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ERNST SCHEIDEGGER/FOUNDATION ERNST SCHEIDEGGER-ARCHIVE AND GIACOMETTI ESTATE, 2015

Giacometti in his studio in Paris in 1958 and, below, outside the atelier in 1956. The studio will be recreated exactly as the artist left it as part of the new Institut Giacometti, a research center and exhibition space that will open to the public late next year.

Reviving Giacometti's legacy

PARIS

Foundation prepares to emerge from decades of strife and lawsuits

BY FARAH NAYERI

For much of his life, the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966) lived and worked out of a cramped and cluttered atelier in Paris's 14th Arrondissement, where paint-stained surfaces were covered with busts and figurines and walls were sketched and scrawled over. The artist toiled day and night in this Spartan setting, pausing for meals with plaster still stuck in his hair.

That 25-square-meter studio will be recreated exactly as he left it as part of the new Institut Giacometti, a research center and exhibition space that will open to the public late next year in the same arrondissement, according to Catherine Grenier, the director of the Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti. The organization has not announced the news publicly and will release further details about the project this year. The space will be an outpost of the foundation, which manages most of the estate and owns the world's largest collection of the artist's works.

Since its creation in 2003, the foundation has been mired in disputes with rival bodies and Giacometti family members over the right to represent the artist and make posthumous casts of his work. Now Ms. Grenier, a former deputy director of the Pompidou Center, aims to open it up to the world and start a more peaceful chapter. "When I got here a year ago," Ms. Grenier said in an interview, "this foundation was not at all well known, for one essential reason: It was closed to the public. My priority is to make its activities and its extraordinary collection accessible."

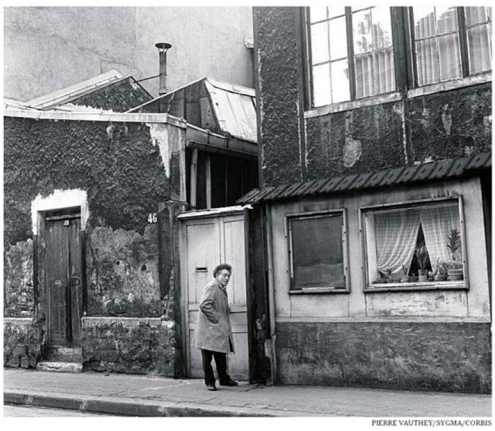
The foundation has other ambitions as well: It is publishing the first catalogue raisonné of the artist's work, and lending more extensively to Giacometti exhibitions worldwide from its collection of about 250 sculptures, more than 90 paintings, and thousands of drawings and photographs, Ms. Grenier said. The largest will be a retrospective at Tate Modern in London in 2017, Ms. Grenier said, to which the foundation will be the biggest lender. (Tate confirmed the exhibition but not the year.)

The past few decades have been tumultuous for the estate. Individuals and institutions representing it have clashed in and out of court, costing the estate money and frustrating further scholarship of the artist's work. That hasn't stopped Giacometti's bronzes from earning huge sums at auction. "Chariot" (1950) sold in November for $101 million at Sotheby's New York, and "Walking Man I" (1960) fetched $104.3 million in 2010, then a record for any artwork sold at auction. And Christie's said on Tuesday that it would auction a 1947 bronze sculpture "L'homme au doigt (Pointing Man)" next month for an estimated value of as high as $130 million.

Giacometti's death at 64 — with no will or succession plans — set his widow, Annette, on a crusade to safeguard his legacy. Sabine Weiss, a photographer friend of the couple, said that when he died, his widow asked her to photograph "everything." "I took pictures of whatever we could find, in the atelier, at the homes of Paris collectors," Ms. Weiss said, adding that she also photographed his works in museums and collections in Switzerland and Spain.

