

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Hollow Man:

Alberto Giacometti and the Crisis of the Monument, 1935–45

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Art History

by

Joanna Marie Fiduccia

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor George Thomas Baker, Chair

This dissertation presents the first extended analysis of Alberto Giacometti's sculpture between 1935 and 1945. In 1935, Giacometti renounced his abstract Surrealist objects and began producing portrait busts and miniature figures, many no larger than an almond. Although they are conventionally dismissed as symptoms of a personal crisis, these works unfold a series of significant interventions into the conventions of figurative sculpture whose consequences persisted in Giacometti's iconic postwar work. Those interventions — disrupting the harmonious relationship of surface to interior, the stable scale relations between the work and its viewer, and the unity and integrity of the sculptural body — developed from Giacometti's Surrealist experiments in which the production of a form paradoxically entailed its aggressive unmaking. By thus bridging Giacometti's pre- and postwar oeuvres, this decade-long interval merges two

distinct accounts of twentieth-century sculpture, each of which claims its own version of Giacometti: a Surrealist artist probing sculpture's ambivalent relationship to the everyday object, and an Existentialist sculptor invested in phenomenological experience. This project theorizes Giacometti's artistic crisis as the collision of these two models, concentrated in his modest portrait busts and tiny figures.

Giacometti's crisis moreover coincided with political and social crises in France and Switzerland in the 1930s and 40s. The rhetoric addressing these crises took up the terms of figurative sculpture to describe the destabilization of national self-representation: a loss of face, the inability to form a cohesive image of the body-politic, and the dissolving boundaries of the individual citizen. These metaphorical "figurations of crisis" are refracted in Giacometti's crisis of figuration through its disruptions of the surface, scale relations, and integrity of figurative sculpture. Tracking these resonances, this dissertation articulates concrete and contextualized terms for the artistic crisis at its center — not as shambolic breakdown, but as a form and experience of substance attained through processes of destruction.

The dissertation of Joanna Marie Fiduccia is approved.

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## VITA

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- “Thy Fearful Dissymmetry: Tauba Auerbach,” *Parkett*. No. 94 (2014): 79–91.
- “Foundation Requirements.” *Plamen Dejanoff: Foundation Requirements*. Vienna: Belvedere/21er Haus, 2015. pp. 150–163.
- “Henri Matisse: The Carnal Formula,” *Spike Art Quarterly*, No. 43 (Spring 2015): 82–87.
- “On and On: On Kawara and the Case of Paul Maselli,” *Spike Art Quarterly*, No. 42 (Winter 2014): 56–67.
- “Portrait: Laura Owens,” *Spike Art Quarterly*, No. 41 (Autumn 2014): 88–99

“Mike Kelley: *Education Complex Onwards*,” in *Education*, ed. Felicity Allen. London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2011. pp. 126–127.

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“Cartes postales des états,” in *Groupe mobile : retracer la vie sociale des oeuvres par la photographie*, February 13 – July 2, 2016, Villa Vassilieff, Paris, France.

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I must make him a statue, said Benin Bird.

A statue out of what? asked Tristouse. Marble? Bronze?

No, that's passé, Benin Bird responded. I must make a profound statue out of nothing, like poetry and glory.

Bravo! Bravo! said Tristouse, clapping her hands, a statue out of nothing, out of the void, it's magnificent...

— Guillaume Apollinaire, *Le Poète assassiné*

## INTRODUCTION

Pitted walls, plaster flakes piled up like ash heaps, buckling stacks of periodicals, empty solvent bottles, scattered brushes. Dust particles muddle the air, and a loose congregation of clay busts and plaster figures stare into every derelict corner: This is how the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti's studio appears in countless photographs — as a den of destruction (Figs. 0.1, 0.2). For many viewers, these images capture the habitat of the artistic genius, perennially unsatisfied, plowing through his creations like some angry god who sees their imperfections before we could even imagine them. The sculptures left standing appear at home in this photogenic breakdown. They are not just its survivors; it would seem that they are its product, a curious combination of Giacometti's unshakeable conviction in his practice and unrelenting dissatisfaction with his works. Jean-Paul Sartre called this Giacometti's "quest for the absolute," positioning the artist as a knight in a romance without an end. Yet the photographs of Giacometti's studio speak to something far more home-bound. Everything that falls short (which is, in short, everything), rather than receding in his wake, crumbles around him.

This one-man wrecking ball nevertheless generated some of the most iconic sculptures of the postwar period, an accomplishment that is difficultly distinguished from Giacometti's self-doubt and destructiveness — largely because those same qualities are seen as being precisely what makes him exemplary of his age. One might compare this vision with that of another canonical sculptor who never seemed to arrive at a fixed or finished work: Auguste Rodin (Fig.

0.3). Rodin's permutations of his sculptures and refusal of the so-called "finishing touch" were, according to Leo Steinberg, expressions of "his secret dream [...] to keep every work going like a stoked fire — forever, if possible."<sup>1</sup> Steinberg aligns Rodin's labors with the act of living as well as giving life, a life whose Bergsonian eternal flux could only be rendered through eternal ramifications. Giacometti's destructiveness, by contrast, suggests that to convey life authentically requires a more severe hand, one that builds one moment and deals the death blow the next. *That* life — that postwar human condition — was one not in flux but one perpetually menaced by, or indeed inevitably meeting, its breakdown.

The figure of Giacometti who comes along with these photographs is an artist in and of crisis. He is up against the wall of world-shaking, existential problems — what is humankind after Auschwitz? What is our nature or our essence, and how can we come to know them? And he goes it alone, heroically isolated from not only his peers, but from the centuries of art that came before him. Yet Giacometti's work and biography give us cause to doubt the legend of this solitary search. The artist in the pages that follow is, accordingly, embedded in his context and actively grappling with many of the same questions about sculpture that began in the collective practices of the interwar avant-garde, and persisted through the development of European sculpture in the 1930s and 40s. But Giacometti is not for that reason any less an artist of crisis. It's just that his crisis is paradigmatic rather than exceptional.

In this dissertation, I use crisis to refer to a particular interval in epochal historical narratives that plays a central role in how those same stories are constructed, a role it plays for both art history and political history. I am particularly concerned with how crisis, when understood in this limited historiographical sense, can begin to reveal relations between more

colloquial understandings of artistic and political crisis, whether we choose to differentiate them on the basis of their scale or their form of expression.<sup>2</sup>

While the term “crisis” has been deployed more and more regularly in recent decades — a function, perhaps, the depreciation of the term’s meaning or the acceleration of events — it nevertheless retains a clear historiographical function. Crisis gives structure to the writing of history in the modern era. Crisis, from the Greek *krinô* (to cut, to choose, to decide, to judge) was initially used in medicine to describe the decisive moment in the progress of an illness, when the life or death of the patient hung in the balance — a moment whose fatefulness was subsequently transposed into the theological concept of crisis as the Last Judgment. For Reinhart Koselleck, the great historian of the concept, the evolution of crisis from these achronic medical and theological senses into its modern meaning coincided with the emergence of a historical consciousness.<sup>3</sup> Alongside a set of other historico-political concepts like “progress,” it transformed time from the fluid medium in which events occurred into a differentiating force that engendered the historical perspective: namely, the capacity to isolate and judge a situation, as well as the recognition that this historicizing activity is itself “historical,” liable to change over time and thus produce novel histories. Crisis makes cuts in time, allowing us to conceive of the past as fundamentally different, and to project a “new time” beyond that epochal threshold. It pulls into focus the conflicts that develop between institutions and world-views, and gathers them together in a crucible that, true to the metaphor, remains closed to view until a new order has been forged therein. It is iterative and periodizing. And it is this way, not just for world history, but for the individual histories included in it.

In those histories, crisis endows a life story with a before and an after, and it invests the “after” with weight of judgment on what preceded it. This is especially apparent in individual *art*

histories. In these accounts, the artistic crisis, if it doesn't consist simply in ceasing to make art altogether, turns an art practice inside-out. Whereas we conventionally imagine art to journey outward from the mind to the studio to the world, the art of crisis implodes, careening back into the artist as the locus of private and unintelligible meanings, or back into a historical style emptied of its pertinence — and thus coming to seem not very much like art at all. When the crisis is over, whatever emerges after it serves to frame the *pre*-crisis style as what must have been expelled, processed, vanquished, or abandoned in order to give rise to something fundamentally new. Progress, in other words, is presupposed, and historical time is recast as active agent of art's transformation. This narrative structure for art history frequently has a moral scaffolding, too, one generally based around the discrepancy of the human conscience with advances in scientific or technological knowledge. Crisis names the resulting aporia, which must eventually be overcome by a new expression of a new human position — the pictorial space of Cubism, for instance, as the consequence of novel experiences of space and subjectivity in modernity. The very notion of art historical progress in modernism, in fact, appears bound up with the concept of crisis as a confrontation between morality (as conscience or consciousness) and external structures (politics or technological advances).<sup>4</sup> Art is both the moral task assigned by crisis and the expression that results from it. The before-and-after tale of an artistic crisis both dramatizes this confrontation and locates it within a single person.<sup>5</sup>

No such narrative structure presides in this monograph, though it is about an artistic crisis. Specifically, it addresses the “crisis of figuration” undergone by the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti from 1935 to 1945. Giacometti is best known for his iconic, attenuated walking men, which debuted in 1946 and came thereafter to emblemize the postwar existential subject (Fig. 0.4). Yet prior to 1935, Giacometti had been making largely abstract sculptures, which catalyzed

the production of the Surrealist object in the 1930s. These eccentric experiments — objects without pedestals meant to be cradled like infants or wielded like clubs, horizontal slabs resembling game boards, “projects” for passageways, for public squares, for graves — came to an abrupt end in the winter of 1934 (Fig. 0.5). Vexed by his difficulties completing a hieratic, stylized female figure, Giacometti decided to hire a model in order to search the solid ground of his artistic training for a solution. The exercise was supposed to last only a week or two, just long enough, he said, to have “sufficient documents to make something out of them, that is, to make compositions and produce works.”<sup>6</sup> But though Giacometti had been modeling heads throughout his early career, this particular session marked the beginning of an extended and troubled investigation of the face and figure. It also coincided with the conclusion of his tenure with Surrealism, along with the end of his early career in the public eye. For the next decade, Giacometti devoted himself to making two sets of sculptures in relative obscurity: a pair of modest portrait busts of his brother and a neighbor, which he began from scratch several times between 1935 and the war, and numerous minuscule figures, many measuring no bigger than a pin, which he started to produce toward the end of the 1930s, and continued through 1945 (Figs. 0.6, 0.7). This dissertation is about these two sets of works. Although it considers both the Surrealist objects Giacometti made before 1935 and descriptions of his oeuvre after 1945, it doesn’t pivot on this crisis as a means to diagnose what came before and after it. Rather, it sits *within* the crisis, in the hollow space of it — that implosion of expressive meaning that characterizes the historiographical locus of crisis in monographic art histories.

The anthropologist Janet Roitman has referred to this hollow space as the “enabling blind spot” of crisis.<sup>7</sup> This is the place of observation — the ground beneath us — that allows us to construct a historical tale and make claims about the significance of an event, but that itself

escapes our analysis. By calling something a crisis, in other words, we usher in the narrative structure described above, which makes certain characteristics of the historical moment in question impossible to see. For instance, we look to establish who or what was at fault for the financial crash of 2007–09 (Roitman’s case study), instead of asking how debt came to be figured as an asset in the first place, or recognizing the structural characteristics of the current system of valuation that resulted in the autonomization of values on the housing market.<sup>8</sup> In the case of artistic crisis, the matter of the blind spot looks initially quite concrete by contrast: its content is the artwork made during the crisis, or for Giacometti, between 1935 and 1945. To call it a blind spot, however, is not to claim that no one has written about these sculptures, or even that they are without explanation — no more than Roitman claims that there have been no explanations for the financial crash.<sup>9</sup> Instead, it is to say that these explanations are determined by the moralizing exigencies of the crisis narrative, and its assumptions about what counts in the histories we tell.<sup>10</sup>

The blind spot of crisis is “enabling” because it aids in the construction of narratives, typically heroic ones. Giacometti is no exception here. To sketch that story summarily: historians have understood Giacometti’s work between 1935 and 1945 as a trial by fire that led him to a radically purified vision of figurative art, stripped of art historical convention, and which understands the object of figuration in a profoundly new way. Christian Klemm, for instance, describes what occurred as follows:

In 1935, shaken by his father's death and weary of the cleverness of the Surrealists, Alberto Giacometti went in search of a new conception of the human being appropriate to his own ideas and to his time while working before his models. First of all, however, he had to battle through the obfuscation of commonplace styles and entrenched notions in order to acquire a fresh perspective.<sup>11</sup>

Giacometti thus fought his way through the portrait busts and miniatures like a knight in a medieval romance. The “new conception” with which he was ultimately requited has been variously described as postwar, existential man; embodied perception; the embodied perception of existential man; the incorporation of the existential situation of man into the perception of him; the incorporation of the phenomenological situation into the depiction of man; and some dozen other nuances of this same theme.<sup>12</sup> It is always somewhat unbecoming to treat a huge swath of scholarship monolithically. And yet there is such a consensus on this thesis, despite its many internal variations, that imagining Giacometti outside of its terms demands considerable effort, as well as a measure of sheer will.<sup>13</sup>

The consensus thesis produces three consequences for the historical narrative of Giacometti’s oeuvre. Firstly, it describes Giacometti’s “crisis” as something exemplary of our ordinary concept of the word. His crisis manifests as a “moment of truth,” one in which the (aesthetic) bubble bursts, and in which (morphological) norms are exposed as mere custom. Giacometti’s statements abet this reading. “People only see the world through the works of academic painting, or impressionist painting,” he commented. “It’s the same for sculpture. Everyone thinks they know what a head is, but everyone sees a Greco-Roman bust in place of the head. Today, any rube sees purple shadows; the posters of the train station [Monet’s 1877 *Gare Saint-Lazare* cycle] made him concede that without him even realizing it.”<sup>14</sup> In 1935, attempting to render the head of a model therefore required clearing away the academic or conventional sculptures that “[got] in the way... between her and you,” and yet, “when there were no more sculptures, there was an unknown such that I no longer knew who and what I was seeing.”<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the busts produced in the first years after 1934 are categorized as evidence of this

difficulty of truly seeing a head. Similarly, the miniaturization that followed is explicated as Giacometti's recourse to taking more and more distance from his subject in order to avoid getting lost in the details. Nevertheless, the problem with positing crisis as a moment of truth or laying-bare-of-the-real is that positing alone cannot describe how real was bared, largely because it renders the works that supposedly accomplish the laying-baring mere symptoms of a struggle, rather than active formulations of a way out (a way out, it bears saying, that Giacometti had already pursued with his Surrealist works). Nor does it explain why Giacometti's subsequent confrontation with the head-laid-bare resulted in his postwar style — except to call it, tautologically, the style of pure vision itself.

Secondly, since these descriptions of Giacometti's phenomenological realism situate it after the "crisis," they imply that the alternatives to conventional figurative sculpture that Giacometti explored *prior* to 1935 were ultimately insufficient (to sustain his interest, to contain his genius, etc.). Giacometti's split from Surrealism therefore appears definitive, the rupture closing what one critic called Giacometti's "surrealist parentheses."<sup>16</sup> This leaves us with two Giacomettis: one stuck in the undertow of his imagination or the charisma of the avant-garde's collective pursuits, another devoted to the observation of the world and the transcription of experience — as though Surrealism was not concerned with this transcription, and as though Giacometti became a solitary searcher after 1935, with no relation to his social and intellectual context. It moreover neglects the instances of figuration in Giacometti's late Surrealist works — among them, the hieratic nude *Invisible Object (Hands Holding the Void)*. *Invisible Object* was no outlier or schismatic production; widely reproduced and exhibited in the mid-1930s, it was also a key plot point in André Breton's novel *Mad Love* (Fig. 0.8). Yet the most powerful account of Giacometti's Surrealist period, Rosalind Krauss's 1984 essay "No More Play,"

insisted that to understand *Invisible Object* as a figurative work primarily is to wrest it from its place in Giacometti's Surrealist oeuvre in order to anticipate his postwar preoccupations. For Krauss, that earlier oeuvre was concerned with the formal and conceptual operations of horizontality, operations that had "worked together to generate the brilliance of his early work," and that Giacometti had altogether rejected in the postwar period with his return to the conventional verticality of the statue (see Chapter 3).<sup>17</sup> Her appraisal of this postwar work may differ from Giacometti's hagiographers, but it agrees with their division between his Surrealist and postwar practice, and thus does not fundamentally challenge the consensus narrative. Both perspectives leave unexamined the generation of Giacometti's postwar style and its relation to his Surrealist work.

Thirdly, and most critically for an art history concerned with an art of crisis: these readings, in putting forward the postwar work as a purification or ground zero of figuration, narrate the interregnum of 1935 to 1945 as the path of destruction, the near obliteration of his *art practice* as figured in the near disappearance of his *artworks* as they were reduced to the size of a pin. The decade becomes a trial by fire, or a death of the old model by a thousand cuts of the penknife. Nadia Schneider has characterized the decade as a period of "unlearning," in which, in order to free himself from acquired habits and internalized styles, Giacometti put himself on a course of "methodic failure": a self-critical enterprise that, like Descartes' "methodic doubt," arrived at truth through relentless winnowing.<sup>18</sup>

This argument is also not without some grounds. For in Giacometti's oeuvre, the "blind spot" of his crisis is nearly literal: many of the works made between 1935 and 1945 no longer exist, and (or because) many of them tended toward invisibility in the first place. Either they were diminished so radically that they dissolved on their tiny armatures, or they approached the

status of the academic exercise so closely that they escaped critical study. The general consequence of this negligibility is to deflect attention, and its principle function has been to cleave Giacometti's Surrealist work from his Existentialist figuration by standing like a caesura between his pre- and postwar work. Nevertheless, the "danger of the disappearance of things" — Giacometti's description of the inexorable diminution of his figures during these years — is qualitatively different from their disappearance *tout court*. Many of these sculptures did not vanish until long after the war when, scattered in the legendary clutter of his studio, it is hardly surprising that a number would have literally bit the dust (Fig. 0.9). Furthermore, during the full decade when they monopolized his attention, Giacometti expressed satisfaction as often as frustration with these works (an ambivalence that, as numerous individuals who sat for portraits attest, continued even in the height of his fame). The narratives that telescope Giacometti's crisis into the physical breakdown of the works preclude both formal and critical attention to his production between 1935 to 1945. This is the attention I intend to give them here. My quarry is therefore not, strictly speaking, with the dominant interpretations of Giacometti's postwar oeuvre. Rather, it is with the unexamined aspects of their narrative structure, and above all, with their characterization of his crisis as a "trial by fire": the crucible of art historical interpretation on which so many stories depend.

But you cannot just pry open a crucible. If the art of crisis is something specific, it is because it resists the kinds of discussions and art historical practices applied to the oeuvre before and after it. The art of crisis, in fact, *is just that art* that resists in these ways. This dissertation argues that to construct a totalizing account of Giacometti's portrait busts and miniatures would be to misunderstand fundamentally what an art of crisis can teach us, not just about Giacometti's oeuvre, but about the challenge posed by artistic crisis to disciplinary practices of modern art

history. Instead, this dissertation will examine Giacometti's crisis through points of convergence with broader social and political crises in order to elucidate its transitional role in his oeuvre, as well as how it positions that oeuvre in central crises of social and political representation in the 1930s and 40s.

The decade in question represents a full quarter of Giacometti's artistic career. It was a time in which many of his friendships from his early years as a Surrealist persisted, while his pivotal postwar relationships, most significantly with Jean-Paul Sartre, were beginning. During these years, Giacometti also continued to fabricate decorative objects and to theorize his art practice, recording his notions in both private journals and published texts, all of which enter into my reflections in what follows. The decade moreover spans a world historical crisis. This raises the question, one both profound and rudimentary for art history, of how artistic crisis relates to political crisis, or more broadly, how art relates to its context.

Instead of an art history that stabilizes and orders (or "disciplines") these busts and miniatures, this dissertation proposes to navigate this relation through what these two crises share: a problem-space of representation. I take the concept of the "problem-space" from cultural historian David Scott. Scott defines the problem-space as "an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs. [...] What defines this discursive context are not only the particular problems that get posed as problems as such [...], but the particular questions that seem worth asking and the kind of answers that seem worth having." The problem-space is therefore historically specific. While a problem can exist over a long stretch of time, the particular questions that seem legitimate or urgent will change, as will the paths taken to answer them, which become more or less intelligible as the stakes around them shift.<sup>19</sup>

In familiar terms, Giacometti's abrupt rejection of his largely abstract Surrealist work and return to modeling from life in 1935 presents what the history of modernism refers to as a "return to figuration."<sup>20</sup> The more salient phrase, however, is a "crisis of representation," one in which the stability or self-evidence of the individual and collective body had been called into question. I argue that this crisis of representation reverberates formally through Giacometti's sculpture no less than politics at large. Politics in France and Switzerland in the 1930s and 40s was populated by sculptural metaphors for the crises it was undergoing, crises that concerned the recognizability and legibility of their citizenry, the cohesiveness of the nation-state, and the integrity of the body in its individual and collective dimensions. Those metaphors anchored crises of political representation in sculptural problems: surface, scale, and the dialectics of multiplication and unification. These relations between artistic figuration and political representation form the grounds for Giacometti's busts and miniatures. That means that these works are not simply a "return" to figuration or withdrawal into convention (for whatever purposes might be narrated in a heroic narrative for Giacometti); they are specific formalizations of crisis. An "art of crisis."

Rather than seeking out images of the body in European political life in the 1930s and 40s and comparing them with Giacometti's sculpture, I examine how the terms of representing the body, and the body-politic, were posed discursively in the politics and intellectual life of Giacometti's context. This integrates Giacometti's sculpture into an ensemble of rhetorical "figurations" of the problem of representation, or a conjuncture of formal, discursive, and political forces.<sup>21</sup> For Stuart Hall, thinking conjuncturally requires gathering together in an argument elements or forces across a historical moment without positing them as a single movement or unified event.<sup>22</sup> The coherence of the conjuncture lies in the problem-space it

constellates, rather than in some particular telos. One could, for instance, claim that the diminution of Giacometti's sculpture was part and parcel of the same set of events that brought about the decimation of public statues in wartime France under Vichy's so-called Bronze Mobilization Campaign, which authorized the systematic destruction of bronze monuments across France to supply non-ferrous metal for German armaments — a destruction that was roughly synchronous with Giacometti's turn to the monumental idiom of the oversized pedestal, paired with the dwindling of the human figure on top of it.<sup>23</sup> The simultaneity of these two destructions of figurative sculpture is provocative (and would be even more so, had Giacometti not spent 1942 to 1945 marooned in Geneva, unable to secure a visa to return to Paris). Yet the analogy does not get to the heart of whatever convulsion of the status of the monument compelled *both* Giacometti's almost workmanlike erasure of the sculptural body *and* Vichy's similarly matter-of-fact liquidation of prominent symbolic bodies. Instead, their relevance to one another emerges through the problem they mutually manifest with the parameters of figuration as such in the early 1940s. Both destructions take place within a shared problem-space; they are part of a historical conjuncture.

Conjunctural analyses have clear precedents in the methodology of social art history in the last fifty years.<sup>24</sup> If I nevertheless turn to cultural historians like Scott and Hall in this introduction, it is because they understand conjuncture more restrictedly, explains Hall, as the “complex historically specific terrain of a crisis which affects — but in uneven ways — *a specific national-social formation as a whole*.”<sup>25</sup> The nation, accordingly, serves as both ground and figure in this dissertation: ground insofar as France and Switzerland are where the events of this dissertation take place, and figure insofar as efforts to represent the nation and codify the

body politic share footing with Giacometti's own pertinacious attempts to render a head or a figure. Indeed, both the difficulty and pathos of these attempts make sense only on this terrain.

### **The Surrealist Catalyst**

Alberto Giacometti was born on October 10, 1901 in Borgonovo, Switzerland, one of a series of close-lying villages in the Italian-speaking Bergell (Val Bregaglia), about four miles from the Italian border. He was the first of four children to Annetta Stampa and Giovanni Giacometti, a Post-Impressionist painter of some renown. Alberto's brother, Diego, was born a year later; their siblings Ottilia and Bruno followed two and five years after. The family spent the summers and winter holidays at a house inherited by his mother in Capolago on the Silsersee, at the top of the 2,400-foot Maloja Pass, which separates the posh chalets of the Engadin from the Bergell villages. The rest of the year, they lived in the town of Stampa, just down the road from Borgonovo, in a house across the street from the inn run by Giacometti's grandfather. The barn next door was converted into a studio, used first by Giovanni, then by Alberto until his death on January 6, 1966. Giacometti made his first paintings and landscapes in 1913, and his first portrait busts of his brothers in the winter of 1914–15. His father furnished the plasticine, and the extended family, the example: Giacometti's cousin-once-removed was the "master of colors," Augusto Giacometti; Cuno Amiet was his godfather, while Ferdinand Hodler was his brother's, making his near relations a good portion of the elite of the Swiss art world. Giacometti went to secondary school in Schiers, near Chur, and then briefly attended the *École des Beaux-Arts* and the *École d'Art et Métiers* in Geneva, finding little satisfaction at either school.<sup>26</sup> After dropping

out and touring Italy, Giacometti took his father's advice and moved to Paris at the beginning of 1922. Diego followed soon after, and would remain at his brother's side for the rest of his life, with the exception of the war, acting as Alberto's studio assistant while also designing decorative objects and furniture.

Following a brief stint at Archipenko's studio, Giacometti joined Antoine Bourdelle's atelier at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, where he took classes on and off through 1927.<sup>27</sup> Giacometti exhibited his sculptures in several salons and galleries in the 1920s, but his career did not begin in earnest until the winter of 1927–28, when he began working on his so-called “plaque sculptures”: smooth, planar shapes inflected by indentations and geometric reliefs, which Jean Cocteau described as being “so light that one might have thought they were birds’ footprints in snow” (Fig. 0.10).<sup>28</sup> These works caught the eye of André Masson, who introduced Giacometti to the circle of artists, historians, and ethnographers who gathered in the studio complex at 23 rue Blomet in Montparnasse, including the German writer and art historian Carl Einstein and the French novelist and anthropologist Michel Leiris, who published the first critical text on Giacometti that year in the journal *Documents* in 1929.<sup>29</sup>

The following year, Giacometti exhibited *Suspended Ball* at the Galerie Pierre in a three-person exhibition with Joan Miró and Hans Arp (Fig. 0.11). *Suspended Ball* consists of a cleft orb hanging from a thread over a crescent-shaped wedge, suggesting both the erotic friction and vicious laceration of one form against the other. Yet these actions are rendered equally unattainable by the length of the thread, since it lowers the ball to where it rests plumb on the crescent shape, whose canted angle interrupts the ball's pendulum swing. This titillating tableau perches on a thin platform raised inside a simple iron scaffolds. *Suspended Ball* appears to take several formal tropes of the day and set them in promiscuous motion. The scaffolds is the bones

of a vitrine without glass, connecting the dots between Picasso's *Monument to Apollinaire* and the utilitarian ironworks of art display that were the original "transparent" objects in exhibitions — structures intended to be looked through. Meanwhile, the forms within echoed the biomorphic forms of Hans Arp and Joan Miró, as well as Picasso's contemporaneous paintings of female bathers, de-composed into collections of orbs, sickles, and cones (Fig. 0.12).<sup>30</sup>

*Suspended Ball* was galvanizing. "Everyone who saw the hanging, slit ball in motion over the blade," recalled the art critic Maurice Nadeau in 1945, "felt a strong and indescribable excitement, not without its portion of subconscious sexual arousal. But," he continued,

there was no satisfaction of any kind forthcoming — rather, the feeling made on more and more uncomfortable. It showed that something was missing and gave one a desire for something that would never come and yet was always on the verge of coming. Now the door was open for a whole series of such objects.<sup>31</sup>

That series was ultimately authored, not just by Giacometti, but by the vast majority of Surrealism's members. The Surrealist object became the primary preoccupation of Surrealism in its second decade, and Giacometti was hailed as its catalyst. Thenceforth, he was one of the movement's members, as an active contributor to its publications and exhibitions as well as a sympathizer with its political agenda, which he claimed was what attracted him to Surrealism in the first place. But politics also marked a fault line between Giacometti and the group. He groused in his journal that the *Association des Écrivains et Artistes* (A.E.A.R.) was a "rotting staircase emerging from a marsh," yet he also took the side of Louis Aragon in the infamous *Misère de la poésie*, writing a strident letter to André Breton (one he would later retract out of deference to their friendship).<sup>32</sup> Like a number of the Surrealists, he was supported by elite patrons — and even produced decorative commissions for certain reactionary ones — while also

devoting journal entry after entry to sorting through his relation to the Revolution.<sup>33</sup> In response to a questionnaire launched by the communist journal *Commune* that asked, “Where is painting heading?” Giacometti sent a drawing of a man striding at the head of a crowd with his fist raised, and in those same years submitted to Aragon a graphic series of anti-bourgeois and anti-clerical cartoons (Figs. 0.13, 0.14). And yet Giacometti was, at the same time, dismissive of Surrealism’s attempts to negotiate its relation to socialist realism and its alarm at Dalí’s reactionary artistic commentary in the early 1930s. This dismissiveness was listed in a letter of warning that fellow Surrealists intended to deliver to Giacometti in early 1935 in the hopes of redressing his flagging commitment to the group.<sup>34</sup> In the course of this short confrontation, Giacometti angrily announced that he was no longer interested in Surrealism, disavowing all his work over the previous five years.

Despite that disavowal, and in keeping with the ambivalence that defined his affiliation with Surrealism in the early 1930s, Giacometti continued to contribute to the major surrealist exhibitions in the latter half of the decade. Moreover, he continued to meet and correspond with the Surrealists, including Breton, even as he began to associate with artists of the *École de Paris* — Tal Coat, Francis Gruber, Balthus, and others working under the influence of André Dérain, who would constitute a looser circle of peers in the late 1930s. Thus neither his rupture nor his affiliation with Surrealism were as seamless as the crisis narratives suggest. These biographical details give initial cause to reconsider the significance of Surrealism on the work that followed directly after, especially through the lens of the anti-idealist politics of the Surrealist object.

In 1931, Dalí introduced the terms of the Surrealist object by presenting *Suspended Ball* as a prime example of the “symbolically functioning object.” In the symbolically functioning object, a modicum of actual movement — for instance, the suggestion of the ball’s progress

along the wedge's edge — sets into motion the subconscious gears of desire and fantasy.<sup>35</sup> Because the primary functioning of these objects is psychological, Dalí concluded that “symbolically functioning objects resist all purely formal interpretation. They depend on the erotic imagination of each individual and stand outside sculpture.”<sup>36</sup> But in standing outside sculpture, they were not to be mere things, either. Breton, working alongside Dalí to pin down the parameters of the Surrealist object, distinguished its relation to erotic imagination from the commodity's petrifications of desire. In his 1936 text “The Crisis of the Object,” Breton claimed that the function of these dream objects was to “unleash the *forces of invention* exalted by contact with objects of dream origin, veritable solidified desires.”<sup>37</sup> In order to accomplish this, these objects needed to resist use-value, as well as elitist notions surrounding the status of both the object and its maker.<sup>38</sup> They did this not just by employing largely found objects in their assemblages, and therefore partaking in the deskilling of the ready-made, but by soliciting the viewer's physical or psychological participation. Giacometti's Surrealist objects offered themselves to be handled or manipulated, repositioned or toyed with, and even, as one work's title suggests, “disposed of.” Like Man Ray's *Gift*, an iron studded with nails on the business end, or Meret Oppenheim's *Fur Teacup*, these Surrealist objects functioned by way of a rejection of the distanced apprehension of the work as an autonomous or self-contained object in favor of the real or implied involvement of the viewer (Figs. 0.15, 0.16).<sup>39</sup> The Surrealist object thus hitches itself to circumstance, becoming contingent on the person viewing it, the context and moment of the viewing, and above all, the “erotic imagination” or “forces of invention” stimulated by the interaction.

The Surrealist object incorporates real movement and literal time; the surreal is among us.<sup>40</sup> But the consequence of this realness and literalness was to make the works resist conceptual

resolution or any “purely formal interpretation.” The real movement of the work, as Dalí conceived it, needed to be only notionally in the object, for its primary location was in the viewer’s imagination, where the object unleashed what Rosalind Krauss has described as the “burgeoning significance of metaphor.”<sup>41</sup> Krauss observed that this generates two challenges to the conventions of sculpture. First, it moves the place of significance from the internal logic or structuring core of a sculpture to its surface. The viewer no longer seeks to sort through her impressions in order to access the sculpture’s stable, resolved form, and thus to experience it as an ideal model of her own coherent and contained subjectivity. Instead, she seeks to be stimulated by contact with the oneiric object, to feel a “strong and indescribable excitement.”<sup>42</sup> Second, this contact — both because it is personal and because it operates through external and unbounded potential for metaphor rather than fixed internal logic — places the Surrealist object in the stream of time, eschewing the stability of the conventionally self-contained sculpture. The Surrealist object is thus a hollow volume, a “peculiar pocket of subjectivity.”<sup>43</sup> Anti-idealist and subject to flux, these objects launched Giacometti’s initial experiments against the symbolic logic of the statue or monument, and prepared the ground for his arduous dismantling of those conventions between 1935 and 1945.

### **Giacometti in Art History**

A monograph on Alberto Giacometti must inevitably confront its superfluity. New catalogues on the artist are published each season, accompanying retrospectives that, in the last three years alone, were mounted in London, Vienna, Rome, Madrid, Münster, Norwich, Nuoro,

Shanghai, Doha, Istanbul, Marrakech, Landerneau, and Zurich. His already eye-popping auction numbers climb steadily, while the sizable staff at the Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti in Paris prepares his long-awaited catalogue raisonné. “What more could you possibly have to say about Giacometti?” one art historian asked me at the outset of this research, so securely does he seem to be stitched into the canon.

Giacometti, however, is not just canonical; he is *doubly* canonical. While his popular appeal is owing to the iconicity of his postwar figures, Giacometti’s art historical significance stems from his place in two major nodes of twentieth-century sculpture: the Surrealist object and Minimalism. In both cases, Giacometti is of an ill-fit. The bulk of Surrealist objects produced in the 1930s are assemblages of everyday flotsam and organic elements, with continuities to the Dada ready-made as well as Surrealism’s poetic tactic of the encounter with the found object. Giacometti’s Surrealist sculpture, by contrast, is composed of conventional sculptural materials like plaster, wood, and marble, and worked by craftsmen to a level of fetishistic finish closer to Brancusi than Dalí. Yet it was Dalí himself, as we have seen, who nominated Giacometti as the progenitor of the Surrealist object, just as it was Richard Serra who named him as a vital influence because of Giacometti’s capacity to “hold the experience of presence in the place” through his spindly postwar figures, and Donald Judd who expressed Giacometti’s importance for positing a model of sculpture that activated and defined space, instead of treating it as a negative or pictorial factor.<sup>44</sup> Serra and Judd’s statements may appear as only isolated testaments to Giacometti’s influence, but they more importantly indicate a turn in the understanding of Giacometti’s contribution to modern sculpture that subsequently repositioned him as an artist concerned, not with the parameters of figuration, but with pure phenomenological operations that were concentrated in the viewer’s encounter with the object — an interpretation that wed

Giacometti historiographically to the terms of Minimalism. As a result, for all of the apparent stability of Giacometti's position in histories of twentieth-century sculpture, there is a good deal of ambiguity to its terms. A figurative sculptor taught alongside Abstract Expressionism, a canonical artist without a catalogue raisonné, insistent on his work's place in a "fabric of social relations" yet mythologized as an ascetic who stood like "a saint [...] in a niche by himself," Giacometti is to the histories of modern sculpture and the avant-garde what his miniatures are to his oeuvre: central, but unassimilable.<sup>45</sup>

Giacometti's "double canonicity" furthermore positions him within two distinct narratives of twentieth-century sculpture: one that describes its development through a dialectical relationship to the commodity form, and another through its negation of the "logic of the monument." According to Rosalind Krauss, this was a logic that defined sculpture as something which "sits in a particular space and speaks in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use of that place."<sup>46</sup> The development of sculpture from the turn of the century occurred through its progressive disassociation from these characteristics, ultimately leading to the postmodern expansion of sculptural practice mapped in Krauss's 1979 essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." A second account, routed through Dada and Constructivism, considers how the use of industrial materials and processes, as well as the embrace of impermanence and the reconsideration of the terms of artistic authorship, transformed the conventions and institutions of art over the past century.<sup>47</sup> George Baker has described these two accounts in terms of the dialectic that shaped avant-garde sculpture: namely, "the contradiction between the *readymade* and the *constructed* sculpture, with their opposed strategies of appropriation or analytic self-reflection, cynical affirmation or utopian negation, the fusion of sculpture with the commodity or with architectural and social space."<sup>48</sup> One can further draw this contradiction through the two

dominant frameworks of interpretation that characterized both the analysis and production of sculpture in the twentieth century: the semiological and the phenomenological. The semiological model describes the work as constituted by information or images that are read or assembled by the viewer, whereas the phenomenological model locates it in kinesthetic alterations to the viewer's embodied, perceptual experience of the sculpture.<sup>49</sup> The conjunction of these models is expressed as an aesthetic crisis: a battle for the soul of sculpture. But analyzing the portrait busts and miniatures he produced between 1935 and 1945 shows these models to be unavoidably imbricated.<sup>50</sup> By virtue of taking place *in* sculpture, the battle undermines any single or totalizing description of sculpture's operations. It suggests, as Baker writes, that "sculpture's strategies will always be double, even inherently contradictory, or better, *incongruent*, a matter of both the physical and the virtual, space and picture, object and image."<sup>51</sup> Analyzing the transition between Giacometti's Surrealist objects and his postwar "phenomenological" figures is therefore not just about uniting two strands of his biography. For in that decade of aesthetic crisis is a conjunction that discloses this fundamental doubleness or incongruency of sculpture in the last century.

Giacometti earned most of his income throughout the 1930s through commissions for high-end decorative objects, and struggled in the early 1930s to differentiate this production of luxury commodities from his Surrealist art practice. His gesture of demarcation, more significant than and yet historically eclipsed by his renunciation of his Surrealist works, ironically exposed more trenchant parallels that return insistently in his practice between 1935 and 1945. Although, in 1935, he took back up an artisanal process with the resumption of modeling from life, Giacometti did it on a regimented schedule, clocking in and out, working his heads in pairs as though they were candlesticks. And though his miniatures resist codification through their material and optical fugitiveness, they are iterated and consumed as regularly and compulsively

as cigarettes. Simultaneously, the logic of the monument degrades in Giacometti's work over the course of the decade, even as his sculptures increasingly recall the monument's representational function and its display grammar through a return to the figure on an oversized pedestal. These two paradigms converge, vie for critical attention, and occasionally unsettle my arguments. But by operating as polarities through the interval that bridges the two Giacomettis, they model the imbrication of two accounts of modern sculpture.

I can only speculate that this imbrication makes itself felt especially during historical moments like the late 1930s, as a specific expression within the field of sculpture of a broader conjuncture. The littleness or profound negligibility of Giacometti production between 1935 and 1945 may, in fact, be part and parcel of this expression. As Adorno observed in his essay on the genre of the essay (which is itself a kind of miniature), ostensibly minor forms that deal in the scraps of major narratives often have a meta-critical aim. They seek above all to “blow open what cannot be absorbed by concepts or what, through contradictions in which concepts entangle themselves, betrays the fact that the network of their objectivity is a pure subjective rigging.”<sup>52</sup> Adorno's defense of the essay as something fragmentary and collage-like that invites over-interpretation thus turns into a statement of ambitious method: one that aims at triggering both small detonations from the unassimilable aspects of an oeuvre, and a more concentrated eruption of the underlying connectedness of terms. For Giacometti's oeuvre, these terms — Surrealist and Existentialist, abstract and figurative, avant-garde and modernist, ready-made and constructed — are what the dominant interpretations of Giacometti have kept separate. Their network of objectivity must be blown apart, not just to reveal its “purely subjective rigging,” but rather more urgently, to demonstrate the connections that course through the crisis at hand.

## Hollow Man

This dissertation identifies three problem-spaces for both Giacometti's sculpture and broader crises of representation: 1) the interwar objectification of modern subjects based on their physiognomy, 2) the model of the nation-state in the late 1930s, and 3) the fascist disintegration of the boundaries of the individual body and collective body-politic. Chapter One, "Face and Facet," examines the portrait busts that Giacometti made directly after his departure from Surrealism. Beginning with a consideration of the two sculptures that bookend Giacometti's Surrealist period, *Gazing Head* (1929) and *Cube* (1934), I demonstrate that the head — far from being a sudden shift in the content of his work in 1935 — preoccupied Giacometti throughout his early career. This preoccupation was timely, synchronized with the resurgence in the 1930s of the "physiognomic worldview," an epistemological framework that sought to stabilize and codify the relationship of surface to significance. The resurrection of this worldview belied growing anxieties regarding the integrity and legibility of the figurative "face" of the nation, anxieties that made Giacometti's pivot to a practice of making portrait busts less a withdrawal from his historical moment than a tumble into one of its volatile motifs.

These portrait busts evolved alongside the campaigns of scientific racism, in which the physiognomic objectification of the face served as a conduit for genocidal violence. In contrast, the increasingly rutted and chaotic texture of Giacometti's busts direct their almost parodic abuse of the sculptural surface against these violent ends. Plying the discontinuity between the surface or face and the structure or significant depths of the head gave Giacometti a means to resist the physiognomic logic of a model shared by sculpture and modern subjectivity — a model that,

despite its place in a humanist tradition of modernist sculpture, facilitated this political subjection.

To trouble the distinction between Giacometti's "abstract" Surrealist work and his "realist" portrait busts, I analyze these terms as they emerged in his practice and in relation to physiognomic abstractions and realisms of the face, including the codifications of racial anthropology and his own "Etruscan-type" features. Beginning with the abstraction of the face pursued in Giacometti's early work, this chapter demonstrates how his engagement with Surrealism simultaneously reckoned with the surface of modernist sculpture. Giacometti's turn to the portrait bust in 1935 evolved toward a concept of form that works through the surface to mitigate the objectification of the face upon which the physiognomic worldview depended.

