

Press release



Alberto Giacometti: A Line Through Time

23 April 2016–29 August 2016

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich

Press view: Friday 22 April, 12–2pm

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, at the University of East Anglia, Norwich is commemorating the 50th anniversary of Alberto Giacometti's death in 1966 with a major new exhibition, *Alberto Giacometti: A Line Through Time*. Giacometti is one of the twentieth century's most significant artists, celebrated as a sculptor, painter and draughtsman. The exhibition will be the most extensive in the UK dedicated to the artist since 2007. It will focus on his work and influence during the post-war period on both sides of the Channel. Examining his preoccupation with the isolated figure, a motif that dominated his work, it will explore a number of key themes which include the influence of ancient art on Giacometti's practice, the context of his contemporaries in post-war Paris and his impact in Britain.

The exhibition comprises over 150 works with significant loans from around the world including Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Fondation Beyeler, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Fitzwilliam Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and many private collections. These loans will complement the Sainsbury Centre's own remarkable collection of Giacometti's works which is the largest in the UK. The Centre is particularly noted for its fine group of drawings acquired by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury.

Following the Second World War, alienated figures and the theme of isolation dominated Giacometti's practice. This work secured his place as one of the great modern masters of the twentieth century. The exhibition will closely consider the context and cultural climate of Paris where Giacometti was living following the war, a time fraught with anxiety. Notions of freedom of expression and materiality will be explored through major works by Giacometti and his French contemporaries including Jean Dubuffet, Jean Fautrier, César and Germaine Richier.

The exhibition title, *A Line Through Time*, references Giacometti's fascination with ancient art, the timeless nature of his endeavour and the enduring resonance of his practice. His work will be shown in the context of Ancient Egyptian funerary figures, Etruscan and Cycladic figurines and West African sculpture drawn from the Sainsbury Centre's rich collections.

Giacometti's reputation grew throughout the post-war period and, for the first time, a major exhibition will explore the artist's influence and legacy on modern British art. His impact was significant and lasting and the years leading up to his first major UK show, held at the ICA in 1955, will be a particular focus. Works by artists including Francis Bacon, Lucian Freud, William Turnbull, Eduardo Paolozzi, Elisabeth Frink, Frank Auerbach, Henry Moore and Isabel Rawsthorne will be exhibited to illustrate Giacometti's far-reaching influence in Britain.

The Sainsburys' patronage came at a key moment for Giacometti. Robert and Lisa Sainsbury first met Giacometti in Paris in 1949 and it was at this time that they acquired the painting *Diego Seated* (1948). They developed a personal and loyal friendship with Giacometti, his wife Annette and his brother Diego. Giacometti later drew portraits of Robert as well as the Sainsbury children, David and Elizabeth. A series of portraits of David from 1955 will be exhibited. Significant archival material documenting the close relationship between Giacometti and the Sainsbury family will be on display, including several unpublished letters that have not previously been exhibited.

Calvin Winner, co-curator of the exhibition, said: 'The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts is honoured to mark the 50th anniversary of Alberto Giacometti's death with this unique exhibition. Giacometti was the quintessential artist-philosopher who offered a deep and profound mediation on the human condition. The benefactors of the Sainsbury Centre, Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, were both patrons and friends of Giacometti, making the Centre a fitting place to mark the anniversary of his death and celebrate his life and work.'

The exhibition is curated by Calvin Winner and Claudia Milburn and runs from 23 April until 29 August 2016.

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Listings Information:

Alberto Giacometti: A Line Through Time

23 April 2016–29 August 2016

£12/£10.50 concessions

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ

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Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts

The Sainsbury Centre was established when Sir Robert and Lady Lisa Sainsbury generously gave their art collection to the University of East Anglia in 1973. The building was designed by Norman Foster and opened in 1978.

For over 40 years, Robert and Lisa Sainsbury collected works of art which ranged across time and place. They sought work from major European artists, as well as art and antiquities from different periods and cultures around the world. The Sainsburys were equally radical in commissioning the young Norman Foster in 1974 as the architect for the new building to house their works. Robert Sainsbury saw Foster's innovative building as the great jewel of the Sainsbury Collection.

The Sainsbury Centre is one of the most prominent university art galleries in Britain, and a major national centre for the study and presentation of art. As well as housing the Sainsburys' art collection, one of the few intact modernist collections of the twentieth century with many seminal works by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, Francis Bacon, Jacob Epstein, Henry Moore, Alberto Giacometti, and Amedeo Modigliani, it also displays the Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau and the University's Abstract and Constructivist Collection. Alongside these permanent collections, it hosts a range of temporary exhibitions in the new galleries, which provide the largest climate-controlled exhibition space in Eastern England.