Annette Giacometti decided to bequeath everything she owned to a foundation and bought stately Left Bank headquarters near the Odéon Theater in 1986, awaiting government authorization. "Things dragged on and on, so Annette said let's set up an association in the meantime," said Ms. Weiss, who was later the association's president, and is no longer involved in its affairs. (Art foundations were harder to set up than associations, requiring approval from the Culture and Interior ministries.)

When the Fondation Giacometti was finally born in 2003 — a decade after Annette Giacometti's death — it refused to acknowledge the association, which was at that time run by her former secretary, Mary Lisa Palmer, a Giacometti expert. The two entities operated in parallel, and wrangled in court. In 2013, the foundation's then-director, Véronique Wiesinger, lost a separate lawsuit she had filed to compel the other representatives of the estate — Swiss family members and the Alberto Giacometti Stiftung in Zurich — to allow her to cast new bronzes without their prior consent.



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Today, the foundation is changing direction, thanks to Ms. Grenier and a new president of the board — Olivier Le Grand — who was appointed in 2011. The association has been dissolved, allowing the foundation to move into the historic Left Bank premises the association had occupied, and most lawsuits (except those involving Giacometti fakes) have been abandoned.

In addition to the Tate exhibition, a show of Giacometti portraits is planned at the National Portrait Gallery in London this year. Programmed next year — the 50th anniversary of Giacometti's death — are a Picasso-Giacometti show at the Musée Picasso here and an exhibition at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, founded by the billionaire collector Budi Tek, which will consist exclusively of foundation loans.

The new 350-square-meter institute, with the artist's studio at its heart, is the foundation's flagship project. Giacometti moved to 46 rue Hippolyte Maindron in Paris in 1926, when he was 25. Except for the three war years he spent in his native Switzerland, he lived there for four decades. Peeking over the gates today, you can still see an atelier with a mezzanine and a large bay window overlooking an old courtyard.

Visitors to the institute will (through a protective glass pane) see the mythical studio as it was at the artist's death in January 1966: a bed, surrounded by bronzes, plasters and abandoned fragments; his desk, covered with paintbrushes and dozens of little turpentine bottles; his easel and sculpture stands; and the works that death interrupted — tiny clay and plaster portraits, mainly of the Surrealist photographer Eli Lotar and of the sculptor's brother Diego.

"We don't have the money to open a museum," Ms. Grenier said. "We'd like to show the public what we hold in our reserves: absolutely everything that was in the atelier at the time of Giacometti's death." The director said that financing the foundation as a whole is a challenge, because its undisclosed endowment is not big enough to cover costs. Philanthropists are starting to step in. Mr. Tek, the billionaire collector, is backing the institute's research program, and the French construction company Emerige is sponsoring the opening of the institute itself. Also planned is a global circle of regular supporters, Ms. Grenier added, hopefully with a strong American com-

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GIACOMETTI, FROM PAGE 10

ponent, since among Giacometti's earliest buyers were the Museum of Modern Art and a few collectors in New York.

The foundation makes one or two sales a year — via the Gagosian Gallery and the Galerie Kamel Mennour in Paris — of posthumous bronze casts commissioned by Annette Giacometti (with other estate representatives' consent) to ensure its longevity, Ms. Grenier said, adding that few such bronzes were left and no additional ones were planned. Rather than cover the foundation's running costs, Ms. Grenier said, proceeds from such sales should help pay for original works to add to the collection — like the 1929 bronze "Homme (Apollon)" purchased for 782,500 pounds, around $1.19 million, from Christie's London in February. It was the first such purchase by Ms. Grenier.

The foundation's Paris dealer, Mr. Mennour, said Ms. Grenier was highly reluctant to part with artworks, and described her as "a kind of guardian of the temple."

To avoid the mudslinging that bedeviled Giacometti's succession, Ms. Grenier said she hoped artists from now on would do more forward planning. "If we want artists and their works to be preserved in perpetuity, their succession has to be organized, preferably before their death," she said. "They are the only ones who can do it."