Chapter Two, "Mountain and Miniature," concerns a more concrete world-view: the vista of the Swiss Alps. It centers on the one occasion when Giacometti attempted to exhibit his portrait busts or miniatures during his "crisis years": the 1939 Swiss National Exhibition, or Landi, in Zurich. Giacometti's little-known and ultimately unsuccessful proposition to display one of his small heads on a large pedestal in the courtyard of the Fashion and Textile Pavilion was a watershed moment. It defined his miniatures as the result of an operation of scale rather than a factor of size, and therefore as a matter of the relation between viewer and sculpture. This insight restores to Jean-Paul Sartre's widely-quoted epigram for Giacometti's sculpture, "man as he is seen — from a distance," its original interpersonal dimension, long buried under a universalizing, boilerplate-existentialist understanding of the phrase. It furthermore yokes Giacometti's miniatures to the broader cultural campaign of the Landi, known as the "*défense spirituelle*," which sought to defend the integrity of Swiss identity — in spite of its tribal, linguistic, religious, and topographical divisions — against the threat of neighboring ethno-

nationalisms. For the organizers of the Landi, no less than the critics and novelists C.-F. Ramuz and Denis de Rougemont, the key lay in asserting Switzerland's "crowd symbol," Elias Canetti's term for an image that functions as a lodestone for national feeling: the Alps, which served as Switzerland founding myth, central natural resource, and defense strategy. I assess the Landi's approach to representing the Alps against the geopolitical paradoxes of the mountains, which make a cohesive view of the Confederation both conceptually and phenomenologically challenging. I then nominate Giacometti's courtyard experiment as the oblique fulfillment of this challenge. Prompting the experience of mountainous scale through its figuration of reciprocal yet distant viewing, Giacometti's miniature engaged the national myth of the Alps.

In the final chapter, Giacometti is no longer an outsider intervening in the visual tropes of myth, but a man entangled in its structures. "Body and Boundary" discusses the convergence of his miniatures with the crisis of fascism on the representation of the body. Shortly after the Landi, Giacometti began to make uncountable minuscule figures and busts — first in Paris, and then in Geneva, where he was marooned from 1942 until the autumn of 1945, unable to secure a visa to return to Paris. In this chapter, I take up the miniatures as a set through which Giacometti endeavored to realize what he called the "third object," a synthesis between the self and the exterior world. In order to come to an understanding of this third object, I track his sculptures between 1939 and 1945 through three material transformations: miniaturization, multiplication, and immolation. Each of these transformations entangles the miniatures in a series of polarities — between the distant and close-at-hand, the singular and multiple, the immediate and recursive, and finally between the empty space and the destroyed mass — that were paralleled in the image and concept of the fascist body. I argue that Giacometti's Surrealist work, in its eroticism and sadism, as well as its exploration of contagious and unstable subjective relations, had drawn him

into this network of polarities shared with the fascist body. Implicated in its conditions, Giacometti could not find an alternative model for the body, except through its destruction.

The sculptural preoccupations of these three chapters — surface, scale, and multiplicity — characterize the main stylistic features of the postwar sculpture: the turbulent texture, manipulation of its surrounding atmospheric space, and remarkable consistency that marked his postwar style from the first works he made upon his return to Paris in the winter of 1945 to his death in 1966. And it is therefore on style that this dissertation concludes, in a coda that returns to the models of crisis discussed at the outset of this introduction.

The title of this dissertation alludes to Eugene Weber’s epithet for 1930s France, the “hollow years,” which describes a decade of depopulation, political destabilization, and economic and psychological deflation in spatial terms.<sup>53</sup> But “hollow” also characterizes the empty space around Giacometti’s sculpture: the empty critico-historical space of the blind spot, for one, but also the atmospheric space discharged by the works themselves. For Yves Bonnefoy, his drastically reduced postwar figures were a *via negativa*, an apophatic depiction-by-negation.<sup>54</sup> For Donald Judd, those same figures were “the apple core of their spatial apple,” implying a space by serving as its gnawed-over remainder.<sup>55</sup> “Shape without form, shade without color / Paralyzed force, gesture without motion,” they take T.S. Eliot’s “Hollow Men,” the other incantation here, as a proposition for sculpture.<sup>56</sup> The sculptures Giacometti produced between 1935 and 1945 are the strangely compelling product of a paralyzed creative force. They are as isolated in art history as Giacometti is now ensconced in his fame. They are repetitive and abject, yet forceful and exquisite in their detail, formidable as an example of persistence, but stymied by predicaments of representation that Giacometti shared with his historical context.

The hollow resounds. This fact reminds us that what is closed in on itself will reverberate when knocked, and when knocked hard enough, may ring like a bell. This resonance was no less than Michel Leiris's definition of crisis. Crises, he writes, are the "only moments that matter in a life,"

moments where what is outside us seems brusquely to respond to the summons that we issue from the inside, where the external world opens itself up so that a sudden communication establishes itself between it and our heart. I have a few memories of this order from my life and all of them come down to seemingly futile events, which are denuded of symbolic value and are, you could say, *gratuitous*: in a luminous street in Montmartre, a negress from the Black Birds holding a bouquet of wet roses in her joined hands, a rowboat on which I found myself aboard separating slowly from a quay, a few snippets of songs murmured by chance, a strange animal I came across in a Greek ruin that must have been some kind of giant lizard... Only can poetry emerge from such 'crises,' and the only works that count are the ones that provide equivalents of them. I love Giacometti's sculpture because everything he makes is like the petrification of one of these crises [...].<sup>57</sup>

I buried the lede: Leiris's formulation of crisis emerges in the first article ever written on Giacometti, published in 1929 in *Documents*. Crisis, for Leiris, remains a breakdown, but only of the thresholds that separate interiority from experience. Its blind spot is negated by blind poetry itself, and made over into revelation. Crisis appears with an unforeseen visualization of an internal state that Giacometti subsequently "petrifies" or formalizes in his early sculpture; it is itself the happy but rare functioning of communicating vessels between one's heart and everything beyond it.<sup>58</sup>

In place of catastrophe and cataclysm, Leiris's crisis takes on the character of the "gratuitous" coincidence, only registered more keenly because it occurs with "the heart," a location significant not so much for its sentimental as its spatial nature, as an enclosed and unknown interior that tallies suddenly with an unbounded, external space of spontaneous

configurations. In its gratuitousness and futility, crisis is therefore recast from a key narrative device into something that may actually be its opposite: a moment in which one actually *lives* one's time. Creating equivalents of this communication may be the role of art. But it may also be the yearning of art history: to indicate the resonance between an individual and a historical moment, petrified in an artwork — and in so doing, to set off another moment where the world opens up again, perhaps wide enough to accommodate our own communication with it.

One could object that this is a poetics, not a method, and that it confuses art history with its object. But it may nevertheless be a means that is well matched to the contrapuntal mode in which art meets history, and individuals, in turn, meet art: through moments of communication rather than causation, and through often seemingly gratuitous encounters. Decades after Leiris published that first article, Giacometti recounted his troubling sense of the work that illustrated it: *Gazing Head* (1929), one of his so-called plaque sculptures, which evokes a schematized three-quarter view of a face on single plane. He said,

It seemed to me that it resembled, in a certain way, things and myself. [...] [T]here was a sort of confusion: did I want to reproduce the things that I saw, or something affective? Or a certain feeling for forms that is interior and that I wanted to project outside myself? There is a mix-up there that I think I will never get out of!<sup>59</sup>

For many historians of Giacometti's oeuvre, such confusions — such crises — were restricted to his prewar work, and resolved after 1945 by his commitment to a phenomenological project or to the entelechy of Existential man. Yet in 1959, Giacometti saw himself still involved in this “mix-up.” From Leiris's point of view, what bothered him was the very thing that made his work incandescent: a crisis petrified, and nevertheless “prodigiously alive.”<sup>60</sup> The chapters that follow will intend to keep it that way.

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<sup>1</sup> Leo Steinberg, “Rodin,” in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> The question “What is an artistic crisis?” is therefore not something I aim to answer in this dissertation in any comprehensive manner; instead, I offer here a study of one crisis within the margins of its implications for modernism and its historical context. It seems to me unlikely, in any case, that one could arrive at a widely applicable definition of artistic crisis that also agrees with our ordinary use of the word. My reference below to an “art of crisis” similarly refers to art corresponding to that role in epochal narration, rather than to a codification of “crisis style.” Could such a codification or description be devised, much as has been done for “late style” (*Altersstil*) by Theodor Adorno or Edward Said? I leave that as an unanswered, though not unpromising, possibility. Theodor W. Adorno, “Late Style In Beethoven,” in *Essays on Music*, trans. Susan H. Gillespie and ed. Richard D. Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 564–68; Edward Said, *On Late Style* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Koselleck tracks its transformation over the course of centuries into its modern sense as, variously and overlappingly, a notion of history as permanent crisis (Schiller’s “world history is the judgment of the world); crisis as a process that both indicates and brings about the crossing of an epochal threshold; and crisis as a Last Judgment, which given our present stage of ecological destruction, militarization, and political precariousness, no longer requires theological backing. Reinhart Koselleck, “Crisis,” translated by Michaela W. Richter. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 2 (April 2006): 372; *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, translated by Todd Samuel Preston and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 240; Janet Roitman, “Crisis.” *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon*, no. 1 (Winter 2011). <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/issue1/crisis/>. Accessed November 8, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> On the notion of crisis resulting from the separation of morality and politics, as well a lucid analysis of Koselleck’s historiography of crisis, see Janet Roitman, *Anti-Crisis* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), pp. 38–44.

<sup>5</sup> This compression of historical crisis is no more unusual or absurd than the pretension of an artwork to encapsulate its era. Dealing in homologies, in other words, is not so much a flaw of art history as something consonant with how artworks tend to be valued and, consequently, studied.

<sup>6</sup> “Entretien avec Pierre Schneider” (1961), in *Alberto Giacometti: Écrits* (Paris: Hermann Éditeur, 2007), p. 230.

<sup>7</sup> Roitman, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> The financial crisis of 2008 is Roitman’s case study. As she notes, the displacement of analytic focus to questions of blame — whether it falls to craven bigwigs on Wall Street, to human error, to the inevitable paroxysms of capitalism, or to the claim that the autonomization of values of brick-and-mortar houses was a consequence of straying from some “true value” of property (which is, in fact, irrelevant the

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system of valuation) — not only demonstrates that crisis is a “non-locus from which to signify contingency,” it also crucially screens out certain concrete examinations of the situation. Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>9</sup> Since crisis is posited as an a priori, it raises the dilemma of how we know we are witnessing a crisis in history in the first place, and how one represents or bears witness to it. Roitman observes that the shorthand for this dilemma — the “unsayability” of crisis (canonically, of Auschwitz) — does not actually mean that the crisis entails the impossibility of speech or representation, but rather something closer to its self-evidence and closed signification. Crisis thus conceived, as a stable and presupposed form, “establishes the slate upon which the act of witnessing can potentially occur.” Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> These explanations are therefore part of this dissertation, but mostly as objects of analysis rather than confirmations or competing arguments vis-à-vis my own writing about Giacometti’s busts and miniatures.

<sup>11</sup> Christian Klemm, “Alberto Giacometti: Works in Plaster,” *Alberto Giacometti, Beyond Bronze: Masterworks in Plaster and Other Materials* (Zurich: Kunsthaus Zurich and Scheidegger & Spiess, 2017), p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> See Valerie Fletcher, *Alberto Giacometti, 1901-1966* (Washington, D.C.: Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1988), pp. 34–36; Gottfried Boehm, “The Demon of the Void: Alberto Giacometti’s Spaces,” in *Alberto Giacometti: The Origin of Space* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2011), p. 49; Karl Ruhrberg, Klaus Honnef, Manfred Schneckenburger, Christiane Fricke, eds., *Art of the 20th Century, Part I* (London: Taschen, 2000), pp. 487–90; W.S. di Piero, “Out of Eden: On Alberto Giacometti,” in *Out of Eden: Essays in Modern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 81–98. For an overview and critique of the influence of Sartre’s texts on this convention of an existentialist Giacometti, see also Julia Kelly, “Alberto Giacometti, Michel Leiris, and the Myths of Existentialism,” in *Giacometti: Critical Essays*, eds. Julia Kelly and Peter Read (London: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 151–69.

<sup>13</sup> I have tried in this dissertation to note where historians and critics have opened the field of discussion, by posing questions or including insights that land beyond this thesis’s terms. It remains the case that the vast majority of scholarship on Giacometti is concerned with defining the artist’s position through the relatively timeless terms of phenomenological realism, to the degree that I must refer readers seeking citations of this argument to my full bibliography. There are naturally better and worse arguments that have been made within this consensus view, but since I am concerned with the blind spot of the thesis *in general*, I will leave the debate to those who have already engaged it insightfully and well. Their voices, in any case, will return in what follows.

<sup>14</sup> “Entretien avec Alain Jouffroy” (1955), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>15</sup> “Entretien avec André Parinaud” (1962), *Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 240–41.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Clay, “Alberto Giacometti [1963],” in *Visages de L’art Moderne* (Paris: Editions Rencontre, 1969), p. 158.

<sup>17</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “No More Play,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), p. 85.

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<sup>18</sup> Nadia Schneider, “Between Crisis and Wonderment. An Introduction to the Theme of Crisis in the Work of Alberto Giacometti,” in *Alberto Giacometti: Retrospective* (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2009), pp. 61, 76.

<sup>19</sup> For this reason, Scott advocates for a *strategic* criticism that understands itself as responding to or, alternatively, circumventing the rhetoric attached to any particular problem with an eye toward highlighting the questions that maintain their relevance in the present.<sup>19</sup> My research maps its problem-space, in this sense, largely implicitly, in that the questions raised around representation in a political crisis that receive attention in this project are strategic in Scott’s sense. The major themes of the chapters — the resurgence of physiognomic thinking, the anxiety over the coherence of the nation-state, and the proliferation of images of the body and its destruction — are also major themes for analyzing the politics of representation today, although spelling out these connections is a matter for another book. David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 4. Scott draws his concept primarily from his readings of A.G. Collingwood and Quentin Skinner, although he acknowledges its debt to Foucault as well as Wittgenstein and Austin. Stuart Hall, “Interview with Stuart Hall,” *BOMB Magazine* 90 (Winter 2005), <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2711/david-scott>.

<sup>20</sup> Indeed, this phrase titled the exhibition and catalogue of the one study devoted to this period in Giacometti’s oeuvre, “Alberto Giacometti, retour à la figuration, 1933–1947,” held at the Musée Rath in Geneva and the Musée national d’art moderne in Paris in the summer and fall of 1986 respectively, and curated by Hendel Teicher and Christian Derouet, with the assistance of Jean-Claude Strobino and Catherine Duruel. *Alberto Giacometti, retour à la figuration, 1933–1947*, ex. cat. (Geneva and Paris: Musée Rath and Musée national d’art moderne/Centre George Pompidou, 1986).

I understand representation here as it has been discussed by Roger Chartier and Louis Marin, who note that representations are *both* substitutions for an absent body or object and public presentations of a person, the “exhibition of a presence.” Figuration and figurative sculpture appear as terms in this dissertation, though as Robert Slifkin has noted, the word is anachronistic. Like Slifkin, I understand the key opposition as obtaining not between figuration (mimetic or morphological correspondence) and abstraction (non-objective, “decorative” image-making), but between the figurative and the literal. Yet whereas Slifkin appeals to a grammatical model, whereby the figurative denotes an image’s rhetorical and referential capacities as a mode of substitution, I look to the interdependency of the two senses of representation: it is because the “figure” is a substitution that it creates the possibility for misunderstanding and opens it onto the set of social, technological, and political practices that concern the artifice or constructed nature of the “exhibition of a presence.” Roger Chartier, “The World As Representation (1989),” in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, edited by Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, *Postwar French Thought, Volume 1* (New York: The New Press, 1995), pp. 552–54; Roger Chartier, “The Power and Limits of Representation,” in *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 90–103; Robert Slifkin, *Out of Time: Philip Guston and the Refiguration of Postwar American Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. xi-xii, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Conjuncture can be defined in three ways: first, as a surface phenomenon that occurs over the “structure”; second, as a punctual moment in historical development (in both these cases, the dichotomy of conjuncture and structure leads the latter to drop out of the analysis and the former to become merely descriptive); and third, as a complex formation in a specific historical situation — a conception that avoids the aforementioned pitfalls of the first time definitions. See Juha Koivisto and Mikko Lahtinen, “Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism: Conjuncture, politico-historical,” *Historical Materialism* 20.1 (2012): 267–277.

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<sup>22</sup> Stuart Hall, “Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three ‘Moments’ in Post-war History.” *History Workshop Journal* 61 (1) (2006): 3.

<sup>23</sup> A conservative estimate places the number of “mobilized” monuments at 1,527–1,750. Kirrily Freeman, *From Bronzes to Bullets: Vichy and the Destruction of French Public Statuary, 1941-1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Notably, T.J. Clark defined his project in his Courbet study *Image of the People* as an effort to go beyond intuitive analogies between aesthetic forms and ideological content in order to “discover the network of real, complex relations between the two” through their historically specific mediations, a project he carried through in his subsequent writing on Manet. T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> My emphasis. Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso Books, 1988), p. 127. See also Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), pp. 41–2.

<sup>26</sup> As Jean Vuilleumier told James Lord, Giacometti was enrolled in the latter in the Industrial Arts program, which covered enamelware, jewelry, and architectural decoration — which was to become Giacometti’s *gagne-pain* in the 1930s — along with basic foundations in sculpture, which he apparently did not terribly enjoy. James Lord, “Notebook 23,” James Lord Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. GEN MSS 790, Box 25, Folder 278. Giovanni Giacometti reported to his friend and fellow artist Carl Albert Angst that Alberto had “entered the École des Beaux-Arts to take classes with Misters Vibert and Estoppey, but unfortunately didn’t find that the atmosphere suited him. He though he perceived a lack of interest and a kind of dilettantism in Vibert and a restrained pedantry in Estoppey which disappointed him, and he left the school after eight days.” Letter from Giovanni Giacometti to Carl Albert Angst, Maloja, September 5, 1919. Fonds Carl Albert Angst, Archives de la Ville de Genève.

<sup>27</sup> Giacometti recounted his dissatisfaction with Bourdelle’s studio, where the instruction was largely based around figure studies of a live model. Daniel Marquis-Sébie, *Le Message de Bourdelle* (Paris: L’Artisan du live, 1931). “During [...] the period of the academy—there had been for me a disagreeable contrast between life and work, one got in the way of the other. I could find no solution. The fact of wanting to copy a body at set hours—a body that otherwise left me cold—seemed to me an activity that was basically false, stupid and which robbed me of many hours of my life,” he later lamented. Nonetheless, as will be discussed in Chapter 1, Bourdelle’s technique and his high estimation for the intelligence required to “get a grasp of reality from close up” bear strong affinities with Giacometti’s figural practice. “[Première] Lettre à Pierre Matisse” (1948), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 90. English translation in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1968), p. 599.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Cocteau, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. X (Lausanne: Marguerat, 1940), p. 140.

<sup>29</sup> Michel Leiris, “Alberto Giacometti,” *Documents* Vol. 1, no. 4 (1929): 209–14; Carl Einstein, “Exposition de sculpture moderne,” *Documents* Vol. 1, no. 7 (1929): 391. In that same season, he received an ambivalent review by Christian Zervos in *Cahiers d’art* and, according to Charles-Albert Cingria and René Gimpel, the recommendations of Jean Cocteau and Georges-Henri Rivière respectively

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— in short, the attentions of the full spectrum of the Parisian art world. Christian Zervos, “Notes sur la sculpture contemporaine. A propos de la récente Exposition Internationale de Sculpture, Galerie Georges Bernheim, Paris,” *Cahiers d’art* (1929): 465–73; Charles-Albert Cingria, “Falconetti sculpture,” *Aujourd’hui*, no. 6 (January 9, 1930): 5; René Gimpel, *Journal d’un collectionneur-marchand de tableaux* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1963), p. 403.

<sup>30</sup> Giacometti reprised this scaffolds in *Cage* (1949–50) and *The Nose* (1949).

<sup>31</sup> Maurice Nadeau, *Histoire du surréalisme* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1945), pp. 215–216.

<sup>32</sup> Notebook c. 1934–44, *Écrits*, p. 485. FAAG 2000-0016. Giacometti attended at least one of the meetings of the A.E.A.R. in its first iteration as the *Association des artistes révolutionnaires*, as Paul Eluard reported to Gala Eluard on 29 January 1932. Paul Eluard, *Letters to Gala*, ed. Pierre Dreyfus, trans. Jesse Browner (New York: Paragon House, 1989), p. 119.

<sup>33</sup> Compare this entry from 1934 — “l’effroyable mentalité bourgeoise qui fausse tout, la combattre partout à tout prix, pour la Révolution” — with this note written later in the very same journal: “La politique: tout assez clair rien à faire pour moi maintenant, me remettre debout sur tous les plans” *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 502, 506.

<sup>34</sup> André Breton, Georges Hugnet, Marcel Jean, Benjamin Péret, Yves Tanguy. “[Étant donné que Giacometti a tenté...],” February 14, 1935. Fonds André Breton. <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100912280>. Accessed April 28, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Dalí described the work as a “wooden ball with a female notch[...] suspended on a violin string over a moon-scythe form whose blade almost touches the groove. The observer is forced by his instincts to move the ball along the blade of the scythe, which is only possible over a short distance due to the shortness of the string.” Dalí is more attentive than Nadeau to the limitations on movement set by Giacometti’s sculpture — for, indeed, there is no “in motion” to the work, since any motion to the ball would simply break its contact with the scythe-edge — but nevertheless seems to suggest that the observer actually physically interacts with the work. Salvador Dalí, “Objets surréalistes,” *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (Paris), n. 3 (December 1931): 16–17.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> André Breton, “Crise de l’objet,” *Cahiers d’art*, no. 1–2 (1936): 22.

<sup>38</sup> Steven Harris, “Voluntary and Involuntary Sculpture,” in *Found Sculpture and Photography from Surrealism to Contemporary Art* (London: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 13–37.

<sup>39</sup> See Harris, *ibid.*, and also Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 119.

<sup>40</sup> See Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1977), pp. 120–24.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Serra, *Writings Interviews* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 292; Donald Judd, *Complete Writings 1959-1975* (New York: Judd Foundation, 1975), pp. 44–45. See also Potts, op. cit., pp. 121, 260–61; Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), p. 44.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Selz, “Acknowledgments,” *Alberto Giacometti*. ex. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1965), p. 8. Giacometti insisted on the social nature of his art, despite the isolation required for its production. “For me, there’s no wish to be an artist in solitude, no smugness in that sense. On the other hand, I should add that as an intellectual and as a citizen, I think that all life is the opposite of solitude, because it’s a fabric of relations with others.... A solitary condition of seeking is not necessarily linked to a poetics of solitude.” Interview with Antonio del Guercio, “L’Arte nella società d’oggi,” *La Rinascita*, no. 8, June 23, 1962.

<sup>46</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* no. 8 (1979): 33.

<sup>47</sup> See Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003); Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1996); David Joselit, *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910–1941* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998); Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture,” in *Neo-Avantgarde and the Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 1–39.

<sup>48</sup> George Baker, “The Other Side of the Wall,” *October* no. 120 (Spring 2007): 110.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>50</sup> In 2014, a group of art and architectural historians gathered to discuss the legacy of Krauss’s essay. In a roundtable with the author, Benjamin Buchloh questioned the central role played by the monument in this theorization, noting that “one could just as well, I thought (and still think), theorize the commodity object as the matrix of sculptural reflection in the twentieth.” Such a theorization, Buchloh goes on to say, would integrate the history of the object from Duchamp through Dada, Surrealism, and *nouveau réalisme* — movements in which the commodity, rather than the monument, served as the principle foil. It was merrily suggested that Buchloh compose his own Klein diagram for his own “Expanded Field” essay with “commodity” and “sculpture” as the initial binary. “The Expanded Field *Then*: A Roundtable Discussion,” *Retracing the Expanded Field*, eds. Spyros Papapetros and Julian Rose (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014), p. 9, 15.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>52</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “The Essay as Form,” translated by Bob Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will, *New German Critique*, no. 32 (1984): 171.

<sup>53</sup> Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).

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<sup>54</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, *Alberto Giacometti: A Biography of His Work* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), p. 278.

<sup>55</sup> Donald Judd, *Large-Scale Works* (New York: Pace Wildenstein, 1993), quoted in Potts, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>56</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men” (1925), in *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1991), p. 79.

<sup>57</sup> Michel Leiris, op. cit., pp. 209–10.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. André Breton, *Les Vases communicants* (1932) (Paris: Gallimard, 1955).

<sup>59</sup> Georges Charbonnier, “Entretien Avec Alberto Giacometti,” *Le Monologue du Peintre, Vol. II* (Paris: Rene Julliard, 1959), p. 163.

<sup>60</sup> Although Leiris calls them “petrified crises,” “[t]here is nevertheless nothing dead about this sculpture; everything is, to the contrary, like the true fetishes that one can idolize (the true fetishes, that is, those that resemble us and are the objective form of our desire), prodigiously alive [...]” Leiris, op. cit., p. 210.

## CHAPTER 1

### FACE AND FACET

Only one man exists and has ever existed in the world. He is, in his entirety, in each of us. Therefore he is ourselves. Each is the other and the others. [...] Except that a phenomenon of which I do not even know the name seems to divide this single man *ad infinitum*, apparently breaks him up in both accident and form, and makes each of the fragments foreign to us.

The more I looked at them, *the less the portraits referred me to anyone*. To no one. No doubt it took me some time to reach the disheartening and thrilling conclusion that the portraits done by Rembrandt (after the age of fifty) have no reference to identifiable persons. No detail, no cast of features, has reference to a trait of character, to an individual psychology.

Jean Genet.<sup>1</sup>

*Everyone knows what a head is!* This, so it is said, was how André Breton chided Alberto Giacometti when he learned that the sculptor was sequestering himself in his studio to plug away at a set of portrait busts.<sup>2</sup> It is not hard to sympathize with Breton: by returning to that conventional genre, Giacometti had not just rejected the collective enterprise of the Surrealist object, an enterprise he himself had catalyzed; he had spurned the revolutionary pursuit behind it, all for what looked like a galling exercise of academicism. It was 1934: the year of the fascist riots and anti-fascist general strike, the unity pact of the French communist party and the international workers' movement, the First Congress of Soviet Writers. This was no time for convention. Breton's irritation may be understandable; his incredulity, less so. For Giacometti

had been making heads all along, from his planar *Gazing Head* (1929) to the thirteen-sided monolith *Cube* (1934), which Giacometti on occasion referred to explicitly as a “head” (Figs. 1.1, 1.2). These works bookend Giacometti’s brief tenure in the interwar avant-garde, during which time he became Surrealism’s premier and, strictly speaking, sole sculptor. As Surrealism moved toward the production of objects as agents of collective revelation, however, Giacometti’s own work remained characterized by the critique of modernist forerunners. *Gazing Head* and *Cube* are points along a trajectory of negations — first of Auguste Rodin’s prodigious example, then of Constantin Brancusi’s — with a single positive form at their center: the head.

Giacometti’s relation to this form nevertheless hung in the balance, caught in a conflict about sculpture’s social legitimacy in the 1930s. Breton’s disdain threw this conflict into relief. “Everyone knows what a head is”: Sculpture, the phrase implies, is not about what *is*, but *what should be*. Or, alternatively, sculpture is not about what is known; it is about what we do not yet understand. Giacometti’s retort — “*moi, pas,*” or “not me, I *don’t* know what a head is” — is less trivial when read in this light, as uncertainty over the head as *a subject of interwar sculpture*. For the head is the combat zone for sculpture’s realist and idealized modes, for the scrimmage of generic types and individual portraits, where bronze fixes the face’s features and petrifies its expressions. The head is also where sculpture must distinguish itself from what heads, once uncoupled from their bodies, can become: the skull, the talisman, the fetish, the death mask. It is, in short, the subject that sharpens the distinctions implied in Breton’s remark, between sculpture’s commitment to reality or ideality, and its differentiation from a horde of pedestrian things and uncanny objects.

For many who have written about Giacometti, however, Breton’s annoyance merely demonstrates his obliviousness to a pivot in Giacometti’s career. This was a shift toward an

unknown lying neither in the unconscious nor in dialectics, but in plain sight — in fact, in sight itself. Giacometti, they maintain, had come to see that the true practice of sculpture lay in the transcription of his vision of the world.<sup>3</sup> That notion is the towering and remarkably stable trope of Giacometti criticism, established with Jean-Paul Sartre’s 1948 catalogue text, “The Quest for the Absolute,” which introduced the quasi-aphoristic characterization of the sculptor’s ravaged and rawboned postwar figures as “man as he is seen — from a distance.”<sup>4</sup> That same notion marks 1935 as the end of an oeuvre devoted to the imagination and the beginning of a turn toward experience (“Art is merely a way of seeing,” Giacometti once professed) or toward the artwork as a phenomenological object (“A sculpture is only interesting to me,” he also stated, “insofar as it is, for me, a way of rendering my vision of the external world”).<sup>5</sup> Within these accounts, the portrait busts and miniatures that follow Giacometti’s Surrealist work are the signs of this turn. Or, better, they are the artifact of eleven years of crisis that began with this turn, and that preceded his triumphant emergence as a major postwar sculptor in 1946. They are therefore understood as ciphers of his repudiation of Surrealism, and evidence of the personal struggle that ensued.

The head, however, remains a stumbling block for these accounts because it both weds these “crisis epiphenomena” to his Surrealist sculpture — bookended, again, by the two heads of *Gazing Head* and *Cube* — and embeds them in the events of a decade when the head, and more particularly, the face had become the site of aesthetic as well as political schisms. To understand the topical significance of the face, this chapter will delve into the discourse around the “science” of codifying the face, physiognomy, as it resurfaced in Europe in the interwar years. The 1930s saw the rise of what Richard Gray has called the “physiognomic worldview,” after Rudolph

Kassner's 1930 publication of the same name (*Das physiognomische Weltbild*).<sup>6</sup> "[It is] no coincidence," wrote Kassner,

that [physiognomy] necessarily occupies the human spirit once more in an epoch in which all social bonds are beginning to dissolve and new ones beginning to evolve. For it is not merely a matter of physiognomics in the strict sense, but also of the fact that science (theory of relativity), historiography and the theory of nature (abandonment of the concept of progress, of evolution), as well as literature have become physiognomic.<sup>7</sup>

Physiognomy offered a basis for the discovery of new bonds in the form of seemingly immemorial ones — "face-values" that superseded historical structures and historically accumulated knowledge, exposing them as merely conventional, while pointing toward primordial affinities. In the eighteenth century, the demise of sumptuary laws and rapid expansion of the city made necessary a new semiotics for reading character.<sup>8</sup> Physiognomy emerged as an ideological instrument: projecting onto the civil subject a moral and characterologically profound inner self, permitting social reorganization on the basis of affinities rather than social standing. These sympathies were increasingly racial in the Weimar Republic and 1930s France, as physiognomic rhetoric was resurrected to articulate anxieties about the "faceless" urban industrial masses and to scapegoat foreigners accused of giving the nation a "sordid face."<sup>9</sup> Physiognomy offered new forms of bonding, mainly through (largely baseless) notions of racial kinship.

Giovanni Battista della Porta, who resurrected Aristotle's physiognomy for the early modern world, recalled that the term designated not only the interpretation (*gnōmon*) of nature (*phusis*), but its "rule" or "law," *gnōmon*'s other meaning.<sup>10</sup> As a pseudo-science deployed as law, physiognomy became notorious in the interwar period for participating in the legitimization of Nazi genocide in the name of racial purification.<sup>11</sup> To the extent that physiognomy has entered

the study of interwar art, it is in these terms: as a logic subtending the production of portrait photography — especially as compiled in photobooks such as Erich Retzlaff's 1931 *German People* and Erna Lendvai-Derksen's 1931 *Face of the German People* — that provided visual rhetoric or propaganda for the policies of National Socialism (Fig. 1.3).<sup>12</sup> Yet at the time, the “physiognomic turn” in photography was judged to be, quite simply, timely. “Whether one is of the Left of the Right,” wrote Walter Benjamin in his review of August Sander's 1929 *Face of Our Times*, “one will have to get used to being looked at in terms of one's provenance. And one will have to look at others the same way” (Fig. 1.4).<sup>13</sup> Photobooks like Sander's, Benjamin stressed, assumed urgency as training manuals for the optic of the decade. That Benjamin's review was titled a “Little History of Photography” suggests what art history has subsequently borne out: discussions of physiognomy in modern art have centered around the medium of photography, homologizing photography's material flatness with the flat-footedness of the physiognomic “science.”

Yet as Kassner himself noted, physiognomy is not merely a method for codifying the human face; it is a full epistemological framework. Moreover, as a synchronic rather than diachronic framework, it specifies that the intelligibility of phenomena is worked out through a theory of the relation of surface to significance, or face to psychological depth. The physiognomic worldview heaved overboard the Enlightenment narrative of progress through accumulated knowledge, returning to a more archaic episteme. It gratified interwar subjects who were as eager to reject the world order that brought about the disaster of WWI as they were to unearth, beneath the spurious hierarchies and increasingly unstable social relations that composed the social fabric, surer grounds for collective identity. Therein lies the rub. Physiognomy's “surface hermeneutics” provided a complement to the Freudian “depth

hermeneutics,” and suffered the same paradox.<sup>14</sup> Both sought to undermine the ideological cleavage between interior and exterior life, yet both tended to reduce one or the other to transparent signs, thereby reinforcing the very hierarchies they sought to dissolve.

Meaning is a physiognomy, wrote Wittgenstein.<sup>15</sup> For the philosopher, theorizing about how a word *means* is like theorizing about how a face *expresses*: one can no more split a word from its sense than a smile from a smiley face.<sup>16</sup> Expression cannot be sundered from the form. Given that this indissolubility of form and expression is considered constitutive of art, the artwork is, in turn and symmetrically, “facialized” by Wittgenstein. Music, despite its resistance to anthropomorphizing, had a “countenance” (round and full in the case of Bruckner, narrow for Haydn), whereas Wittgenstein claimed that to lack a musical ear was like lacking the ability to recognize faces. A common intuition prevails here: artworks and faces are bound together because the expression of aesthetic objects parallels the expressiveness of the human face.

Wittgenstein was not alone in ascribing physiognomies to artworks to account for their expressivity. Consider Walter Benjamin’s description in his famous “Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility” of the auratic artwork as something that gazes back at its viewer, or Theodor Adorno’s claim that “expression is the suffering countenance of artworks,” rather than their makers. If expression simply illustrated one’s subjective feelings, Adorno wrote, “it would be null and void; the artist who condemns a work as being an impression rather than an invention knows this perfectly well.”<sup>17</sup> Instead of this impression of the artist’s feelings, he contended that art should express extra-artistic situations, “historical processes and formations [that are] already sedimented in them and speak out of them.” Adorno’s opposition between superficial personal sentiment and deep socio-historical formations is reinforced by the spatial qualities of his description: the print or impression of a “null and void” art, against the expression or outward

projection of historical sedimentation. The face is not only the operable metaphor here for the way in which art “expresses” or makes meaning; it is a face-*as*-surface, hovering over a volume of deep formations.

Physiognomy, as a theory of how meaning is written on the (sur)face, is therefore an interpretive practice that models not just a hermeneutics of art in general, but one particularly adapted to the medium that relates surfaces to volumes: sculpture. For Adorno, sculpture offered a metaphor for artistic meaning that other mediums could not provide. “[I]f what is expressed becomes the tangible content [*Inhalt*] of the artist’s soul, and the artwork a copy of this content,” he continues, “the work degenerates into a blurred photograph.”<sup>18</sup> To escape this blurry, photographic flattening, art must resist devolving into the expression *of* some feeling or other, and instead model the “here I am” or “this is what I am” of the subject itself, “as if artworks, by molding themselves to the subject through their organization, recapitulated the way the subject originated.”<sup>19</sup> The autonomous artwork is not just *modeled* on the autonomous subject; it is *molded* to it. By “recapitulating” the class formations that forged modern subjects, it becomes a “cast” of the essential historical processes sedimented in them.

Here are the makings of a paradox in interwar sculpture: to claim autonomy, art must reject expressions of psychological interiority and instead reproduce how that subject was constructed. But as Europe experienced a resurgence of a pseudo-science of physiognomy, which determined the construction of subjects through the codification of their facial features, sculpture seeking to fashion itself similarly was likely to resemble something similarly “objectified,” or precisely *non*-autonomous. This chapter will argue that this paradox was one horn of a dilemma for Giacometti, a dilemma that has since taken on the historical shorthand of “crisis.” When later in life, Giacometti was asked to explain the origins of this crisis, he put it in these precisely anti-

psychological terms: having “abandon[ed] the real” as a subject of sculpture, his experiments ranged ever closer to abstraction before ultimately “hitting ‘the wall’! The fabrication of volumes that were only objects. But,” he noted, “the object is not a sculpture.”<sup>20</sup> No longer capable of differentiating between the procedures for making Surrealist sculpture and what it looked like to make just any old thing (read: any new object), Giacometti felt himself pitched against something unsurmountable. He rejected this double objectification with an artistic about-face that took the form, not incidentally, of devotion *to* the face.

How is a sculpture not like an object? How is a head not like a thing? How should a surface hermeneutics — or, perhaps, any theory of meaning — that moves metaphorically through the face, grapple with the complexities of the communicative functions of the human countenance? For Giacometti, the answer was firstly: through the face. Through the face, not just because it is the conventional site of expression, but because the face is where expression and form cannot be divided. The face sustains the complex relation between surface and depth, appearance and structure, the subjective and fleeting look and the organic, depersonalized apparatus of organ and bone. The face is the public part of the body, that which goes forth into the space of dialogue. But it is also, importantly, the part of our body that we can never really see except in reflections, be they in mirrors or in other people’s faces as they react to our own. More precisely, then, the face is the most interpreted part of the body because its significance only emerges through relations. (This may be the other meaning of “meaning is a physiognomy” for Wittgenstein: my expressions, like my language, are meaningful only in action, insofar as they are seen and understood by and with others.) Yet as an uncrossable threshold between two people, and between the buried source of expression and its reception, the face also suggests some fundamental unknowability. “If the surface is the location of the body’s meaning,” Susan

Stewart summarizes, “it is because that surface is invisible to the body itself. And if the face reveals a depth and profundity which the body itself is not capable of, it is because the eyes and to some degree the mouth are openings onto fathomlessness.”<sup>21</sup> In the following history of modernist sculpture, therefore, the primacy of the surface does not imply the exclusion of content outside of the medium. To the contrary, focusing on the surface redelivers the medium to the complexities of its communicative uses.

To put it otherwise: Giacometti’s emphasis on the face *of* and *in* sculpture discloses the non-obviousness, rather than banality (to recall Breton’s slight), of the sculpted head. In what follows, I will venture that the same must be said of the politics of this return. Though Giacometti sought to disentangle himself from both Surrealism’s aesthetics and its political commitments, the form that his withdrawal took — a seemingly conventional, “objective” portrait bust — steered him into the center of a larger clash concerning the power and violence facilitated by the objectification of the subject in the 1930s. In France, the portrait bust may seem like the very image of the “return to order”: a genre tied to classicism on one hand and Enlightenment codifications of the passions on the other, absorbing all too easily a chauvinist rhetoric that sought the true “physiognomy” of the nation in an art form that could merge a classical lineage with France’s own historical high points. But in its Janus-faced capacities to both depict an individual and present a type, the bust played into the existential and social anxieties cued by Genet in this chapter’s epigraph. To the extent that we are the same, forged in the same historical processes and formations, our individuality is an illusion produced by the fragmentary view we are always only afforded. But to the extent that we, as individuals, find representation — through depictions or, in democracies, through elections — we find the representative must stand for no one in particular. The subtlety of this position stands out in relief

against totalitarian regimes and the violence of their programs, as was the case in the 1930s. To defend that subtlety, it bears saying: Everyone does not know what a head is.

## **The Head as Research**

In the mid-1930s, a new neighbor arrived at 46, rue Hippolyte-Maindron, the narrow horseshoe of studios in Montparnasse that Giacometti occupied from 1926 until his death four decades later. Her name was Margaret “Rita” Gueffier. Born in Jersey to an English mother and a French father, Rita moved to Paris in the 1920s, painted and modeled occasionally, and eventually settled after the war in a small village near the border of Geneva with her partner, Julienne “Lili” Jaumary, where they lived a quiet life running a ceramics studio.<sup>22</sup> Little else is known about her, except the following: that she had a pointed chin and a slightly pursed mouth, that she had high cheekbones and deep-set eyes, that as a young woman, she wore her hair in an Eton crop, and that she was rather exceptionally patient. We know these things because, starting in the winter of 1934, Rita posed for Giacometti nearly every afternoon for several years (Fig. 1.5).<sup>23</sup> His brother Diego modeled for him in the mornings, and Rita arrived in the afternoons, sometimes sitting until well into the evening. Giacometti began their portrait busts anew twice each year, “always the same, without ever finishing them,” setting the studies aside once he had made a cast.<sup>24</sup>

Sixteen of these casts still exist today. With Rita, Giacometti had returned to working in Plasticine, at least during their initial sessions. It was the material he used for his first sculpture, when he was only thirteen — a bust of his brother Diego — and one that he had more or less

abandoned during the years before, when most of his works were modeled in clay and then produced in plaster, wood, or marble, often by other craftsmen (Fig. 1.6). The surviving works from 1935 until 1939 are largely plaster casts made from piece-molds of the original clay or Plasticine model, with a few bronzes made in the postwar period from sand casts of these plasters. The earliest include a bust hewn out of wood and two so-called “masks” of hollowed-out plaster that depict Diego and Rita’s faces from temple to temple (Figs. 1.7, 1.8). But these works are outliers; Giacometti appears to have quickly hit upon a formula that brooked little variation between 1935 and the war. The busts of Rita and Diego all measure either 10 or 23 centimeters tall, give or take a centimeter. They include the neck, slightly fluted in Rita’s case to balance the heft of the head, but no other pedestal (Figs. 1.9, 1.10).<sup>25</sup> The volumes of the head were modeled first and then detailed with a pen-knife and Giacometti’s fingernails, but only so far as to render the basic features that add up to a likeness. Thus the shape of the lips and tip of the nose are detailed, but the ears are left as simple outcroppings; the orbitals of the eyes and seam of the eyelids are cleanly denoted, but not the texture of the hair. The busts’ surface therefore retains a sense of ductility that gives them a tense, leathery materiality, closer to Henri Matisse’s *Jeanettes* than the airy and perfected countenances of Charles Despiau’s portrait heads (Fig. 1.11). This tactile matter-of-factness is redoubled by the plainness of his sitters’ expressions. In work after work, Rita and Diego stare out with the affect of someone posing for a passport photo. They are like anti-*têtes-d’expression*, showing their subject neither lost in thought nor lost in emotion, but rather simply present — in the way one is present for a roll call.

