Picasso

Curated by Dr. Dieter Buchhart

Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Bahnhofstrasse 1  
9 June – 27 August 2022



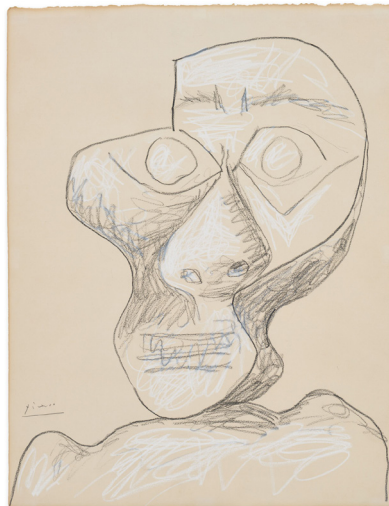
This June, coinciding with Zurich Art Weekend and Art Basel, Hauser & Wirth Zurich, Bahnhofstrasse 1 presents 'Facing Infinity. Alberto Giacometti & Pablo Picasso', an exhibition of critical late works by two of the most important artists of the 20th Century. Bringing together a selection of masterpieces from international collections, this exhibition displays new insights into Picasso and Giacometti's questioning of existence, as well as their endless search for the relationship between figure and space. This is the second collaboration between Hauser & Wirth and internationally renowned curator and expert of modern and contemporary art Dr. Dieter Buchhart, who curated the exhibition 'Schwitters Miró Arp' at Hauser & Wirth in 2016. He states: "Facing Infinity. Alberto Giacometti & Pablo Picasso" brings a focused insight into their dazzling last years, revealing fascinating connections and contrasts.'

When Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) moved to Paris in 1922 as a 20-year-old, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) had already become the predominant artistic presence in France. Picasso, cubism's radical pioneer, quickly turned into a role model for the young Swiss artist Giacometti, who would soon become an integral part of the Parisian art scene himself. After observing Picasso from afar, Giacometti finally met him in person in 1931. A year later, Picasso was amongst the first visitors of Giacometti's inaugural solo show in Paris. These initial interactions quickly developed into a deep artistic and intellectual friendship. From 1930 to the early 1950s, Picasso and Giacometti saw each other regularly, and in 1940 and 1941 almost daily. The two artists eventually had a falling out in the early 1950s and their intense artistic exchange ended abruptly. Yet, it is precisely in their late oeuvres that multi-layered connections between the two artists emerge.

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In the face of their advanced age, Giacometti and Picasso's artistic avenues continued to expand: their works became an acute meditation on creativity, propelled by a denial of aging and mortality – an attempt to halt the unstoppable. In Picasso's late work, the aim to exorcise death becomes latent through the portrayal of emotions and sensual motifs. Working on the canvas in a sketch-like technique, the artist would often leave the canvas with colored clots, cracked areas and visual pentimenti, as seen in 'Tête de femme (Head of a Woman)' (30 June 1971) and 'Nu couché (Reclining Nude)' (9 October 1968). Picasso wrote, 'A painter never finishes. There's never a moment when you can say, 'I've worked well and tomorrow is Sunday.' As soon as you stop, it's because you've started again. You can put a picture aside and say you won't touch it again. But you can never write THE END.' The end – whether in his work or in death – is not an option for Picasso and this is reflected in the work of his last years.



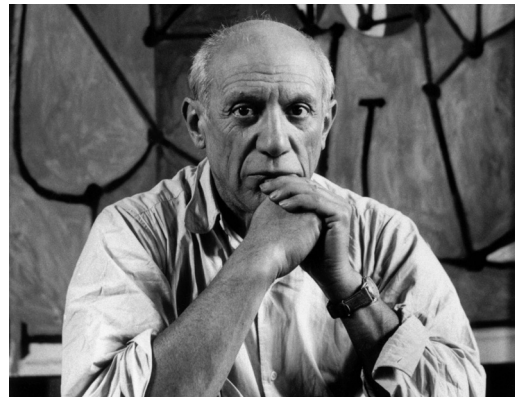
Giacometti's restless inquiries linger on the void between forms, the indivisibility of the human being and the question of proximity and distance. In his late work, such as 'Tête noire (Dark Head)' (1957-1962), Giacometti's subject matter and color palette remained consistent: brown, grey, white and black. A painted frame surrounds each figure in which edges become blurred and undefined, and contours of the body parts vanish, transforming the figures into a dark mass. With these paintings, Giacometti investigated how to reduce the figure as far as possible while infusing it with power and significance. Jean-Paul Sartre described Giacometti's works as floating 'between being and nothingness, no transition is conceivable at all.'

