

GAGOSIAN

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**Peter Lindbergh's Haunting Photos of Giacometti's Sculptures**  
*As his new exhibition opens at the Gagosian, the legendary image-maker talks to AnOther about the obsessive genius of Alberto Giacometti*

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*Alberto Giacometti, Group Of Nine, Zurich, 2016, 2016)*

The marriage of legendary photographer Peter Lindbergh's lens with with the work of iconic artist Alberto Giacometti in *Substance And Shadow* at the Gagosian in London sheds new light on one of the most important artists of the 20th century, throwing inimitable genius into sharp relief. The images that Lindbergh presents to us in the show create an intimate new perspective on Giacometti, via a deployment of light that seems almost to breathe life into and animate the sculptures. There is an overarching sense that these images are a searching and psychological excavation of the man himself – a portrait of the soul of the artist.

The show concentrates very much on Lindbergh's renditions of the post-war sculptures of Giacometti, although it also gives us a sense of his evolution through haunting images of works from earlier periods. We spoke to Lindbergh at the opening to find out how a photographer famous for shooting some of the most iconic fashion imagery of our era approached these inanimate, roughly hewn sculptures by one of the most profoundly influential artists in history.

### **On the process of becoming Giacometti...**

“I was really surprised, when I learned more about Giacometti, by just how long it took him to actually become Giacometti, because if you see the sculptures he made before the war they have nothing to do with the work he made after the war. It’s as though before the war he was always searching. When you watch films of him working you can see he was obsessive, and it is said that he had always wanted to make the perfect portrait. It is amazing when you have something like that inside of you and finally you find it, because then you really have access to your own creativity, and that is an incredible event for an artist – that is when they call you a genius. It is that sense that’s very strong in his work, for me – that at one point, he was working similarly to everyone else, and then for some reason he hits on the solution of these thin sculptures and then you find the man, and he is then like no one else, and that’s beautiful.”

### **On trying to find yourself as an artist...**

“This is the first time I’ve shot objects with so much intention, and I could very much feel through them that this was somebody who had reached a point where genius has become separated from trend; someone had found in himself something to communicate. Other people of his time worked in groups, or they adapted to a style – even if you look at Picasso and Cubism this is true – but Giacometti was just totally naïve, and trying to find himself. Most people never come to the point Giacometti reached because you have to have a point of view and a connection to self, and you can’t look around to find that. I feel I have a much more precise feeling, from shooting his work, that it’s the most important thing for artists to have that real contact to something that’s only inside them, so that when you do something it comes out of this place that’s unique.”

### **On the humanity in these sculptures...**

“I think there is a real humanity in his work and that’s what I felt very strongly – I don’t know if the sculptures reflect something essential about the human condition but this incredible humanity is in there. There is a different view and whole look to the sculptures in the photographs because without the lens you can never get that close to the thing and that part of him – when you take the lens longer and you go in closer – that also affects the perspective and frames the object, so I discovered a lot about Giacometti through that process.

“I think from a technical point of view you could say that in this show you see sculptures and how they are photographed, and see if something has been added to the normal view, or you can really go to there to feel something, something that is very purely Giacometti. I don’t even think about the objects when I am shooting them because there is so much of him in there that they become alive to me; they are a part of him.”