Passport photos, roll calls: what seems remarkable about these works at first glance is their weirdly insistent banality, coming on the heels of the inventive works that had first garnered Giacometti critical attention. Juxtapositions of abstract forms in Giacometti’s Surrealist objects

prompted frissons of erotic or uneasy energy. By contrast, there appears to be neither sensuality nor discomfort in these simple studies. On the face of it, Giacometti had hired a model, and seemingly let go his ambition — returning to the comforts of youth just like he had returned to Plasticine. François Stahly recalled a visit to the studio in 1935: Giacometti's Surrealist sculptures had been “moved out of the way at random and now lay there, some of them piled one on top of the other and some badly damaged in places. Giacometti's interest was somewhere else. [...] Everything else, all the diversity of things that life tends to bring daily into a room, had fallen here like withered leaves, and now lay on the floor, forming rubbish piles that got deeper and deeper as the years passed.”<sup>26</sup> Stahly's impression of Giacometti's new preoccupation was much like Breton's. It seemed to him that Giacometti's fixation on these busts had turned a once vibrant engagement with the world into so much detritus. The return to the academic exercise of modeling a bust from life had seemingly rendered insignificant all his work of the previous years, and in the process had begun to bury the artist in rubbish drifts of what he could no longer recognize, or no longer process.

One can easily psychologize about this sudden shift in Giacometti's practice. In the early 1930s, Giacometti was swept up in the activities of Surrealism, but struggled to maintain both his social footing and his artistic autonomy. Giacometti's position in Surrealism had hardly been secure or steadfast. Siding with Aragon during the infamous “Misère de la poésie” episode, in which Breton maladroitly defended Aragon for the latter's inflammatory poem and exposed their ideological rift, Giacometti then subsequently attempted to mend his relationship with Breton through a series of obsequious letters.<sup>27</sup> He attended meetings for the Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires (A.E.A.R.), and then repudiated the organization.<sup>28</sup> He maintained running registers in his notebooks of the interest or derivativeness of his fellow Surrealists, all

the while making refined sculptures out of plaster, marble, and wood for a movement that had declared a program of “objects of symbolic functioning [that] left no place for formal preoccupations.”<sup>29</sup> To add to Giacometti’s ambivalence, Surrealism and the French art world at large were in significant disarray by the mid-1930s: although Surrealism was expanding abroad, in France, the movement was stymied by political schisms, ideological compromise in the search for new audiences, and a market that showed no signs of recovery.<sup>30</sup> Critics meanwhile were calling, not for more collective experimentation, but rather for a new Cézanne, yet no one had arrived to take up the mantle.<sup>31</sup> Given all this, Giacometti’s return to a concrete, limited field of observation may look, in fact, like a predictable withdrawal into convention at a time of personal and political confusion. The regimented schedule he kept for his two models could similarly be explained as a desire to take comfort in rigid structure when little else seemed to offer it. Such assumptions underlie art historians’ and curators’ claims that the busts made in these “years of crisis” illustrated his need in 1935 for a “new beginning.”<sup>32</sup> It would seem that Giacometti reached a breaking point, and had retreated to the safety of known quantities and familiar activities.

Yet Giacometti explained that he did not initially think of his employment of Rita as a break from Surrealism. Instead, his studies of Rita were supposed to be brief and utilitarian, directed to the end of making more Surrealist compositions. Giacometti’s Surrealist objects had long incorporated the human body and, as we will see, the head in particular. Early examples evoked abstracted body fragments or anamorphic figures or faces, such as the architectural *Head Fallen into a Graph*, which recalls 17<sup>th</sup>-century Flemish anthropomorphic landscapes, or *Project for a Passageway*, an undulating maquette of connected vestibules that suggests a diagram of the large intestine or else a primitive game of Mouse Trap. Viewed from above, however, it

resembles a beheaded woman whose blood drops into the guillotine box like discarded pistachio shells (Figs. 1.12, 1.13). By 1934, Giacometti had moved on to more straightforward depictions of the human figure with his *Mannequin* (later, *Walking Woman*) and *Invisible Object*, both of which were hieratic, stylized standing nudes (Fig. 1.14). “I had seen anew the bodies that attracted me in reality and the abstract forms that seemed to me to be true in sculpture, but I wanted to do the former without losing the latter,” Giacometti wrote to Pierre Matisse.<sup>33</sup> As he explained, he anticipated his sessions with Rita would last only a couple of weeks, just long enough to generate “sufficient documents to make something out of them, that is, to make compositions and produce works.”<sup>34</sup> It was as though his old teacher’s words had worked their way into him after all those years: “To keep your efforts within some sort of bounds,” Antoine Bourdelle had advised Giacometti and his fellow students at the Grande Chaumière, “you should limit your field of observation now and then: make portrait busts, lots of them. That is very healthy practice. You can concentrate better, because you are occupying yourself with a narrower range of materials. That is real research work, believe me!”<sup>35</sup> Rather than a new beginning, or a crisis driving him to repeat the early days of his artistic instruction, the winter of 1934 to 1935 might therefore have been spent “researching” an interest integral to his Surrealist work.

According to some, however, a continuance of Surrealism was never in the cards — not because Giacometti had retreated too far into academicism, but rather because he was never much of a Surrealist in the first place. “He didn’t make a stopover in the 1920s and 30s in the problems and thought — the revolutions of thought — of his contemporaries, before retreating into research that had no relation to his time period,” the poet and art historian Yves Bonnefoy has remarked. “He had simply questioned the latter in order to borrow from it the means to a

self-awareness, before taking back up his great task, one already begun but that he had since come to better understand. That is to say, in spite of the two periods [of Giacometti's oeuvre, prior to 1935 and after 1945], he was *singular* [*il a été un*], as any great artist is and can only be."<sup>36</sup> Surrealism, in other words, was "research," for the reimagining of representation was Giacometti's fundamental enterprise. In a letter written to his mother in early January 1935, Giacometti recounted his newest labors in terms that appear to verify this claim, even as they contradict his aforementioned explanation for hiring Rita:

I've continued to work continuously, almost without interruption, except for sleeping (and not very much) and I never go anywhere but I have reached the beginning of what I wanted and I have worked on a view for an indefinite time. I finally found what I was looking for and my Plasticine figure is moving forward [...] I realize that I am alone and make progress very slowly, [...] but by now I have what I want and all the work up to now was only research in one way or another for what I needed to discover. I am eager to continue and then I have to [sic] then find these heads and then begin one of Diego when he returns [from Stampa]. Diego will see that I've made progress and am keeping to exactly what I see as much as the sculpture permits. It has nothing in common with naturalistic things [...] nor with anything else you might imagine as being natural. [...] I no longer think about anything but my work and often I don't eat dinner until after 9:30.<sup>37</sup>

Giacometti's excitement and confidence at this early stage expresses not the beginning of a strenuous search, but the thrilling and definitive *arrival* of a subject that Surrealism had prepared him to discover. Two explanations for the busts therefore need to be parsed: one that holds that they were, at least initially, "research" for future Surrealist compositions, and another that subordinates the Surrealist work as research preparing him for new efforts.<sup>38</sup> The difference in the timing of these two claims — one retrospective, the other contemporaneous — is of limited use when deciding the matter, since both perspectives can produce distortions. What they share, however, is 1) the assertion that Surrealism was relevant to those initial busts of Rita in 1935,

and 2) the notion that “research,” a meeting point for the academic instruction of Bourdelle and the “*recherches experimentales*” of the Surrealists, lay at the heart of one or both enterprises.<sup>39</sup>

A hypothesis: this research not only determined Giacometti’s decision to hire Rita as a model in the middle of the decade, but guided the developments of the busts in the years that followed. Despite the uninflected affect depicted in Rita and Diego’s portraits, the handling of the medium itself changed dramatically as the decade drew to a close, growing turbulent and anarchic. The leathery, lightly worked surfaces of his first busts become, in later versions, rutted and sharply incised, splattered with plaster, and scored with pencil (Fig. 1.15). In these later busts, the impassivity of Rita and Diego’s *faces* contrasted remarkably with the violence of the sculptures’ *surfaces*. Yet the aforementioned “banality” of both their expressions and the busts as a genre, on one hand, and the description of this work as a crisis on the other, have masked this evolution.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the whole set of them has been categorized as aesthetically retrograde, and therefore negligible to the narrative of Giacometti’s artistic importance. Their formal development, meanwhile, is explained away as visual static or as a gestural acting-out of artistic crisis.

For Giacometti, however, there was nothing banal about this work, and nothing chaotic or confused about its development, which required his careful and patient labors. While a letter written to his mother on February 14, 1935 reports that he is “above all busy finishing as soon as possible the bust [of Diego],” a second letter written to his sister and brother-in-law that April lets on that the finish line seemed far off.<sup>41</sup> “Diego’s head is progressing slowly, and still needs months of work,” he writes.<sup>42</sup> In 1938, Giacometti again reflected on his deepening descent into the production of the heads.

When I began my heads and my figures three years ago while refusing to exhibit and [to do] so many other things, while starting everything over from scratch, I knew that that could lead me into difficult positions for a period, and the more I progressed the more I accepted them, and now more than ever I feel stronger than ever... because I had to gradually cast aside almost everything else and at least I am beginning to see what a form is.<sup>43</sup>

Clarity derived from focusing intently on one subject sounds like the result of dedicated research, to be sure. And yet his statement pairs strangely with the busts themselves in the late 1930s. In these furrowed and agitated sculptures, the face is nearly drowned in the seemingly non-signifying marks that accumulate on its surface. Whatever concept of form Giacometti has in mind in his 1938 letter is therefore something that emerges in, through, or despite apparent violence *to* form. To understand this concept will require returning to his “research” into the face prior to 1935. It will also call for a consideration of what lay beyond this work: a program of scientific racism that deployed another kind of research into faces — namely, physiognomy, an important discursive context for a thorough assessment of Giacometti’s portrait heads. Therefore, before returning to these busts, this chapter will plot the form of the face in Giacometti’s oeuvre through the 1930s, from its abstraction to its objectification, and finally to its ruination, considering at each turn the specific political valences of these actions on the face.

### **Abstract Face**

Bonnefoy may be on to something when he asserts that Giacometti was unified in his Surrealist and postwar concerns, but for reasons quite different than he supposes. His primary evidence is that Giacometti had been making portraits from live models all along, particularly

during visits to Stampa and Maloja during the summer and winter holidays. Bonnefoy notes that these holiday portrait busts are “barely distinguishable from those he did of Diego and Rita in 1936 and 1938,” and claims they attest to his real loyalties to the art of his father. Certainly a bust of Maria Fasciati-Maurizio, the young woman who helped his mother around the house, made around 1935 or 1936, appears quite similar to bust of Bruno sculpted in 1930: they share the smooth and regal regularity of their features and slightly geometricized coiffures (Figs. 1.16, 1.17). And yet there is something unintuitive about this idea: namely, that the unity in Giacometti’s genius largely eluded him for five years of intense work in the art capital of the West, persisting only in sculptures made while vacationing back home in a studio shared with his father. One might more reasonably conclude that the works sculpted in Switzerland during the interwar period look alike because they were, precisely, *neither* research *nor* its result, but rather a happy exercise done in the company of a family of artists upon return to the place of his early artistic instruction.

Nevertheless, important continuities do exist between Giacometti’s work in the 1920s and in the 1930s. In the late 1920s, during which time he was trying on for size a “cubist” style largely derivative of Jacques Lipschitz, Henri Laurens, and Archipenko, Giacometti turned to the portrait bust as a site for his most radical experimentation. Some of these experiments appear largely material-driven. A portrait of his father and two other male heads in granite respond to the hardness of the stone by reducing the features to a set of angular projections and recessions that anticipated the geometric face of *Head Fallen into a Diagram* (Fig. 1.18). A polished hunk of marble, with couple of fortuitous veins and almost imperceptible indents marking facial features, forecasts the smooth planes of his later plaque sculptures, in which features — ambivalently facial and sexual — are denoted by cones and indents (Fig. 1.19). Along similar

lines, an archaizing self-portrait from 1925 depicts the eyes and lips as contoured, low-relief shapes that would subsequently be mapped onto *The Couple* (1927), a pair of monoliths ornamented with signs for male and female sexual attributes (Figs. 1.20, 1.21). Projecting eclipses for eyes and vaginas, circles and cones for breasts and phalluses, *The Couple* suggests a version of “primitivist deco” that recalls Fernand Léger’s sketches for *La Création du monde* (1923).<sup>44</sup>

Giacometti’s less derivative embrace of the influence of the “primitives” also emerges through studies of the head. In several of his busts from 1926 and 1927, the face is either a low-relief depiction on a narrow, head-shaped slab, or it is drawn directly onto a plane using the tip of a pen-knife or pencil to score the features onto a flat face of a volume. In [*Head of Mother, Flat*] (1927), Annetta Giacometti’s portrait emerges from softly rounded projections that rise only a couple centimeters off a slab about ten centimeters thick. Giacometti conveys the direction of her head, which is turned slightly to the left, through a slightly deeper relief of her right cheek and the elongation of her left, while the back of her head is indicated by a small outcropping of a bun alongside her neck (Fig. 1.22). This curious combination of bas-relief techniques and sculpture-in-the-round is complicated further by trace lines that align her pupils with the edges of her lips, as though her face were being mapped on a two-dimensional surface. Drafting technique appears even more striking in his “flattened” head of the Swiss collector Josef Müller, made that same year, in which Müller’s forehead is branded by the crosshairs used conventionally to map the three-dimensional volume of a head onto a plane (Fig. 1.23). This cross-fertilization of drawing and sculpture allows Giacometti to resist what he later decried as one of Western sculpture’s most egregious misapprehensions in the name of naturalism:

Nothing is more arbitrary than the Greek canon [...] Same with a Roman bust: what is more false than this little cold thing that one can walk around? In a real human figure, the face commands and holds your attention. You don't walk around a man like you walk around a tree. There is a screen of academic habits between us and the real. People copy a certain idea that had been lodged in their head of this real. Cézanne was right when he elongated the arm of his *Man [Boy] in the Red Vest*, because, as it happens, he saw this arm as more important. Same thing goes for the negroes, when they make the heads huge and the feet very little, or the sculptors of New Guinea who, again, emphasize what they have *seen* and not what they *know* about man.<sup>45</sup>

His flat heads thus privilege the frontality of the sculpture, but they do so for reasons altogether different from those of nineteenth-century theorists of sculpture, notably Adolf von Hildebrand. For Hildebrand, the sculptor's task was to organize spatial perceptions in order to convey a unified and clear "virtual visual idea" from a single perspective.<sup>46</sup> By synthesizing these impressions, sculpture "remove[s] the disturbing problem of cubic form" — namely, the ambivalence and dissatisfaction of objects (and unsuccessful sculptures) that, because they lack this thoughtful and constructed unity, are liable to "drive [us] all around the figure without ever being able to grasp it once in its entirety."<sup>47</sup> Seeking furthermore to limit the kinds of kinesthetic variations that result from stereoscopic vision as one moves closer to a work, Hildebrand sung the virtues of the bas-relief and those sculptures-in-the-round that best approximated it, since reliefs both asserted a single viewpoint and presented a concrete, physically bounded space for the objects they depicted.<sup>48</sup>

Giacometti's frontality, by contrast, is not about reining in kinesthetic, stereoscopic perception in order to demonstrate a visual concept. It seeks rather to convey a habitus: our specific mode of perceiving human heads, which privileges the face. There is therefore no significant surface in his plaque sculptures that is not the face, nor any blank plane beyond it to denote the environment that surrounds the face; this environment simply doesn't matter when a

face has commandeered the scene. The contours of the face are thus the limits of the work itself. Giacometti's "flattened" heads of his mother and Müller anticipate the plaque sculptures, which follow on their heels, likewise dispensing with the volume of conventional sculpture-in-the-round in the name of a face that "commands and holds your attention." The most acute example of this effort is *Gazing Head* (1929), a subtly indented rectangular plane with a slightly irregular silhouette, whose bottom edge slopes like a jawline (Fig. 1.1). As with [*Head of Mother, Flat*] and Müller's bust, it sits on a narrow, rectangular "neck" supported by a short foot — a compression in both length and width of the conventional proportions of a plinth in line with the wholesale squeezing of the sculpture into the narrowest profile.

In 1929, the journal *Documents* published the first critical text on Giacometti, written by Michel Leiris and illustrated by a series of photographs by Marc Vaux. The first to appear is a photo-collage of *Gazing Head*, which renders literal this compression of the sculpture (Fig. 1.24). Vaux's photograph of the work has been cut out from its background and pasted onto a second print of a fiber mat, evacuating any circulatory space around the sculpture in the manner of a copy-stand photo.<sup>49</sup> The collage thereby reduces this gazing *head* to a *face*, one that is coextensive with the sculpture's *surface*. But the collage only emphasizes what the work itself, in its narrowness as well as in the blankness of its back side, asserts on its own: the fusing of the physical surface and the figurative face. The process by which [*Head of a Mother, Flat*] or his flattened bust of Müller become *Gazing Head* implies therefore not just a "drawing-away" from the particular features of mimetic depiction toward some non-objective endpoint — an evolution that maps Giacometti's progress into the avant-garde rather conventionally, as a move from figuration to its antipode, abstraction. Of course, we can see such a formal progression in the simplification of the early busts. Yet if we are to grasp the wit of *Gazing Head*, the process

resembles more significantly a “drawing together” of figuration and a different antipode: literalism.<sup>50</sup> “Literalism” here refers to that which does not partake of the structures of substitution that attend certain senses of representation and the “figurative” (as in, figurative language), and thus does not enjoin the viewer to read the (sur)face of the work. *Gazing Head* is an “abstract head,” in other words, because it merges the figurative and literal face.

Heterodox though it may seem, this definition of abstraction in fact approaches a *physiognomic* ideal of sculpture. We can trace this model back to the sixteenth-century physician and alchemist Paracelsus, for whom the external form of things in nature was a sign of their inner essence. Craftsmen or sculptors, if they are to register some of this natural accord, must learn to “discern the Sign, for the reason that Nature’s art shows the means by which the Sign is discerned — what soul is in a person.”<sup>51</sup> One must intuit the inner through the outer, thereby penetrating the envelope of the body. This is all simple enough with organic objects. The lung-shaped form of lungwort, for instance, indicates its medicinal power for respiratory problems. With the human form, however, the matter is more complex. The sculptor’s task, Michael Baxandall observes, becomes one of “mobile and radical pattern-making” in order to “stimulat[es] the Paracelsian eye to look for hidden virtues in the forms, [so] that the eye grasps temporarily at formal analogies [...] as approximations of more complex intuitions.”<sup>52</sup> Sculpture thereby dynamizes a propensity to read inner truth through external form in order to say “unphrasable things.”<sup>53</sup> Even when it fails to pull off the physiognomic task of describing the inner through the outer, sculpture has nevertheless expressed its capacity to mobilize perception in novel, intricate ways.

One of the more poetic statements for this Paracelsian eye in sculpture comes from Rainer Maria Rilke’s writings on Auguste Rodin. He writes:

[L]et us for a moment consider whether everything before us, everything we observe, explain, and interpret, does not consist simply of surfaces? And what we call mind and spirit and love: are these things not only a slight change seen on the small surface of our neighbor's face? And must not the artist, who would give us these in plastic form, keep to the tangible element which is in keeping with his medium, to the form which he can lay hold of and imitate? And whoever had the power of seeing and producing all forms, would he not (almost unconsciously) give us all spiritual emotion? [...] For all happiness that has ever thrilled the heart; all greatness, even to think of which almost destroys us; every spacious, world-transforming idea: there was a moment when these were nothing but a pursing of the lips, the lifting of the eyebrows or the shadow on a brow: and this contour of the mouth, this line above the eyelids, this show on a face—perhaps they have previously existed in exactly similar form: as a marking on an animal, a fissure in a rock, a hollow in a fruit... There is only one single surface which suffers a thousand changes and transformations.<sup>54</sup>

According to Rilke, the sculptor's task is to reveal the full content of the world as consolidated on the surface — in fact, as consolidated *in the face* (Fig. 1.25).<sup>55</sup> For Rilke, the face is not a collection of features that either articulates or obscures some truth or human content lying behind it. Instead, it is that human content's manifestation, an empirical totality rather than a code to be deciphered. Rodin's *Gates of Hell* suggest, by analogy, a reading of Giacometti's *Gazing Head*: A headless face, a roomless door, both motifs are made present because everything is presented, there on the surface that captures and expresses everything. Thus hell *is* that roiling, epidermic terror, while a human face *is* that surface animated by the gaze.

*Gazing Head* is a seeing sculpture: a head in the act of looking, as well as one that emphasizes its optical, as opposed to haptic or “ponderable” qualities — something emphasized by the redoubled flattening of Leiris/Vaux/Giacometti's *découpage* in *Documents*. Unlike a number of Giacometti's later Surrealist objects, which ask to be held or manipulated, *Gazing Head* holds itself at an almost ceremonial distance through the austerity and mutedness of its forms, “so light,” to recall the words of Jean Cocteau, “that one might have thought they were

birds' footprints in snow" (the ethereal quality of the white plaster no doubt adds to this effect).<sup>56</sup> Moreover, in contrast to Giacometti's other plaques, which feature a combination of low-relief motifs and graphic scratchings, *Gazing Head* has no apparent symbol-writing.

It is through receiving atmospheric effects that the abstract *Gazing Head* begins to resemble a face. As light sweeps across the plaque, a nose and an eye emerge from the two oblong indentations. A horizontal concavity mimics the depression of the eye socket, while a vertical one simulates the projection of the nose: its left half, caught in shadow, appears to recede in space, while the illuminated right half projects forward.<sup>57</sup> One seems, in other words, to be looking at a face in three-quarter's profile. Should one therefore conclude that the "literalism" of *Gazing Head*'s figuration is actually a very subtle or attenuated "impressionism," in which the sculpture appeals to the flickering optical perceptions of its viewer — *an eye producing an eye?*

The answer will be a resounding "no," but to get there, we must return to Giacometti's convictions about the frontality of the face, and to their likely source: a theory of sculpture advanced by the German art historian and writer Carl Einstein. Giacometti first met Einstein through the circle of artists, historians, writers, and ethnographers who collaborated on *Documents* in 1929 and 1930. Einstein was one of the earliest proponents of Giacometti's sculpture, mentioning the tenderfoot artist in a 1929 review, in which he complimented Giacometti by placing him in the ranks of Brancusi, Lipchitz, and Laurens, the luminaries of the day.<sup>58</sup> Throughout the following decade, Einstein was a frequent visitor to Giacometti's studio, and his opinion and advice registered deeply with Giacometti.<sup>59</sup> It was likely Einstein who commissioned Leiris to write his feature on Giacometti in *Documents*, and Einstein's theorization of sculpture, particularly in non-Western traditions, that continued to echo through Giacometti's statements about it for decades to follow.

Einstein had been a student of Georg Simmel, who defended Rodin's sculpture against Hildebrand's critiques. Simmel rejected both the stable "virtual visual idea" that Hildebrand advocated as an aesthetic ideal, and the conception of the viewer that it presumed: a similarly stable subject, for whom both seeing and being meant arriving at the solidity of an underlying core. Simmel's model of the subject, by contrast, was Bergsonian. He held that the subject was in continuous transformation or flux. Rodin's sculpture externalized this flux in both its form and the mode of experience it offered to its viewers, endlessly shifting with the changing light, atmosphere, and angle of view.<sup>60</sup> Einstein's theory of sculpture contested both Simmel and Hildebrand's models. He maintained that the sculpture that corresponds to them was in the thrall of what he called "optical naturalism," or the imitation, not of nature itself, but of the nature of nature's *beholder*.<sup>61</sup> Since the Renaissance, sculpture had gradually been overtaken by its "pictorial surrogates," Einstein claimed, which increasingly emphasized optical sensation and eroded the distinction between sculpture-in-the-round and relief. This pictorialization of sculpture carried a psychic corollary: by reducing sculptural form to a byway for optical impressions, the ideal relation between sculptor and beholder became one of maximal synergy and sensitization. Einstein explains, "Increasingly the work dissolved into a conduit for psychological excitation; the individual flow, cause and effect, became fixed. These sculptures were professions of a genetics rather than objectified forms, a charged, instantaneous contact of two individuals."<sup>62</sup> The sculptor thus came to model his work through Impressionist *touches*, leaving the form itself as something to be constituted in the viewer's mind.

What was at stake was more than just a loss of medium-specificity. The problem was that optical naturalism stoked viewers' sense of mastery by presenting a world that fundamentally resembled them, and reduced the experience of this world to parcels of sensation awaiting their

appropriation. By assembling optical impressions and thus “completing” the sculpture, Sebastian Ziegler explains, the beholder of these works is affirmed in the categories that held stable the “world as world and himself as subject, [...] who would thereby possess this world as his experiential property, for it would be complete only through the synthesizing power of his mind.”<sup>63</sup> Einstein devoted two decades of his art historical work to articulating counter-models to this so-called “insidious ideology of subjective identity maintenance,” locating them first in African art and later in a sprawling treatise “on” Georges Braque, to which I will return at the close of this chapter. In this first text, his 1915 essay “Negerplastik,” Einstein observed that the non-naturalistic proportions of African sculpture were the result of an effort to convert intuitions of space into a formal order, and thus to deliver a “cubic” — that is, non-pictorial, veritably sculptural — “vision of space.”<sup>64</sup> This worked through what he called the *depth quotient*: rather than convey depth or volume through naturalistic mass, African sculpture communicates it through the relation of parts (Fig. 1.26). Each of these parts is charged with “absorbing” its depth, and presenting it on the frontally visible side. As a result, these parts often traduce European conventions of proportion and unification, but these discontinuities are in the service of a “clarification of form, not an order of parts that, since sculptural form is the issue here, are valorized according to their sculptural expressiveness.”<sup>65</sup> For example, the arms and legs in a Baule figure, though bending non-naturalistically both forward and backward, relay conceptually the movement of limbs in space. The sculpture neither relies on the viewer’s imagination to “fill in” the missing side through recollection or self-reference, nor on the impressionist *modèle* to fuse what are, in fact, supreme discontinuities of form. The sculpture thus defends its autonomy: it is not a reflection of the viewer’s self, and nor is it a convocation of her phenomenological experience, summoned for the purposes of completing the work.

To return, then, to *Gazing Head* and the suspicion of its “impressionism,” we can restate the question by asking whether our apprehension of the face is an instance of optical naturalism: an illusion that works by establishing sympathy based not on mimetic resemblance, but on the recognition of ontological sameness (*an “I” producing a (model of an) “I”*). This is where Giacometti throws a wrench into the works. The indentations of *Gazing Head*, he explained, correspond to the “vertical and horizontal components to which all human figures [*figures humaines*] could be reduced.” This binary ramifies through the visual and tactical attributes of the work — projection and recession, mimesis and illusionism — by virtue of its homologizing of the figurative and literal face. What may appear like an appeal to the viewer’s psyche to complete the work is, in fact, the presentation of an almost proto-Structuralist operation. It is as though Giacometti has gone undercover, posing as Rodin’s inheritor in order to smuggle in a completely different model of sculpture... and a completely different model of sculpture’s relation to the self.

Just as a Baule figure encodes the functioning joints of the body, *Gazing Head*’s binary encodes the functioning of the face. Or rather, it describes the “abstract machine” that *produces* the face, to invoke the concept of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The face is a system, they state, with two components, the white wall and black hole — a plane for the projection of univocal, linguistic meanings, and a hole for the submersion of inner life or consciousness.<sup>66</sup> Though the face is contiguous with the body, it is both qualitatively distinct and ideologically commanding. The body hosts multiplicities of affects and impulses; the face operates to subjugate these unruly forces by unifying them in a surveillable surface that covers an inaccessible, but apparently coherent subjectivity. The work of this white wall/black hole system is therefore to crush all polyvocality, disciplining the body by containing it in this binary logic of

signification and subjectification. “The face is a politics,” they conclude; it produces “good subjects,” autonomous and socially legible — and its nature is to spread that politics over the whole body.<sup>67</sup>

By refusing the “Bergsonianism” of Rodin — by which I mean not so much the sculptor himself as the theorization of modernist surface that Rodin represented — Giacometti’s face-as-surface ran aground before too long on just this politics of the face. Its name, in the interwar years, was physiognomy. The history of physiognomy and its relation to scientific racism in Germany is well known. Its rise in Weimar Germany drew on the convergence of several nineteenth-century intellectual traditions: material and positivist scientism, anchored in the transformation of physiognomy under its modern father, Johann Caspar Lavater, from an esoteric divination to a codified system; racist anthropology; and, lastly, the German tradition of *Lebensphilosophie*, from Goethe to Nietzsche, which promoted the concept of body-soul unity.<sup>68</sup> These traditions laid the ground in the 1930s for a transformation of the face from a largely literary description of the aftermath of WWI in Germany — a national “loss of face” — to a literal, morphological image to rally populist sentiment.<sup>69</sup> “It was precisely this tendency toward literalness,” writes the historian Claudia Schmölders, “that had made biological racism as acceptable as it had become [in the 1930s]: as a reclamation of the supposedly ‘lost face’ in a concrete biological sense.”<sup>70</sup> In France, the nineteenth century included a robust visual and literary physiognomic tradition (notably, in the physiognomic literature of the city, typified in Baudelaire and Daumier’s urban portraits and Victor Fournel’s popular 1858 *Ce qu’on voit dans les rues de Paris*), along with a renewed emphasis on the *tête d’expression* in artistic training.<sup>71</sup> The latter revived the late seventeenth-century lectures and writings of Charles le Brun, which found themselves both amplified and complicated by the entrance of photography into the

academies as a training tool.<sup>72</sup> In particular, sets of photographs taken by Duchenne de Boulogne of the human face stimulated by electric current were circulated through art schools, at once contributing to the codification of facial expression and undermining its capacity to serve as a transparent mediator to the soul.<sup>73</sup> And yet if expression found itself destabilized, physiognomic “science” nonetheless took hold in certain areas of anthropology, as we will see, implicitly authorizing colonial conquests, though by no means universally. The complicated status of the physiognomic tradition in France primed the face to become the bearer of a broader rhetoric of instability, on the theme of crisis.

In 1931, France, though initially buffered from the 1929 crash by its parochial industry and mistrust of American gigantism, began to suffer what Serge Bernstein called a “languorous crisis.”<sup>74</sup> Slow enough to set in, by the time a new shudder of economic destabilization hit Europe in 1935, the crisis in France had come to seem perpetual. Crisis took on a moral character and, consequently, a double mistrust — of government and of capitalism — began to foment in far-right factions. For these factions, France’s problems were rhetorically bound to the sense of abjection and lack of integrity in the body politic, coalescing around a particular distrust of the nation’s “false face”: the one worn by the political parties and economic influencers that these reactionaries blamed for the crisis (Fig. 1.27).<sup>75</sup> In 1936, Thierry Maulnier authored an article titled, “Will we find our way out of French abjection?” in which he wrote:

Sordid greed, cowardice, impudence, swindling, and to finish it off, this atrocious betrayal: this is the face of France in 1936. This is the face that has been bestowed on France. Every Frenchman who is somewhat lucid now realizes that he belongs to a nation that has been slowly debased to the extent that it not only suffers the unanimous contempt of civilized peoples, but even begins to deserve it.<sup>76</sup>

Jean-Pierre Maxence, who co-authored with Maulnier the tract *Demain la France* (1934) blamed this debasement on the “bourgeois age” ushered in by Henri Poincaré, whom he accused of giving the nation a “sordid face” and a “motionless and fixed mask.”<sup>77</sup> Redemption, for these thinkers, would not be found in better governments, but in a moral, economic, and political return to a more or less pre-modern state, one that recognized the primacy of humanity over the autonomy of the individual, subordinated consumption to production, and had a radically decentralized government.<sup>78</sup> Personalism, the movement to which both Maulnier and Maxine subscribed, called for a rejection of representative democracy in favor of governance by so-called “natural communities” composed of incommensurable personalities, rather than countable individuals.<sup>79</sup> They reasoned that the way to throw off the sordid face imposed on the nation was to avoid giving France any single face whatsoever.

Pierre Rosanvallon has argued that such reactions are immanent to democracy, the result of a clash between the principles of universal suffrage and the actual functioning of representative democracy. “In democracy,” he writes, “the people no longer has a form: it loses all corporeal density and becomes positively *numerical* [...]. This explains the radical aspect of universal suffrage: it marks the beginning of a serial order.”<sup>80</sup> Yet governance requires that officials nonetheless *represent* this non-figurable “people” — not as sovereign incarnations of the monarch’s subjects, but as autonomous representatives of a free and equal electorate. The rise of positions like Personalism indicated mounting trouble with this tension inherent in the representative democracy. If Hobbes’s *Leviathan* provides an image of the sovereign for whom representation is “personification,” and in which the domain and its subjects are contained within the skin of the ruler, democracies are tasked with converting the serial masses into a nation in the absence of the sovereign body (Fig. 1.28).

This conversion of mass into nation motivated the right *and* left in France after 1934.<sup>81</sup> Karl Jaspers's "The Spiritual Situation of the Age" had just been translated into French, bringing with it a new vocabulary with which to discuss the condition of the so-called "*homme-masse*," a product of modern industrialization, which had come to be conceived as the totality of humanity itself on which "the will of the majority imposes its character, determines the physiognomy and the actions"; man, in turn, had become a "function of the mass."<sup>82</sup> Yet whereas Jaspers expresses concern about the regimentation of life by the mass, a contemporaneous view saw the mass as a volatile, heterogeneous element that threatened to overturn order — namely, the racial hierarchy. In Germany, as Klaus Theweleit has demonstrated, in the interwar years the opposition between race and mass came to supersede that of individual and mass. Theweleit cites Maximilian Delmar's 1925 *Französische Frauen*, in which Delmar distinguishes between the qualities of "race" — grace, perfection, wisdom, passionate intensity in a man and passionate submission in a woman — and those of "mass" — death, weakness, "equality and its attendant horrors."<sup>83</sup> Mass indicates what is interior, unfixed, undistinguishable; race, conversely, is the body's armor: a clear, hard shell that serves to "keep the mass in check."<sup>84</sup> Miscegenation implies a transgression that would bring to the surface the "primitive within," and the threat of which must therefore be exterminated. In order to ensure the integrity of the body, and of the body politic, the ability to recognize racial difference therefore becomes imperative.

In Germany, the school of *Rassenkunde*, or racial anthropology, had transformed the more conservative studies of physiognomy at the turn of the century into large-scale, popular science whose aim was to educate the public on how to identify race. The 1928 *Rassenkunde* exhibition at Hamburg hung wigs in a grid, presented skin color on plaster panels molded to look like shoulders and backs, and displayed skulls, busts, and photographs together in vitrines so that

visitors could “test” their ability to distinguish types (Fig. 1.29).<sup>85</sup> In France, the persuasiveness of *Rassenkunde*’s ideological drive to merge physical anthropology and ethnography may best be illustrated by the persistence of these models in the Musée de l’homme, which was established by the anti-racist anthropologist Paul Rivet in 1937. Despite Rivet’s politics (and those of numerous other anthropologists and ethnographers behind the museum), the displays adopted many of the same strategies for presenting race. Although Rivet himself believed that any notion of pure race belonged only to our deep or pre-history (“we are all mongrels now,” he stated), race typology nonetheless assumed the status in the field and in the museum as part of the new science of anthropology, reinvigorated by advances in genetics and the discovery of blood types in the previous decades.<sup>86</sup> The ethnographic galleries of the Musée de l’homme thus included crania as well as photographs of “living examples” of “other” races, as well as, ignominiously, the skeleton and full-body cast of Sara Baartman (Fig. 1.30). Large sections of the museum were moreover devoted to exploring the nuances of the three “major” races (black, yellow, white) in both “fossil and modern” form.<sup>87</sup> Even if Rivet and others held that race was constantly changing and barely a useful vector for a modern world of mixed race, the nature of the displays mitigated these perspectives and encouraged belief in the existence of real and relevant racial types.<sup>88</sup> Typologies became evidence. And this evidence, by virtue of sitting in a state museum, could be mobilized for those who sought to preserve race against miscegenation or to orient it toward the extermination of what had muddied or falsified its “face”: the twin menace of the foreign and the modern.<sup>89</sup>

The reduction of the face to a surface that can be read to determine racial type and “cleaned” to reduce racial expression both *is* and *has* the consequence of closing off the face from its subjective, individual depths. The reconfiguration of the “portrait bust” in these displays

thus echoes one mode of the abstraction of the face in modern sculpture. In racial anthropology, the face-as-surface becomes a table on which to write the signs of race, which are necessarily limited to a basic range of codified variations. In sculpture, however, the uses of this limited range are less clear. *Gazing Head* is the “simplest” of the plaque sculptures — the human face pared down to its vertical and horizontal aspects. But Giacometti’s œuvre includes several similar works in which indents of various shapes are paired with low relief projections and graphic scratchings, titled either “Woman” or “Man” (Fig. 1.31). These plaques are schematized bodies transposed onto the face, which retains the same “neck” and “shoulder” traced to the flat heads of his mother and Müller. The trope is as familiar to Surrealism — consider, for instance, Magritte’s *Rape* (1935), which transfers a woman’s nude torso to her face, her breasts serving as eyes, pundenda as mouth — as it is to the idealized fragmented Greek torso, whose body was conceived as a kind of marble Argus, so suffused with spirit that it appeared to gaze back at its beholder (Fig. 1.32).<sup>90</sup> In Magritte’s painting, the trope produces a repellent objectification. In Giacometti’s work, it makes for a closed system that quickly grows repetitive and arbitrary: circular indent for belly, circular projection for head or breast, bifold projection shape for genitals, hatch marks for hair, which merely need to be disposed differently on the plaque to earn it a new title. The “usefulness” or interest of this reduction for Giacometti seems quickly to wear itself out, for the very reasons it gains strength in racist typologies in the 1930s: its shallow literalism. If Giacometti was to continue his research into the head, he would have to direct it beyond the literal face.

## Objectified Head

One of the inconsistencies to the story of Giacometti's rupture with the Surrealists is that the visual thematic of the face, though reportedly disdained by Breton in their confrontation, was most certainly something of interest to the movement. Various signal moments for Surrealism in the early 1930s coalesced around the face, from Dalí's statement of his paranoiac-critical method — which he introduced through his misreading of a photograph of African huts as a Picasso portrait turned on its side — to “physiognomic” photo-collages in their publications that displayed the faces of Surrealists in a grid or, again for Dalí, orgasmic and “hysterical” faces of women alongside images of ears (a privileged physiognomic object of criminologists), to meditations on the face by Michel Leiris and Pierre Mabilie (Figs. 1.33, 1.34, 1.35).<sup>91</sup> This is to say nothing of the significance of head for Georges Bataille, whose journal and eponymous secret society *Acéphale* sought to explore the political and sacred potential of a “headless” society, one ruled neither by a metonymic head-of-state nor by the faculties of reason lodged at the apex of the human form.<sup>92</sup>

Breton himself admitted some years later his own complicated relationship with the head, source of allure and irritation, especially due to the location of the face on it: stuck to the side like an “electricity meter — and moreover, what an indecent one — plumb in the middle of the chimney.”<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, Breton admits that he is fascinated by faces. He is captivated by certain ones, disgusted by the mass of them, and mesmerized by his preferences, which turn on some “unfathomable mystery.” “A gathering of human faces, even select ones, always reminds me of a rather vulgar masquerade,” he writes,

in which resemblances to animals are most in evidence, where doubles move enigmatically through the crowd [...]. Inner life does not easily filter through this deceiving exterior: whenever we feel confident we can uncover it, whenever we fill a face with it to saturation point, it is, alas, because we already know it is there (as in the case of Pascal, Baudelaire, Rimbaud). [...] There is no doubt that the human face is a cipher, like everything else, but the key to it is forever being recast and thus remains incandescent, more unreachable than any other.<sup>94</sup>

This physiognomers' masquerade — with the legacy of della Porta and more contemporary forms of bureaucratic facial sorting both in evidence — interests Breton to the degree that the bases of the “science” of reading faces is ever-changing. The face *en masse* is absurd and vulgar, but taken as a single object, it is enigmatic and transcendent, epitomizing our inevitably frustrated attempts to decode the world. These two attitudes toward the face, as a luminous cipher and as a vulgar and indistinguishable thing, typify the two aspects that problematized Giacometti's second line of research into the head and face: this time, not as surface, but as a volume.

In 1934, Giacometti completed a work that is widely considered to be his most enigmatic, most metaphysical sculpture. The enigma begins with its name. *Cube*, as it is titled, is no such thing (Fig. 1.2). A thirteen-sided polygon, it measures nearly one meter tall, and was initially exhibited on a rolling platform. This “erratic stone,” in the words of André du Bouchet, is many times the size of his tabletop Surrealist objects. It is monolithic and enclosed where his postwar figures are linear and radiating; it is neither “Surrealist” nor “Existentialist.” Most who have written about it have concluded that it is a “mute” work.<sup>95</sup> This is not to say that the *Cube* was formally *sui generis*. The shape itself is a rendition of the the so-called “Dürer's solid” from Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I* (1514) (Fig. 1.36).<sup>96</sup> The same polygon appeared a year before in Giacometti's *Surrealist Table* (1933), a console complete with its own baubles, commissioned by

the Comte and Comtesse de Noailles for their hallway, and before then, in a detailed sketch of his studio that Giacometti prepared for the aristocrat Donna Madina Arrivabene Valenti Gonzaga at her playful request (Figs. 1.37, 1.38).<sup>97</sup> In the latter, the *Cube* is rendered transparent, as a small polyhedral cage on a table with a small (dancing?) figure frozen inside of it.<sup>98</sup> Giacometti reprised this motif of the *Cube-as-cage* in a lithograph produced in William Hayter's studio (Fig. 1.39). Only in this second work, the figure appears to precede her cage: the polygon around her is constructed out of tangents to her silhouette (a small vignette of the resulting *Cube*, sans figure, appears to her left).<sup>99</sup> Bauble or philosophical headrest? Prison or new Vitruvian man? *Cube* seems, in fact, not mute but perhaps *too* voluble, speaking in too many tongues at once.<sup>100</sup>

And yet, when questioned about the sculpture, Giacometti's answer was curiously simple. "Have you ever made a really abstract sculpture?" James Lord asked him. "Never," he replied, "with the exception of the large *Cube* that I made in 1934, and even then *I considered it in reality as a head.*"<sup>101</sup> Two precedents in Giacometti's oeuvre make sense of this claim: a series of "heads of the father" dating to the late 1920s, and a sequence of studies of the skull, pursued more or less continuously since his years at the Grande Chaumière. From 1927 to 1929, Giacometti produced a sort of stylistic declension of his father's bust in granite and marble, as well as plaster and bronze. Giovanni Giacometti's pointed goatee serves as their key identifying feature. Whereas the granite *Head of Father* (c. 1927) notches the features of his face so roughly that the work appears like a weathered antiquity, the marble *Head of the Artist's Father* (1927) is a polished, schematized version of the head folded along the face's vertical axis, and almost imperceptibly indented at the eyes and nose (Figs. 1.18, 1.19). The countenance of the *Head of Father (Round II)* (c. 1927–30), while alert and expressive from the front, looks from the back as

though a bricklayer had slapped it onto the smooth knob of a mannequin's head, rendering his expression a human mask on a faceless form (Fig. 1.40).

