

RUI CHAFES AND ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

GRIS, VIDE, CRIS

3 October - 16 December 2018



Rui Chafes, *Avec rien*, 2018, fer, 130 x 25 x 23 cm.
Courtoisie de l'artiste. Photo: Alcino Gonçalves



Alberto Giacometti, *Toute petite figurine*, 1937-1939, plâtre,
4,50 x 3,80 cm, coll. Fondation Giacometti, Paris © Succession
Alberto Giacometti (Fondation Giacometti, Paris + ADAGP)
[2018]

« Tout l'art du passé, de toutes les époques, de toutes les civilisations, surgit devant moi, tout est simultané comme si l'espace prenait la place du temps. »

This reflection from Alberto Giacometti is the starting point for the encounter between this artist and contemporary sculptor Rui Chafes, a challenge issued by Helena de Freitas, curator at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The project represents an exploration of the lexicon common to both artists: timelessness, dematerialisation and the void. The exhibition will feature fifteen works by Alberto Giacometti, including eleven sculptures and four drawings. All of the sculptures by Rui Chafes, with the exception of a piece from 2015, have been specially created for this project.

The exhibition will be held at the French Delegation of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 3rd October, with support from the Fondation Giacometti in Paris.

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RUI CHAFES

Rui Chafes was born in 1966 in Lisbon, where he currently lives and works. In 1989, he graduated in sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Lisbon. From 1990 to 1992, he studied with Gerhard Merz at the Kunstakademie Dusseldorf in Germany. During his stay, he translated the Novalis *Fragments* from German into Portuguese.

Rui Chafes lays claim to a timeless land and positions himself close to his former masters, including Tilman Riemenschneider, Jacopo della Quercia, Bernini, Novalis and Otto Runge, with whom his complicity is more elective than generational. His sculptures are almost always made from iron, painted black or anthracite, and seek the empty spaces of non-objects.

He has exhibited his work regularly since the 1980s, and began his international career very early on, representing Portugal at the Venice Biennale (in 1995 with José Pedro Croft and Pedro Cabrita Reis) and at the São Paulo Biennial (in 2004, in a project with Vera Mantero). Several of his sculptures can now be found in public spaces, both in Portugal and abroad, and in public collections such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum – Modern Collection, the Serralves Foundation and the Centre Pompidou. In 2004, he was awarded the Robert-Jacobsen Sculpture Award from the Würth Foundation in Germany, as well as the Pessoa Prize in Portugal in 2015.

Part of his time is dedicated to writing, translating and editing monographs to accompany his sculptural work.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

Born in 1901 in Stampa, Switzerland, Alberto Giacometti is the son of Giovanni Giacometti, a renowned Post-Impressionist painter. He was introduced to art in his father's studio, where he created his first artworks aged 14: a still life of apples using oil paints 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 was taught by sculptor Antoine Bourdelle. During this period, he learned the life drawing technique and took an interest in avant-garde compositions, especially Post-Cubist. In 1929, he began a series of flat women, whose novelty brought him attention from the Surrealist artistic community. In 1931, Giacometti joined André Breton's Surrealist movement. Surrealist themes are significant in his creative work: love and death, a dreamlike vision, objects with symbolic meaning. During this era, he created numerous utilitarian objects for the avant-garde decorator Jean-Michel Frank: lamps, vases, wall lights, etc. From 1935, he distanced himself from the Surrealist group and focused his attention on the question of the human head, which was a central theme of investigation throughout his life.

After spending the wartime years in Switzerland, he resumed his research on the human form upon returning to Paris. His favourite models were those close to him: Annette, his wife since 1949, and Diego, his brother and assistant. Working from life, he aimed to reproduce the models as he saw them, with their ever-changing characteristics. At other times, his figures became anonymous, positioned on plinths which isolated them from the ground, or contained within 'cages' sketching out a virtual space. In 1958, he was invited to submit a project for the square at Chase Manhattan Bank in New York. He chose to represent the three motifs which had haunted his work since 1948 in large size: a female figure standing, a man walking and a monumental head. The monument was never actually erected in New York, but Giacometti presented an initial version of the ensemble in bronze at the 1962 Venice Biennale, receiving the Grand Prize for sculpture. Following the success of his retrospectives in Zurich, Basel, London and New York, Alberto Giacometti, weakened by cancer, passed away in January 1966 at Coire Hospital in Switzerland. (Giacometti Foundation, Paris)

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