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Diego Giacometti, Giacometti's brother, was one of his most frequent models, appearing in paintings and sculptures throughout his entire oeuvre. In 'Buste d'homme (Bust of Man)' (1951), Giacometti captured his brother's gaze with unique intensity, for he regarded the eyes as the expression of life. Diego's upper body is nearly indistinguishable from the background, while his head, facing the viewer, is more detailed and striking. Held in a state of suspension, the colors of Diego's countenance are applied densely using innumerable, endlessly repeated brushstrokes, contrasting to the almost translucent space around him. 'I certainly paint [...] to better defend myself, to better attack, to hang on, to advance as much as possible on all levels, in all directions, to defend myself against hunger, against the cold, against death [...]'.

Despite their different approaches in style and technique, the exhibition underlines how both artists experimented with pared-back representations of the face and figure. Picasso's self-portrait from 2 July 1972, 'Tête (Head)', is one of the most moving pieces of his late career. The painter's skull-like visage stares at its viewers, drawing their attention to the wide-set eyes. The face and shoulders are outlined with rapid but precise shading and highlights, demonstrating Picasso's unique capacity to record profound thoughts with spontaneous gestures. 'Tête (Head)' is stripped back to its essentials in both content and form, conveying a dramatic feeling of urgency in the face of uncertainty.

As Dr. Dieter Buchhart explains 'by bringing together these late works, 'Facing Infinity. Alberto Giacometti & Pablo Picasso' explores an often-overlooked chapter of modern art history, lifting the veil on two remarkable and profoundly different artists who attracted and amazed each other.'



### Hauser & Wirth at Zurich Art Weekend

Coinciding with this exhibition, Hauser & Wirth will present two solo exhibitions at its Limmatstrasse location from 10 June to 20 August: 'Jack Whitten,' featuring rarely exhibited paintings by American abstractionist Jack Whitten from the late 1960s, and 'Frank Bowling. Penumbral Light', displaying recent abstract paintings made by Bowling mostly during the London lockdown in 2020. 'About, by or of Marcel Duchamp', an exhibition by fluid editions, will be on view at Hauser & Wirth Publishers Headquarters from 6 May to 2 July. This will illuminate the journey to resurrect the critically acclaimed first monograph and catalogue raisonné of legendary artist Marcel Duchamp, released by Hauser & Wirth Publishers last November. For the 20th anniversary of Art in the Park, Hauser & Wirth will present four sculptures by the celebrated French artist Camille Henrot, in partnership with the Baur au Lac and Gigi Kracht, founder of Art in the Park, from 13 June to 17 July.

### For additional information, please contact:

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**Hauser & Wirth Zurich,  
Bahnhofstrasse 1**

Bahnhofstrasse 1  
8001 Zürich

**Opening hours:**

Tue – Fri 10 am – 6 pm  
Sat 11 am – 5 pm

**[www.hauserwirth.com](http://www.hauserwirth.com)**

**Caption and courtesy information:**

Alberto Giacometti  
Buste d'homme (Bust of Man)  
1951  
Oil on canvas  
46.2 x 38 cm / 18 1/4 x 15 in  
Courtesy of Private Collection. © Succession  
Alberto Giacometti / 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich

Pablo Picasso  
Tête de femme (Head of a Woman)  
30 June 1971  
Oil on canvas  
81 x 65 cm / 31 7/8 x 25 5/8 in  
Courtesy of Private Collection. © Succession  
Picasso / 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich  
Photo: Jon Etter

Alberto Giacometti  
Tête noire (Dark Head)  
1957-1962  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 65 cm / 39 3/8 x 25 5/8 in  
Private Collection. Courtesy of Kamel Mennour,  
Paris. © Succession Alberto Giacometti / 2022,  
ProLitteris, Zurich  
Photo: Archives Kamel Mennour

Pablo Picasso  
Nu couché (Reclining Nude)  
9 October 1968  
Oil on canvas  
114 x 162 cm / 44 7/8 x 63 3/4 in  
Courtesy of Private Collection. © Succession  
Picasso / 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich  
Photo: Jon Etter

Alberto Giacometti  
Buste d'homme (Bust of Man)  
1957  
Oil on canvas  
40.5 x 33 cm / 16 x 13 in  
Courtesy of Sammlung Klewan. © Succession  
Alberto Giacometti / 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich

Pablo Picasso  
Tête (Head)  
2 July 1972  
Pencil and chalk on paper  
65.7 x 50.5 cm / 25 7/8 x 19 7/8 in  
Courtesy of Private Collection. © Succession  
Picasso / 2022, ProLitteris, Zurich  
Photo: Jon Etter

"Alberto Giacometti, XXXI Esposizione  
Internazionale Biennale d'Arte", Venezia, 1962  
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ProLitteris, Zurich

FRANCE. Paris. Rue des Grands Augustins.  
Pablo PICASSO at his studio in front of "La  
Cuisine". 1948  
Photo: Herbert List © Herbert List / Magnum  
Photos  
© Succession Picasso / 2022 ProLitteris, Zurich