The most radical head produced in those years is *Head of Father Flat II* (c. 1927–30) inverts this mask/form relation (Fig. 1.41). In this work, Giacometti sheared off the head in front of the ears, and then incised the features of the face on the flat plane: a few scored marks for the cheerfully upturned whiskers of Giovanni's mustache and goatee, a deep vertical gouge for the bridge of his nose, and two round circles for the eye sockets — one enclosing a circle, the other a horizontal line.<sup>102</sup> This “wink” seems like a curious gesture for a portrait, until one considers that Giovanni likely spent many hours of the day holding his face in just that position: one eye closed, the better to gauge the depth of the scene he was painting. In this last bust of Giovanni, Georges Didi-Huberman suggests, the father is therefore depicted *as an artist*: not just as the biological progenitor, but as artistic forerunner — indeed, “as the paradigm of [Giacometti's] whole artistic formation, and even as the *basis of all figuration* [*repère de toute figuration*]” in the portrait's demonstration of his method of observation.<sup>103</sup> This method, in turn, haunts *Cube*. The presaging of *Cube*'s planes in *Head of Father Flat II* points to the extremity, in both senses of the word, of the project of portraiture when turned in on itself and on its own praxis. To “*dévisager*,” or look hard at his father — who is, in turn, in the act of looking hard at something else — is to “de-visage” him.<sup>104</sup>

The second continuity of the head and *Cube* begins slightly earlier, with a human skull that Giacometti bought during his years at the Grande Chaumière. In the Surrealist work, the skull surfaces in several sculptures, such as *Head Fallen into a Diagram* and *Caress*, as well as sketches in which the skull is denoted through a series of orthogonals and ellipses such that it appears “crystallized” — faceted as well as transparent (Fig. 1.42). This would be the other way

to carry the portrait to its breaking point, via an analysis of the face that simulates a “geometric necrosis.”<sup>105</sup> The face, regarded through its faces/facets, becomes the skull, or the place from which the face has been withdrawn or sheared off.

These sketches ultimately anticipate the most significant of the 1930s skulls: Giacometti’s *Head-Skull*, also known as *Cubist Head* (1934) (Fig. 1.43). *Head-Skull* is an architectonic, faceted object only slightly larger than a human skull. On one half of this work, sharply canted planes form the skull’s gaping maw, while a round indentation marks an eye socket. The other half is composed of polygons that meet at convex angles, as though the cranium had been enclosed in an abstracting “skin” stretched taut over its cavities. Between *Head-Skull* and the heads of Rita and Diego are a couple of now-destroyed sculptures that we know from photographs taken by Marc Vaux. In one of these works, a cylindrical neck has been added below the head, whose angles are now softer (Fig. 1.44). A single, nearly vertical plane composes the area of the eyes, interrupted by a pyramidal form for the nose, such that the shadow from Vaux’s light source falls softly over the eyes and marks the recession under the nose and lip. The head itself is asymmetrical, seeming to pull to a point above its right brow — suggesting, as with the flattened heads of his mother and Müller, a three-quarters profile, given straight-on. In the other destroyed work, the head is symmetrical, but the basic arrangement of vertical and projecting facets remains the same. The surface is plaster worked wet on wet, a much rougher handling that anticipates the texture of Rita and Diego’s heads, thereby completes the transition between *Head-Skull* and the *Head of Diego* two years later. The simplification of the volumes of the head, which above appeared to usher in the dissolution of the face into the skull beneath it, becomes here a preparatory stage of the portrait bust.

This exposes a tension between the face conceived metaphorically in relation to the individual — as a window on, or externalization of, individual subjective depths — and a sculptural idiom that suggests both an analysis or scrutiny of this “window” and the destruction of its logic. In his early essay “The Aesthetic Significance of the Face,” Simmel attempts to account for the peculiar force of the face as both a model for artworks in general and a distillation of modern individuality. For Simmel, the human face is centrifugal: the perceiving mind finds in it the “highest degree of inner unity” — a unity that is both a prerequisite for aesthetic contemplation, and the fruit of a human capacity for synthesis, which gives the face the impression of being “pervaded by mind.”<sup>106</sup> As such, the face “strikes us as [...] the geometric locus, as it were, of the inner personality, to the degree that it is perceptible.”<sup>107</sup> This makes the face a supreme object of aesthetic contemplation: because personality is thus concentrated on the surface, every detail is charged and every change, no matter how minute, is significant. But it also turns the face, as a “geometric locus” of the individual, into a largely legible surface on which to read a person’s character.<sup>108</sup> Aesthetic and physiognomic projects are again yoked together, albeit in a more complex manner than the equivalence of the literal and figurative surface of the face. For the “geometricization” of the head, notably through its “cubing,” literalizes this relation of the inner structure of self and its outer manifestation, and mediates it through a phrenological depiction of the head-as-skull.

In sum, the antecedents of *Cube* suggest two strands of “research” into the head that culminate in it: one on the praxis of fixated observation in portraiture that leads to its “de-visaging,” the other on the analysis of a head that leads to its “deadening.” We can return now to Giacometti’s assertion that the face commands and engages one’s attention frontally. A face may, of course, be viewed from other angles, but according to this claim, doing so is incompatible

with its apprehension *as* a face. For Giacometti, this became a formal predicament as well. “I cannot see the face and profile at the same time,” Giacometti bemoaned. “If I look at you in the face, I forget your profile. If I look at your profile, I forget your face. That’s how it is. I am no longer able to capture the whole thing.”<sup>109</sup> *Head of Father Flat II*, viewed in light of this statement, appears to illustrate the point emphatically, almost parodically: in profile, the facial plane disappears entirely from sight. *Cube*, by contrast, provides an answer to, and not just an illustration of, this problem. Among all the forerunners to *Cube* in Giacometti’s oeuvre, I’ve already presented the closest formal precedent — just (literally) in the wrong way. *Head-Skull* looks like a schematic skull from one angle, yet rotate the work 180 degrees, and one discovers the germ of *Cube* in this work’s faceted cranium (Fig. 1.45).<sup>110</sup> *Cube* has taken this form and proliferated it across its entire surface, such that one can rotate around the work without ever arriving at the face. By multiplying *sculptural* faces, Giacometti undermines the logic of the head: its division into significant-and-signifying face and non-signifying skull, or into an “abstract facial machine” and organic body.<sup>111</sup> Not only is there no privileged viewpoint; circling *Cube*, the viewer is confronted by the unpredictable, unresolvable cant of the facets.<sup>112</sup> Driven interminably around the sculpture, like a nightmare of unresolved sculpture as imagined by Hildebrand or Wölfflin, the viewer confronts only skull, both de-visaged and deadened — a faceless head of facets.

## Anonymous Objects

The formal representation of three-dimensionality, Carl Einstein acknowledged, was not easily won. It must not rely on “vague optical suggestion,” he noted, but nor could it be merely “some object in space.”<sup>113</sup> *Negerplastik* does not address how sculpture should avoid this pitfall.<sup>114</sup> In fact, Einstein’s concern with the ritual viewing context of African sculpture — a context in which the objectivity of cubic form and the spiritual immanence of the sculptures mutually reinforced one another — allowed him to sidestep the specter of the commodity altogether.<sup>115</sup> It may also be why Einstein seemed hard-pressed to identify a contemporary sculptor invested in cubic form. To wit, with the widespread closure of galleries in 1934, works like Giacometti’s *Cube* increasingly had *no* context, not even the shadow of ritual space that lingers in the exhibition gallery. Partly in response to this market decline, Giacometti had begun working in the early 1930s with the interior decorator Jean-Michel Frank, producing what he called “anonymous objects” for an international elite.<sup>116</sup> These works briefly converged with his sculptures, sharing the same scale and materials, appearing beside them in his sketchbooks and in the studio. So it is hardly surprising that, if *Cube* sprang from the skull of *Cubist Head*, a faceted vase he made that same year sprang right along with it (Fig. 1.46). This vase was one of several that Giacometti had designed for Frank, among them, the so-called *Marianne Vase*, a zaftig vessel. A photograph taken by A. J. Hepworth shows it pushed against the wall beside the mold of *Spoon Woman* (1927), and the plaster versions of *Invisible Object* (1934) and *Femme qui marche I* (formerly *Mannequin*, c.1934).<sup>117</sup> In this chorus line, the vase is one of several possible permutations of the female figure.

Or perhaps it is one end in a continuum of objects that run from the Surrealist to the decorative, where no clear dividing line can be drawn between one category and the other. Another explanation for *Cube*'s alternate title suggests itself here: The photograph of the work published in *Minotaure* in 1934 shows *Cube* on its rolling platform and, edging into the frame, another platform exactly like the first, seemingly awaiting its own *Cube*. In fact, Giacometti produced *two* plasters of the sculpture, each of which was used to create its own bronze cast — a highly unusual repetition in Giacometti's sculptural oeuvre, if an absolutely common one for his decorative pieces. The *Cube* is thereby doubled in plaster, and “squared” in bronze. Like the sconces and vases that Frank commissioned from Giacometti in those years, it would seem that *Cube* was, at least initially, intended as a pair. The *Cube* on display in “Thèse, Antithèse, Synthèse” could therefore be called partial because it was presented *alone*, partial like a single candlestick.

This proximity of sculpture and decorative objects would soon become a problem. In 1962, recall, Giacometti described *Cube* as the “last step before hitting ‘the wall’! The fabrication of volumes that were only objects. But the object is not a sculpture.”<sup>118</sup> His interlocutor, André Parinaud, responded leadingly, “You mean that your attempt to understand the world, not in imitating it, but in trying to capture it through imagination, intellect, memory, by recreating it through sensory data, led to a failure, whose proof was that your sculptures were not living works but objects. But how did you know that?” Because, Giacometti replies, he worked on a vase exactly like he worked on a sculpture: by conceiving the form first, and then executing it — or more often, having someone else execute it for him.<sup>119</sup> The distinction between objects and sculptures was therefore not a matter of style; it was not *Cube*'s “abstractness” per se that constituted the “wall.” Instead, what concerned him was how the form of objects was

determined before they ever entered concrete experience. It may be tempting to assume by this that Giacometti was concerned with the materiality of his medium — to imagine that he meant that a form should be influenced by whether it is made in wood, plaster, or marble (as several Surrealist sculptures were made in their various versions). Yet Giacometti worked both in clay or Plasticine and directly in plaster after 1935, often applying pigment or paint to plaster casts and having his bronzes patinated by Diego. In short, there was a good deal of material promiscuity throughout his oeuvre. Therefore, the “concrete experience” here must be understood as something else, which I will say more about in the third part of this chapter, but which can be briefly glossed here as heterogeneous, discontinuous, spontaneous experience prior to fixed categories or conceptualizations.<sup>120</sup>

“Strange position of so-called abstract sculpture,” wrote Giacometti in a draft of his review of the 1957 Salon de l’Automobile, “but which would more properly be called concrete or non-figurative; it means the *realism of finite objects*.”<sup>121</sup> In an underhanded way, this review served Giacometti to deliver a hit to the other modernist *eminence* who, like Rodin, had rethought the relation of sculpture to surface: Constantin Brancusi. Giacometti’s review continued,

A sculpture by Brancusi or some other so-called abstract sculpture, rusted, dented, broken [...] what do they become? Do they belong to the same world as Cycladic sculpture, as Rodin, as Rembrandt, or to a separate world that one would locate close to the world of machines, the world of objects, and to what degree are they still sculptures, paintings, and to what degree are they perhaps [sculptures] no longer?<sup>122</sup>

Giacometti’s critique of Brancusi is, almost to the letter, the criticism that Christian Zervos leveled at his own plaques in 1929, down to the contrast with the broken work of Cycladic art.<sup>123</sup> According to Simone de Beauvoir, however, comments like these are not hypocrisy, but rather

Giacometti acknowledging that he himself had once thus transgressed. “For a long time,” she recalls from the early 1940s, Giacometti “had worked not on showing reality through a material analog, but on fabricating things. Now, he critiqued this aberration in others as he did in himself.”<sup>124</sup> These “fabricated things” were finite because they were formed in advance, almost prophylactically closed to lived experience. In turn, any confrontation with experience that might somehow impact them was liable to destroy them. This vulnerability, despite their gleaming self-sufficiency, made them equivalent to typical things, “anonymous objects” exiled from the world of art.

Yet Giacometti’s conclusion that he must introduce a distinction between these objects and his sculpture came, once again, through a work — that is, *Cube* — imagined *as a head*, which itself extended from a line of heads made in the first half of the 1930s. To better understand the significance of this subject, as well as why he remained fixated on it while trying to distance his sculpture from typical or anonymous objects, will require surveying the status of the typical *head* in the 1930s: first, in a program of social realism as it was articulated in the mid-1930s France, and second, as a case study in a complex nexus of archaeology, scientific racism, and physiognomy that directly implicated Giacometti and his choice of portrait subjects in those same years.

## **The Oppressed Ones**

Giacometti was not the only one uneasy with the promiscuity of his decorative and fine art. At least one account of his excommunication attributes it to the Surrealists’ disapproval of his

decorative work for Jean-Michel Frank.<sup>125</sup> But the depth of this disapproval is at least as overstated as the story of his rupture with the movement itself. Here it is: On February 14, 1935, solicited by Benjamin Perét to attend a meeting at Georges Hugnet's apartment under different pretenses, Giacometti arrived at a meeting whose true purpose was to admonish him for a series of social infractions, among them: his willful obstruction of all Surrealist activities, his "systematic opposition" of the attendance requirements of group membership, his "fundamental hostility" regarding the recent expulsion from the group of Salvador Dalí (on the grounds of latter's pro-Hitler imagery), and his refusal to pay fees to attend group meetings — a refusal "inexplicably tied to his personal difficulties in executing his sculpture and to exclusively plastic concerns," as the Surrealists stated in the ukase prepared for the occasion.<sup>126</sup> When Giacometti realized that he was being ambushed, he preempted his ambushers by declaring that he was through with Surrealism — quitting before he could be excommunicated. Subsequently, Giacometti would denounce his Surrealist work as mere "masturbation," a "flight from reality" and a symptom of "a mysticism that had slipped into his work."<sup>127</sup> These statements have helped generate the terms of Giacometti's relationship to portraiture from 1935 onwards. Giacometti, it follows from this account, was opposed to the unreality of surreality. His contribution to the history of modern sculpture is premised on his rejection of the avant-garde, and all that one associates with it: its particular interwar historical context, its political nature, its desire to disrupt mores and social conventions. Instead, the canonical post-Surrealist Giacometti is imagined to have taken "higher ground" in a quest for true resemblance or pure presence, vaulting his work into the ranks of what is supposedly timeless and universal in human expression.

There are numerous problems with this tale. There is the fact, for instance, that Giacometti continued exhibiting with the Surrealists through the decade and beyond (even if he was listed as

an “artist formerly associated with Surrealism”), and that, just a month after this “total rupture,” Giacometti contributed a drawing to the program for a cycle of lectures on, among other things, the Surrealist object. Then there are the letters of apology exchanged between him and Breton directly after that February night... and the letters exchanged in the decades after.<sup>128</sup> One could point to the “Surrealist” aspects of Giacometti’s postwar oeuvre, like the uncanny bodily fragmentation in *Head on a Rod* (1947), the repetition of the cage-form of *Suspended Ball* in works like *The Cage* (1949–50) and *The Nose* (1949), or the use of chance procedures in the disposition of figures in his multi-part compositions (Fig. 1.47). Of course, there were real stylistic differences between these works and Giacometti’s Surrealist production, and there was a major shift in the activities that took place in his studio once Giacometti began to work from the live model. But if the rupture was not the aggressive *push away* from Surrealism as it has been imagined, it is worth considering what might have been *pulling* Giacometti in a different direction.

In June 1935, the Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (A.E.A.R.) hosted an exhibition of painting and sculpture at the Maison de la Culture, which served as the visual counterpart to a debate launched in the pages of *Commune* about the future of painting. Twenty-nine responses to “Où va la peinture?” were collated and published along with texts by Courbet and Horace Vernet, and followed up with a series of conferences hosted the following year at the Maison de la Culture. Known as the “Querelle du réalisme,” the results of these conferences, organized in May 1936, were published together with the original twenty-nine texts, along with a handful of illustrations.<sup>129</sup> Among these is a drawing attributed to Alberto Giacometti of a figure with its his fist raised, standing before a fringe of small figures that crowd the horizon line (Fig. 0.8).

The drawing, executed with the fervid, heavy hand that came to characterize Giacometti's later portraits, was one of a series produced on spec for Louis Aragon for the journals *La Lutte religieuse*, *Commune*, and *La Ligue anti-impérialiste* between 1932 and 1935.<sup>130</sup> Of the remaining six, two were published in the following issue of the journal, while the remainder were deemed too graphic for publication. Vehemently anti-clerical, the drawings depict allegorical figures in scenes of desecration or cruelty. While the figure with his fist raised is listed in the index as Alberto Giacometti's contribution to the query "Où va la peinture?" the unpublished drawings were signed pseudonymously as "Ferrache."<sup>131</sup> As Aragon explained, it probably wouldn't have mattered much that the audience could identify their author as someone who was also working for a fashionable interior decorator. What kept these illustrations from seeing print was not the identity of their author, but the violence of their content: a "horned pig crowned with a cross burying its genitals in the intestines of a man that it had just eviscerated with its horns, captioned by Giacometti 'The Dirty Beast'"; an "infant resting on a bed of nails in a crib, a cross buried in its forehead, a flagpole thrust through its stomach."<sup>132</sup> Aragon eventually included the full set of drawings in the fifth volume of his 1975 *L'oeuvre poétique*, contextualizing their brutality not only through the violence of his own divisive *Front Rouge* and *Persécuté persécuté*, but through the sadistic qualities of Giacometti's Surrealist sculpture, as though the allegorical figures were the anthropomorphic renditions of the slicing mechanism in *Suspended Ball* or the mortified insectoid form of *Femme égorgée (Woman with her Throat Cut)* (1932).

Giacometti's contribution to the accompanying A.E.A.R. exhibition was decidedly less explicit, both in terms of its militancy and its violence. He had exhibited, in fact, two heads. Aragon's review of the show discusses these works in the paragraph devoted to the sizable

number of portrait busts included in the exhibition. Aragon discusses these busts directly after briefly touching on the Communist portraits and portrait busts in the exhibition, including those of Lenin, Kamélinat, Kirov, and two busts of Cachin, “one of [which] was painted by Vallaint-Couturier in the Santé in 1928, and which is already more than painting: it is history.”<sup>133</sup> Among the nameless busts, Aragon cites Jacques Lipschitz, Henri Laurens, and Giacometti. “[I]t is characteristic that these three sculptors, the elite of avant-garde sculpture, are going toward a more human art (*un art plus humain*), toward the dangerous taste of the real, which, as Apollinaire rightly said, will not push them into the ranks of ‘high society.’”<sup>134</sup> In the midst of the realism debates and their political stakes, in the strained attempt to pursue an aesthetics of social realism in the wake of increasing suspicion of Moscow’s affairs alongside the political restabilization of France following the tumult of 1934, Aragon’s opposition of the “taste for the real” to bourgeois society is pointed. Just as notably, if more subtle, stands his recognition of their status as *the elite of the avant-garde* who are pursuing what he sees as real risk: not through abstract configurations of cruelty, which already had achieved a certain measure of bourgeois acceptance with the growing popularity of Surrealism, but in search of the real.<sup>135</sup>

In the *Querelle*, Aragon argues that this search is distinct from the vulgar naturalism of artists in the Second Empire. For the artists of the Front Populaire, realism was the “conscious expression of social realities” and an integral part in the battle to change them.<sup>136</sup> Stated otherwise, Aragon understood realism not as the reflection of a visible, normative, waking world — as opposed to, say, a surreal distillation of the dream world or unconscious — but instead as an image that puts forth a particular definition of reality, namely, a social reality.<sup>137</sup> The salient opposition lies therefore between the personal and the social, rather than the abstract and figurative. Insofar as the former had come to define modern (bourgeois) art, the latter would be

defined through its desire to address a collective — a desire it shared with the Surrealists. This goes some way toward explaining the curious mention of Giacometti's works in Aragon's review. "The two heads that Giacometti calls *the two oppressed ones* only insufficiently represent this seeker," writes Aragon, "whose drawings have already demonstrated his hatred of the society he lives in."<sup>138</sup> The drawings, presumably, are those by Ferrache; the "two oppressed ones," while never identified, are likely the portrait busts of Rita and Diego: neighbor and brother, recast as types.<sup>139</sup> The painted portraits in the exhibition might as well be photographs; they are history *tout court*. These busts, on the other hand, are endowed with the capacity to pursue a "more human art," where humanity is defined not as individuality, but as typicality.<sup>140</sup>

This title, "the two oppressed ones," is anomalous, and no doubt it does the work of transforming Giacometti's intimate studies into proper content for an exhibition sponsored by the A.E.A.R.. But it also redescribes the major transition of Giacometti's work, from the experimental heads that occupied him throughout the previous decade to the busts of Rita and Diego, as a shift from *exercises of abstraction* to *exercises in typicality*. In the context of the exhibition, this typicality recalls Engel's statement, "Realism to my mind implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances."<sup>141</sup> For Giacometti, moreover, truth to detail was explicitly yoked to the so-called typical character: his pursuit of the bridge of the nose or the shape of the eye, he explained in interview after interview, remained beyond his grasp, and drove him to return incessantly to the head.<sup>142</sup> Asked if he was seeking out the general character behind particular faces in these many attempts, "to the point of being abstract," Giacometti responded, "Absolutely the opposite! The more it's you, the more you become anyone [*n'importe qui*]. . . . But you are only other in being maximally yourself, no? You only get to the general, you could say, by passing through the most particular."<sup>143</sup> His

statement reprises Genet's insight from the epigraph. It also suggests that the supposed tension between typicality and portraiture — the former addressed to the general, the latter to the individual — does not always obtain.<sup>144</sup>

### **The Head of an Etruscan**

In an undated treatise *On Sculpture*, Leon Battista Alberti describes two principles to achieving likeness (*similitudo*): by presenting a type, or by representing an individual, according to his observations that nature accords both a concordance across the species as well as a differentiation through its ranks.<sup>145</sup> In moving between the ideal and the portrait, which correspond with the techniques of mapping dimensions and using the pointing tool respectively, the artist thereby replicates the natural ambivalence between the particular and the type. Leonardo da Vinci, the artist most concerned with the development of particularity from the type, cautions the artist against his natural inclination to repeat the same figure over and over — a version, more or less, of his own. As a bulwark against this tendency, Leonardo suggests the careful observation of other faces, since faces have a limited number of features of nevertheless “indefinite” shape, and thus can provide a training in recognizing both resemblance and variation. Leonardo's own compendiums of noses, lips, foreheads, and so forth — resembling nothing so much as the lavishly illustrated editions of Lavater's *Physiognomie* avant-la-lettre — were intended as *aide-memoires*, containing a glossary of types useful for recalling the living “air” of a once-seen face from the comforts of the studio.<sup>146</sup> In this way, artists could avoid imposing their own character on the facial characteristics of their subjects.

Giacometti, to judge by the many instances in which his own physiognomy marks the criticism of his sculpture, never quite managed this separation. “For once, nature hadn’t lied,” wrote Simone de Beauvoir, for “what his face promised, Giacometti delivered; to look at him up close, moreover, it was obvious that his features were not those of an ordinary man.”<sup>147</sup> That “beautiful mineral face” for de Beauvoir, that face carved out of a rock, for Leiris, and yet light as an ibex: these descriptions serve Giacometti’s critics as entrées into his sculpture.<sup>148</sup> Sartre boldly begins his key 1948 text by impugning the artist’s face, writing, “A glance at Giacometti’s antediluvian face reveals his arrogance and his desire to place himself at the beginning of time.”<sup>149</sup> Giacometti’s face, creased like an armpit of linen and weathered as an old baseball mitt, does not merely look old beyond its 47 years; it looks *ancient*, revealing the artist’s pretensions to position himself among the sculptors of antiquity. Sartre performs his physiognomic reading of Giacometti doubly: on one hand, his features expose his character, ambitious and proud; on the other, they reveal a generic, or even *genetic* type. The status of this genetic type brings to the fore the nature of the pair of subjects to which Giacometti devotes himself in the second of the 1930s: Diego and Rita — his brother and closest collaborator, and a neighbor with whom he had neither blood, nor social, nor romantic, nor artistic relations. We are compelled to ask whether it was simply convenience or a desire for a gender balance that led Giacometti to choose these models, or whether the pair rather oppose Rita’s androgynous, generic aspect to the specific, racially-marked face that he and Diego share.

The particular antiquity evoked by Giacometti’s face was overdetermined in the interwar years. In 1930, a profile on Giacometti published in *Aujourd’hui* by fellow Swissman Charles-Albert Cingria refers to Giacometti as “a young man with a head exactly like an Etruscan figurine.”<sup>150</sup> The comparison stuck, perhaps because of certain indicators in his early sculpture,

such as the compositional similarity between *Project for a Public Square* and a bronze sheep's liver for haruspicy from Gossolengo, near Piacenza: a long, pyramidal form with slightly curving edge, flanked by a shorter arched tab and a supine, carrot-shaped protrusions, the whole inscribed with the names of the god on a liver-shaped platform (Figs. 2.46, 1.49).<sup>151</sup> Cingria's article mentions Giacometti's self-awareness about his particular physiognomy. "We had, speaking in fact about his face, exchanged some words about the problem of extinct, or near extinct, ethnicities, of which certain vestiges remained surprisingly well preserved in certain mountain ranges; in any case, he told me that he was from one of those places."<sup>152</sup> Cingria's account adds contextual richness to the description that Giacometti anecdotally gave of himself frequently: that he was a man of the mountains. His assertion to Cingria (one who, unlike the Parisians to whom he identified himself otherwise, understood the specificity of the Bregaglia region and its pockets of "extinct, or near extinct, ethnicities") reframes Giacometti's vague assertions of mountain identity in a particular racial discourse in the 1930s.

Cingria is referring to a somewhat marginal theory about the presence of Etruscan stock in the Rhenian Alps, which include Giacometti's native Val Bregaglia.<sup>153</sup> That theory had gained new purchase among certain anthropologists in the efflorescence of Etruscology during the interwar period, as they sought to solve the so-called "mystery of the Etruscans," or the geographic origins of the civilization.<sup>154</sup> The origins of the civilization that occupied Etruria, the Italian region coincident with present-day Tuscany and portions of Umbria and Lazio, and at periods spreading north of the Apennine mountains, had long been the subject of speculation for archaeologists and anthropology, who since the eighteenth century had hesitated between textual sources, unable to determine if the civilization was transmarine or an Alpine people descended from the north.<sup>155</sup> Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, and in particular with the

Risorgimento, these were joined by a third theory of an autochthonous Etruscans. This thesis was joined by the claims of Gaetano de Sanctis's 1907 *Storia dei Romani*, which argued that Etruscans were Italiots.

In Germany, the reaction against de Sanctis's popular theories picked up speed. By the 1920s, the field of Etruscology was strained by a growing schism that was as political as it was scientific. The German Tibetologist Albert Grünwedel published in 1922 a study that somewhat fancifully claimed to have decoded Etruscan inscriptions through Egyptian hieroglyphics — findings largely dismissed by both Etruscologists and Egyptologists, but whose descriptions of the Etruscans as a tribe of sorcerers and satanists were nonetheless embossed on the popular imagination. Grünwedel's description was taken up by the Nazi anthropologist Arnold Rosenberg, whose 1930 *Der Mythos des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* had sold more than a million copies. Rosenberg concluded that the Etruscans were descendants of Near Eastern populations who imported into Italy a gamut of sexual perversions and occult practices, typified by their “prostitute”-cum-priestess Tanaquil and their divinations from the haruspices, and later routed by the noble Nordic race that established Rome.<sup>156</sup> Rosenberg's opposition between Occidental Romans and Oriental Etruscans, as Marie-Laure Haack has noted, mirrored the distinction between Nordic Romans and meridional Etruscans that presaged the Pact of Steel. Already in 1932, proto-fascist and active proponent of the Italian racial laws Julius Evola wrote that the Roman eagle and axe were “primordial symbols of nordic-Aryan origin,” whereas the Etruscans' prophet was none other than a “royal semitic woman.”<sup>157</sup>

The anti-Semitic rhetoric around the Etruscan race took on precise, visual terms in the 1930s, shifting from a description of *practices* to one of *physiognomies*. While the rare Etruscologist sought out present-day examples of Etruscan physiognomy among so called

*lebendende Etrusker*, the bulk were taken from the faces of funerary monuments and artifacts — like the Apollo of Véii — provocative, again, in large part for its distinctive facial features.<sup>158</sup> This shuttling between sculptural representations and living individuals was authorized by archaeologists, who had taken the quiddity of Etruscan art to lie precisely in its relationship to *portraiture* as opposed to genre.<sup>159</sup> “Etruscan art draws its resources from the expression of the national soul,” wrote Ducati. “[I]t is characterized by a realism that surges out from [...] the series of portraits; its investigation into individual truth opposes the Greek attempt at depicting an ideal type.”<sup>160</sup> Claims made about the faces of Etruscan *sculptures* were thus transposed seamlessly to the Etruscan *race*.

For Ottorino Gurrieri, who published his conclusions about the autochthonous race of Etruscans in *La Difesa della Razza*, the figures in the Volumnus Hypogeum at Ponte San Giovanni testifies to the “purity” of Etruscan-Aryan features: “the ample and broad foreheads, the straight noses, the high arched brow, the cut of the mouth and regularity of the jaw are undoubtable qualities of purity.”<sup>161</sup> They thus stood to demonstrate the “admirable line of purity” of the Italian race. In Germany, Eugen Fischer, a former physician turned self-proclaimed specialist in *Rassenkunde*, claimed to have observed over the course of a trip to Italy in 1935 the physiognomic markers of a pure “Etruscan race” (Fig. 1.50).<sup>162</sup> His evidence, however, was largely based in diagrams and drawings made from museum collections and archaeological sites, which Fischer then compared to descriptions of the physiognomy of natives of Asia Minor.<sup>163</sup> That depictions in Etruscan art were viewed as evidence of a physiognomic type facilitated a syllogism: Etruscan art was portraiture, these portraits were physiognomically distinctive or “pure,” thus the Etruscan race was pure.

Fischer's motive however, was not merely to make his name among the other Etruscologists; it was to prove the superiority of *Rassenkunde* over archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and the science of peoples (*Völkerkunde*), disciplines that had likewise attempted to solve the “mystery of the Etruscans.”<sup>164</sup> The real persuasion would be accomplished not by Fischer, but by an antecedent publication by his colleague Hans F.K. Günther, who first published his *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* in 1922. Two decades later, it reached a circulation of 124,000 copies.<sup>165</sup> Günther hypothesized a system of six races, wherein the Etruscans are cast as a “Dinaric” race appearing also in Asia Minor, a conclusion he draws from their physiognomy as observed, once again, in artifacts that show them as a people of round faces and short noses.<sup>166</sup> The difference in these descriptions of the Etruscan physiognomies is instructive. All, it seemed, could agree that the Etruscan physiognomy was *particular*, and a key to establishing their origins in a time when establishing “provenance,” as Benjamin noted, was of capital importance. But few could agree on what that face looked like.

By aligning himself with the Etruscans, Giacometti set himself within a charged racial discourse constructed precariously around an opaque core, around a “mystery” where physiognomy pledged to offer transparency. Giacometti's identification with the Etruscans is therefore only ambivalently about claiming an ethnic identity. Or rather, it claims an ambivalent ethnic identity. Other artists, typically of Italian extraction, had likewise claimed Etruscan heritage in those years — among them, Arturo Martini, Italo Griselli, and Marino Marini. Arturo Martini was particularly strident, writing, “I am the true Etruscan: they have given me a language and I have made them speak, I have expressed them. I could have carried out a thousand statues as they would have imagined them.”<sup>167</sup> Yet it was Giacometti's perennial rival and sometime friend, Picasso, who provides the closest model for Giacometti's auto-primitivization. I refer

here to the self-portraits dating from the summer of 1906, which Picasso spent in Gosol in the Spanish Pyrenees, and during which the local Romanesque art and the Iberian masks he had observed at the Louvre first began to directly impress themselves on his work — and, more directly, onto his face: *Self-Portrait with a Palette* swaps his features for an archaic Iberian style (Fig. 1.51).<sup>168</sup> An alternative European primitivism associated with a “native land” is claimed by taking on the face sculpted by the “primitives.”

Famously, it was this same face that Picasso imposed on his portrait of Gertrude Stein after a long struggle to paint her likeness (Fig. 1.52). Picasso’s apparent indifference to Stein’s actual features (notwithstanding the famous pithy retort that Stein will come to resemble her portrait) has the effect of denaturalizing the physiognomic license of the bourgeois portrait. In one fell swoop, it undermines the extrapolation of Stein’s character from her portrait, and suggests that any face she might have “put on” of her own accord would be mask-like: preformed, prefabricated, prevaricating.<sup>169</sup> This denial of the physiognomic sign of the portrait is part of a trajectory of negations in twentieth-century portraiture —culminating, perhaps, in Robert Rauschenberg’s snitty telegram to his Paris dealer, “This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so.” Yet it also recasts Picasso’s ancient face as a vehicle for communion with Stein. The portrait operates, Robert Lubar has argued, as a shared performance, mapping his face onto hers, and her (sexual) otherness onto his.<sup>170</sup> It is a communication of identity made possible by the imposition of an “Iberian-type” face, stabilized in Iberian sculpture, which could be traded between Picasso and Stein as easily as one can lend a mask.

For Giacometti, the procedure is different. Once again we see a pairing of self and other — in Diego (as proxy for Giacometti) and Rita — whose respective portraits are produced in stylistic lockstep. Yet Giacometti’s busts are no masks, in the sense of schematic and stable

representations of the face. In fact, as the decade progresses, they grow less and less mask-like. While the earliest busts of Rita and Diego are textured with the light working of his penknife and fingers, the heads that follow become coarser, even cruder depictions. Around in 1937, that same penknife brusquely scores the hairline and the labial folds, the pocket of skin under the eye, and the ligaments of the neck (Fig. 1.53). Then, in 1938, it is used to gouge deep caverns around the eyes, sharp ridges into the forehead, cicatrices across the cheekbones (Fig. 1.54, 1.55). These slashing gestures are met with a similarly rough-handed application of the clay. In his *Head of Isabel* (c. 1938–39), a supplement to the Rita/Diego series, but stylistically similar, the subject — an English artist and model who was, at the time, Giacometti’s inamorata — is rendered with a series of seemingly swift shoves of the clay by Giacometti’s fingers, which have pressed her shoulder-length hair into a billowing fin (Fig. 1.56). Traces of his fingernails nick the surface. In a second plaster cast of the original clay model of *Isabel*, he returned with a pencil that runs roughshod over her cheekbones, at the corners of her lip and eye socket, as though Giacometti intended to draw in the shadow of a specific light source falling to her left. Yet he does so with the intensity of a frustrated kid carving his name into a school desk. In a head of Rita made that same year, Giacometti produced multiple plaster casts and again returned, this time with the penknife, to scratch a web of marks over her face, as if he intended to graffiti Rita’s features on its sculpted copy like he had with his father’s features in *Head of Father II*. There is, in other words, an affect to the *sculpting* of these later heads, even if the affect of their *models*, as earlier noted, remains neutral. Instead of “de-visaging” his portrait busts, or rendering them as “faceless heads of facets,” Giacometti *defaces* them: gouging, carving, scraping, and excavating their surfaces. Ultimately, their resemblance to their models seems like a pyrrhic victory of face recognition over so much wreckage.

Starting in 1935, Giacometti's studio practice placed the busts of his brother and neighbor on equal footing, stressing their parity by dedicating equal amounts of time to them, and by initiating and completing them as a pair. Yet the end result would be neither to give them the same face, thus erasing the physiognomic distinctions of these two "types," nor to reify their differences. They are not aligned because they share a single mask like Gertrude and Pablo, but because they partake of the same differentiated, turbulent surface that aggressively contests their legibility as faces. This shared illegibility makes Rita and Diego's heads a *détournement* of the project of physiognomic portraiture, whether it be as Simmelian "geometric loci" of individual personalities or as expressions of racial identity.

It also pits them against a certain ethic of realist portraiture in general. As Norman Bryson has observed, one of the consequences of a conventional view of the artistic image, which conceives of it as a product of matching the artist's vision to the viewer's, is that the naturalism of any given image is proportional to how much it exceeds the bare minimum of information required to recognize something.<sup>171</sup> Put simply, the more details in a portrait, the more "realistic" it appears, particularly when those details abound in the intermediary, non-denotative zones of the face, like the cheeks, forehead, and chin.<sup>172</sup> Giacometti's heads of Rita and Diego appear like a parody of this principle, or like its parody *and* its undoing. Like his postwar painted portraits, they overload the face with information: dashes and ruts that fill said intermediary zones, magnifying the smallest wrinkles of the face, reproducing the way shadow pools under the veins of a forehead or light skips across a cheekbone. But these marks furthermore, and inescapably, suggest a determined violence to the sculpted form that moves from Diego's heads to Rita's and back again. Their scrambled surfaces invert the other model for a study of types based on information accumulated on a surface: Galton's composite portraits,

which merged the features of numerous subjects onto a single photographic plate so as to arrive at a slightly blurry, but legible schema (Fig. 1.57).<sup>173</sup> By contrast, as Genet observed about Rembrandt's portraits in this chapter's epigraph, the heads that are subject to such intense scrutiny and ferocious labor ultimately close off the route to their underlying, individual psychologies. But in appearing to bridge their distinctions as simple types, they become "[broken] up in both accident and form." Typicality begins in this way to deliver, not the *promise* of portraiture in realism, but its breaking point.

### **Shattered Head**

Between 1935 and 1944, images of Giacometti's new work appeared before the public only once: in the 1939 issue of the magazine *Verve*, the English-language "French review of art" published by Tériade.<sup>174</sup> Two photographs of a miniature bust and a reproduction of a portrait of his mother appeared alongside essays by Paul Valéry and Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Paulhan and André Gide, Henri Michaux, Marcel Jouhandeau, Adrienne Monnier, Alfred Jarry, and more than a dozen of writers. *Verve's* pages included tipped-in heliogravures of Boccaccio's "Fair and Renowned Ladies" and Etienne Chevalier's Book of Hours, color lithographs by Braque and Constantin Guys, photo essays by Herbert List, portraits by Gisèle Freund and David O. Hill, Brassai's photographs of Aristide Maillol's studio, reproductions of David, Bonnard, Miró, Derain, Franz Hals, Renoir, and Klee, and twenty-four miniatures by Jean Fouquet printed on lustrous ivory stock. The sumptuousness of this issue is nearly unparalleled in the history of art magazines. And it was, in its entirety, devoted to the topic of the face.

Sartre's contribution was titled simply "Faces." It begins, "In a society composed of statues, life would be a deadly bore, but it would be lived according to the dictates of justice and reason. Statues are bodies without faces; blind and deaf bodies, without fear or anger, and uniquely concerned with obeying the laws of rightness, i.e., poise and movement."<sup>175</sup> The unified body of the statue suppresses conflict and illustrates "*le droit*," or what is both morally and physically upright. But there is no such equipoise in the society of men, for in society, "the face reigns and the body is a serf." Sartre thus anticipates Deleuze and Guattari's observation: the face dominates not only our attention, but our bodies, and this occurs in general rather than specific terms. The face does not just "lord over" the body below it; it reigns over *all* bodies. "If you would seek comprehension of war and injustice and our hidden ardors and sadism and great terrors," he writes, "you must go back to those round idols which go through streets on top of subjugated bodies or occasionally, in times of strife, at the end of pikes."<sup>176</sup>

Sartre goes on to describe a harrowing processional — the body as a crowd struggling to bear up the tabooed object of the head, women whose faces are erotic and bloody altars. The head swims between its status as a fetish and an abject trophy, both of which organize the ritual actions of the masses around them. In similar terms, when Georges Bataille in those same years invokes a "headless" or acephalous community, he is not merely speaking about removing the metonymic "head of state." He is advocating the undoing of the very metaphorical architecture of the human body that concentrates its humanity in the face: that region that flouts the animal's axial orientation by staring forward — like an electric meter installed plumb on chimney, to recall Breton, recalling Bataille — and thus asserts its difference from the animal world, based on the faculties of the head and all that goes on inside it (rationality, sublimation, and so forth).<sup>177</sup> This is the case except when the rational mind is overcome by ecstasy or pain. In those moments,

reflex throws the head back and redraws the axis from the mouth, now opened in a passionate cry, to the anus and down to the feet, firmly planted in the ground. For Bataille, as for Sartre, true brutality begins only when the chin descends to level and the face looks forward again, ready to assume its despotic functions. Humankind thereby distinguishes itself from the animal world not through its higher mental faculties, but through the wars and injustice that replicate the head's tyranny over the body in the tyranny of the head-of-state (or of-church, or of-family) over the collective body.

For Sartre, however, the head does not solely move in the direction of this metonymic register. The current can be reversed, not by doing away with or reorienting the head, but by examining it "head-on." He writes,

Certainly, the face is *also* a thing: I can take it between my fingers, hold the heavy, warm weight of a head I love, I can crumple the cheeks like a piece of cloth, tear the lips like the petals of a flower, split the cranium like a pottery vase. But it is not only, nor even *primarily*, a thing. The name of magic is given to such inert objects as a bone, a cranium, a statuette, a rabbit's foot, all of them immersed in their silent routine and yet possessing the virtues of an intellect. Faces are natural fetishes.

The swift descent of Sartre's description into an extraordinary litany of violence suggests what comes of treating faces like things. Between the gesture of the lover, who places her hands like a tender parentheses around the beloved's face, and utter savagery, lie only a few moves. The face is too seductive — of our affection and our rage — to be just an "anonymous object," as Giacometti once fretted. To objectify the face is to expose it to violence. That much became obvious as the resurgence of physiognomy was coopted by the agenda of scientific racism. To imagine, on the other hand, that it is a carapace concealing an inner and inscrutable essence, is to

restore to it its magic, and thereby its capacity to tyrannize those under its thrall.<sup>178</sup> In other words, objectifying the face leads to sadism; idolizing it leads to despotism.

