

LE CLAIRE

SEIT 1982

KUNST



ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

1901 Borgonovo - Chur 1966

Annette dans l'atelier

Black crayon on paper.

Signed and dated in pencil lower right: *Alberto Giacometti 1951*.

384 x 557 mm

PROVENANCE: Ruth and Hermann Vollmer, New York (acquired in the 1950s) – Susanne and John Hulme, Watford (by descent from the above in 1982) - Thence by descent

EXHIBITIONS: *Alberto Giacometti*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, June–October 1965, p. 118, no. 119 – This exhibition later travelled to the Art Institute of Chicago, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

LITERATURE: Christian Klemm et al., *Alberto Giacometti*, exhib. cat., The Museum of Modern Art, New York, June–October 1965, p. 118, no. 119

Alberto Giacometti's central preoccupation with the theme of his studio in Paris goes back to 1932. In that year he made two detailed drawings of the studio and these are fully described in the literature. To Giacometti, they had quasi-documentary value in that they both depict a large number of his sculptures in considerable detail.¹ The studio was to provide him with a constant source of artistic and intellectual stimulus, although over the years, he was to modify the importance of interiors and how he saw them.

Annette Arm, Giacometti's future wife, first encountered Giacometti in 1943 while he was living in Switzerland – a refugee from occupied France. With the end of the war she decided to leave the parochialism of Calvinistic Geneva for the freer, more intellectually appealing climate of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. She arrived in Paris in the summer of 1946 to join the prickly father figure she idolized and moved into a room adjoining the two workshops Giacometti occupied with Diego, his brother and assistant. Although living conditions were grim she determinedly shared the privations of life with the brothers, who amongst other things were accustomed to working at all times of the day and night.² Annette married Alberto in 1949 and came to fill a unique place in his life. She was the only woman he gave a measure of the affection that tied him to his mother. She was to be his muse and one of his principal models, sitting for sculptures, paintings and drawings. He depicted her in a wide variety of head-and-shoulders portraits and busts, and as a half or full-length figure, seated or standing, often in a studio setting.

¹ Executed in pencil, both are signed and dated 1932. Kunstmuseum, Basel, Department of Prints and Drawings, inv. nos. 1971.416 and 1972.12.

² Michael Peppiatt, *in giacometti's studio*, New Haven and London, 2010, pp. 113-4.

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The year 1950 marked a turning point in Giacometti's work,³ as the two important sculptures of 1950 – *Chariot* and *Figurine entre deux maisons* – demonstrate. In 1951, the date of the present drawing, he also began to change his focus to lithography. A large lithograph – like the present drawing, in horizontal format – titled '*Man Walking*' in the Studio [Fig. 1] appeared in a special edition of *Derrière le Miroir* published to accompany an exhibition at Galerie Maeght in 1951.⁴ The year 1951 can be safely identified as a year of transition marking the emergence of Giacometti as a painter and printmaker. This focus on lithography represents the fusion of his mature sculptural technique with his newly discovered mastery of painting. He also produced an important body of large-format drawings – works of art in their own right – and innumerable sketches. For Giacometti, drawing remained paramount – in sculpture, in painting and in lithograph. Drawing was his way of seeing, not imitating reality but exploring the structure of mass and matter from a given distance, and by truthfully conveying his own subjective perception, attempting to create a new reality.

In the present drawing Giacometti depicts the small, drab room adjoining his Paris studio which served as the bedroom [Fig. 2].⁵ The sheet may possibly have been executed in preparation for a lithograph. *Space does not exist, it has to be created*, he wrote in 1949⁶ and: *The sculpture rests in a surrounding emptiness. Space is excavated to construct the object, and the object itself then creates a space.*⁷ The nude figure of Annette seated on the bed seems distanced and enclosed in its own private space.⁸ Giacometti consciously avoids any feeling of intimacy. Space envelops the figure, isolating it in a nimbus of intangibility. The room is populated with furniture and everyday artists' utensils. It occupies something of a space in its own right around the seated figure of Annette.

We would like to thank Mathilde Lecuyer, Fondation Giacometti, Paris, and Christian Klemm, Fondation Alberto Giacometti, Zurich, for their help in preparing this entry.

³ Yves Bonnefoy, *Alberto Giacometti – A Biography of his Work*, trans. Jean Stewart, Paris 1991, p. 356.

⁴ *Derrière le Miroir*, 39-40, June-July 1951, pp. 3-4; see Herbert C. Lust, *Alberto Giacometti – The Complete Graphics*, San Francisco 1991, p. 73, no. 94.

⁵ *The room, his and Annette's room, has a lovely red tiled floor. It used to be a solid earth floor. The rain came in. He very reluctantly agreed to the tiling, the most attractive but most modest tiling there is. He told me he would never live anywhere else than in this studio and this room. If it were possible he would like it to be even more humble.* Jean Genet, *Alberto Giacometti*, Zurich 2004, p. 32 (Swiss edition of Genet's essay, originally published as *L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti*, L'Arbalète, Décines, (Lyon) 1958).

⁶ Alberto Giacometti, *Notizen*, in *Gestern Flugsand*, Mary Lisa Palmer and François Chaussende (eds.), Zurich 2006, p. 197.

⁷ *Gespräch. Alberto Giacometti mit André Parinaud*, in exhib. cat., Galerie Beyeler, Basel 1964, no page.

⁸ Christian Klemm, *Alberto Giacometti*, in exhib. cat., Kunsthau Zürich and The Museum of Modern Art, New York 2001, p. 150.

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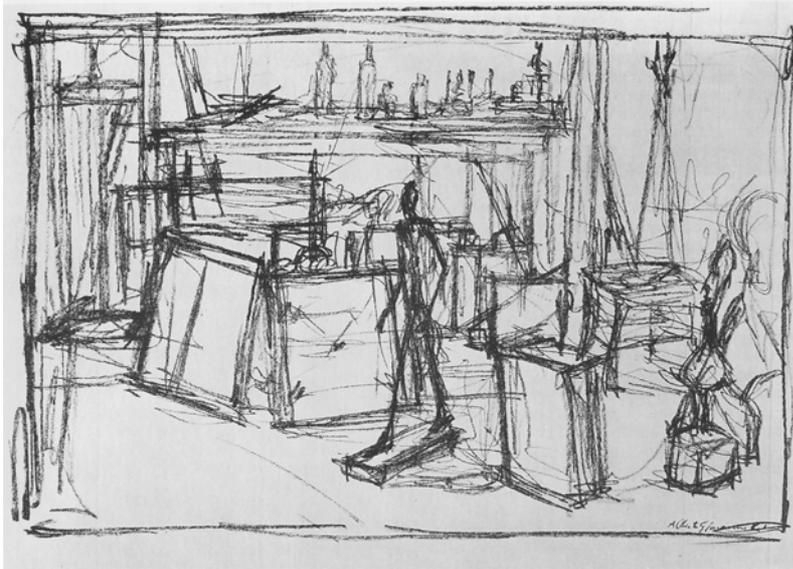


Fig. 1: 'Man Walking' in the Studio, lithograph, 550 x 389 mm. 1951



Fig. 2: Sabine Weiss, *The Bedroom Adjacent to Alberto Giacometti's Studio at 46, rue Hippolyte-Maindron, Paris, 1954*