Could the face be treated otherwise? For this, I want to return again to the later busts of Rita and Diego, to linger on the apparent violence of their surfaces. The furrows driven into them are *part* of what makes their faces so turbulent, but most of the texture comes from the medium: the clay that buckles and skids over itself, and supplements Giacometti's incisions with still more shadows. On the whole, the grain of the surface speaks less to where the medium has been pressed or smoothed into shape than to where it has resisted the sculptor's touch. The form is a record of how it fled that touch, not of how it merged with it; it solidifies not their contact but their distance, their inability to converge. In these late busts, clay and plaster thereby become not an ally in the analysis of the face — smoothly conveying it in similarly smooth planes — but an opponent. It is not merely that the surface texture appears unintentional; the medium appears to actively rebel at this attempt to press a face into it. "I am beginning to see what a form is," Giacometti wrote to his family in 1938.<sup>179</sup> Whatever that form was for Giacometti, it could hardly be the ideal of a surface fully impregnated with the spirit of the work or wholly legible as a table of meaningful signs. What, then?

In the years when Giacometti was still a Surrealist, Carl Einstein was developing a theory of form that he nevertheless waited to publish in 1934, where he dispersed it through his book-length treatise, *Georges Braque*. At the heart of this theory is a dialectical concept of form-making that understands the production of art as an act of destruction. "Every precise form is the assassination of other versions," writes Einstein — not just of prior *aesthetic* forms, but indeed of all modes of stabilizing, categorizing, and simplifying the "real."<sup>180</sup> For Einstein, products of cognition are not the natural product of human life, but in fact the shackles we place on our own

capacity to freely imagine new worlds.<sup>181</sup> Form, in its truest sense, is a “spontaneous hallucination” that ruptures these “deadly” fixities.<sup>182</sup> This action locates art in league with other kinds of “metamorphic revolt” that, by acknowledging the capacity for self-transformation, address themselves to an inherently pluralistic and labile reality.<sup>183</sup> Art, in fact, formalizes this reality. Realism for Einstein is just that: not a morphological representation, but a constructed form (or *Gestalt*) that echoes the operations of the concrete world, distinct from its oppressive, a posteriori formulations. In an unpublished manuscript that distills the concepts of form in *Georges Braque*, he writes:

Every object represents merely comforting experiences, an accord, a *parti pris*. What is needed now is not repetition of tired tautologies, but the extension of the repertory of concrete gestalts to form new visionary objects. Yet, with that, artistic activity is rescued from passivity and its optimistically servile attitude is shattered to pieces. Art becomes a human means for shaping and altering reality.<sup>184</sup>

It is ultimately this concept of a “concrete gestalt” that seems to echo Giacometti’s revelation of form in 1938, as an agonistic process that pitches itself against the schema of the morphological face. As Didi-Huberman has stressed, this process is reciprocal: there can be no destruction of form without a corresponding destruction of the mind that holds on to it, or “at least the destruction of [its] prior ‘points of view.’”<sup>185</sup> This is what renders all true visual experience a “genuine combat” of the most personal order.

“Doubtless the primordial need for a sculptor to discover structures makes him come forth to touch with his hand the mineral hardness of the skeleton and the skull,” reflects Jacques Dupin. “But this explanation is insufficient [to describe Giacometti’s process. . . .] Returning to the human head, he did not stop at the hard structure he had laid bare and which displayed the motionless presence of death. Rummaging deeper into the face, penetrating the wall of bone

which death had applied to it like a mask, he sees and gives to be seen the living depths which inhabit it.”<sup>186</sup> Dupin’s brilliant and grotesque image of “rummaging” into the bone rightly grasps both the violence to and the convolutions of the surface that Giacometti was driven to perform over the course of the 1930s. Only for Giacometti, life is not beneath that wall of bone, but in the concrete form that resists our attempts to stabilize or simplify it. Life lies here, in heads that rebel against deadly taxonomies and lethal idealizations.

The iconic, churning surfaces of Giacometti’s postwar art find their roots in this operative violence, which works against the morphological form of the face as well as the modernist sculptural forms completed through our perception of them. The next phase of his work is rooted here, too. We find it several pages beyond Sartre’s contribution in *Verve*: two photographs of a small bust, sunk to its chest into a cube of plaster photographed by Marc Vaux and printed at many times its actual size (Fig. 1.58). The face is a static blur of pick marks, yet one can make out the socket of an eye and a nose, and, if one stares longer, the cheekbone and lips, the hairline and ears, the fold of a collar, the crest of an earlobe. In short, a spontaneous hallucination of form emerges through this aggressively unmade, miniature head. The bust has been photographed twice, once from the front, the other in profile, like a sly sendup of the procedures and images of the physiognomers. Against their abstractions, and by traveling through his own, Giacometti had begun to see what a form is: violence and hallucination to contest the greater violence and more devastating hallucination that attends on our objectification.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean Genet, *What Remains of a Rembrandt Torn into Four Equal Pieces and Flushed Down the Toilet*, trans. Randolph Hough (New York: Hanumen Books, 1988), pp. 21–22 and 44. The text in the

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original French is printed in two columns, aligning roughly as they do here. “Au monde il existe et il n’exista jamais qu’un seul homme. Il est tout entier en chacun de nous, donc il est nous-même. Chacun est l’autre et les autres. [...] Sauf qu’un phénomène, dont je ne connais même pas le nom, semble diviser à l’infini cet homme unique, le fragmente apparemment dans l’accident et dans la forme, et rend étranger à tous même chacun des fragments.” “Ce qui est resté d’un Rembrandt déchiré en petits carrés bien réguliers, et foutu aux choïttes”; “Plus je les regardais, et *moins ces portraits me renvoyait à quelqu’un*. A personne. Il me fallut sans doute assez longtemps pour arriver à cette idée, désespérante et enivrante : les portraits faits par Rembrandt (après la cinquantaine) ne renvoyait à personne d’identifiable. Aucun détail, aucun trait de physionomie ne renvoie à un trait de caractère, à une psychologie particulière.” *Oeuvres Complètes* Vol. 3 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> The primary account of this incident appears in Simone de Beauvoir’s memoir *La Force de l’âge* (1960) (Paris: Gallimard, Collections Folio, 1986), p. 632.

<sup>3</sup> “The characteristic of his work which seem to remove it from realism are merely manifestations of a superior realism, at once broader and more precise, which no longer has as objects man or the world as they are, but as Giacometti’s eye sees them.” Jacques Dupin, *Giacometti: Three Essays*, translated by John Ashbery and Brian Evenson (New York: Black Square Editions, 2003), p. 26. Recalling Sartre’s lines (see below) almost verbatim, Reinhold Hohl writes that Giacometti was seeking “‘l’image phénoménale de l’Autre ou d’un autre homme, telle qu’elle lui apparaissait à distance,” Reinhold Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti*, translated by H.-Ch. Tauxe and Eric Scher (Lausanne: La Guilde du livre et Clairefontaine, 1971), p. 105. Or again, “Giacometti’s new work attested to the real distance between the object and the eye perceiving it [...] replacing familiar and conventional ways of seeing with true records of actual appearances.” Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1971), p. 107. “Ce que propose Giacometti n’est pas une expérience de physique, la traduction d’une aberration optique (les poires du compotier qui s’amenuisent, les silhouettes qui s’amincissent, la tête rétrécie, les pieds faits en socle). C’est une donnée d’évidence de la perception non corrigée par l’habitude ou la convention d’une géométrie raisonnée.” Jean Louis Schefer, “L’ange ou la géométrie,” in *Alberto Giacometti: Le Dessin à L’oeuvre* (Paris: Gallimard/Centre Pompidou, 2001), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “In Quest of the Absolute,” in *Essays in Aesthetics*. Translated by Wade Baskin (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1963), p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> “Entretien avec Yvon Taillander,” *Alberto Giacometti: Écrits* (Paris: Hermann Editeur, 2007), p. 176.

<sup>6</sup> Kassner’s book was published at the midpoint in a surge of physiognomic thinking, including Klages’s characterology/theory of expression, offered as alternative to Freudian archaeologies of the individual; Ernst Kretschmer’s publication about the physiognomy of mental illness, *Körperbau und Charakter* (1922); Bela Balazs 1924 *Der sichtbare Mensch oder Die Kultur des Films*; and Hans F.K. Günther’s proto-fascist racial anthropology, more of which anon. Finally, one can mention Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss’s *Rasse und Seele* (1937), which Gray views as a compromise between Klages and Günther. A student of Husserl, Clauss sought to develop a racial psychology based on the perception of “essence.” The breadth of disciplines involved here, at the convergence of *Lebensphilosophie*, Goethe’s scientism (and in particular his morphological studies, which had come to represent a fusion of intuition and observation), and finally deep cultural pessimism and anti-modernism, lead Gray to conclude that physiognomy is best conceived as a “super-discipline,” “hypostatized as a universal theory of knowledge, perception, and instinctual understanding that presents a powerful counter-model to the Enlightenment narrative of a rationally endowed, historically progressive humanity.” Richard T. Gray, *About Face*:

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*German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206, from Rudolph Kassner, *Sämtliche Werke* Vol. 4 (Pfulligen: Neske, 1969–91), 435.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Shortland, “The Power of a Thousand Eyes: Johann Caspar Lavater’s Science of Physiognomical Perception.” *Criticism* 28, no. 4 (1986): 397.

<sup>9</sup> Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 205. Jean-Pierre Maxence, *Histoire de dix ans, 1927–1937: Chronique des années trente* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), 2nd ed. (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2005), p. 110, *cit.* Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Battista della Porta, *De humana physiognomic* (Napes, 1568), p. 58, *cit.* in Patrizia Magli, “The Face and the Soul,” *Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Two*, ed. Michel Feher, with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone Books, 1989), p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> The paradoxes here are legion, and one might start by acknowledging that the Holocaust was accomplished through the harrowing deployment of bureaucratic systems that tracked bloodlines and filiation *as well as* through propaganda that insisted on the existence and significance of the physiognomic difference of Jews (the baselessness of this difference is reflected in the virulence of the propaganda campaign). The other side of the coin is the great efforts taken to establish and police an Aryan physiognomy — despite the fact that the Führer himself hardly conformed to it — alongside *Blut und Boden* rhetoric. What seems important to note is that physiognomy contains within it a means to mellow, if not resolve, these antinomies: as Kassner noted, physiognomic thinking is essentially ahistorical, meaning that it seeks out bonds that exist not just *outside* but *prior to* modern history and progress — those two agents of assimilation and interrelation.

<sup>12</sup> See Allan Sekula, “The Traffic in Photographs,” *Art Journal*, vol.41, no.1 (1981): p.19; Sabine Hake, “Zur Wiederkehr des Physiognomischen in der modernen Photographie,” in *Geschichten der Physiognomik: Text, Bild, Wissen*, Rüdiger Campe and Manfred Schneider, eds. (Freiburg: Rombach, 1996), pp.475–513; George Baker, “Photography Between Narrativity and Stasis: August Sander, Degeneration, and the Decay of the Portrait,” *October*, no.76 (1996): pp.73–113; Graham Clarke, “Public Faces, Private Lives: August Sander and the Social Typology of the Portrait Photograph,” in *The Portrait in Photography*, Graham Clarke, ed. (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), pp.72–3.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Little History of Photography,” *Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2: 1927–1934*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 520.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. li–liiii.

<sup>15</sup> Actually, he wrote “((Meaning is a physiognomy)).” Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* § 568, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), p. 151e. For an account of Wittgenstein’s “critical physiognomy” as distinct from scientific physiognomy, see Daniel Wack, “Wittgenstein’s Critical Physiognomy,” *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 3 (No. 1) 2014: 113–137.

<sup>16</sup> For Wittgenstein, facial expression — as a phenomenon that is fundamentally indivisible from the face where it appears — has the capacity to defeat the Cartesian separation of interior and exterior, or

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form and content. In the *Brown Books*, he explains the problem and its solution by reference to a smiley face: to say this face *has* a particular expression is to fall for the Cartesian swindle, since it suggests that the expression could be considered separately from the surface carrying it (what, after all, is the smiley face without the smiling face?). Instead, Wittgenstein argues, one should say it *is* a certain kind of face, and thus avoid altogether the temptation to sunder expressive phenomena into theoretically, but not *actually*, distinct parts that cannot henceforth be put back together again. Bernard Rhie, in his insightful analysis of the connection between Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind and his philosophy of art, explains that for Wittgenstein, "the concept of expression does not name a 'relation' at all: expression does not *connect* inner to outer, mind to body, or emotions to their expressions. What is expressed is present *in*, and *as*, the expression itself. To think otherwise will be to create the very problem of relationship (the "how does it work?" problem) that the idea of expression will then never be able to solve." Bernard Rhie. "Wittgenstein on the Face as a Work of Art," *Non-Site*, no. 3 (October 2011). <http://nonsite.org/article/wittgenstein-on-the-face-of-a-work-of-art>.

<sup>17</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London and New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 111. Adorno's larger argument here is to oppose the registration of subjective feeling to the "objective expression" of that which, while perhaps once subsisting in an individual, now persists only in the artwork.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> "Entretien avec André Parinaud," *Écrits*, op. cit., 239.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 127.

In relation, therefore, and yet never *reducible* to relations, the face and the head are host to a complexity one recognizes in artworks — and, especially, in the modern artwork. The literary theorist Jean Starobinski traces the origins of this complexity to Rousseau's request that his readers refrain from taking his words at "face value." Starobinski sees in Rousseau's "invalidat[ion of] the vulnerable objective text, only too accessible to rational criticism" the beginnings of a whole school of modern literature: one that both presupposes and exposes the complex relation between the surface of a text and its expressive depths, at the basis of all communication. The suggestion troubles the definition of modernism as the self-evidence of the medium, revising it to mean instead that the medium in modernism foregrounds the *non-evident* relation between what is seen and what is not. Starobinski insists that this is isn't a pre- or anti-structuralist position, but rather one that acknowledges all that may not be accounted for in structure alone. A history of a modernist return to figuration must do no less. Jean Starobinski, *The Living Eye*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. xi.

<sup>22</sup> The two were known collectively as the "pottières d'Entremont," according to Mathilde Salvvert, grand-niece of René Piaggi, who shared a studio complex with Gueffier beginning in the early 1950s. While some have suggested that Giacometti and Gueffier had an intimate relationship, there is no indication that this was the case. As to the suggestion that Giacometti once asked Rita to move in with him, Piaggi recounted that Rita rebuffed him by citing as unacceptable his habit of leaving his socks out to dry on the windowsill. It is possible to take Giacometti's proposition as seriously as Gueffier's rationale for refusing it: Rita, as Giacometti might well have known, may not have had an interest in living with *any* man. Email to Veronique Wiesinger from Mathilde Salvvert, 13 December 2007, FAAG Archives.

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<sup>23</sup> As reported to James Lord by Diego Giacometti, 12 February 1970, Rita modeled “every day until the war.” James Lord Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Box 24, Folder 269.

<sup>24</sup> “Lettre à Pierre Matisse,” *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>25</sup> In one case, a pedestal of a plaster cube was added after the fact, though it unclear when the addition came about. In any event, the significance of the pedestal, as chapter two will argue, for the “semantics” of these works only emerged toward the end of the decade.

<sup>26</sup> François Stahly, cit. Hohl, p. 273.

<sup>27</sup> FAAG 2003-4492.

<sup>28</sup> Eluard, Paul. *Letters to Gala*. Edited by Pierre Dreyfu. Translated by Jesse Browner. New York: Paragon House, 1989), p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> Salvador Dalí, “L’Objet surréaliste,” *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, n. 3 (December 1931): 16.

<sup>30</sup> Susan Suleiman, “Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930s.” *Visual Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 39–50; Raymond Spiteri, “The Political Physiognomy of the Marvelous.” In *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, edited by Raymond Spiteri and LaCoss, Vol. Sixteen. Studies in European Cultural Transition (London: Ashgate, 2003); Robert S. Short, “The Politics of Surrealism, 1920–1936.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 2 (1966): 3–25.

<sup>31</sup> Hopes seemed to have lain briefly with Dérain, whom Giacometti also admired avidly, but these were scuttled after the death of Derain’s dealer, Paul Guillaume, in 1935 and the subsequent downturn of his fortunes and will. Elie Faure, “L’Agonie de la peinture,” *L’Amour de l’art* (June 1931): 233; Jacques Guenne, “La Peinture est morte? Vive la peinture!” *L’art vivant* (September 1931): 493, cited in Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars* (Yale University Press, 1995), p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> Hohl, op. cit., p 106; Büttner et al, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>33</sup> “Lettre à Pierre Matisse,” op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>34</sup> “Entretien avec Pierre Schneider” (1961), in *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>35</sup> Cit. Hohl, op cit., p. 30, from Daniel Marquis-Sébie, *Le Message de Bourdelle* (Paris: L’Artisan du livre, 1931), p. 127.

<sup>36</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, “Le Problème des deux époques,” *Dessin, Couleur, Lumière* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1995), p. 301.

<sup>37</sup> “Io ho continuato a lavorare continuamente senza quasi interruzione a parte il dormire (e non tanto) e [illegibile] più mai da nessuno parte ma sono arrivato al principio di ciò che volevo e ho lavora un vista per un tempo indefinito ho finalmente trovato ciò che cercavo e la mia figura in plastellina continua sua ho lavorato alla grande e devo cominciare una media. sarà il più comodo sua non si ha tempo

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abbastanza per tutto e mi accorgo d'essere solo non si avanza che molto lentamente, specialmente la grande bisogna lavorare a due ma ormai ho ciò che voglio e tutti i lavori sino adesso non erano che delle ricerche da un lato e dall'altro di ciò che bisognava trovare. Sono impaziente di continuare e poi devo poi trovare quelle teste e comincerò poi una di Diego quando ritorna, Diego vedrà che ho fatto dei progressi e che tendendomi esattamente a ciò che vedo quanto la scultura lo premette non ha niente di comune alle cose naturaliste [illegible] nei con niente altro su cose ciò che si immagina essere la natura. [...] Non penso più a altro che al mio lavoro e sovente andavo a cene che erano le 9 1/2 passate....” Alberto Giacometti, “Letter to Annetta Giacometti,” 7 January 1935, SIK-Isea. HNA 274.A.2.1.129.

<sup>38</sup> In the same letter, Giacometti asserts that these works have “nothing to do with naturalism or anything you might imagine as being in nature” and that they have “nothing in common with his research in abstract[ion] or the surrealists” — a statement that contradicts his assertion, just sentences earlier, that “all the work up to now was only research.” Given that Giacometti describes to his family, again in this same letter, his plans to keep exhibiting the surrealist work and to continue on his decorative commissions, this contradiction may be understood to mean that there are no formal commonalities between the two sets of work (and thus no reason to imagine exhibiting these new works in surrealist contexts), even if there is a strong continuity between the surrealist “work up to now” and the portrait busts. Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> “Recherches expérimentales” was the name of a questionnaire in which Giacometti participated, published in the sixth issue of *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, but the concept of research accompanied the movement from its very inception; the *Centrale surréaliste* or Bureau of Surrealist Research was opened in October 1924, with the purposes of collecting information from the public regarding the activities of the unconscious mind.

<sup>40</sup> The busts were “still too indebted to the classical and academic conventions and still based too strongly internalized styles,” Nadia Schneider determines. She argues that the decade constituted a period of “unlearning,” in which Giacometti had to break through acquired habits of representation. While she suggests that destruction played a role in a creative process, a notion to which I will return, she also characterizes the period as one of “methodic failure”: like Descartes’ “methodic doubt,” the decade’s work constituted a phase of clarifying self-critique. Nadia Schneider, “Between Crisis and Wonderment. An Introduction to the Theme of Crisis in the Work of Alberto Giacometti,” in *Alberto Giacometti: Retrospective* (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2009), pp. 61, 76.

<sup>41</sup> “...le più che mi occupa è di fare a puittosto finire il busto.” Letter to Anetta Giacometti, Giacometti Stiftung, SIK-Isea, 274.A.2.1.131. February 14 was the very day that Surrealists confronted Giacometti about his portrait busts, leading Giacometti to announce his departure from the movement.

<sup>42</sup> “La tête de Diego avance lentement, et il faudra y passer encore des mois.” Letter to Ottilia and François Berthoud, Giacometti Stiftung, SIK-Isea, 274.A.2.1.132.

<sup>43</sup> “Quand il y a 3 ans j’ai commencé mes têtes et mes figures en refusant d’exposer et tant d’autres choses, en recommençant tout de nouveau à la base, je savai [sic] que ça pourrait me conduire dans des positions difficiles passagèrement, et plus j’avançai [sic] et plus je les acceptai [sic], et maintenant plus que jamais je me sens plus fort que jamais... parce que j’ai dû laisser à côté peu à peu, plus que part toute autre chose et au moins je commence à voire [sic] ce que c’est qu’une forme.” Letter to Annetta Giacometti and Ottilia and François Berthoud, Giacometti Stiftung, SIK-Isea, 247.A.2.1.152.

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<sup>44</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “No More Play,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1984), p. 51.

<sup>45</sup> “Entretien avec Jean Clay (1963),” *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 312.

<sup>46</sup> Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. M. Meyer and R.M. Ogden (New York and London: G.E. Stechert & Co., 1907), pp. 94.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95–6.

<sup>48</sup> Heinrich Wölfflin draws on this theory, while adapting it to sculpture in the round, in his excursus on the photography of sculpture. “The educated eye feels it is a virtue that here the figure explains itself all at once and becomes completely understandable,” he explains, “so that one is not driven around it in order to grasp its content, but rather that it informs the beholder about its viewpoint right from the start.” Nevertheless, “one will find a particular relish in moving from the inferior views to the completely convincing [view], and one does not tire, when repeating the experiment, of allowing from inadequate appearances the purified image to emerge, which stands calm and clear and in the true sense is felt to be a liberation. This is a pleasure that painting cannot give us.” Heinrich Wölfflin, “How One Should Photograph Sculpture,” translated by Geraldine Johnson, *Art History* 36, no. 1 (February 2013): 53–4, 59.

<sup>49</sup> Michel Leiris, “Alberto Giacometti,” *Documents* Vol. 1 No. 4 (1929): 210. This *découpage*, like the compositions of the article’s other illustrations (which depict groups of Giacometti’s works), is attributed to the “author,” who could be Leiris, Giacometti, or Vaux. There is evidence that Giacometti, at the very least, was in on its production: the FAAG archives has a second *découpage* of another plaque sculpture, *Woman*, which has been similarly cut out and pasted onto a sheet of blank paper.

<sup>50</sup> This opposition is the generous insight of Robert Slifkin’s study of Philip Guston’s “return to figuration.” Slifkin argues that the key opposition for understanding Guston’s career is not between figuration (understood as morphological correspondence) and abstraction (understood as nonobjective image-making), but between the figurative and the literal. Appealing to a grammatical model, he redefines the figurative as a mode of substitution with specific rhetorical capacities, which encourages viewers to “read” his paintings as matrices of reference that resist the broader movement toward literalism in the 1960s, and provided a loophole to reintroduce a mode of re-presentation at a time that seemed itself increasingly resistant to representation. Robert Slifkin, *Out of Time: Philip Guston and the Refiguration of Postwar American Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. xi-xii, 4.

<sup>51</sup> Paracelsus, *Werke*, XII, p 175-6, quoted in Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), p. 161.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>53</sup> Baxandall specifies that the “motif is a recurrent stimulus and standing guidelines for the actively scanning eye and is the armature underlying the structure not of the figure but of our act of perception of the figure” — an insight he draws from the Renaissance limewood sculptors, but that may as well have been said by Gottfried Boehm, one of Giacometti’s most perceptive critics, for whom the roiling surfaces of his postwar sculpture goad the eye into constant movement whose “armature” is a perceptual or optical totality, entirely distinct from the sculpture’s haptic tumult. *Ibid.*, and Gottfried Boehm, “Das Problem Der Form Bei Alberto Giacometti,” in *Weges zu Giacometti / Louis Aragon mit*

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*anderen*, ed. Axel Matthes (Munich: Matthes & Seitz Verlag, 1987), pp. 39–66; Gottfried Boehm, “The Demon of the Void: Alberto Giacometti’s Spaces,” in *Alberto Giacometti: The Origin of Space* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2011), p. 49.

<sup>54</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “The Rodin-Book: Second Part [1907],” in *Where Silence Reigns: Selected Prose*, trans. G. Craig Houston (New York: New Directions, 1978), p. 134.

<sup>55</sup> Deleuze and Guattari echo the notion, in an elegiac burst at the center of their excursus on the despotic work of the face’s “abstract machine”: “All faces envelop an unknown, unexplored landscape; all landscapes are populated by a loved or dreamed-of face, develop a face to come or already past. What face has not called upon the landscapes it has amalgamated, sea and hill; what landscape has not evoked the face that would have completed it, providing an unexpected complement for its lines and traits?” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 172–73.

<sup>56</sup> Jean Cocteau, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. X (Lausanne: Marguerat, 1940), p. 140.

<sup>57</sup> This simulation is a canny trick, and an old one, too, borrowing from techniques used since antiquity to simulate the pupil in the sculpted eye. See, for example, Denis Diderot, *Lettre sur les aveugles*, 2nd. ed. (Paris: E. Droz, 1963); Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion’s Creative Dream*, trans. Jason Gaiger (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 56; George Redford, *A Manual of Ancient Sculpture* (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1882), 46–48; Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot: An Essay on the Relations between Painting and Sculpture in the Modern Age*, trans. Chris Miller (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), pp. 87–92.

<sup>58</sup> Carl Einstein, “Exposition de la sculpture moderne,” *Documents* Vol. 1, n. 7 (1929): 391. It was an “almost unbelievable leveling of the ranks,” in the words of Reinhold Hohl — and one that reflected perhaps even better on Giacometti than Charles-Albert Cingria’s blarney about the future of the new “sculptor-wunderkind” or Cocteau’s promotion of the same, as reported by Cingria. Charles-Albert Cingria, “Falconetti sculpture,” *Aujourd’hui* Vol 1, no. 8, 9 January 1930, republished in *Le Musée de Genève*, n. 65 (May 1966): 15–16.

<sup>59</sup> Giacometti often mentioned Einstein in letters to his family in the early 1930s; he expressed dismay when Einstein was insufficiently enthusiastic about his work. His letters also relay the Einsteins’ increasingly dire circumstances — Einstein came to Giacometti for money shortly before leaving France, which, given the artist’s penury, indicates something about their desperation — and his sincere mourning when he learns of Einstein’s death in 1940. Alberto Giacometti, “Letter to Family,” July 5, 1940. SIK-Isea; Giovanni Giacometti, “Letter to Alberto Giacometti,” undated. SIK-Isea; Alberto Giacometti, “Letter to Family,” July 1940. SIK-Isea.

<sup>60</sup> As Sebastian Ziedler points out, Simmel thus doesn’t jettison Hildebrand’s model; he simply “processualized” it. Sebastian Ziedler, “Totality Against Subject.” *October*, no. 107 (Winter 2004), pp. 24–26. See also Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 72–75.

<sup>61</sup> “The optical naturalism of Western art is not the imitation of external nature; rather, the nature that is passively imitated here is merely the vantage point of the viewer. Whence the geneticism, the excessive relativism that characterizes most of our art. This art adapted itself to the beholder (frontality,

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distant image), and increasingly the production of the final optical form was entrusted to an actively participating beholder.” Carl Einstein, “Negro Sculpture,” *October* 107 (Winter 2004): 133.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>63</sup> Sebastian Ziedler, “Introduction,” *October*, no. 107 (Winter 2004): 5.

<sup>64</sup> Einstein’s rhetorical opposition between pure sculptural vision (African art) and the “pictorial” Western arts was established by Hedwig Fechheimer in her 1914 *Die Plastik der Ägypter* — a book that Giacometti owned and frequently copied from — which moreover uses the term cubic to describe the superiority of Egyptian “tectonic” sculpture over the West’s problematic attempts to convey movement. Klaus Kieffer has demonstrated the influence of Fechheimer over Einstein. Klaus Kieffer, *Diskurswandel im Werk Carl Einstein. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Geschichte der europäischen Avantgarde* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994). See also Joyce Cheng, “Immanence out of Sight: Formal Rigor and Ritual Function in Carl Einstein’s ‘Negerplastik.’” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 55/56 (2009): 90.

<sup>65</sup> Einstein, “Negro sculpture,” *op.cit.*, 134.

<sup>66</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 167–174. “The face system is distinct from the volume-cavity system of the body — one that is multidimensional and corporeal, and one to which the head belong. The face, on the other hand, is produced only when the head ceases to be part of the body, but instead comes to function, not as a master slide or model, but as “an overcoming of all of the decoded parts.”

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>68</sup> Gray, *op. cit.*, 223.

<sup>69</sup> This “loss of face” can be understood as both social, as in a fall in status, and physical, as the so-called “*gueules cassées*.”

<sup>70</sup> Claudia Schmölders, *Hilfer’s Face: The Biography of an Image*, trans. Adrian Daub (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 32–3.

<sup>71</sup> Fournel’s book records his activity as part-*flâneur*, part social anthropologist, analyzing passerby to divine from their appearances their character, occupation, and even private thoughts, invoking Lavater as well as the founder of phrenology, F.J. Gall. “C’est ainsi que je fais chaque jour du Gall et du Lavater sous ma responsabilité personnelle. Rien n’échappe à mon regard qui peice les ténèbres les plus impénétrables.” Victor Fournel, *Ce qu’on void dans les rues de Paris*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1865), pp. 277–78. See also Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982) and John House, “Toward a ‘Modern’ Lavater? Degas and Manet,” in *Physiognomy in Profile: Lavater’s Impact on European Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), pp. 180–197.

<sup>72</sup> Beginning in 1759, the Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture, and later the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, conducted an annual *Concours de la tête d’expression*. These competitions consisted in a three-hour session in which students of both painting and sculpture produced portraits of a live model illustrating a particular expressive state or condition — for instance, “faith mixed with hope” or “a

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mother's happiness upon the curing of her son's ill-health." The institution of the Concours was almost entirely the initiative of the Comte de Caylus who, over a series of lectures in the late 1740s and 1750s, came to insist on the delicate conveyance of expression as the benchmark for artistic competence. Catherine Schaller, "L'expression des passions au XIXe siècle. Le concours de la Tête d'expression à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris. Théories de l'expression des passions et analyse des toiles du concours," PhD dissertation, University of Fribourg, 2003.

<sup>73</sup> See Antionette le Normand-Romain, "Concours de la tête d'expression," *La Sculpture Française Au XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1986), 44.

<sup>74</sup> Bernstein traces the cause of this "late crisis" to two factors: firstly, a perception problem, wherein the strength of the French franc had hidden the effects of the decline in production until 1934, while the country's relatively archaic economic structures, which did not share in the volatility of the markets in the US, Britain, and Germany, and secondly, a management problem, wherein government policies that sought to safeguard the value of the franc and buffer France from the instability of foreign markets, ultimately made it impossible for France to recover along with other nations. Serge Berstein, *La France Des Années 30*. 4th edition (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002), p. 25. Jean-Louis Loubet le Bayle paints a slightly more optimistic picture of the early years of the decade, in firmly separating them from the more divisive and less imaginative politics post-1933. Like Jean Touchard, he describes a "spirit of 1930" in which young intellectual registered broadly a need for real examination and change. Jean Touchard: "Dans les années 1930, de jeunes intellectuels se retrouvent autour des mêmes revues, parlent le même langage, utilisent le même vocabulaire ; tous rêvent de dépasser les oppositions traditionnelles, de rajeunir, de renouveler la politique française ; tous se déclarent animés de la même volonté révolutionnaire. Les années 1930 apparaissent donc au premier abord comme une de ces époques de syncrétisme où les oppositions politiques et idéologiques s'effacent, où l'esprit de l'époque est plus important que les distinctions traditionnelles entre les courants de pensée. Il existe, semble-t-il, un *esprit de 1930*, comme il a existé un esprit de 1848, un esprit de 1936 (très différent de l'esprit de 1930), un esprit de la Résistance et de la Libération." Jean Touchard, "L'esprit des années trente," in *Tendances politiques dans la vie française depuis 1789* (Paris, 1960), p. 89.

<sup>75</sup> See Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far-Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in 1930s France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), p. 136.

<sup>76</sup> Thierry Maulnier, "Sortirons-nous de l'abjection française?" *Combat* (November 1936): 5, cit. *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>77</sup> Jean-Pierre Maxence, *Histoire de dix ans, 1927–1937: Chronique des années trente* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), 2nd ed. (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2005), p. 110, cit. in *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>78</sup> Sanos compelling argues, however, that the ultimate resolution for the non-conformists — troubled above all, she claims, by a "crisis of man" (which is to say, a crisis of the masculine subject in France) lay in the aesthetic, which alone offered "the possibility of a simultaneous binding and transcendence that enabled the recovery a whole bounded and normative masculine self." Sanos, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Largely driven by Catholic and crypto-Catholic thinkers like Jacques Maritain, Henri Massis, and Emanuel Mounier, personalism held that the modern individual was the symptom and cause of the country's malaise. For the Personalists, the individual represented "the horrifying consequences of

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modern alienation and materialism while the notion of ‘person’ embodied the individual's vital social integration into a larger body politic.” *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>80</sup> “Dans la démocratie, le peuple n'a plus de forme : il perd toute densité corporelle et devient positivement *nombre*, c'est-à-dire force composée d'égaux, d'individualités purement équivalentes sous le règne de la loi. C'est ce qu'exprime à sa façon radicale le suffrage universel: il marque l'avènement d'un ordre sériel.” Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Peuple Introuvable: Histoire de la représentation démocratique en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), p. 18.

<sup>81</sup> Jessica Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People: Political Culture in France, 1934–9* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 56–93.

<sup>82</sup> Artur Rosenberg, “Chroniques: Karl Jaspers, *Le bilan spirituel de l'époque*,” *Europe* (May 15, 1933): 147.

<sup>83</sup> Maximilian Delmar, *Französische Frauen. Erlebnisse und Beobachtungen, Reflexionen, Paradoxe* (Freiburg, 1925), cit. in Klaus Thelewit, *Male Fantasies, Volume 2, Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, translated by Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 74.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Andrew D. Evans, “Race Made Visible: The Transformation of Museum Exhibits in Early-Twentieth-Century German Anthropology,” *German Studies Review* 31, no. 1 (2008): 87–108.

<sup>86</sup> On Rivet and the Musée de l'homme, as well as his counterpart in the Swiss-born, openly anti-semitic George Montandon, see Alice Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850–1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 145–88.

<sup>87</sup> Fabrice Grognet, “The Metamorphoses of the Trocadéro and the Re-Invention of the Musée de l'Homme,” *Museum of Anthropology Review*, vol. 8, n. 1–2 (April 2014): 58–79. <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/mar/article/view/12943/29095#cnote> Accessed March 2, 2017.

<sup>88</sup> Conklin, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>89</sup> This future-oriented race as a becoming (*un devenir*) was the theory of Rivet's counterpart in the 1930s, the Swiss-born George Montandon. See *ibid.* and George Montandon, *L'Ethnie française* (Paris: Payot, 1935).

<sup>90</sup> “[The artwork] has to convert every shape in all points of its visible surface into an eye,” writes Hegel. G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics, Volume I*, translated by T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 153. See also Rebecca Comay, “Defaced Statues: Idealism and Iconoclasm in Hegel's Aesthetics,” *October* 149 (Summer 2014): 123–42.

Consider also the first stanza from Rilke's “Archaic Torso of Apollo”:

“We cannot know his legendary head  
with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet his torso

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is still suffused with brilliance from inside,  
like a lamp, in which his gaze, now turned to low,  
gleams in all its power.”

This motif appears several times in Rilke’s writings on Rodin. With regard to *The Thinker*, he writes, “His whole body has become a skull and all the blood in his veins have become brain.” Of *The Age of Bronze* (described in the text as *Man of Early Times*), “What was expressed in the face, the pain and effort of awakening together with the desire for this awakening, was written on the least part of the body; each part was a mouth uttering it in its own manner.” Rilke, op. cit., p. 110, 102.

<sup>91</sup> Like *Head Fallen into a Diagram*, Dalí’s vision of the Picasso portrait in the village photograph depended on viewing this “head-landscape” (as it was later titled) as a portrait turned on its side. Salvador Dalí, “Communication: Visage paranoïaque,” *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, no. 3 (December 1931): 40. On the physiognomic photographic projects of Surrealism, in particular the photo-collages, see Michel Poivert, “Le phénomène de l’extase,” *Études photographiques*, no. 2 (May 1, 1997): 130.

<sup>92</sup> Georges Bataille, “Propositions,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, ed. and trans. Allan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 197–201.

<sup>93</sup> Breton seems to have been mulling Georges Bataille’s vintage work, in particular, the entry for “Mouth” in the “Critical Dictionary” published in *Documents* in 1930, and “The Pineal Eye.” The only salvation for this absurd human architecture is to burst out laughing, an image that Bataille also uses first: it is only when the head is thrown back, whether in a scream or in ecstasy, that the human is righted on the axis that runs from mouth to tail. André Breton, “Predescription” (25 April 1949), *Free Rein*, p. 204.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>95</sup> “Its monolithic form, with no evident symbols or allusions, appears to be a purely formal composition without meaning.” Valerie J. Fletcher, ed. *Alberto Giacometti, 1901–1966* (Washington: D.C., Hirshhorn Museum/Smithsonian Institution, 1988), p. 108.

<sup>96</sup> In a letter written to Breton in the summer of 1933, Giacometti explains the source of the polyhedron — “a saturnine symbol [...] the same polyhedron represented in Dürer’s engraving *Melencolia*.” Letter from Giacometti to André Breton, 8 August 1933, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet, BRT.C.832 1/3. Giacometti had admired Dürer since his childhood (one of his earliest sketches is of a Dürer reproduction, and as an adolescent, he even played at producing a monogram of his name modeled off of Dürer’s own). On this “melancholic” aspect of *Cube* — in particular, its relation to the death of Giovanni Giacometti in 1933, and to the gravestone that Giacometti designed for his father, see Georges Didi-Huberman, *Le Cube et le visage: Autour d’une sculpture d’Alberto Giacometti* (Paris: Macula, 1993), pp. 153–168.

<sup>97</sup> Stranger still, one of Dürer’s studies for *Melencolia I* depicts the polygon on a squat, irregular platform whose angled right edge is echoed in the shape of Giacometti’s *Surrealist Table*. A small eye drawn at the vanishing point of in Dürer’s study appears, Didi-Huberman notes that this eye, in roughly the same position as the eye on the bust in Giacometti’s study for the *Surrealist Table* (1934). He suggests the initial “A”, which marks the top facet of the cube in a contemporaneous drawing of the *Surrealist Table*, might therefore also be an eye in profile, as in Dürer’s other perspectival renderings — suggesting

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a figure open to both direct and profile views at once. Didi-Huberman, op. cit., p 163. On the source of the polygon, see Brenson 1974, p. 201, n. 50.

The Comte and Comtesse de Noailles were consistent patrons of Giacometti and the Surrealists in the early 1930s; in fact, they were the first to purchase one of his works, no less than the *Gazing Head*. Because it was produced with an intended location in mind, *Surrealist Table* is one of a number of works now treated as part of his sculptural oeuvre that sit ambiguously beside his decorative objects, a group that includes *Vide-Poche*, *Projet pour une place*, and *Head of Isabel (The Egyptian)* (more on which below), all of which were featured in interior decor photographs that advertised the work of Jean-Michel Frank and his collaborators.

<sup>98</sup> This cage recalls the eau-forte that Giacometti produced for René Creole's *Les Pieds dans le plat* (1933), which shows a contorted *écorché* inside a scaffolds of some sort. A seahorse has swum up to the side of the structure.

<sup>99</sup> FAAG 1994-0722.

<sup>100</sup> Didi-Huberman book-length discussion of the work is, by leagues, the most satisfying reading of the sculpture by virtue of making this prismatic nature of *Cube* into the book's organizational principle: his study is broken into thirteen "facets," which each explore a different set of references and line of thought into the sculpture.

<sup>101</sup> My emphasis. James Lord, *A Giacometti Portrait* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 49.

<sup>102</sup> This motif of the "wink" is one of Giacometti's curious tropes; one sees it the stylized head of *Invisible Object (Hands Holding the Void)*, whose eyes are represented as two wheels, one broken and one whole, as well as in the bust in his *Surrealist Table* (one eye "blinded" by a drape that covers it) and in *Cubist Head*, to which I'll turn shortly, in which only one eye is represented as a circular depression. It can't be said for certain, however, that this asymmetry of the eye derives from his depiction of his father. For one, the double doors of the family home in Stampa are punctuated by two wheel-shaped windows, one of which has several "spokes" missing, and may have served as one origin for the wheel-eyes of *Invisible Object*. More broadly, the unevenness of the eyes in the busts, which continue through his studies of Diego and Rita, could also be attributed to a perceived or even habitual unevenness in his observation of the model: on one hand, light hitting one side of the face would make one eye appear more volumetric or pronounced; on the other, one tends to look primarily at *one* eye when looking at someone's face, thus conceivably making that one eye appear more prominent in comparison to its neglected complement.

<sup>103</sup> Didi-Huberman, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>106</sup> Georg Simmel, "The Aesthetic Significance of the Face," in *Georg Simmel, 1858-1918: A Collection of Essays with Translations and a Bibliography*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1959), p. 276.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279. This last qualifier holds the subtlety of Simmel's position in this essay. *If* this perception could arrive at perfection (pure perception, unadulterated by preconceptions), then the face

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could operate as the “veiling and unveiling of the soul” — but this, for Simmel, is most certainly only an “if.” p. 281.

<sup>108</sup> This syllogism of sculptural surface and individual face has its roots in Hegel’s *Aesthetics*. Hegel seizes upon the Greeks as a model for both sculpture’s aesthetics and sculpture’s metaphorical figuration of subjectivity. The task of the sculptor, according to Hegel, is to diffuse the “gaze” or soul of a body over the entire surface of the work. This produces a work entirely and evenly impregnated with *Geist* — “spirit poured into the mold” — that, in turn, illustrates the identity of the ideal citizen and statesman, who should be like the great Greeks themselves, Pericles and Plato and so forth, “all of them [...]” he writes, in a telling slippage, “out-and-out artists by nature, ideal artists shaping themselves, individuals of a single cast.” [“Besonders die Zeit des Perikles war reich an solchen Charakteren: Perikles selber, Phidias, Platon und vornehmlich Sophokles, so auch Thukydidēs, Xenophon, Sokrates, jeder in seiner Art, ohne daß der eine durch die Art des anderen geringer würde; sondern alle schlechthin sind diese hohen Künstlernaturen ideale Künstler ihrer selbst, Individuen aus *einem* Guß, Kunstwerke, die wie unsterbliche todlose Götterbilder dastehen, an welchen nichts Zeitliches und Todeswürdiges ist.”] In the passage, Hegel plays off the idiomatic “aus einem Guß,” meaning “of a piece.” The moral undertones of this passage suggest a slightly different inflection, namely, of a whole or unified, unconflicted person. Hegel, *Hegel’s Ansichten über Erziehung und Unterricht* (Kiel: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1853), p. 204.] G.F.W. Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetics*, p. 705. See also Rebecca Comay, “Defaced Statues: Idealism and Iconoclasm in Hegel’s Aesthetics,” *October* 149 (Summer 2014): 130.

While there is no consensus on the degree of Giacometti’s knowledge of Hegel, it is clear that artist was familiar with the philosopher’s aesthetics — enough to critique Breton’s reference to Hegel in *Misère de la poésie*, Breton’s pamphlet in response to the attacks on Aragon’s *Front Rouge*, as both insufficiently revolutionary and inadequately dialectic. In particular, he critiques Breton for attacking Peyralbe Moussinac by citing “a passage from Hegel on architecture that, it seems to me, you [Breton] abuse, architecture being (I think, even for Hegel) the art that best expresses an era.” Alberto Giacometti, “Letter to André Breton,” Dossier « Affaire Aragon », Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits.

Hohl notes that Giacometti’s statements about what he wanted to do with the gaze are remarkably similar to Hegel’s, “but Giacometti wanted to do in sculpture what Hegel thought possible only in painting.” “It is not impossible, but improbable that Giacometti read Hegel’s *Aesthetik* in the original German,” Hohl concludes, although Giacometti did mention Hegel and his interest in the Romantics to several individuals, and furthermore owned a French translation of Hegel’s selected writings, which Lord identified as those made by Bernard Teyssède from Jankélévitch’s translation (Paris: Aubier, 1944) called *Esthétique de la peinture figurative* (Paris: Hermann, 1964). Hohl, on the other hand, notes that Claude Kohdoss had edited another (better) selection ten years earlier, which may have been the source of Giacometti’s understanding of Hegel, whether directly or indirectly. G.W.F. Hegel, *Esthétique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954). See Hohl, 1971, op. cit., p. 299 fn. 26.

<sup>109</sup> Alberto Giacometti, “Entretien avec André Parinaud,” *Écrits*, p. 271.

<sup>110</sup> An explanation for *Cube*’s alternate title, “Part of a Sculpture” — the title under which it was listed when it was shown at the Kunstmuseum Luzern in the spring of 1935 in the context of the group exhibition “Thèse, Antithèse, Synthèse” — may lie here: *Cube* is the back part of *Cubist Head*. *thèse, antithèse, synthèse*, ex.cat. (Lucerne: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1935).

<sup>111</sup> This, despite Dürer’s study, *Polyhedral on pedestal* (1514), in which the polyhedron is transparent, its twelve indices precisely marked. A bodiless eye drifts in space at the vanishing point of the drawing — the eye on the other side of the perspectival screen, mirroring but also displacing our own

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face's organizing force. Didi-Huberman notes that this eye is in roughly the same position as the eye on the bust in Giacometti's study for the *Table surréaliste* (1934). He suggests the initial "A", marking the top facet of the cube on the table in this drawing, might therefore also be an eye in profile, as in Dürer's other perspectival renderings — suggesting a figure open to both direct and profile views at once. Didi-Huberman, *op. cit.*, p 163. On the source of the polygon, see Brenson 1974, p. 201, n. 50.

<sup>112</sup> Recall that is Baudelaire's complaint about sculpture: "Brutal and concrete like nature, [sculpture] is at the same time vague and ungraspable because it shows too many faces." Charles Baudelaire, "Pourquoi la sculpture est ennuyeuse," *OC 2*: 487.

<sup>113</sup> Einstein, "Negro Sculpture," *op.cit.*, 132.

<sup>114</sup> Einstein does, however, give a clearer indication of the distinction between artworks and objects in an unpublished manuscript, translated as "Gestalt and Concept," and bearing some close affinities with his 1934 text "on" Braque, in which he distinguishes between objects, which confirm and normalize our experiences, and those things that actively participate in the gestalt "new visionary objects" that "shatter[] the suggestion of the given and the causal standardization of the world." Carl Einstein, and Charles W. Haxthausen, "Gestalt and Concept (Excerpts)," *October* 107 (2004): 175.

<sup>115</sup> Joyce Chen, *op. cit.* See also Z.S. Stretcher, "Looking for Africa in Carl Einstein's *Negerplastik*," *African Arts* Vol. 46 n. 4 (Winter 2013): 8–21.

<sup>116</sup> "In order to make a living, I agreed to make anonymous utilitarian objects for a decorator of the time, Jean-Michel Frank. He was by far the best decorator of the time and I really liked him. I thus agreed to make anonymous objects. At the time, it was looked down upon." "Entretien avec André Parinaud," *Écrits*, *op. cit.*, 239. For an overview of Frank's work, including Giacometti's collaborations, see Pierre-Etienne Martin-Vivier, *Jean-Michel Frank* (Paris: Norma Editions, 2006).

<sup>117</sup> "Sixty Seven B&W photographs: taken by AJHepworth in the 1930s," Tate Archive Photograph Collection. Robin Spencer has dated the photograph to February 1935 on the basis of letters between Ben Nicholson and Giacometti, which indicate that Giacometti was still at work on the (an) "object-vase" in September 1936 — a persistence which, argues Spencer, demonstrates that Giacometti was still working through his relationship to the object well after the supposed Damascene moment of the heads in 1934. This argument echoes Christian Derouet's insistence that Giacometti's abstraction continues on through the decorative work in the 1930s alongside the "politicized" realism of his busts. Robin Spencer, "Giacometti's Break with Surrealism: Abstraction, Hegelianism and the Communicating Vase," in *Giacometti: Critical Essays*, edited by Peter Read and Julia Kelly (London: Ashgate, 2009), 78; Christian Derouet, "Proposition pour le detour à la figuration d'Alberto Giacometti," in *Alberto Giacometti Retour à La Figuration 1933–1947*. Exh. Cat (Geneva, Paris: Musée Rath, Musée national d'art moderne, 1987), 72.

<sup>118</sup> "Entretien avec André Parinaud," *Écrits*, *op. cit.*, 239.

<sup>119</sup> Diego often took this role, but Giacometti also employed a Basque woodworker named Ihitsague, and occasionally the workshop of Chanaux, which worked closely with Frank. Wiesinger, *Giacometti: A Retrospective*, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

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<sup>120</sup> On Giacometti's processes and materials, see Philippe Büttner, "Alberto Giacometti's Use of Sculptural Materials," in *Beyond Bronze: Masterworks in Plaster and Other Materials* (Zurich: Kunsthaus Zurich and Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), pp. 22–43.

<sup>121</sup> My emphasis. Alberto Giacometti, "La Voiture démystifiée (manuscript)," undated, FAAG 2003-1871. In its published version, the passage reads, "But there is — made new like machines — the so-called sculpture. It is in fact concrete and not figurative. It can create and it creates finite objects like machines, only dependent on themselves and which want to be or which are perfect." "La Voiture démystifiée," *Arts*, no. 639 (October 9–15, 1957): 4. Republished in *Écrits*, p. 133.

<sup>122</sup> *Écrits*, *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> "Une plaque cycladique semble se suffire de simples indications. Au vrai, elle réalise toutes les conditions de la plastique. Aussi une indication viendrait à disparaître, cette oeuvre ne perdrait rien de sa grandeur car chaque fragment est plein à craquer de plastique. [...] Au lieu que si l'on supprimait une quelconque partie de l'oeuvre exposée de Giacometti [*Homme*, 1929], on s'apercevrait que celle-ci se trouverait désorganisée, du fait que son unité repose davantage sur l'apparence que sur les qualités intrinsèques de la plastique." Christian Zervos, "Notes sur la sculpture contemporaine," *Cahiers d'art*, no. 10 (1929): 471–73.

<sup>124</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *op. cit.*, p. 632.

<sup>125</sup> Giacometti also recounts to Parinaud that, despite his esteem for Frank, fabricating "anonymous utilitarian objects [...] at that time was looked down on [*mal vu*]." "Entretien avec André Parinaud" (1962), *op. cit.*, p. 239. Ulf Kuster has intimated that Giacometti's decorative work may have been the true cause of the Surrealists' ire — a suggestion confirmed by Marcel Jean in an interview with James Lord, who noted that while other Surrealists were also making decorative work as their *gagne-pain*, they, at least, did not sign their works with their own name. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that Giacometti's decorative work — whether because it was seen as sub-artistic or because it pandered to the bourgeoisie — was the primary motive for the excommunication; the same patrons of Giacometti's decorative work, including the Vicomte and Vicometesse de Noialles and the ethnographer David Henri-Weill, were also patrons of the Surrealists and, in the latter's case, part of the larger circle of intellectuals around the Surrealists. Ulf Kuster, *Alberto Giacometti: Space, Figure, Time* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009). James Lord, "Notebook 66," n.d. James Lord Papers. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. GEN MSS 790, Box 28, Folder 320.

<sup>126</sup> Letter signed Andre Breton, Yves Tanguy, Georges Hugnet, and Marcel Jean. "[Etant donné que Giacometti a tenté]," February 14, 1935, Fonds André Breton <http://www.andrebretton.fr/work/56600100912280>, accessed 4/21/2014. Ulf Kuster has intimated that Giacometti's decorative work may have been the true cause of the Surrealists' ire — a suggestion confirmed by Marcel Jean in an interview with James Lord, who noted that while other Surrealists were also making decorative work as their *gagne-pain*, they, at least, did not sign their works with their own name. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that Giacometti's decorative work — either because it was seen as sub-artistic or because it pandered to the bourgeoisie — was the primary motive for the excommunication; the same patrons of Giacometti's decorative work, including the Vicomte and Vicometesse de Noialles and the ethnographer David Henri-Weill, were also patrons of the Surrealists and, in the latter's case, part of the larger circle of intellectuals around the Surrealists. Ulf Kuster, *Alberto Giacometti: Space, Figure, Time* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009). James Lord, "Notebook 66," n.d. James Lord Papers. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. GEN MSS 790, Box 28, Folder 320.

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<sup>127</sup> Louis Aragon, “Expositions en revue: La peinture au tournant (I),” *Commune : revue de l’Association des écrivains et des artistes révolutionnaires*, n. 17, (January 1933): 1188. Nevertheless, these declarations may not have indicated Giacometti’s final feelings on the matter. A letter sent to Patrick Waldberg in 1959 praises the latter for his glowing description of the Surrealist work, which he calls the best writing ever done on the period, and adding that, although he had indeed once claimed that the Surrealist work had become “too easy for him,” he no longer knew to what degree that statement was true or false. Moreover, Giacometti’s willingness to share his very limited studio space with rather substantial plasters from those early years — in particular, the nearly human-sized components of the 1931 *Projet pour une place* — testifies to his continued interest in at least some portion of his Surrealist production. Letter from Alberto Giacometti to Patrick Waldberg, 3 March 1959, Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, MS 41884.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. “Letter from Giacometti to André Breton,” 16 February 1935, BRT.C.841; and “Postcard from Giacometti to Breton,” 19 February 1935, BRT.C.842, in which Giacometti writes, “The only solution I don’t want is rupture.”

<sup>129</sup> Jean Lurçat, Marcel Gromaire, Édouard Goerg, Louis Aragon, Edmond Küss, Fernand Léger, Le Corbusier, Jean Labasque, Jean Cassou, *La Querelle du réalisme. Deux débats organisés par l’Association des peintres et sculpteurs de la Maison de la culture*, Éditions sociales internationales, Coll. « Commune », 1936. Republished as Serge Fauchereau, ed., *La Querelle du réalisme. Léger, Le Corbusier, Lurçat, Aragon, Lhote, Goerg, Cassou, Delaunay, Ernst...* (Paris, Diagonales. Éditions Cercle d’art, 1987). As Nicole Racine has noted, the subtitle of the second edition, eliminating the more obscure names of Küss and Labasque, while including the more notorious or celebrated names of Lhote, Delaunay, and Ernst, reflects rather the will to “satisfy our modernity” than the historical accuracy of the most central members of the debates. Nicole Racine, “«La Querelle du réalisme» 1936–36,” *Société et Représentations* n. 15 (January 2003): 114.

<sup>130</sup> Giacometti references these drawings in a letter to André Breton protesting the latter’s declarations on Aragon’s “Front Rouge.” In clear opposition to Breton’s *Misère de la poésie*, he writes, “Je ne conçois pas la poésie et l’art sans sujet.” Regarding the production of his own position in the debate, Giacometti continues, “J’ai fait pour ma part des dessins pour la lutte, dessins à sujet immédiat et je pense continuer, je ferais [sic] dans ce sens tout ce que je peux qui puisse servir dans la lutte des classes.” Alberto Giacometti, Letter to André Breton, Bibliothèque National Française, NAF 25094, L’Affaire Aragon, 9 March 1932.

<sup>131</sup> Some have speculated that this may be an elliptical reference to Georges Bataille’s pseudonym, Lord Auch (for the expletive “aux chiottes”), in which the abbreviation is... “fer à cheval,” or horseshoe. I wonder if it is not more likely a slanted pronunciation of “feroce,” or “ferocious,” given how that name might have better described the attitude of his cartoons. Augais, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>132</sup> “Il n’était pas de grande utilité qu’on pût alors identifier l’auteur avec ce sculpteur encore peu connu, qui avait commencé de faire des modèles d’objets de décoration et d’ameublement avec le décorateur Jean-Michel Frank, dont la clientèle eût fait scandale. Et cela n’eût rien arrangé de leur montrer le cochon encorné d’une croix qui fourre son groin dans les intestins d’un homme qu’il vient d’éventrer de sa corne, et de l’écriture de Giacometti, la légende : La Sale Bête. Ou bien le nourrisson couché sur des clous dans un berceau, une croix enfoncée dans les fontanelles, la hampe d’un drapeau lui traversant le ventre.” Louis Aragon, *L’Oeuvre poétique* 5 (Paris: Editions Livre Club Didero, 1974), p. 403.

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<sup>133</sup> “[L]’un d’eux a été peint par Vallaint-Couturier à la Santé en 1928, et c’est déjà plus que de la peinture : de l’histoire.” Louis Aragon, “Expositions en revue: La peinture au tournant (I),” *Commune : revue de l’Association des écrivains et des artistes révolutionnaires*, n. 17 (January 1935): 1188. Aragon deems that the most successful bust is Joel’s “head of Dimitrioff... which really has the unforgettable gaze of this Accuser of fascism.” Vallaint-Couturier himself was the founder of the AEAR. According to Paul Eluard, Giacometti, along with Luis Buñuel, Max Ernst, and Yves Tanguy, attended the first meeting called on 29 January 1932. Paul Eluard, *Lettres à Gala* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 154.

<sup>134</sup> “Les deux têtes que Giacometti appelle *les deux opprimés* ne représentent qu’insuffisamment ce chercheur, qui déclare que tout son oeuvre ancienne était une fuite de la réalité, qui parle avec dédain d’un mysticisme qui s’était glissé dans son oeuvre, et qui par des dessins a déjà montré sa haine de la société où il vit. Pourtant il est caractéristique que ces trois sculpteurs, l’élite de la sculpture avant-garde, aillent vers un art plus humain, vers le goût dangeureux du réel, qui, croyons-en Apollinaire, ne les poussera pas dans la « bonne société ».” Aragon, *Op. cit.*

<sup>135</sup> The “real,” of course, has no relation to — in fact, may well be the opposite of — the Lacanian “real.” For the political pinch of Surrealism in its second decade, as it increasingly resembled a modern style to be embraced by the bourgeoisie, see Susan Suleiman, “Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930s.” *Visual Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1991).

<sup>136</sup> Louis Aragon, “Premier Débat,” in *La Querelle Du Réalisme*, edited by Serge Fauchereau (Paris: Editions Cercle d’art, 1987), p. 96.

<sup>137</sup> According to Paul Wood, “‘realism’ seems to suggest an orientation toward, rather than a direct connection with, reality. In fact, competing definitions of reality are at stake” — and it is this competition over definitions that characterizes the positions of interwar realism. Paul Wood, “Realisms and Realities,” in *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 254.

<sup>138</sup> Aragon, “La peinture au tournant,” *op. cit.*

<sup>139</sup> There are no photographs from the exhibition, nor details about the dimensions of the work. Giacometti’s other heads produced in those years, included *Cubist Head*, were likewise exhibited occasionally with the simple title “Head.” Yet given the explicitly “cubist” engagement of these earlier heads, and Aragon’s description of them as “going toward a more human art,” it seems likely that Giacometti had chosen to exhibit the works that were so exciting to him in 1935: his new busts of Diego and Rita.

<sup>140</sup> Typicality was one value that passed into the major artery of Socialist Realism, explicitly sought out by the *Peredvizhniki* (Wanderers) in 1870s Russia and reflected in Engel’s statement that “Realism to my mind implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances.” Letter to Margaret Harkness, quoted in Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>141</sup> “Letter to Margaret Harkness,” in *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, eds. L. Baxandall and S. Morawki, p. 115, *cit.* Paul Wood, “Realisms and Realities,” in *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 271.

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<sup>142</sup> “Le détail me passionne,” he explains, “le petit détail, comme l’œil dans le visage, ou la mousse sur un arbre. Mais pas plus que l’ensemble, parce que comment faire la différence entre le détail et l’ensemble?” “Entretien avec André Parinaud,” *Écrits*, p. 242.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Pierre Schneider, *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 228. Compare with these lines from a poem-drawing published in 1933: “No human face is as strange to me as a face that having been looked at so much is closed off in all directions on the steps of unknown staircases.” Alberto Giacometti, “Rideau brun,” in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, n. 5 (15 May 1933): 15.

<sup>144</sup> One can, in any case, point to numerous traditions of portraiture in which this opposition did not exist. Cf. Jean M. Borgatti, “Portraiture in Africa,” *African Arts* 23, no. 3 (Special Issue: Portraiture in Africa, Part 1) (July 1990): 34–39; James Douglas Breckenridge, *Likeness: A Conceptual History of Ancient Portraiture* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). For a general discussion of the modalities of portraiture, see Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991).

<sup>145</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *On Sculpture: A Practical Translation of the Sculpture Manual of the Early Renaissance*, trans. Jason Arkles (2013): 14–15.

<sup>146</sup> Leonardo, *Treatise on Painting* 1:153. See Davide Stimilli, *The Face of Immortality: Physiognomy and Criticism* (SUNY Press, 2012), p. 50.

<sup>147</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, op. cit., p. 629; .

<sup>148</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, op. cit., p. 634. Michel Leiris, *Pierres Pour Un Alberto Giacometti* (Paris: L’Échoppe, 1991), p. 14.

<sup>149</sup> Sartre, “The Quest for the Absolute,” op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>150</sup> Charles-Albert Cingria, op. cit. Cingria here confuses Giacometti’s surname, perhaps mockingly, with that of the actress, Rénée Jeanne (Maria) Falconetti, best known for the star turn of her face in the close-ups of Dreyer’s *Joan of Arc*. In a letter to *Aujourd’hui* editor Henry-Louis Mermod, Cingria asks to insert a correction in the forthcoming issue noting the misspelling of the artist’s name, acknowledging that he himself may have been at fault for the error. One is inclined to believe him, given that he asks that the correction state that the artist’s name is “Antonio Giacometti.” Charles-Alberto Cingria, *Lettres à Henry-Louis Mermod*, ed. Marie-Thérèse Laithion (Lausanne: Editions de l’Age de l’Homme, 2001), p. 65. Leiris echoes the reference, describing his face as a Commedia del’arte mask whose origins, he claims, go back to the Etruscans. Leiris, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>151</sup> Hohl dismisses this reading, finding in it a merely formal comparison that falls short of the metaphorical thrust of Giacometti’s sculpture at that time. “We can learn more about Giacometti’s conception of art,” Hohl suggests, “by comparing the metaphor of *Model for a Square* with that of Böcklin’s oil *Odysseus and Calypso*. [...] By employing the contrasted symbols for man and woman (column and cave, stele and hollow) they both portray the myth of the gulf between the sexes.” This reading is bolstered by Hohl’s conviction that the zigzag form in the group is a snake, and that the drama therefore represented is Adam and Eve before the fall, and the Square, Eden. Yet there is no reason that these readings must be mutually exclusive. Hohl, 1971, 298 fn. 17.

It has moreover become something of a boilerplate account of Giacometti’s postwar sculpture to insist that it was *in no way* influenced by the attenuated standing figures of Etruscan art, on the basis that Giacometti had not seen these works until 1955. While that year may have been the first time he had seen

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these works in the flesh, it would have taken a rather remarkable feat of selective blindness for Giacometti to miss seeing photographs of the sculptures in the pages of *Documents*, which he was clearly reading and using for inspiration for works in those years. *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 4 (1930): 223–25.

<sup>152</sup> Cingria, “Falconetti sculpture,” op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Decades later, Diego was still conjuring a similar mystique for the Giacomettis’ homeland. To convey the remoteness of Stampa and the humbleness of their childhoods, he remarked to Michael Brenson, “It was not even the Middle ages. [...] It was prehistory.” Michael Brenson, “The Other Giacometti,” *The New York Times Magazine*, March 11, 1984: 47.

<sup>154</sup> This efflorescence was partly attributed to the discovery of the so-called Apollo statue at the archaeological site of Veii in 1916, whose formal refinement suggested that Etruscan art had been more advanced than previously supposed. The origins of the Etruscans remained obscure and subject to competing theories, stoked by the presence of accomplished but inconsistent artifacts, and an indecipherable written language that bore both a superficial relationship to Egyptian hieroglyphs and a vexing number of hapax. The problem, as Pericle Ducati explained in his 1938 historiography, was two-pronged, consisting in a search for origins, “or, if you will, the homeland [*la patrie*] of the Etruscan people,” and the decoding of the language. Pericle Ducati, *Le Problème étrusque* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1938), p. 3.

While the vast majority of this scholarship, detailed below, took place in Germany and Italy, France — and, in particular, publications including *Documents* and *Cahiers d’art* — took an interest in the debates as well. Hans Mühlestein in 1929 *Cahiers d’art* (“Histoire et esprit contemporain”) compares Hellenistic and Etruscan art in Nietzschean terms, opposing the Apollonian former with the Dionysian latter. Georges Pudelko’s review of *Etruscan Art* by Mühlestein (less a review than a summary) summarizes the Heroditian position, the transmarine, and emphasizes their relation to the Egyptians, which must have pleased Giacometti. The Etruscans are described as the best of both worlds. This article is moreover illustrated by some of the attenuated Etruscan figurines — evidence, however modest, that Giacometti may have seen these works prior to the 1955 exhibition of Etruscan art, the assumed first encounter of Giacometti with them. *Documents* Vol. 2, no. 4 (1930): 223 (222-225).

<sup>155</sup> A Heroditian description that suggested that the Etruscan civilization was the result of a transmarine migration, while a reference by Pliny the Elder to the Raeti (Rhaetians), indicated that they had traveled southward from the Alps. See Ducati, op. cit. and Louise Adams Holland, “Herodotus I, 94: A Phocian Version of an Etruscan Tale,” *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 41, No. 3 (Jul. – Sep., 1937): pp. 377–382. Nicolas Fréret was one of the first modern writers to take seriously Pliny’s suggestion of the Etruscans’ continental origins, a theory that took hold primarily in a Germanophone context, where it was reinforced by Christina Heyne (1729-1812) and Berthold Georg Niebuhr (1776-1831). Theodore Mommsen’s popular *Römische Geschichte*, published in numerous editions between 1854 and 1856, advanced the theory that the Etruscans initially descended through the Alps and then reascended, as a group of splitters then identified as the Rhetians. For a comprehensive bibliography of Etruscan studies, see Alfonz Lengyel, *Etruscology: An Outline for Etruscan Studies* (Northern Kentucky State College, 1974).

<sup>156</sup> Rosenberg’s description of the Etruscans — in particular, its wedding of sexual perversity with femininity and occultism — occurs like a transposition of anti-semitic depictions of the Jew as an effeminate mystic. See Sanos, op. cit., 135–36, 219–22.

These German condemnations of the perverse Etruscans were not without their echoes among Italian Etruscologists. Andrew Gillette traces this “implementation of Nordic racism” to 1936, with a

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seeming about face in Mussolini's stance toward racism, which he had prior to the moment declared unhelpful for the fascist cause. Gillette — whose top-down analysis Italy concerns the formation of policy rather than the workings of racist metaphor and manipulation of cultural artifacts — attributes this about-face to Mussolini's frustrations with his own people, and his desire to convert a "race of slaves" into a "race of masters." See Andrew Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 50–99.

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Marie Laurence Haack, "Le Problème des origines étrusques dans l'entre-deux-guerres," Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2012), p. 403. From Julius Evola, *Il simbolo aristocratico romano e la disfatta classica dell'Aventino*, in *Nobiltà della stirpe* (Nov.-Dec 1932), reprinted in *Symboles et « mythes » de la tradition occidentale* (Milan: Arche, 1980), p. 34.

<sup>158</sup> Eugen Fischer, for instance, included photographs of "living" Etruscans in his *Zur Rassenfrage der Etrusker*, *Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1938).

<sup>159</sup> Even Aby Warburg, in a well-known essay on early modern portraiture, dwelt on the physiognomic peculiarity of Medicean Florence, which "united the wholly dissimilar characters of the idealist — whether mediievally Christian, or romantically chivalrous, or classically Neoplatonic — and the worldly, practical, pagan Etruscan merchant." Aby Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie: Domenico Ghirlandaio in Santa Trinita: The Portraits of Lorenzo de' Medici and His Household (1902)," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), p. 190.

<sup>160</sup> "L'art étrusque a pour ferment l'expression de l'âme nationale; il est caractérisé par un réalisme qui fait irruption, surout à la première et à la dernière période, dans la série des portraits ; sa recherche de la vérité individuelle s'oppose à l'effort des Grecs vers un type idéal." Ducat, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>161</sup> "[L]e fronti ampie e spaziose, i nasi diritti, l'arco della sopra-ciglia elevato, il taglio della bocca e la conformazione del mento sono indubbie qualità di purezza." Ottorino Gurrieri, "Unità della razza dagli Etruschi al Rinascimento," *La Difesa della Razza*, Vol. ii, no. 5 (5 January 1939): 17.

<sup>162</sup> His "Fascism and the Problem of Race" was first published anonymously in the *Giornale d'Italia* in July 1938 and then reprinted in the 5th issue of *La difesa della razza*, alongside Gurrieri's reflections. See Haack, Marie Laurence. "L'étruscologie au XXe siècle bilans historiographiques." *Anabases*, no. 23 (2016): 19.

<sup>163</sup> In this, Fischer's "methodology" parallels almost exactly that undertaken by J.C. Not in the mid-nineteenth century, who from the observation of portrait busts and statues, opined that "Tuscan physiognomies are rather ugly: entirely different from the Egyptian, Shemetic, Assyrian or Greek cast. [and] characterized by a low forehead, high cheek-bones, and a coarse and prominent chin." And yet, in a moment of not-quite-successful awareness, Fischer seemed to acknowledge a potential distinction between statues and the face of its makers when he observes that the former are "barbarous and ugly idols, intentionally distorted like the pataeci of the Phoenicians" [my emphasis]. Nott, J.C., and Geo. R. Gliddon, *Indigenous Races of the Earth, or New Chapters of Ethnological Inquiry* (London: Trübner and Co., 1857), pp. 158, 154.

<sup>164</sup> Marie Laurence Haack, "The Invention of the Etruscan 'Race'. E. Fischer, Nazi Geneticist, and the Etruscans." *Quaderni Di Storia*, no. 80 (December 2014): 268. Fisher's writings served the formation

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of Axis politics, and where in fact published the first time anonymous in the *Giornale d'Italia* on 15 July 1938 under the title “Fascism and the Racial Problem,” and then again in the fascist publication *La difesa della razza* on 5 August 1938.

<sup>165</sup> Gray, op. cit., p. 223.

<sup>166</sup> H.F.K. Günther, *Rassenkunde des Deutschen Volkes*, 8. Munich, 1926), p. 23–24. Also Haacke, 402. Map published in 1939 edition, photograph in Gray, p. 256.

<sup>167</sup> Paolo, Balacci, Arturo Martini, and Gianni Vianello, *Arturo Martini* (New York and Milan: Edizioni Philippe Daverio, 1991), p. 43, from G. Scarpa, *Colloqui con Arturo Martini* (Milan: 1968), p. 118.

<sup>168</sup> The initial account for an Iberian as opposed to African prototype for these works was published by James Johnson Sweeney (“Picasso and Iberian Sculpture,” *Art Bulletin*, xxIII, no. 3 (1941): 191-99), who traces the influence to a 1906 exhibition of Iberian reliefs at the Louvre, with subsequent evidence linking the development of *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* to Picasso's acquisition of two Iberian busts stolen from the Louvre in March 1907. See William Rubin, “The Genesis of Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,” in *Studies in Modern Art 3: Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, ed. William Rubin (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), p. 129. Josep Palau i Fabre contested this attribution, however, suggesting instead that the Romanesque *Virgin of Gosol* provides a more apt model for the archaizing faces of 1906. Josep Palau i Fabre, *Picasso: The Early Years, 1881-1907* (Barcelona: Ediciones Poligrafia, 1985), p. 477.

<sup>169</sup> Buchloh makes a somewhat similar claim: that the mask — much like the caricature-like notations of Picasso's sitters in his cubist portraits — has the effect of undermining bourgeois identity as being “always already construed” by “de-naturaliz[ing] the model of physiognomic evidence in representation.” Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “Residual Resemblance: Three Notes on the Ends of Portraiture.” In *Face-Off: The Portrait in Recent Art*, Ex. cat. (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1994), 54.

<sup>170</sup> “Gertrude's refusal to occupy the position of lack mobilized a complex fantasy of castration for Picasso; the mask signifies at once his conflicted desire for the lost maternal object through specular identification with a queer woman and his anxious apprehension that the very terms governing sexual identity and normative heterosexual-ity are unstable and subject to revision.” Robert S. Lubar, “Unmasking Pablo's Gertrude: Queer Desire and the Subject of Portraiture,” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (March 1997): 72.

<sup>171</sup> More explicitly, this is a consequence of what Bryson calls “perceptualism,” or the notion (notably Gombrich's) that artistic images are a matter of accommodating perceptions to pre-perceptual schemas or concepts. From the standpoint of perceptualism, “distance from the patent side of meaning is interpreted as distance towards the real,” he writes. Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New York: MacMillian Press Ltd, 1983), p. 56.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. Esther Pasztor, “The Portrait and the Mask: Invention and Translation,” *Studies in the History of Art* 58 (2000): 272.

<sup>173</sup> Galton's procedure was the basis of Hans Gunther's 1929 *Rassenkunde des jüdischen Volkes* (Racial Studies of the Jewish People), one of the principle publications in the recasting of *Rassenkunde* in

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the interwar period to serve a eugenic vision of physiognomic “science.” See Claudia Schmölders, *Hitler’s Face: The Biography of an Image*, trans. Adrian Daub (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 88–9.

<sup>174</sup> This is not to say that Giacometti did not exhibit *at all* during those years (*pace* the artist’s own claims, as reported to Sartre and verified by Giacometti in his revisions of Sartre’s drafts, that he did not exhibit between 1935 and 1948): between 1935 and 1945, Giacometti participated in no less than 31 exhibitions, although in every case, he presented work made prior to 1935. .

<sup>175</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Faces,” *Verve* nos. 5–6 (July-October 1939): 43.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> See Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 76–85.

<sup>178</sup> On the fetishistic power of Hitler’s face, see the brilliant Claudia Schmölder’s *Hitler’s Face*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–42.

<sup>179</sup> Letter to Annetta Giacometti and Otilia and François Berthoud, Giacometti Stiftung, SIK-Isea, 247.A.2.1.152. See fn. 48.

<sup>180</sup> Carl Einstein, “L’enfance néolithique,” *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 8 (1930): 479.

<sup>181</sup> “The chance for freedom is not to be found in cognition; rather it lies precisely in freeing ourselves from unequivocal causality and from the narrow constraints of continuity, which spontaneous hallucination disrupts. Every continuum, including causality, represents a simplification and reduction of process, which by its nature is immensely paradoxical and pluralistic.” Carl Einstein, “Gestalt and Concept (Excerpts),” trans. Charles W. Haxthausen, *October*, no. 107 (2004): 173.

<sup>182</sup> Cubist collage is exemplary, “the most audacious and most violent attempt at the destruction of conventional reality.” Carl Einstein, *Georges Braque*, trans. E. Zipruth (Paris: Les Chroniques du Jour, 1934), p. 28. *Cit.* in Georges, Didi-Huberman, “‘Picture = Rupture’: Visual Experience, Form and Symptom according to Carl Einstein,” translated by C.F.B. Miller, *Papers of Surrealism: The Use-Value of Documents*, no. 7 (2007): 4.

<sup>183</sup> Sebastian Ziedler, “Form as Revolt: Carl Einstein’s Philosophy of the Real and the Work of Paul Klee,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010): 242. See also Sebastian Ziedler, *Form as Revolt: Carl Einstein and the Ground of Modern Art*. (Ithaca, NY: A Signale Book, Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2015).

<sup>184</sup> Einstein, “Gestalt and Concept,” *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>185</sup> Didi-Huberman, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>186</sup> Jacques Dupin, *Alberto Giacometti* (Paris: Maeght Éditeurs, 1962), n.p. Pierre Bruguère evokes a similar image of the supremely alive *écorché* when he describes Giacometti’s drawings after 1935 as “l’être en soi à vif de la figure que l’on voit comme dépouillé de son enveloppe.” Pierre Bruguère, “L’Oeuvre de la Vision - Giacometti de 1933 à 1947,” *Retour à la figuration*, p. 10.

## CHAPTER 2

### MOUNTAIN AND MINIATURE

Is it the tiny, restless, alive eye, or the immovability of the mountains? Is it God's will, or the will of a little field mouse that makes you stand shaken and unprepared? One puts aside the thought of God, and asks oneself more exactly: is it the mobility of the eye, or the immovability of the enormous mountains? And helpless, one perceives that they are one and the same thing.

— Robert Musil

In the spring of 1939, as his city planted the last of its temporary gardens, strung the final auxiliary power lines, scrubbed once more its famously clean streets, and braced itself for the multitudes soon to be upon it when National Exhibition opened in Zurich in May, Bruno Giacometti waited for his eldest brother's train to arrive from Paris. Bruno himself was part of the preparations. Second architect of the fashion pavilion for the Swiss National Exhibition, or *Landesausstellung* — the *Landi*, for short — under Karl Egender, Bruno was in charge that day of assuring that both his brother and his brother's sculpture arrived in Zurich in one piece. Some weeks earlier, Alberto had sent him the dimensions for a low pedestal — a square plinth measuring almost a meter across, atop an even larger rectangular base — to be placed in one of the pavilion's courtyards, where he presumably intended to display one of his larger sculptures (Fig. 2.1).<sup>1</sup> So it was with some surprise that Bruno found his brother empty-handed upon

arrival. “I asked him if we had to go pick up his sculpture at customs,” recalled Bruno. “He replied that the sculpture was in his suitcase, and then proceeded to take out a very small sculpture and, much to our surprise, placed it on the pedestal.”<sup>2</sup>

This anecdote is one of several nearly identical tales about Giacometti’s miniatures, rattled off in history after history like a Borscht-belt joke, with modernism’s self-serious monumentality as the butt. Chronologically, however, Bruno’s comment marks the first of these accounts, adding a date stamp to a period in Giacometti’s oeuvre where there are few. Since he never exhibited them, and only once published their images during the period of 1935 to 1946, the inception of Giacometti’s smallest sculptures has remained a matter of speculation.<sup>3</sup> Catalogues and archivists equivocate, giving most of his so-called “*toutes petites figurines*” a date range of six or seven years. The historians and hagiographers, for their part, cite Giacometti’s admission (quite after the fact) that his sculptures “began to shrink” in 1940 — a “terrible catastrophe” in which all his figures started around the length of an arm and yet, “inexorably, ended up a centimeter tall. One little movement of the thumb and, whoops! no more statue.”<sup>4</sup> We are led to imagine a process of miniaturization that took place each day anew: a foot-tall “statue” winnowed down to a splinter, in an apotheosis of carving technique that decimates the figure in the process of liberating it from the brute material.<sup>5</sup>

Yet even a cursory examination of the miniatures — a thimbleful of plaster cleaving to a tiny iron rod that in no way could have supported a foot-tall figure — shows that this account is a fiction (Fig. 2.2). Or more precisely, that it is a myth. Like a good origin story, man is created (and nearly destroyed) in a day. What is deceptive about this tale, however, is not necessarily the misdirection about the artist’s day-to-day process. At a stretch, after all, Giacometti could have

begun a day's work with one armature, only to take up another, smaller one as the day wore on, shifting the sculpture's girding but not perforce its identity for him, since the subject could be said to have remained the same. More importantly, Giacometti's tale conceals the significance of the sculpture's *scale* in the drama of its *size*. He endows his miniatures with the tenor of crisis because their smallness appears — as crises, by definition, do — inexorable and fatal. But to approach their chronology outside this story confronts us with a set of seemingly unknowable distinctions. Were *those* miniatures the “little Greek heads” disdained by Peggy Guggenheim during a 1938 studio visit, or were they the first of those “exceptionally small” heads, no larger than an almond, that François Stahly recalled seeing shortly before the war?<sup>6</sup> What distinguishes — semantically and conceptually, no less than chronologically — a *Head of Rita*, a hair over 10 cm high, from the pea-sized sculptures Simone de Beauvoir reported from the spring of 1941?<sup>7</sup> Is there an uncanny valley of diminution? A height below which the modest becomes miniature?

This chapter will argue that, if there is no such height, there is such a valley — and like the roboticist Masahiro Mori's concept of the uncanny valley, it requires thinking in terms of relations and not merely measures.<sup>8</sup> That is to say, Giacometti's miniatures are an operation of scale rather than a factor of size, where the former is defined as the comparison of two different sets of dimensions. One can immediately draw out a corollary. If scale is a matter of relation, then the miniature distinguishes itself from the small by what happens when it is *seen*. The modest portrait heads discussed in Chapter 1 might therefore be categorized as what, in fact, Giacometti initially claimed they were: private studies for the sculptor. The necessary though not sufficient condition of the miniature, conversely, is display — and, for Giacometti, its significant

trial run occurred the first time he attempted to exhibit one of his post-Surrealist sculptures, at the 1939 Landi in Zurich.

It bears saying that this claim takes us far afield of existing interpretations of these miniatures. These interpretations fall, more or less, into two camps: the monist and the phenomenological. The monist position is typified by Yves Bonnefoy, who describes the attrition of Giacometti's sculptures as the result of an extended campaign in which the sculptor "increasingly seeks to strip [his figures] of all those signs by which mimesis denies itself the experience of Oneness."<sup>9</sup> Conventional sculpture-in-the-round asks us to take in a work view by view — circling it, looking at it from this angle and that, and by consequence, experiencing the sculpture as an accumulation of these viewpoints, rather than a totality.<sup>10</sup> But the miniatures are so tiny that they can be seen all at once. This all-at-onceness stands in for the immediacy with which we perceive another person, namely, as something singular and coherent. The phenomenological reading holds that the miniatures produce the illusion of a "figure-in-the-distance," an effect generated by soliciting certain spatial projections in the viewer.<sup>11</sup> Because they are both minuscule and imprecise, and yet nevertheless identifiable as human figures, they convey the proportion of the visual field occupied by a faraway person. "Distance is inscribed in the extreme diminution of the size of the figurines," writes Thierry Dufrêne, as though Giacometti had mastered a Kabbalistic art to endow his little golems not with life, but with relative location.<sup>12</sup> This second reading is, in fact, a *complement* to the monist position, only the totality in mind is not the Oneness of man, but the unity of a figure with its surroundings. Such interpretations imply that, despite their negligibility (both physically and, in the body of Giacometti literature, critically), Giacometti's miniatures mark a singular juncture in the history

of modern sculpture. They are either a culmination of Western sculptural tradition — the representation of the body as inspirited flesh, undivided and indivisible — or its last major innovation, the beginning stages of a “new field of creation,” according to Reinhold Hohl, that had “introduced the depiction of physical distance into the three-thousand-year-old art of sculpture.”<sup>13</sup>

At the origin of these two positions lies Sartre’s description of Giacometti’s work in 1948. Rather than attempting to sculpt the human figure mimetically, and ending up with an object that splintered before the viewer into mere and myriad appearances, Sartre argued, Giacometti aimed at sculpting appearance itself — and, in so doing, paradoxically arrived at the absolute: “man as he is seen — from a distance.”<sup>14</sup> But what has been lost, both in this epigram and in the two dominant readings of the miniatures that extend from it, is Sartre’s conviction that both the distance and the seeing are social factors.<sup>15</sup> This distance is unquestionable and unquantifiable because it affirms something of an existential condition: it is not a matter of a person viewed from ten or twenty steps away, Sartre specifies, but rather of a *man viewed as he is for others*, “as he emerges in inter-human surroundings.”<sup>16</sup> Giacometti’s figures are therefore representations in the strong sense, as characterized by Roger Charrier, who noted that concept of representation historically has held simultaneously two apparently contradictory senses, the first referring to the making-visible of an absence, and the second to the exhibition of a presence.<sup>17</sup> Sartre’s description draws out this second significance for the representation of man in the miniatures. They are not just objects that make something absent visible, but public presentations of a person that subtend a symbolic relationship of the body to the collective.

This is the crucial point that makes the context of the Landi significant for the status of the miniatures in Giacometti's oeuvre. For the Landi was likewise concerned with representation in this second sense: the representation of the Swiss to their neighbors, but above all, to themselves. The Landi, like the previous Swiss national exhibition in 1914, opened at the brink of a world war in which Switzerland would be both officially neutral and profoundly implicated. In these conditions, the stakes of Switzerland's internal cohesion and its external defense converged under the cultural campaign known as the "*défense spirituelle*," which strove to affirm Swiss values against the rising specter of totalitarianism and the threat of neighboring ethno-nationalisms in Germany and Italy — ideologies incompatible with the Confederation's internal ethnic and linguistic diversity. The Landi's objective was therefore to aid Switzerland to see itself, to undertake the technically impossible task of presenting a cohesive image of a *body politic* that looked no more consistent from the inside than the viscera and bone inside a *body*. The precarious solution to this problem, in its very resistance to conventional national self-images, parallels Giacometti's depiction of "man at a distance" and entangles that depiction in the social and political thickness of Sartreian "inter-human surroundings" of the 1930s. Through his discovery of the operations of scale in his sculpture, Giacometti reproduced an image the Swiss nation defined, not by its iconography, but by the perceptual difficulties that it yields.

To get here will require a detour — the scenic route, perhaps — through the image that yokes the spectacle of the Landi to Giacometti's eccentric experiment in one of its courtyards. In the 1930s, the political and economic threats to Swiss unity placed pressure on the Confederation's peculiar manner of imagining its integrity: not through the borders that demarcate other nations, but through the mountain ranges that bind and separate its cantons, and

the mountain passes that made the Swiss self-proclaimed custodians of the European idea. The mountain is Switzerland's founding myth, central resource, and its first and last defense. But it is also the source of its divisions, and the root of its incapacity to see itself whole. Today, with ethno-nationalisms engulfing the greater part of the Western World, and even some pockets of the Left seeking to resuscitate the nation-state against global capital, Switzerland's figuration of this paradox is both topical and useful.<sup>18</sup> Considered within this nationalist discourse, Giacometti's artistic involvement in the Landi begins to look less like something withdrawing into the distance, and more like something emerging in the vast and precipitous space of national myth.

### **Clothes Make the Man**

In 1939, Giacometti was still living in his dirt-floored studio in Paris on the rue Hippolyte-Maindron, laboring in semi-obscurity on his portrait heads and barely supporting himself off decorative commissions from Jean-Michel Frank. His youngest brother Bruno, by contrast, was at the beginning of a promising career, working at the right hand of the architect Karl Egender, when the latter was approached to design the Landi pavilion for the fashion and textile industry. Titled "*Kleider machen Leute*," or "Clothes Make the Man," the fashion pavilion was situated on the left bank of Lake Zürich, toward the far end of a massive complex of pavilions showcasing everything from hydraulics and armaments to crafts and agriculture. The complex was divided between "modernity" on the left bank and "tradition" on the right (Fig.

2.3). Interspersed with the pavilions were miniature villages, model factories, beer gardens, bakeries, theaters, cheese huts, and petting zoos: life-sized dioramas of Swiss life, populated by the Swiss themselves, who came often and in droves (Figs. 2.4, 2.5, 2.6). Between the inauguration of the Landi on May 6, 1939 and its closing on October 29, over 10 million tickets were sold (Switzerland's total population at that time measured around 4 million, from which one can conclude that many Swiss visited the Landi more than once).<sup>19</sup>

“*Kleider machen Leute*” was a particular sensation, and something of a counter-statement to the Landi's *pro forma* division of modernity and tradition. Visitors entered through a large machine hall that displayed both traditional looms and the newest models from the floors of textile factories (Fig. 2.7). They were then ushered into a series of smaller galleries with displays for weaving and lacemaking, installed cheek-by-jowl with couture shoes and jewelry. The display architecture was just as unpredictable. Bally shoes were displayed like avian specimens in gilded, crown-shaped vitrines; hats on a conveyor belt ambulated past a row of lawn chairs (Figs. 2.8, 2.9). In the “Textilhalle,” mannequins in elaborate gowns circulated on moving tracks in the floor, engaged in a silent and inscrutable theater just half a year before they would patrol a hallway, in more eclectic dress, at the “Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme” at the Galerie Beaux-Arts in Paris (Figs. 2.10, 2.11). Egender's structure culminated in the massive “Mode-theater,” designed in collaboration with the artist Serge Brignoni, where fashion shows took place in a graduated auditorium illuminated by 1500 bulbs and Swiss women and girls took on the whirling choreography of the mannequins in the rooms preceding them (Fig. 2.12).<sup>20</sup> The displays of the pavilion, in short, presented a combination of the whimsical and uncanny of an international avant-garde that itself had relocated during that decade, in the words of Susan

Suliman, from “the streets to the salon.”<sup>21</sup> If the acceptance of Surrealism by a bourgeois audience in France and Britain signaled the failure of its “double program” (dream *and* revolution), the use of surrealistic display in “Kleider Machen Leute” showed its aesthetic strategies repurposed to signal, not the avant-garde pursuit of dream and revolution, but the national message of modernity and tradition, the former shepherding the latter into the future under its trappings.

“*Kleider machen Leute*’s” most unusual architectural element performed a similar reworking — in this case, on the international expositions or world fairs of the industrial era. Outside the main pavilion stood three conical huts, alluding to the colonial exhibition in France in 1907 and 1931, only instead of Sudanese “visitors,” they housed displays of men’s tailoring, shoes, and haute couture (Fig. 2.13). As one journalist mused, “Their exotic aspect evoked the colonies, but... if we have Swiss settlers more or less everywhere, where are our colonies? Did they build these pointy huts to remind us of our lakeside ancestors? In fact, [these huts] are beehives, made to shelter the treasures of industrious activity.”<sup>22</sup> The recognition of the echo as well as the disjuncture of the Landi and its international counterparts, whether in the form of international pageants or avant-garde exhibitions, fell to the distinctiveness of Switzerland itself. The Swiss were *colonizers without colonies* — scrappy settlers of their own lands — and if they invoked other empires, whether they be political or artistic, that invocation was ultimately a foil for Switzerland’s own insular industriousness.

The Landi can more broadly be understood as a counterpoint to the Universal Exhibition, in which nations demonstrate the superiority of their cultural and technological achievements to their neighbors. The Landi, by contrast, was essentially *for the Swiss*. Since the first national

exhibition in Zurich in 1884, it had carried the mandate announced by then Federal Counselor Numa Droz: “Connais-toi toi-même!”: Know Thyself.<sup>23</sup> Droz’s command referred the Swiss to the words of their countryman Rousseau, from the opening lines to the preface of his “On the Origins of Inequality Among Men.” In Rousseau’s hands, the path of self-knowledge takes a far different route than the source of his epigram, *gnothi seauton* from Book X of Plato’s *Republic*. In the *Republic*, it is the “love of wisdom” that ultimately recalls the soul to itself. According to Plato, reason restores the soul to the form it had before it fell under the corrupting influences of society. Rousseau is equally concerned with society’s deleterious effects on man, but has no such faith in reason to restore him (“the mind perverts the senses”).<sup>24</sup> Instead, he recommends quiet soul-searching to acquaint oneself with the “first and simple operation of the soul”: an internal sense of freedom, that most noble of human faculties.<sup>25</sup> By appropriating Rousseau’s command, the officiators and organizers of the Landi advised that looking inward was a task for the whole federation. Freedom remained the reward for this introspection — the freedom to maintain neutrality no less than the freedom of Europe that Switzerland professed to safeguard.

By 1939, this mandate of knowing oneself had taken on urgency. The official statement of the Landi read that “Every one of us has to sharpen his national conscience.”<sup>26</sup> If external events of the prior years — including the rise of fascism, the destabilization of the European left, and near continuous labor strikes in the wake of the economic crash (268 since the start of the decade) — had motivated the *défense spirituelle*, it was the particular character of Switzerland that provided the grounds. “It is hardly necessary to say how important it is for us, Swiss of Switzerland,” remarked Eugène Rimli in the Landi’s *Livre d’Or*, “to face a synoptic tableau of our material and spiritual civilization; most of our citizens being incapable of forming a concrete

idea of this powerful reservoir of values and energies accumulated through the centuries on the tightly limited territory of our nation.”<sup>27</sup> To know oneself *as a Swiss* would not be to form a general idea of “Swissness”; given its internal linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity, no such thing is possible. Instead, it was to form an awareness of this historical reservoir — an awareness that the Landi, in its sweeping panorama of Swiss culture and industry, intended to instill.

The Landi’s art on the whole was explicitly aligned with this objective of delivering a “synoptic tableau” in the name of Swiss *défense spirituelle*. As the critic Peter Meyer wrote in his review of the Landi, “The artists have realized that it is important to express the content or the human situations that concern everyone in a haunting manner with the best artistic skills. Art will only be felt once again as a public matter of the people when, as at the Landesausstellung, it endeavors to give shape to the spiritual needs of the public.”<sup>28</sup> Nowhere was this synoptic tableau as explicit, however, as in the Landi’s murals.<sup>29</sup> The grandest and most celebrated was Hans Erni’s mural, titled “Switzerland, The World’s Vacationland,” commissioned by the Tourist Office to cover the wall of a model hotel designed by Otto Dräyer (Figs. 2.14, 2.15). Almost seven meters tall and 108 long, it was also a paean to Swiss technological achievement: a “painted photomontage,” as Stanislaus von Moos has called it (or a painting that recalled the disjunctive aesthetic of the interwar photomontage murals), of the confederation’s progress through the centuries.<sup>30</sup> Across a rolling band of Alpine landscape, emerged a glacial mill, an old cog railway, an electric power plant, a railcar, a Saurer Alpine bus, a Swissair D3 plane, models of molecular structure — all of these interspersed with processions and folk festivals, scenes of Carnival in Basel, portraits Pestalozzi and Lavater and Goethe... in short, tradition and modernity, set in one continuous panorama (Fig. 2.16). The ideological content of this painted

photomontage is the process of modernization as something both grounded in nature and mastered by man, or more directly, as von Moos writes, an “idealistically tinted allegory of contemporary mass culture” as an appropriation of montage’s dialectics: even the past becomes a tourist destination.<sup>31</sup>

Like Giacometti, Erni was educated in Paris; like Giacometti, he joined the avant-garde in the early 1930s as a member of the group Abstraction-Creation, only to part ways with the group toward the end of 1934. Erni’s departure was spurred by his desire to pursue a “synthesis” between abstract and classicist principles — one that he spent the greater part of the next decade seeking. In 1934, Erni organized the exhibition “Thèse-Antithèse-Synthèse” at the Kunstmuseum Lucern and included Giacometti among its participants (Giacometti chose to exhibit neither his better-known Surrealist sculptures nor his newer portrait busts of Diego and Rita, and instead chose to present the anomalously abstract work discussed in Chapter 1, *Cube*). Erni himself showed a series of abstract canvases in the same room, though they already belonged to his artistic past, which represented the “thesis” of geometric abstraction against the “antithesis” of Surrealist experimentation. By 1938, Erni had altogether stopped making abstract work and henceforth devoted himself to the popular illustration and figurative painting that would garner him considerable renown in the postwar period.

Erni’s mural therefore doesn’t just announce his turn toward figurative art; it anticipates the synthesis of his postwar career between the “high art” of painting and the mass cultural art of illustration. This reconciliation takes place, visually as well as conceptually, through the mural’s central theme: the Alps. For there is perhaps no other motif that has done more to dissolve the barriers between fine art and visual culture in the early industrial age than the mountains. In

Switzerland, the Alps were at once a central motif of early twentieth-century Swiss painting and the protagonist of its advertisements — a kind of cultural mountain pass, not only for imagery, but also for the employ of artists themselves. Both Giovanni Segantini and Giacometti's father, the Impressionist Giovanni Giacometti, whose fame far outstripped his son's in that period, painted the peaks in Day-Glo dapplings that were collected in national museums (Figs. 2.17, 2.18). But they also plied their mountain-art in more pedestrian contexts, painting murals in the halls of local villages and producing watercolor postcards to advertise their native cantons (Figs. 2.19).<sup>32</sup> The Swiss Tourist Office in Zurich meanwhile employed Otto Baumberger, Bernhard Reber, and Herbert Matter to design brochures and posters promoting the new Alpine highway system, the dazzle of Pontresina's slopes, or the Engelberg téléphérique (Figs. 2.20, 2.21).<sup>33</sup> The Alps were the multipurpose patrimony of Switzerland's fine and applied arts, its timeless and contemporary culture. They stood as both the symbol of an authentic and anti-modern national spirit and the backdrop to Swiss technological achievement.

### **Mythic Mountain**

The Alps could play all these roles *visually* because they played them all *literally* as well. Switzerland's chief technological developments lay in the exploitation or navigation of its mountain ranges, from hydropower to recent transportation advancements — above all, the electrification of the railway system, pioneered and broadly adopted in Switzerland well before its European neighbors. The Simplon Line, electrified in its entirety by 1930, was feted with

leaflets by Otto Baumberger. Like Matter's photomontages for the pamphlet "Switzerland By Car" (*Im Auto durch die Schweiz*), where cobbled highways and motorcars careered toward a vanishing point that merged with snowy summits, the imagery for this economic robustness was enmeshed with the landscape that furnished that other abiding Swiss industry: tourism (Fig. 2.22). The Alps are both scenery and subject; in fact, the color scheme on the front cover of "Switzerland By Car" — blue for the cars and sky, and russet for the peaks — is inverted on the back cover, so that the road becomes the ground for the figure of the mountain, which appears to cascade onto the highway as it rushes toward the viewer. The agency symbolically granted to the mountain in these images suggests its higher purpose in what Judith Schueler has called the "co-construction" of the Swiss railways and national identity in the interwar period.<sup>34</sup> In particular, the central mountain range in Switzerland, the Gotthard allowed this identity to draw on that construction economically as much as ideologically.

The construction of the Gotthard railway tunnel was initiated in the same years as that other project of co-construction: the building of the National Redoubt, a virtually impregnable network of fortifications established in the 1880s in the Alps (Fig. 2.23). Swiss neutrality was tactically dependent on the Redoubt and, notwithstanding efforts to reinforce the borders beginning in 1937, it would remain its primary defensive strategy through WWII.<sup>35</sup> It alone insured that no invading power could successfully penetrate the entire neutral territory, much less command its strategic passes, without great cost. "If we are drawn into a fight," General Guisan explained in his military order shortly after the French armistice, "the point will be to sell our skin as expensively as possible."<sup>36</sup> In the popular imagination, however, the Redoubt as hard-headed military strategy (as well as hard-hearted: the purpose of the Redoubt was to protect the

military, while cities and their residents, still the vast majority of the Swiss despite the confederation's citizen militia, would be surrendered to any occupying force without a fight) was overlaid with the Confederation's origin story: the 1291 *Pacte du Rütli*, the founding oath of the first three tribes of Switzerland — made on the same mountain meadow where General Guisan announced the strategy of the Redoubt six and a half centuries later — to defend their territory against the Habsburg dynasty (Fig. 2.24, 2.25). In the lead-up to World War II, the nation cleaved to the Gotthard for its complex of images, lore, and history — that is to say, its *myth*: that the Swiss were and would remain united through their defense of their mountain passes, and that by defending them, they would in turn defend a greater entity, Europe itself. The formidable profiles of the Gotthard were a crucial impediment to hegemony, the Hapsburgs of old and the Axis Powers of new. The Swiss author and playwright Max Liehburg summarized the progressive line: “No force that wants to establish hegemony will succeed so long as Switzerland is standing. The pass must remain open for all European peoples. When Switzerland fights for its mountains, it fights at the same time for the freedom of all Europe.”<sup>37</sup>

This statement of Switzerland's outward-facing responsibility, however, belied its inward-facing tensions, sandwiched between the ethno-nationalism of Italy and Nazi Germany. Polyglot and poly-ethnic Switzerland would need a different model than the “Blood and Soil” credo of fascism if it was to defend its unity.<sup>38</sup> The charge was made more difficult by differing opinions within Switzerland itself about the urgency of its *défense spirituelle*: although the French phrase was used slightly more often than *Geistige Landesverteidigung* in the prewar years, German-speaking Swiss nevertheless registered more calls to national unity, likely because their shared language with their northern natives made distancing themselves from

Germany and National Socialism all the more imperative.<sup>39</sup> In came — or up-surfed — the Alps. The mountains appeared to offer an identity, part metaphorical, part exemplary, for the Swiss. For Liehburg, “Switzerland is a country of mountains, and the Swiss man is a man of the mountains,” whose daily struggle to survive forged in him a sober, sound, moderate character.<sup>40</sup> Switzerland was not a uniform territory organized around a center, but a federation of mountain communities tailor-made to the virtues of the Alpine peasant. The mountain peasantry were celebrated for their rude health and hardiness (nevermind that, in reality, they often lived in abject poverty with poor nutrition, vulnerable to the elements and to disease), and for their pastoral, seasonal economy, which freed them from the toil of agricultural labor, which even in preindustrial forms, as Marx and Engels argued, shackled men to their plows and made true political autonomy impossible.<sup>41</sup>

Giacometti’s insistence, throughout his life, that he was a “man of the mountains” — often asserted *instead* of any national affiliation — speaks therefore to his desire to mark not only his difference from Parisians, but also his affiliation with this privileged character.<sup>42</sup> In the words of the historian Gonzague de Reynold, writing in 1941, “Switzerland is made of stone. A solid, even hard foundation. It is not in vain that the Alps and the pre-Alps occupy about three-quarters of our territory. By heredity or by influence of the place, we have remained mountain people.”<sup>43</sup> In these myths, the mountaineer, quaffing the pure air and exercising the stubborn virtue of one forced to thrive in natural adversity, was converted into a figure for the Swiss *Sonderfall*, or exceptionality, which made the Confederation a foil to various other troubled European models of government. The notions of freedom and autonomy in Switzerland were, unlike their counterparts in the English natural rights tradition, not incompatible with a collective

dependence. In fact, collective decision-making and aid were essential to the mountain peasant's survival, and thus to his freedom; the very elements that compelled him to live independently also compelled his cooperation and made him a model of the virtues of federation.<sup>44</sup> The uniqueness of the Swiss model of democracy, in its resistance to both large centralized government as well as monolithic socialist unification, was therefore understood to emerge out of the conditioning of its citizenry by its mountains — a “naturalization of the nation,” in the words of Carl Zimmer.<sup>45</sup>

The Alps are what Elias Canetti has called a “crowd symbol,” an image that serves as the locus for national feeling. For the English, the crowd symbol is the captain at sea; for the Dutch, it is the dykes; for the Germans, it is the forest, with its uniform army of upright trees. And for the Swiss, it is, of course, the Alps. Canetti writes, “The peaks are divided, but below the mountains are linked like the limbs of a single gigantic body. They *are* one body, and that body is the country itself.”<sup>46</sup>

The ubiquity of the mountain in discourses of Swiss unity and in the visual rhetoric of the Landi, confirms Canetti's analysis — to a point. For the underlying unity of the body is precisely what is at issue here. The Swiss Alps present different faces, so to speak, depending on whether one views them from the inside or the outside, notes Benjamin Barber. From the outside, Switzerland is central and mountainous; from the inside, it is endlessly variegated and unyielding (Figs. 2.26, 2.27).<sup>47</sup> These two views come with their corresponding geopolitical paradoxes. Switzerland is central, yet difficult to penetrate; internally divided, but also therefore hard to dominate. As Barber notes, “a country vulnerable precisely because it lacks such centralized power systems is not really vulnerable at all.” The Alpine environment's role in this quiddity of

Swiss freedom and democracy therefore lies not in the Alps supplying some kind of natural boundary, but in the metonymy of the terrain with conceptions of Swissness.

The official line of the Alpine “crowd symbol” emphasized that these tensions in the geopolitical identity of Switzerland should be isomorphic with the identity of each of her citizens. It advised that Swiss must not just adjust to these paradoxes; they must also learn to carry them internally.<sup>48</sup> In 1939, the president of the Confederation, Philipp Etter, made the following pronouncement to his fellow citizens:

Switzerland is the land of mountain passes and mountain springs. [...] The people entrusted with the defense of the connecting passes and the fertilizing [*Befruchtung*] springs must carry the forces of union and fertilization within themselves. From the south, west, north, and east, peoples of different tongues have settled our mountain valleys and the highlands between the Alps and the Jura, tribes of the Latin and Alemannic languages, in order to join as a community of the will and the spirit, and to fertilize each other spiritually. Both connection and fertilization presuppose that those who join together preserve their countenance and their individuality, and do not lose their individuality to communion.<sup>49</sup>

That these words issued from the very lips of Swiss officialdom goes some way to explaining why, two years earlier, the French personalist organ *Esprit*, devoted an entire issue to the “Swiss problem” and its relation to the future of personalism in Europe.<sup>50</sup> The most infamous contribution was penned by Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz, whose commentary sparked a flurry of responses across Switzerland.<sup>51</sup> Ramuz’s mordant response to *Esprit*’s call revealed a crisis at the heart of Swiss identity that was simultaneously revealed by, and for Ramuz, resolved in the image of its mountains. Ramuz’s answer took the form of an open letter addressed to his compatriot, Denis de Rougemont. Ramuz gently chides de Rougemont for countenancing the issue’s theme in the first place. “It’s a crushing enterprise to explain the nature of a people when

‘the people’ doesn’t exist,” he writes. “We know that we are not Swiss, but Neuchatelois, like you, or Vaudois, like me.”<sup>52</sup> He then goes on to list the passive reasons that the Confederation remains unified: its shared constitution, military defense, political defense, as well as a certain littleness of spirit that shows itself in the Swiss people’s uninspiring petty bourgeois occupations and devotion to tidiness. As the letter develops, the stakes of seeking anything beyond these passive explanations become clear: war is on the horizon, and it is likely to be an ideological war, against which such expediencies may not prove sufficient to keep Switzerland intact. In response, Ramuz offers, like so many before and after him, the mountains: verticality as the “common factor that explains difference [...] with all the consequences such a topography entails.”<sup>53</sup> The only positive attribute of the Swiss, in other words, is their divisive landscape.

De Rougemont’s response, “Neutralité oblige,” clarifies Ramuz’s double address: both to the Swiss, whom he tasks with the work of understanding why they are unified (only for profit or security? only by virtue of their predilection for cleanliness, comfort, and good behavior?), and to outsiders, the foreigners commissioning and reading these disquisitions on Swissness in *Esprit*. If he understands some sort of obligation to explain Switzerland to neighboring countries, de Rougemont explains, it is because it is their lot to “exist according to these neighbors [*exister en fonction de ces voisins*].”<sup>54</sup> In fact, explaining Switzerland may require understanding the particular nature of this existence, one de Rougemont proposes to investigate from the point of view of personalism. In Switzerland, personalism’s mutual reinforcement of the rights of the individual and the duties to the collective is the *central position*; there, both individualism and collectivism, representing capitalism and socialism respectively, are “morbid deviations.”<sup>55</sup> Thus “the mission of Switzerland can be defined at the scale of Europe: Switzerland must be the

guardian of this central, federating principle” — a balance of individual and collective rights that stands as the most eloquent formula of the European spirit, as well as the spirit of personalism.<sup>56</sup> Switzerland is a *multum in parvo*, a miniature of the European idea that guards its principle in concentrate. And it is in the name of upholding this principle that Switzerland must remain neutral, since the country’s confederation of Latinate, German, and French civilizations is “the control experiment and prophecy” of Europe itself.<sup>57</sup>

The cultural specificity of Switzerland, moreover, comes from this “*voisinage*” or neighboring; it is in the close contrast of cultures (“*corps à corps*,” he writes) of Francophone and Germanic cultures that the major cultural contributions of Switzerland find their specificity. “Our unity exists,” writes de Rougemont, “but on a level that is both higher and vaster than ‘unification’ in the Jacobin or classical sense. It is the original unity, and maybe the future and final one, of European diversities, symbolized by our three languages, our two religions, our 25 republics.”<sup>58</sup> Perhaps, de Rougemont concedes, the Swiss will never reach the cultural heights of any of its neighboring countries that honed at one point or another a grand, unified expression in art or music, but as recompense, Swiss grandeur will lie instead in the intimate harmony, or the interior anguish, of competing cultural strands. Neutrality thus conceived is not accommodation; it is a “perpetual, exalting combat, the beating heart of Europe.”<sup>59</sup> The writers who emerge from this combat are eminently *European*, but they are European only because they are, first of all (as Ramuz had maintained) *cantonal*. Insisting on a unified or coherent Swiss culture would traduce the real content of Switzerland’s cultural grandeur, reasons de Rougemont, and indeed its grandeur at large: the active production of neutrality through the agon of *voisinage*. “Our neutrality, conceived as a prudence,” he writes, “becomes the worst imprudence at the center of a

fascist Europe.”<sup>60</sup> But if neutrality is understood as a great mission, if it can become revolutionary — not in the overthrow of one order as in other countries, but in the reconstitution of the Swiss *raison d'être*, its original revolt against the hegemonic will of the Habsburgs — it will reestablish the stakes and soul of the Confederation.

The mountain again provides the crucial symbol. De Rougemont concludes his essay like Liehburg, by invoking the Gotthard. But de Rougemont's Gotthard is not Liehburg's "sacred fortress," a sheltering barrier for the Swiss in their "prudent neutrality." Instead, it is a pass between cultural bodies, which must be kept neutral if it is to remain open, and which compels the Swiss to act as guardians of the European idea: *neutralité oblige*.<sup>61</sup> This is the version of the Gotthard that reappeared a few years later, in de Rougemont's manifesto "What is the Gotthard League?" upon his co-founding of the same with Theophil Spoerri. The Gotthard League was formed in response to the disconcertingly conciliatory sermon delivered in June 1940 by then President and Foreign Minister Marcel Pilet-Golaz, which announced, among other things, the gradual demobilization of Swiss forces and the necessity of adjusting to a "new order" in Europe. Against any perceived accommodation of totalitarian regimes, de Rougemont asserted the central responsibility of defending the Gotthard pass and called for a coalition of Swiss across class and religion: a union of opposites, of unlikely neighbors.<sup>62</sup>

In de Rougemont's widely-read manifesto, the "crowd image" of the Gotthard is an image in Canetti's expanded sense. No mere symbol to canalize Swiss heterogeneity into one panorama or one future, as it was in Erni's mural, the Alps are an image of relation, or better, an image understood *as* relation. That relation is twofold: the straightforward rapport of one Swiss to another — a cultural politics of *neighboring* — and the more complex relation of

Switzerland's two views, from within and from without. To amend Robert Frost's line, "Switzerland is hard to see." The national figure of the Alps, which dominated both the Landi and the 1930s debates over the terms of Swiss identity, reproduces that simultaneously self-evident and evasive experience of the Alps themselves: to be in Switzerland is perforce to see the Alps, and to see them blocking your view.

### **A Large Head, Viewed from Far Away**

The collision of traditional costume and couture inside "*Kleider Machen Leute*" seemed to delight precisely because it met this discontinuity head on. The idiom itself implies the problems of self-definition with cheer. Clothes make the man: we are judged on and treated according to our self-presentation. But also: the right outfit can transform the man wearing it, in a "fake it 'til you make it" logic doled out by salespeople since time immemorial. The pavilion's principal architectural feature provided a figure for this reciprocity of inner and exterior views. From the outside, the main body of Egender's pavilion was composed of two large square buildings connected by one long rectangular section, with few windows or doors (Fig. 2.28). From the interior, however, the building was pierced by glass-walled courtyards that allowed light to enter into the galleries without opening them onto the outside (Figs. 2.29, 2.30). These "dream islands," in the silvery formula of one critic, "perfectly interrupted the brilliant reality of the products of industry."<sup>63</sup> This appraisal does not merely oppose nature and commodity, but in fact inverts their typical relations, associating the organic world with fantasy — an imaginative

transport to a tropical hideout, an austere Japanese rock garden, an enclosure in Provence — while redescribing luxury commodities as the concrete stuff of life. (Gardens, Robert Harbison reflects, are “places for the indecisive who prefer their facts virtual not actual” — and who, one could venture, prefer their fantasies purchasable.<sup>64</sup>)

Giacometti’s initial proposition for the Landi followed a similar logic. Egender and Bruno originally asked Giacometti to design something for the entrance to the pavilion: a 14-meter-high wall with a small pair of doors opening onto the Machine Hall.<sup>65</sup> Giacometti’s proposal was a monumental drape made out of plaster.<sup>66</sup> The concept was a scaled-up version of the curtains he and Diego had produced for Lucien Lelong’s fragrance showroom in Paris in 1935 — a proposition which consisted in drolly reimagining the supple, light-blocking curtain as a rigid frame for recessed lighting (Fig. 2.31). Against the austere trompe-l’oeil of Giacometti’s plaster curtains, Lelong’s fragrance bottles took on an air of “brilliant reality,” of increased animation, like actors made more lively by a flat set. Giacometti’s proposition for the pavilion facade suggested something similar. A Grand Drape, drawn up before the theater of industry, it implied that what lay beyond this plaster curtain was the paradox of a *real pageant*, a medley of whirling automata and mechanized runways as well as industrial looms and sample fabrics, contained within a building that was itself rendered a kind of theatrical prop (Fig. 2.32). Unsurprisingly, this proposal was rejected — owing, said Bruno, to the lack of quality plaster in Switzerland, though just as likely because it disrupted the hygienic lines of Egender’s façade. The entrance was given over instead to the Genevan painter Maurice Barraud, who created a much-lauded and thematically straightforward *sgraffito* of Helen at her loom (Fig. 2.33).

Giacometti was asked instead to come up with a proposition for one of the courtyards, joining a small group of artists commissioned by the architectural firm to place works throughout the complex. Some, like Otto Schillt's plaster torsos and Sascha Morgenthaler's human-sized dolls, were integrated directly into the exhibition: Schillt's classical nudes were draped with striped tricot, as though they'd been mistaken for department-store mannequins, while the broken-button eyes and leather hair of Morgenthaler's jute-skinned figures — prototypes of her affectless postwar Sasha dolls — modeled couture gowns (Figs. 2.34, 2.35).<sup>67</sup> Others were commissioned to take part in the pavilion's decorative scheme, with murals in the case of Barraud and Max Gubler, and with sculptures for the courtyards in the case of Cornelia Foster and Giacometti. Foster's contribution, a monumental head, sat alone in one courtyard amid ferns that sprouted between the paving stones. A shaped trellis on the back wall extended the gridded windows of the courtyard into a trompe-l'oeil recession, with an enigmatic panel hanging in its center, depicting a floating mirror and drape that seemed to be plucked from the repertoire of metaphysical painting.

Giacometti's proposal, as we know, was the diminutive head he introduced out of his suitcase. But Giacometti struck out again. As Bruno explained, although he and Egenger appreciated the inventiveness of his brother's gesture, "it was nevertheless quite impossible to present his concept to our customers because we were neither a museum nor an art gallery."<sup>68</sup> *Cube* was sent in its place, though the only document of it is a photograph of the *Mode-Theater* that shows it hazily in a courtyard in the far background (Fig. 2.36).<sup>69</sup> That Morgenthaler's coarse mannequins and Foster's curious transformation of the courtyard into a ruin yard should have been welcomed while Giacometti's diminutive head was rejected suggests that a concern

for the conservative tastes of the customers (the textile and fashion firms) was not the deciding factor. If Bruno and Egender had selected artists and vitrine designers for their whimsy, humor, or eccentricity, it certainly couldn't have been the unconventionality of Giacometti's proposition alone that disqualified it.

To understand the "impossibility" of his concept requires looking beyond Bruno's explanation that the head was simply too "artistic" or nuanced for its audience, or still more, required the context of an art institution to be legible. In a letter written that May to his mother and brother-in-law, Francis Berthoud, Giacometti described what ensued:

I worked on the pedestal and the head for two days from morning to evening in a very beautiful spot on the outskirts of the city and on Thursday morning I installed my sculpture. I was very happy to see it installed, on the whole it had the effect I wanted. [...] but the sculpture made too much of a scandal and [Bruno and Egender] didn't dare to leave it. [...] They reproached it for being: too little, a joke, too serious, done to shock the bourgeoisie, too poor, too pretentious, too good for this kind of exhibition, too thoughtful, a joke on Egender, too solemn (both of these were Egender's reflections!), a very curious idea, that it made the garden too big, that one couldn't not look at it, and many other things besides. [...] It is by far the most daring thing I have done. It completely transforms the space (which everyone rather involuntarily remarked and that's what made them uneasy [...]). A glass or something else of the same dimension of my head in its place wouldn't have changed the proportions of everything. My head changed everything. The very tiny flowers on the paving stones became as big as roses (Bruno noted that) the cracks between the patio stones became like crevasses ([Max] Gubler said that) the plants behind became trees [and] the garden without limits [...] and the head and the whole sculpture was very big — the head, a large head viewed from far away, even from three meters [away], and on the other things, it had on the eye the effect of a telescope? (that instrument that makes everything large). You looked at my sculpture and the whole surroundings took on a new aspect. It can make a square meter immense.<sup>70</sup>

Giacometti's small head, in short, exploded the universe of the pavilion itself, putting it into a state of both tonal and spatial disarray. One can break Giacometti's reflections into three principle points. First, Giacometti notes that there is something indeterminate about his head, but

in every case, its ambivalence — poor or pretentious, thoughtful or flippant, and so forth — registered as *excessive*. Secondly, the sculpture “completely transforms the space.” Giacometti attributes this transformation to the fact that the sculpture is a head (“A glass or something else of the same dimension [...] wouldn’t have changed the proportions of everything”). One might put forward a few possibilities for why this is the case. Perhaps it is that the head is an artwork, in contrast to the literal and figurative transparency of a utilitarian object like a glass. Or maybe it is because the head is figurative, and therefore implicitly introduces the expectation of altered scale entailed by all representations.<sup>71</sup> Or, again, might it be because it is a *head* that we are seeing — a depiction of something *that* sees. (These are not, of course, mutually exclusive explanations.)

Finally, Giacometti likens the effect of the head to the operations of a telescope. Telescopy is the preservation of distance, at any distance: it draws the distant close without ever vouchsafing the tactile or bodily experiences of closeness. Put otherwise, it delivers a completely optical closeness. That viewers could not enter the garden only enhanced this impression — rendering them something like ambulating eyeballs, suspended momentarily before a wall-sized spyglass. Giacometti’s parenthetical description of the telescope here is significant.<sup>72</sup> The telescope does not make everything *visible*; it simply makes everything *large*.<sup>73</sup> The head appears monumental not despite, but because it appears far away — *because the viewer seems to view it from afar*, “even from three meters.” The incommensurable dimensions of viewer and head are resolved in the former’s favor, anticipating Giacometti’s statement in a late interview, “A sculpture only really interests me to the extent that it is, for me, a way of rendering my vision of the external world. Or, actually, today it’s only, for me, a way of knowing this vision.”<sup>74</sup>

If this phenomenological realism was the project of Giacometti's post-Surrealist work, his confrontation with scale predates it by a couple decades. In a late interview, Giacometti recalled an early drawing lesson at his father's side:

I was in his studio drawing some pears on a table, at the normal distance of a still-life, and the pears always became minuscule in my drawing. I began again, they invariably turned out exactly the same size. My father was irritated and said, "But begin by drawing them as they are, as you see them!" And he corrected them. I tried to do them his way, and then, despite myself, I kept erasing, and half an hour later they had become exactly the same size as the first ones, to within a millimeter.<sup>75</sup>

To judge by a still-life of apples painted at a conventional size in that same period, the anecdote might be yet another instance of Giacometti's "rewriting the original incident the better to bring out its truth" (Fig. 2.37).<sup>76</sup> In this case, that truth is the conflict between Alberto's incipient understanding of the size of things "as he sees them" and, as he recounts in the same interview, his father's practice of painting portraits life-size, even when their subject was seated several meters away. "Lifesize," he would later declare, "does not exist. It is a meaningless concept. Lifesize is at the most your own size — but you don't see yourself."<sup>77</sup> What is at stake here is the relationship of vision to apparent size, or in fact, a telescoping of the latter into the former, such that the only possible reconciliation of apparent and actual size lay in the impossible situation of an eye turned inward on the body that houses it. As Reinhold Hohl has argued, Giacometti seems to be confusing a realist principle — a depiction of the pear or head in its overall form, unobscured by artistic convention — with a contextual matter, bearing on the *seeing* rather than the *being*.<sup>78</sup> At some fundamental level, Giacometti mistook the subject of his sculpture. All while believing he was depicting a pear or a head, he was in fact depicting the intervening distance between him and it. To make his point, Hohl draws on Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology*

of *Perception*, in which he asks, “[I]s not a man *smaller* at two hundred yards than at five yards away? [...] [H]e is neither smaller nor indeed equal in size: he is anterior to equality and inequality; *he is the same man seen from farther away.*”<sup>79</sup> According to Merleau-Ponty, the best one can say is that a man in the distance is less precise, offers less detail, and thus exhausts the eye less completely, such that one’s field of vision encompasses far more than just him.

The depiction of this field of vision dominates another study of fruit by Giacometti, this one painted in the late 1930s. Among the handful of paintings he produced in those years, the 1937 *Still Life with Apple* (also called *Apple on the Sideboard*) depicts a single apple, sitting on a sideboard (Fig. 2.38). Black lines of the cabinetry score the canvas into an oscillating grid of planes, some built up insistently from patches of warm color, others given only in washes. Regions of the canvas itself are abraded, as though the paint has been rubbed off by use, like the business side of a chair leg. These passages draw the eye toward more rectilinear lines that mark out a frame a few inches inside the canvas edge. The frame is staggered, as though Giacometti were sketching out multiple alternative dimensions of the composition, even though the painting is densely worked toward finish. In fact, the pigment is so thoroughly networked over the surface that these drawn frames appear neither below nor above the composition, but inside of it, as integral to the construction as the carpentry of the sideboard (Fig. 2.39).<sup>80</sup> A smaller *Apple on the Sideboard*, painted that same year, raises and cants the point of view, and closes in on the apple itself (Fig. 2.40). This more assured rendering may have been painted after the larger version, although Giacometti’s postwar painting — with its multiple drawn frames around its portrait sitters — seems to draw its lessons from the earlier canvas (Fig. 2.41).<sup>81</sup> In these paintings, the single apple is suspended between bands of sideboard, panel, and wall, and painted with neither

more nor less detail than the worried surfaces of the rest of the canvas. The field of vision, determined by oscillating parameters of the drawn frames, seems to be composed in response to the emerging form of the apple. It is a delicate and unstable calibration of the field to fit the clarity of the object.

What the multiple drawn frames demonstrate is the process of bringing the apple into view, as though it were an alien thing that could only come into some precision through Giacometti's brush. This visual innocence took the apple as its object, not just out of biblical wit, but inevitably in reference to that other great innocent, Cézanne.<sup>82</sup> Exhibitions in Paris and Basel in 1936, timed with the thirtieth anniversary of his death, alongside a spate of publications on the artist, had reinforced Cézanne's position as the "father of modernism."<sup>83</sup> For Giacometti, Cézanne's importance lay in his resistance to the infiltration of painting by a system of norms:

[L]ittle by little, the works of the classical [artists], which represented a sum of knowledge, the sum of the knowledge that they had of reality, and not their vision — these works came to be substituted for the vision itself of reality. [...] The importance of Cézanne comes from the fact that he is the only one to have broken profoundly with this [substitution of knowledge for vision]. And it's because of him that today, the entire vision of reality is now a point of discussion.<sup>84</sup>

Cézanne's realism thereby proved his place in an avant-garde, a true avant-garde — not the ruins of the one that had lately rejected Giacometti. His realism meant a rejection of artistic convention, of the nonsensicality of "life-size," and above all, received knowledge and normativity. By taking up Cézanne's motif, Giacometti symbolically took up his position in the conflict between vision and knowledge. "We do indeed know what a head is," wrote Jacques Dupin, referring to Breton's dismissal of Giacometti's portrait project discussed in Chapter 1. "But this knowledge, precisely, is what Giacometti is struggling against. This false knowledge,

the unverified heritage which our laziness accepts and passes on, this pretended knowledge which is the opposite of knowing and the real obstacle to the eye. The mental figuring of reality has expelled true, living perception.”<sup>85</sup>

But this conflict between vision and knowledge was rendered only more complex by Giacometti’s efforts to pare it down. Just as the single apple on his sideboard made Giacometti’s efforts appear simultaneously more elementary and less innocent, since it burdened the fruit with art historical reference, the miniature format — whether of pears or people — also makes the relation between vision and knowledge more complex. As Claude Levi-Strauss argued in *The Savage Mind*, the miniature is a mode of knowing, a way of grasping an object of our attention that runs counter to the practices of scientific thought. The procedure of the latter is to build knowledge of a whole by examining it part by part. By contrast, in the miniature, because it can be grasped at a glance, “knowledge of the whole precedes knowledge of the parts.”<sup>86</sup> This is somewhat of an illusion, Levi-Strauss notes, but it is an illusion that is constitutive of the form nevertheless. Miniatures are philosophical objects, reductions of the world that allow their viewers to understand their totality more immediately.<sup>87</sup>

They are also, he observes, aesthetic objects — indeed, even perhaps the “universal type” for the artwork in general. All artworks are small-scale, even those that are massive in size, since all art implies some kind of abstraction of perceptual information, and some manner of contraction (the Sistine Chapel is gigantic, he concedes, but far small than its theme of the End of Time). All miniatures, reciprocally, partake of the aesthetic. Miniatures are, by definition, cultural products; there are no naturally-occurring miniatures.<sup>88</sup> Because they are *made things*, miniatures can be situated between the work of the scientist and the *bricoleur*, Levi-Strauss’s

designation for the “savage” or “primitive” epistemic mode, which he argues is the technical or physical equivalent to myth, “a kind of ‘intellectual bricolage.’”<sup>89</sup> The *bricoleur* seeks knowledge in the world through an embedded, heterogeneous dealing with what-is-at-hand in it, the scientist by taking distance from it; both, he insists, are deeply concerned with reality. The artist (Levi-Strauss’s chosen example is the sixteenth-century French miniaturist Jean Clouet) must both understand, at a remove, the construction of his subject — the morphology and manufacture of a lace collar, for instance, that Clouet seeks to depict — and attend to its situated existence, including how the light hits it at a given hour, how it contrasts with the colors of the cloth against it, who wears it and whether it is new or old, ironed or creased (Fig. 2.42). “Aesthetic emotion,” Levi-Strauss surmises, comes from the satisfying union of these two means toward knowledge in the work of art. This synthesis moreover lies behind the symmetry of artworks and myth, a parallel that explains why we often treat myths, like the myth of the Gotthard, as objects of artistic contemplation *and* as stories that produce and reaffirm relations. What *distinguishes* art and myth are their procedures: Whereas art gathers together contingent elements to reveal their deeper unity, myth begins with a structure and spins tales from it. Art discovers structure from a set of relations; myth constructs a set of relations from a given structure.

This distinction is a blunt tool, but nevertheless one can use it to chip away at an incongruity of Bruno’s explanation: namely, why it was that Giacometti’s little head created such a stir, when giant rag dolls dressed in couture, twirling mechanized mannequins, ambulating hats, and display vitrines that seemed to have been beamed into the past straight direct from Memphis were considered just part of the program. For his head, as Giacometti’s letter attests,

worked chiefly to manipulate the viewer's sense of scale. From the given structure of the courtyard display, it produced a set of relations that seemed at once absurd and profoundly strange, irreconcilable with the conventions that dominated the apparently unconventional pavilion. His head makes one want to imagine Levi-Strauss's mirror image of myth and art as a continuum. Asked to present something that could fleetingly focus the spectators' overstimulated sensoria in a "dream island" of contemplative artworks, Giacometti answered with a sculpture that did exactly the opposite. "It is by far the most daring thing I have done," Giacometti writes — not just because he had the chutzpah to present a tiny work in such a grand setting as the Landi, but because the *work* of that tiny work was to spawn a strange and disorderly new set of scale relations. The head's capacity to "change everything" bore ultimately on the procedure of art itself, and edged that procedure ever closer to the space that Levi-Strauss recognized as myth.

### **Artist as Mountaineer**

To what degree was scale a new fascination for Giacometti? To what degree an extension of an earlier concern? One could argue that Surrealism was, at heart, an art of scale as well, which sought to place the proportions of the unconscious mind in relation with the dimensions of the lived world, and whose works were models of larger mechanisms of desire or

the psyche. Certainly some of Giacometti's Surrealist sculptures were scale-models in at least one of these senses. Consider *Palace at 4.a.m.* — a dollhouse made of string and pick-up sticks, inspired by violent adolescent reveries, whose compositions suggests the influence of both Arnold Böcklin's *Island of the Dead* (1880) and Lyubov Popova's set designs for the Meyerhold Theater (Figs. 2.43, 2.44). Or, again, *No More Play* (1933), his best-known "gameboard" work, whose central sepulchers recall Fra Angelico's *Last Judgment* (c. 1425–31), which Giacometti likely saw in Florence during his grand tour in 1921 (the hollows that flank these sepulchers meanwhile evoke the pebble game *i* or mancala, introducing yet another form of scale, games being "scaled down" rehearsals of real conflicts) (Figs. 2.44, 2.45).<sup>90</sup> Even the enigmatic *Cube*, discussed in Chapter 1, evokes both Mallarméan die and mountain or glacier, and existed at once as a bauble on the *Surrealist Table* and a container for the human body in a lithograph prior to its meter-tall plaster incarnation.<sup>91</sup> Several other sculptures were titled straightforwardly as "projects" or propositions for larger architectural scenarios: the aforementioned *Project for a Passageway* (1930–31), in which the decapitated form of a woman's body appears modeled on the curved walls and conical huts of a Cameroonian village, an image of which Giacometti would have seen published in *Cahiers d'art*, and *Project for a Public Square* (1932) (Fig. 2.46).<sup>92</sup> This second work consisted of a series of five geometric shapes and one semi-circular indent arranged on a rectangular board. The group makes for a compendium of forms in Giacometti's Surrealist compositions: the snaking zigzag is borrowed from *Man and Woman* (1928–29), where it plays the neck of a concave form evoking his earlier *Spoon Woman* (1926); the hollow cup derives from *Woman Dreaming* (1929) and *Man* (1929), and the rectangular ridge from initial maquettes of *Gazing Head*; the tongue-shaped stele reappears in *Palace at 4.a.m.*

(1933); the cone is taken up again in the “tusks” of *Disagreeable Object, to Be Disposed Of* (1931) and *I+I=3* (1934, destroyed). Early sketches of the work show various permutations of these shapes, attended by human figures that stand beside or lean over them (Fig. 2.47).<sup>93</sup> In 1932, Giacometti extended this concept into a full plan for the scaling-up of his works, and titled the page “Projects for Large Sculptures Outdoors” (Fig. 2.48). In this mock-up, stick figures appear next to five Surrealist works, all of which are taller than them. Giacometti draws the figures with their hands on their hips, striding toward the works, or holding on to their armatures — in each case, resembling the works themselves, and occasionally undifferentiated from them.<sup>94</sup> The conveyed intention in scaling up these Surrealist works appears to have been, not to confront viewers with massive, alien objects, but to integrate them into the relation of elements in the composition.

This was the aspiration, in any case, of the one sculpture for public space that Giacometti might have made, when Gordon Bunshaft approached him to propose a work for the plaza of the Chase Manhattan Bank.<sup>95</sup> Giacometti responded with a group of figures, composed from his basic postwar vocabulary — a walking man, a standing woman, and a large head — that would be slightly larger than the average pedestrian, a relatively modest scale for public sculpture that was one reason for the Chase committee’s rejection of his proposal.<sup>96</sup> Giacometti had always had a strong desire to create sculpture that would be integrated with a larger environment, André Masson once reported, but “because he was never given the chance, his sculpture is rootless [*sa sculpture est errante*].”<sup>97</sup>

Make what you will of Masson’s judgment, the ambition appears true. Indeed, for Reinhold Hohl, scale is what links Giacometti’s two periods, for which “the underlying concept

of making compositions with a public, almost mythical, and to some extent monumental, significance was the same.”<sup>98</sup> In his famous retrospect letter to Pierre Matisse, he described a sketch of *Project for a Place* as a “maquette for a large sculpture in a garden, I wanted people to be able to walk on the sculpture, sit on it and lean on it.”<sup>99</sup> Giacometti made nearly human-scale plasters of the elements in *Project for a Square* shortly after the tabletop version was complete, and they lingered in his studio long after he had renounced Surrealism (in fact, for at least one of these objects, until the end of his life) (Fig. 2.49). They were testaments, perhaps, to a desire for physical interaction with his sculpture that guided his early propositions. But it was only after withdrawing from this body of work that Giacometti came to the insight that erupted in the Landi pavilion’s courtyard: that one did not need to handle, lean on, sit on, or even just circumambulate a sculpture for the body to be involved. *Scale itself* involved the body in a web of relations — even be monumental, almost mythic relations, no matter the size of the work itself.

To unpack the nature of this involvement, and its relation to the frame of seeing and knowing outlined above, will require looking back further in art history and more directly at the problems of sculpture. But in order to do so, we cannot yet leave Cézanne. In his essay “Cézanne’s Doubt,” first published in 1948, Merleau-Ponty applied his concepts of embodied perception to his readings of Cézanne’s painting.<sup>100</sup> Painting, understood by Merleau-Ponty fairly conventionally as an act of depiction, was an invitation to the viewer to “take up the gesture which created [the painting] and, skipping the intermediaries, to rejoin, without any guide other than a movement of the invented line (an almost incorporeal trace), the silent world of the painter, henceforth uttered and accessible.”<sup>101</sup> The tremulous contours of Cézanne’s still-

lives transmitted the “lived perspective” of a world in which forms are always oscillating, and in which their sensual impressions jockey to emerge from the density of experience.<sup>102</sup> Yet this invitation is different from naive improvisation; the painter does not simply try to put his “feeling” into the painting, but rather his *style*, defined as a “mode of formulation” that develops in the “hollows of the painter’s perception as a painter.”<sup>103</sup> Perception itself is already a stylization, and the gestures painters use to relay it are the result of this labor of formulation that sets up equivalences between their painted marks and their embodied experience.

In an earlier essay, Merleau-Ponty described how this labor took place for Cézanne in his many studies of Mont Sainte-Victoire in Provence (Fig. 2.50). Defending against the critical boilerplate that Cézanne’s non-conventional perspectives represented a rejection of the science of perception, on one hand, or artistic convention, on the other, Merleau-Ponty described Cézanne’s commitment to both science *and* tradition. Not only did the painter put in his hours at the Louvre, notes the philosopher,

He inquired about the geological structure of his landscapes, convinced that these abstract relationships [...] should affect the act of painting. [...] He would start by discovering the geological foundations of the landscape; then, according to Mme Cézanne, he would halt and look at everything with widened eyes, ‘germinating’ with the countryside. The task before him was, first, to forget all he had ever learned from science and, second, *through* these sciences to recapture the structure of the landscape as an emerging organism. To do this, all the partial views one catches sight of must be welded together; all that the eye’s versatility disperses must be reunited; one must, as Gasquet put it, “join the wandering hands of nature.”<sup>104</sup>

This description of the role of geological information in Cézanne’s process appears in the regularity with which certain subtle structural characteristics of the mountain register in his paintings over the decades — the barely inflected second saddle on the ridgeline, the pentagonal

shape formed by the compressed profiles of three of the cliff faces. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc used a similar technique to depict the peaks in his study of Mont-Blanc in Switzerland (Fig. 2.51). Given that any single view was bound to suffer from the distortions of perspective, and that there was no way of seizing the whole at once, Viollet-le-Duc developed a system of sketching the mountains from multiple viewpoints, and each of these viewpoints multiple times, ultimately accruing a “mass of memoranda” from which to gradually build up his renderings of the mountains.<sup>105</sup> The principle for both Cézanne and Viollet-le-Duc is that to depict the mountain, one must know something about it — the better to position oneself in the place of its creator. A chain of invitations into the force of generation is thus extended, from artist to viewer, from tectonic force to artwork.

Giacometti’s own paintings of the mountains in his native Val Bregaglia display a similar process of analysis, accumulation, and distillation. In *The Mountain* (c. 1930), the shoulder of Piz Lunghin rises from the humped meadows just north of Maloja (Fig. 2.52). A chute of snowfall bisects the mountainside, which is faceted like the back of a pangolin, and painted in short orthogonal strokes whose precision emphasizes the distinction between the pelted long grasses that move up the east face of the peak, and the ragged limestone that catches the southwesterly light.<sup>106</sup> This faceting of the mountain side is echoed in the crosshatching of the sky, as though both organizations of color served to simply build up a uniform body from geometric elements (one can see something similar at work in Giacometti’s figure studies from the Grand Chaumière). Yet a comparison of Giacometti’s painting and Piz Lunghin — the actual mountain, I mean — reveals that the faceting in certain areas is descriptive rather than suggestive. Like Cézanne’s Mont Sainte-Victoire, the mountain is carefully observed here, and

even the more extravagant features of its palette, such as the creamy pink accents on the front face, the almost iridescent green by the peak, can be found on Piz Lunghin itself, in the vesuvianite and serpentine rock that streak up the mountainside.<sup>107</sup>

In 1965, Denis de Rougemont published a strange travelogue of the Confederation — more of an elegy, really — titled *Switzerland, or the History of a Happy People*. His travels took him to visit Giacometti in his atelier in Stampa, where he recorded the following haunted notes:

Very pointy clocktower of Stampa, skinny, tormented, irregular poplar trees, and all the way at the top of the peaks, above the arollas, rocks sharpened into needles, Piz Duan, Piz de la Sciora. “Could they be volcanic formations? — Yes, they emerged from a single thrust, the last one.” His father sometimes took him up there, in this country of high, projecting boulders, irresistibly stretching upward... Emotion of feeling behind the work, accident of human genius, and in these telluric accidents, one same profound thrust, one same law of formative violence.<sup>108</sup>

If you make the pilgrimage to Giacometti’s village in the Engadine, you may find that emotion still lying in wait. It is difficult, in the narrow valley of Bregaglia where the mountain sides rise up like the petrified walls of a parted sea, to resist seeing in them a premonition — or a predestination — of Giacometti’s sculpture: to not see, in the profile of the peaks, his late bust of Diego; in a group of pine trees, the arrangements of his standing figures; in the underside of a boulder, the ravaged surface of his bronzes (Figs. 2.52, 2.53, 2.54, 2.55). In short, it is hard not to fall victim to a cosmic and facile pseudomorphism: to see in the mountains, Giacometti, and Giacometti in the mountains. If you did, you would not be the first. Michel Leiris wrote that Giacometti’s face “seemed to be carved in a rock,” assimilating him to the “petrified crises” of his Surrealist work no less than the material with which he maintained a professional familiarity.<sup>109</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, “I am not sure whether he is a man bent on imposing a

human seal on space or a rock dreaming of human qualities. Or perhaps he is both and mediates between the two.”<sup>110</sup> Sartre’s prose tellingly permits some ambiguity here: it isn’t certain whether he is describing the sculptor or his sculpture. The man and his works seem to share, like they did for de Rougemont, in the same substance, and pulled in two directions between a genuinely humanist project that centers the formation of the world within the artist’s world-formation, and a case of romanticizing pseudomorphism. The hermeneutic perils of the latter are telegraphed in Sartre’s imprecise diction, as though pseudomorphism itself ushers in a dubious closing of all distinctions.

For his part, Giacometti’s own empathy with the *ascensionnistes*, those “sufferers from the climbing mania” as Viollet-le-Duc called them, is never so apparent as in analogy to his efforts as a sculptor.<sup>111</sup> As the years devoted to sculpting the portraits of Rita and Diego began to pile up, Giacometti’s laborious attempts to model their likenesses began for him to resemble something like the mountaineer’s efforts. Working on the heads, wrote Giacometti to his family in the spring of 1937, was “like climbing a mountain, and losing the path is as much or even more dangerous, [something] which happens to me more or less every day until I am able to learn the path, but I’m not there yet, mostly I end up on precipices [and] tumble down them without realizing it and then, in an instant, [I’m] already at the bottom of the ravine and looking for a way out [...]. You have no idea how much this work can consume you!”<sup>112</sup> What better metaphor to convey it than the arduous ardors of the mountaineer, all that toil up a mountainside for a few minutes at the summit, which functions only to goad them on to more and still more peaks.<sup>113</sup> His analogy recalls Braque’s famous description of Cubism’s first years, in which he and Picasso were like “two mountain-climbers roped together” — yet in its solitude, suggests

that this once collaborative model of experimental modernism had become a lonely and even more treacherous business, an obsessive and asocial pitch.

Giacometti's letter provides the final and, up until now, absent figure of the Alps in this discussion: the one set on climbing them. Beyond its rather apt sociological comparison between the avid hiker and the sculptor, both expending effort that is more or less inscrutable for those who don't share the passion, it expresses a more fundamental aspect of his experience of figuration that is isomorphic with the experience the mountains from within them. Up there, wrote Viollet-le-Duc, "[m]an is so diminutive, the positions favorable for observation are so few and so interior in elevation to the neighboring summits, and the latter are so often difficult to access, that the masses can be scarcely appreciated as a whole, and the smallest detail assumes proportions so considerable that it withdraws our attention from the main outlines."<sup>114</sup> The humbling of the false summit, the acknowledgment that the apparent manageability of an ascent is just an illusion from the valley floor, the sudden withdrawal, at a given altitude, of that same valley into a dollhouse sham of valleys — these are all part and parcel of mountaineering, perceptual problems that put the lie to any notion that one climbs in order to get a singular and stable view of the world from the top. The Alps have a coherent shape only from a distance, or from a standpoint where they have yet to engage the dimensions of your own body. Any closer, and perceptual variances intervene on this coherence, the same that led Merleau-Ponty to claim that perception is already a stylization, a matter of conceiving any representation as the result of a "mode of formulation." Giacometti's difficulty sculpting heads testifies to a similar problem of his bearings, in his insistence that they be always actual and never conventional. But what is essential to these difficulties, as well as the difficulty of depicting the mountains, is their

specificity: it isn't simply that things in general are hard to see as one approaches them, but that mountains and people are hard to see. The geopolitical paradoxes that Barber diagnosed in the Graubünden — from afar, a fortress (whose centrality makes it a target of neighbors with hegemonic designs), from up close, an endlessly variegated network of passes (that make it difficult in practice to dominate)— are shared by the heads Giacometti is trying to sculpt, which also become impossible to master at close view. But more importantly, the politics that follow from Graubünden are *established by* this dissymmetry of interior and exterior views, which Giacometti again encounters in the figure.

Giacometti's head "changes everything" into a mountainous space: something incommensurably vast, impossible to master or to feel altogether united with. But the head also "changes everything" in the representation of a body to its viewer. If it appeared like a monumental head in the distance, Giacometti's Landi contribution nevertheless performed none of the conventional functions of the monument. It gave no detailed form to symbolize a people; it provided no face for the nation; it marked no space where the citizens of the state share common ground. Instead, it transformed a little courtyard into something that not merely depicted, as in Hans Erni's mural, but generated the scale relations of the Alps, the crowd image of Switzerland. This is an image defined by the perceptual difficulties it raises, from its relation to a viewer who both sees it and inhabits it.

## Near and Far

To carry Giacometti's analogy of sculpting to mountaineering to the end is to imagine his fingers like the hiker's feet, tracking the unsteady surface of a face in full exposure — not just three points of contact, but five. It's a more desperate version of what Meyer Shapiro called Cézanne's "caressing vision," that takes in its subject with the roving hands of the blind man.<sup>115</sup> Alois Riegl had a term for this vision: *Nahsicht*, or near-sightedness, a mode not so much of perceiving as producing sculpture, through a cultural logic or *Kunstwollen* that privileged the haptic sense.<sup>116</sup> *Nahsicht*'s antipode was *Fernsicht*, or far-sightedness, and both sights — along with the happy medium of *Normalsicht* — corresponded to a trajectory in the history of sculpture, which Riegl theorized in *Late Roman Sculpture*. In the first phase, the tactile plane predominated in sculpture, which concerns itself almost entirely with the perception and material clarity of objects or entities. The purest expression of *Nahsicht* art is the sculpture of the ancient Egyptians, whose bas relief avoided the distortions of foreshortening and confusions of shadows, as well as the depiction of psychological or subjective states (i.e. figurative depths).<sup>117</sup> Following this phase comes that of normal-sight, typified by the art of the Ancient Greeks, in which depth began to enter the compositions, but not to the degree that the viewer lost tactile connection to the work, or by extension the secure separation between the depicted entities. Finally, in the third phase, the optical sense takes over as space surrounds the figures, dissolving them in its fluid. "Individuals give up their tactile connection to the plane, deep shadows interrupt it, and objects blur into their environment": this is *Fernsicht*, whose exemplary art is the sculpture of Late Antiquity (and, in a modern return, Impressionism). *Fernsicht* depicts collective appearance, or

the demonstration of the interdependence of objects.<sup>118</sup> Whereas ancient artist sought out the unity and beauty — a two-fold unity, since beauty *was* unity — of objects, the *fernsichtig* artist sought to express the collective character of the natural objects before them, and the multiplicity of underlying forces determining these objects, only some of which would ever show their faces to the viewer.

In this manner, the art of Late Antiquity and modern art appeals to experience, whereas Egyptian art rigorously bracketed it, “painstakingly suppressing any subjective infiltration.”<sup>119</sup> But Riegl noted that this suppression couldn’t hold indefinitely; as soon as art started to admit the relationship between objects, and therefore between the planes on which these objects stood, the first fissures were introduced into a sculptural system that would eventually have to face the problem of depicting space. “This leaky structure,” observes Antonia Lant, “grows in a particular ideological nexus: it is consonant with the gestures of historical (and sometimes imperial) vantage in expressing the dual desire to locate ancient Egypt both as the powerful but limited source from which modern culture has traveled an enormous and valuable distance, and as a stable, weighted, touchstone, the eternal beacon from the past, reassuring in the grip of modernity’s fluctuations.”<sup>120</sup> Riegl’s system was forced to clear a similar hurdle to Hegel’s concept of the unified sculptural surface in both securing and quarantining a significant (foreign) art of the past whose present subjugation was a matter of imperial interest.

In the years after Riegl published his study, the concepts of near- and far-sightedness filtered down through the discipline — appearing, notably, in Carl Burckhardt’s conference on Rodin, delivered in Basel in 1918 and published several years after in *Rodin und das plastische Problem*. In the text, a copy of which Giacometti kept in his personal library, Burckhardt

distinguished between the *Burghers of Calais* (near-sighted) and *The Thinker* or *Balzac* (far-sighted).<sup>121</sup> Whereas the *Burghers* appealed to the movements of its viewers, interpellating them in an elastic frieze of distinct postures, the *Thinker* and *Balzac* had a visual unity, but one with no relation to the structure of the human body. This quality, according to Burckhardt, suggested new grounds for the production of figurative sculpture, a new “legitimacy” founded on a “physically ungraspable stationary state, a purely suggestive stationary state, that we could call a stationary state of consistency.”<sup>122</sup> Despite Giacometti’s heavily palpated surfaces, despite his evocation of Cézanne’s “caressing vision,” this “physically ungraspable stationary state” describes the state of his miniature in the Landi courtyard. Unlike the pocket-sized sculpture of Kurt Schwitters, or Picasso’s barely carved pebbles and studio oddments, or Hans Arp’s fist-sized excrescences, or Henry Moore’s small-scale models, Giacometti’s miniatures are imponderables; they defy Herbert Read’s definition of sculpture as mass that occupied the viewer’s space — sculpture for the hand, sculpture that shared in its viewer’s touch-space (Figs. 2.56).<sup>123</sup> Instead, they testify to the severing of the viewer’s space from the sculpture’s — without, however, divorcing the sculpture from *its* actual, material space, or its “consistency.”

The continuation of Bruno’s anecdote of the miniatures in the Landi pavilion seems to bear this out. “[Alberto] explained,” Bruno related, “that the sculpture would work equally well at 10 meters or 20 meters away and that its effect depended on the surrounding space.” One must look beyond the grammar to let land the strange claims for sculpture relayed in this explanation. Giacometti describes to his brother a sculpture at once *dependent on* its display context and *independent of* the viewer’s position in it. Its illusionism was thereby premised on a rupture with a central premise of modern sculpture: the contiguity of the viewer’s space with the

sculpture's.<sup>124</sup> In order for scale, as a proportion of two sets of dimensions, to operate, those sets must be distinct but in conversation. This explanation comes near to Alex Potts understanding of contiguity in modernist sculpture as the first in a “double-take” that encompasses viewers’ apprehension of the sculpture both as an object and as the source of various unstable phenomenological qualities.<sup>125</sup> This “double-take” — used by Potts to address how modernist sculpture managed to court the form of the commodity while still retaining the history of display and presence — suggests that Riegl’s cycle had undertaken a shift in modern art after Impressionism, such that art would no longer concern itself either with entities or with subjective relationships, but with both, simultaneously and differentially. Giacometti’s non-palpable miniatures, as a strange combination of nearsighted and farsighted paradigms of sculpture, unexpectedly become the exemplary work of this double-take. They both interpellate their viewer phenomenologically, while resisting proximity.

There is, as it happens, a cartoon for this insistent reciprocity in the form of two competing sets of dimensions, drawn by Ad Reinhardt for a series of satirical “how-to” comics published for *Art & Architecture* in January 1947. The most famous of these is a cartoon of a besuited man pointing a finger at an abstract painting, and guffawing, “Ha ha what does this represent?” The painting responds by sprouting an arm of its own, which it jabs back in the direction of its philistine inquisitor, while lobbing the question back at him, “What do you represent?” (Fig. 2.58).<sup>126</sup> The caption to this image reads, “An abstract painting will react to you if you react to it. You get from it what you bring to it. It will meet you half way but no further. It is alive if you are. It represents something and so do you. YOU, SIR, ARE A SPACE, TOO.”<sup>127</sup> Below the caption lies the same man, this time on his back with x’s over his eyes. One could

read this image of the dead (or laid out) philistine as a reminder that bodies also *take up* space — most obviously when they are stiff — but Reinhardt’s diction, “YOU ARE A SPACE,” suggests the opposite: the dead or prone philistine is just an object, whereas the living, talking philistine can engage in that reciprocity of reactions that make him capable of representing something to others. This capacity comes from being a space for presentation in the first place, in the same way that Sartre, in his article on the face in *Verve* as discussed in Chapter 1, claimed the face made room for human relations in the crush of mere things.

A core premise of the recognition of others in existentialist doctrine, as Sartre developed it in those same years, depended on just this concept of “being a space.” In *Being and Nothingness*, which he began to draft the same year that Giacometti brought his head to the Landi, Sartre introduces a scenario in which he observes his surroundings in a public park: benches, a statue, a lawn, and finally, a man crossing that lawn, whose appearance allows Sartre to elaborate the difference between objects and “the Other.” Whereas all other objects in his field of vision exist in additive relation to Sartre — the bench, which sits a certain number of yards from the statue, which stands a certain number of yards from where he observes the scene — the man introduces an entirely distinct proposition. This is the upsurge of a univocal relation, an instant recognition of a “spatiality which is not *my* spatiality; for instead of a grouping *toward me* of the objects, there is now an orientation *which flees from me*.”<sup>128</sup> The man’s appearance on the lawn discloses, suddenly and violently, the contingency of the world’s organization. It *could* be organized as it appears for Sartre, or it could be organized with any of its “blind sides” facing anyone else, actual or otherwise. It is as though a drain hole has opened in the middle of the world: an absence of the world-as-perceived-by-Sartre located at the very center of his

perception. More importantly, the presence of the Other across the lawn makes *Sartre himself* over into something that can be seen and organized relative to other objects as well. He nominates this being-seen-by-the-Other as the central truth of seeing-the-Other — a hemorrhaging of contingency, indeed, of *existence*, inaugurated by a spatial and perceptual crisis.

This more complex idea of *fernsicht* has its complement in the experience of *nahsicht* in *Being and Nothingness*'s pendant, *Nausea*. In the novel's famous bench scene, Roquentin records in his diary a revelation that comes to him sitting in a park beside a chestnut tree. The episode occurs after a violent waves of nausea has hit Roquentin on the city tram, a sense of the unbearable closeness of things that seem arbitrary, useless, nameless. He escapes for relief into the city park. Hunched over on the bench, his head bowed between his shoulders, he finds himself staring at the tree's root, suddenly unable to see it *as* a root: something with a particular significance and function, stabilized in a system of references. In the absence of this self-distancing foreknowledge of the thing, the crude sensuality of the root assails him. Yet in the midst of this sensual affront, which reprises the queasy claustrophobia on the tram, Roquentin abruptly understands the source of his nausea: his confrontation with existence, not some empty form or abstract category, but as the "very stuff of things" in their rapturous, superfluous, uncategorizeable nature. This revelation occurs as an absolute loss of distance between him and other "existants," resulting in a confusion of optical and tactile senses. "The chestnut tree pressed itself against my eyes," Roquentin reports.<sup>129</sup> Sounds and smells of the garden invade his body, gainsaying his attempts at order and categorization — not just of things, but of attributes, too. The black of the chestnut root "*resembled* a color but also... a bruise or again a secretion, a yolk — and something else, a smell for example, it melted into a smell of wet earth, of warm moist

wood, into a black smell spread like varnish over that sinewy wood, into a taste of sweet, pulped fiber.”<sup>130</sup> Each attempt to “think” an existence, to name and thereby restrain it, was met by a rich confusion of qualities that was beneath all explanation.

“Existence,” as Robert Harrison summarizes, “transcends conceptualization. It is absurd, contingent, without foundation or reason, and ultimately unjustified.”<sup>131</sup> Roquentin describes this unjustified nature as a condition of being “in the way” — the English translation of the original French *de trop*, or “in excess.” In his “horrible ecstasy,” the absurdity of a world so excessively beyond use or necessity, so thoroughgoingly *contingent*, extends finally to Roquentin himself.<sup>132</sup> The narrator is quite literally “beside himself”: he reaches *ek-statis*. But he is not thereby reduced to some algebraic zero. As Sergei Eisenstein observed, “[t]o be beside oneself is not ‘to go into nothing.’ To be beside oneself is unavoidably also to transition into something else, to something different in quality, to something opposite to what preceded it.”<sup>133</sup> If that “something opposite” is not precisely the Other, it is a distancing that echoes Sartre’s observations from *Being and Nothingness*: a state, you could say, of neighboring. This neighboring is defined *against* merging or unity; it is a neighboring of being beside oneself in order to come into being. It is, in short, a kind of revolutionary *voisinage* in de Rougemont’s sense of the word.

Giacometti’s crisis of miniaturization — inexorable and fatal, or simply an issue for organizers of a pavilion, trying to add a little culture to the industrial pageant — must be conceived within this relation: not as merely the sculpting of distance, but the sculpting of distance between two bodies, one that is perceiving, and another that is representing. The capacity of this distance to add or frustrate knowledge of that body and formulate or distort its image is, in a very basic political sense, incomplete and insufficient. “There is always and in all

ages a feeling of insufficient congruence between public life and real life,” wrote Robert Musil in his 1921 essay “‘The Nation’ as Ideal and as Reality.” “But can anything at all in public events be the true expression of real life? Am I then, as an individual, that which I do, or am I a compromise between unarticulated energies in me and transforming external forms ready to be realized? In relationship to the whole, this little difference gains a thousandfold in significance.”<sup>134</sup> A nation, like a race, is only manifested through individuals — it is present, says Musil, in the way rain is present when drops fall from the sky — and thus the question of the individual self-determination or figuration carries through to the complexion and will of a state.

The isomorphism of depictions of the body and the body politic is therefore not a contrivance; it is, in certain cases, an inevitability. What are those cases? I have tried to argue here that the construction of Swiss identity is not just founded in ideology; it is built on myth. That myth is the complex one of the Alps, whose paradoxes align with the spatial and epistemological breaches of Giacometti’s miniature sculpture. But myth is not always something to be discredited or dispelled. In times of crisis, nations will reach for it to shore up their defenses, spiritual and otherwise. Artists will turn to it, too, for a myth is something an artist can work with. They recast and revise it, or whittle it down into an immensity, a mythic transformation if there ever was one. Fortified with an alloy of myth and practice, the spectacle that surrounded him that spring in 1939, Giacometti’s courtyard experiment generated the experience of scale in the Alps. His head produced a crowd image of Switzerland as Denis de Rougemont would have had it: an image of relations, or an image as relation — a tiny,

monumental head for a country that needed no obelisk to point to its center, already occupied by innumerable peaks piercing the sky.

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<sup>1</sup> Giacometti's dimensions, based on a sketch included in a draft of a letter to Bruno, appear to have been exacting: 0.8 meters square for the plinth, 1.24 x 2 meters for the base. FAAG 2003-3641.

<sup>2</sup> Felix Baumann and Roland Frischknecht, *Bruno Giacometti Erinnert Sich: Gespräche Mit Felix Baumann* (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess AG, 2009), pp. 45–46.

<sup>3</sup> Most agree, nonetheless, that it began sometime in the late 1930s. The great outlier to this is André Thirion, whose acerbic description of Giacometti — a shy, anxious sycophant concerned above all with escaping the judgment of the others, even to the point of contradicting himself (a description hard to square with all other accounts of Giacometti as famously argumentative and charismatic) — also recounts that Giacometti “brought along his minuscule sculptures” to his first meetings with the Surrealists, before stumbling upon the success of his objects of symbolic functioning. It's easy to discredit Thirion's story, but harder to explain its invention, since the stories of Giacometti's pocket sculpture all date from the postwar period. André Thirion, *Révolutionnaires sans révolution* (Paris: Laffont, 1972), p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> Alberto Giacometti, “Entretien avec Jean Clay” (1963), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 315. Giacometti's other narration of the miniaturization, as will be discussed in the following chapter, dates the origin to his 1937 attempt to depict his lover, Isabelle Delmer (later Rawsthorne), as she appeared in the distance on the Boulevard Saint-Michel.

<sup>5</sup> Silvio Berthoud's recollections of his uncle's wartime technique echo Giacometti's: Silvio would leave off modeling for Giacometti in the evening, and by morning, would find his likeness drastically reduced — by just how much, however, is never stated. Again, this description came long after he observed Giacometti as a child. Silvio Berthoud, “Some Personal Memories,” in *Alberto Giacometti, 1901-1966* (Washington, D.C.: Hirschorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1988), p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Guggenheim's account, despite appearing regularly in Giacometti literature, is singularly unhelpful for these dating problems, since the disparagement is equally strange as a description of the volumetric, textured busts of Diego and Rita as it is for the miniatures. François Stahly, “Der Bildhauer Alberto Giacometti,” *Werk XXXVII*, no. 6 (June 1950): 182.

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<sup>7</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *La Force de l'âge* (Paris: Gallimard, Collections Folio, 1960), p. 631.

<sup>8</sup> The “uncanny valley” was coined by the roboticist Masahiro Mori in 1970 to refer to that precipitous dip in psychological comfort that occurs around robots that are *almost*, but not quite, convincingly human. By analogy, the progression at hand refers not simply to a change in the size of the sculpture from, say, the monument to the amulet, but to the relation of the viewer to these sculptures — from bodily immersion to bodily intimacy, or, not unrelatedly, from optical to tactile impressions. The “uncanny valley” of diminution would therefore refer to that point on the continuum toward the body’s integration of the sculptural object where it suddenly marks off its distance or foreignness. Masahiro Mori, “The Uncanny Valley,” *Energy* Vol. 4, no 7 (1970): 33–35.

<sup>9</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, op. cit., p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> Stahly reports Giacometti making a similar claim. Said Giacometti, “I try to give the head the right size, the actual size as it appears to a person when he wants to see the head with complete visibility. Our eye can see things whole only on a small scale. As soon as we approach things closer, exaggerations and distortions in perspective set in which destroy the impression of the whole. But in sculpture everything depends on the impression of the whole.” Qtd. in Hohl, *Giacometti: A Biography in Pictures*, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>11</sup> Nadia Schneider, “Between Crisis and Wonderment. An Introduction to the Theme of Crisis in the Work of Alberto Giacometti,” in *Alberto Giacometti: Retrospective* (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2009), p. 66; Thierry Dufrière, *Giacometti: Les Dimensions de la réalité* (Geneva: Skira, 1994), pp. 113–14. At the extreme, Ulf Kuster claims that Giacometti’s miniatures “represent figures at precisely the size determined by the distance between the figure and Giacometti’s eyes.” Ulf Kuster, “Thoughts on the Exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler,” *Giacometti*, Ernst Beyeler, Ulf Kuster, and Véronique Wiesinger, eds. (Basel: Beyeler Museum AG/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> Thierry Dufrière, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>13</sup> Reinhold Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti*, trans. H.-Ch. Tauxe and Eric Scher (Lausanne: La Guilde du livre et Clairefontaine, 1971), p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “In Quest of the Absolute,” in *Essays in Aesthetics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1963), p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Rosalind Krauss describes this as a largely American problem, due to the delayed arrival stateside of the pertinent theory (namely, Merleau-Ponty, whose *Phenomenology of Perception* was only translated into English in the early 60s) and the insistence of an existentialist reading in which “Sartre’s man-in-a-situation was commonly understood to be moral, not perceptual man.” My survey of the Giacometti literature, however, seems to indicate that the partial or incomplete of Sartre’s passage is rather more global. Rosalind Krauss, “Richard Serra, a Translation,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>16</sup> Sartre, op. cit., p. 90. Sartre repeats this observation in an essay on Giacometti’s painting (four women at the Sphinx, his preferred brothel, were depicted “as he saw them — *from a distance*”), where he notes that the “solitudes” enforced by this unsurpassable distance do not imply misanthropy or solipsism: “He is distant, of course, but man creates distance while distance has no meaning outside

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human space. Distance separates Hero from Leander and Marathon from Athens but not one pebble from another.” Sartre, “The Paintings of Giacometti” (1954), in *Essays in Aesthetics*, *ibid.*, p. 47. . See also Simone de Beauvoir, *The Prime of Life* (World Publishing: Cleveland, 1962), p. 387–88: “Giacometti’s standpoint came close to that of phenomenology because he wanted to sculpt a face in a concrete situation, its existence for others, from a distance; and in so doing he transcended the errors of both subjective idealism and false objectivity.”

<sup>17</sup> Roger Chartier, “The World as Representation (1989),” in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, edited by Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Postwar French Thought, Vol. 1. (New York: The New Press, 1995), pp. 544–58.

<sup>18</sup> Wolfgang Streeck’s *How Will Capitalism End?* (Verso, 2016) may be considered the most recent of these call-to-arms, a position that Jürgen Habermas has publicly denounced as a nostalgic wish to retreat into “national fortresses.” Streeck, in turn, criticizes Habermas for a “political universalism” patterned on the universalism of capital.

<sup>19</sup> Riccarda Torriani, “The Dynamics of National Identity: A Comparison of the Swiss National Exhibitions of 1939 and 1964,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 4 (2002): 561. The impressive section of statistics in the Landi’s *Livre d’or* recorded that on the highest day of attendance, 163,567 people visited the Landi, while the daily average of ticket sales was 60,384. The exhibition closed its doors for three days at the start of the war. Armin Meili and Martin Hürlimann, eds., *Die Schweiz Im Spiegel Der Landesausstellung 1939/La Suisse Vue a Travers L’exposition Natonale 1939/La Svizzera Vista Attraverso L’espoisizone Nazionale 1939/La Svizzra a Travers L’exposiziun Nazuinala 1939* (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1940).

<sup>20</sup> “Modetheater an der Schweizerischen Landesausstellung Zürich 1939,” *Das Werk* 28 (1941): 88.

<sup>21</sup> As Sulieman notes, the 1938 exhibition was the same in which *Le Figaro*, which only seven years previous had demanded the closure of *L’Age d’Or*, wrote that Surrealism “defies the years’ financial crises and political crises” and “takes us far away from the realities of the day” (not exactly,” quips Sulieman, “what the Surrealists had in mind when they proclaimed, in the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* and of *SASDLR*, that they wanted to ‘do away with reality.’”) Susan Suleiman, “Between the Street and the Salon: The Dilemma of Surrealist Politics in the 1930s,” *Visual Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 48.

<sup>22</sup> “Leur aspect exotique évoque des colonies, mais... si nous avons des colons suisses un peu partout, où sont nos colonies? A-t-on édifié ces huttes pointues pour rappeler nos ancêtres lacustres? Au fait, ce sont des ruches, faites pour abriter les trésors d’une industrielle activité.” Thérèse de Chambrier, “Le Pavillon de La Mode,” in *Die Schweiz Im Spiegel Der Landesausstellung 1939/La Suisse Vue a Travers L’exposition Natonale 1939/La Svizzera Vista Attraverso L’espoisizone Nazionale 1939/La Svizzra a Travers L’exposiziun Nazuinala 1939*, edited by Armin Meili and Martin Hürlimann (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1940), p. 143.

<sup>23</sup> Initially inscribed at the Delphic temple — the meaning understood variously to mean “check yourself” or “discover your authentic essence” — the phrase was also as invoked by Plato twice, first in Phaedrus and then Philebus, by way of brushing aside a discussion: one must first know oneself before doing on to discuss other things (the implication being that discussing such heady topics without first being possessed of self-knowledge is a sure way to speak idiocies). The quote was later taken up by

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Hobbes in the Leviathan, in terms similar to Rousseau's as discussed below, who argued that by looking inwards at our own thoughts and emotions, we might come to a better understanding of others.

<sup>24</sup> For Rousseau's relationship to Plato's "know thyself," see James Miller, "Preface," Henri Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), pp. xi–xii.

<sup>25</sup> Rousseau, *ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Torriani, *op. cit.*, 561.

<sup>27</sup> "Il n'est guère nécessaire de rappeler combien il était important pour nous, Suisses de Suisse, d'être placés en face d'un tableau synoptique de notre civilisation spirituelle et matérielle ; la plupart des Confédérés étaient incapables, hier encore, de se faire une idée exacte de ce puissant réservoir de valeurs et d'énergie constitué tout au long des siècles sur la terre étroitement limitée de notre patrie..." Eugène Rimli, "L'Exposition nationale - Image vivante de la collaboration, de l'entente et de l'union suisses," *Le Livre d'Or de l'Exposition nationale 1939* (Zurich, Verkehrs-verlag S.A), p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> "Die Künstler haben begriffen, dass es darauf ankam, ideeninhalt oder menschliche Situationen, die jedermann angehen, auf eindringliche Art mit besten künstlerischen Mitteln auszusprechen. Kunst wird erst wieder als öffentliche Angelegenheit des Volkes empfunden werden, wenn sie sich - wie an der Landesausstellung - bemüht, geistigen Bedürfnissen der Allgemeinheit Form zu geben." Peter Meyer, *Das Werk*, n. 11 (1939): 322.

<sup>29</sup> The Landi was not, of course, alone in privileging the mural for its aesthetic and propagandic force, nor in calling upon prominent artists with avant-garde affiliations —Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, and Fernand Léger to name only a few — to produce murals for international expositions. Cf. Romy Golan, *Muralnomad: The Paradox of Wall Painting, Europe 1927-1957* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Stanislaus von Moos, "Hans Erni and the Streamline Decade," trans. Alice Kennington, *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 19 (1993): 128.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148. On mass culture's appropriation of montage's dialectics, see Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, translated by Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art," *Artforum*, vol. 21, no. 1 (September 1983): 43–56.

<sup>32</sup> A series of nine postcards titled "Das Ober-Engadin" (c. 1903) is in the private collection of Marco Giacometti in Stampa. It's unclear whether and where they may have been distributed, but the sizable number of postcards in the collection and completion of each set suggests that they may never have actually been marketed.

<sup>33</sup> Herbert Matter, *Herbert Matter FotoGrafiker. Sehformen der Zeit. Das Werk der zwanziger und dreissiger Jahre*, ex. cat. (Baden: Lars Müller, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> Judith Schueler, *Materialising Identity: The Co-Construction of the Gotthard Railway and Swiss National Identity* (Amsterdam: Askant, 2008).

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<sup>35</sup> General Guisan chose a “middle path” between those advisors, overwhelming German-speaking, who advocated a “pure redoubt” position, wherein no attempt would be made to secure borders or protect the citizenry, so that the entirety of the Swiss forces and arms could be concentrated in the Alpine fortifications, and a largely Francophone position that advocated defense, if not at the border, at least at the Linth-Zurich “fallback line.” The ethical superior status of this second position vis-à-vis the responsibility of the military to the civilian population (many of whom nonetheless supported the Redoubt, since it was not immediately apparent to many Swiss that only military would be sheltered within the fortified center of the territory) is nevertheless less clear than it may appear: a “scorched Earth” policy would spare Switzerland from following France in contributing its industry to the Axis powers. See Georges-André Chevallaz, *The Challenge of Neutrality: Diplomacy and the Defense of Switzerland*, trans. Harvey Fergusson II (New York: Lexington Books, 2001), pp. 67–79 and Angelo M. Codevilla, *Between the Alps and a Hard Place: Switzerland in World War II and the Rewriting of History* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2000), pp. 57–68.

<sup>36</sup> General Henri Guisan, *Rapport du Général Guisan à l'Assemblée Fédérale sur le service actif 1939–1945* (Bern, 1946), p. 39.

<sup>37</sup> “Nulle puissance avide d'hégémonie ne s'en emparera tant qu'un Suisse vivra. Le passage doit rester ouvert pour tous les peuples de l'Europe. Lorsque la Suisse combat pour ses montagnes, il combat en même temps pour la liberté de l'Europe - - et cela jusqu'à nos jours jusqu'à demain et après demain.” Max E. Liehburg, “Le Mystère Suisse,” trans. into the French by Denis de Rougemont. *Esprit* 6, no. 61 (October 1937): 15.

<sup>38</sup> To this day, the inhabitants of Giacometti's own Val Bregaglia still refer to themselves as a “razza,” and bemoan the influx of “stranieri” who are diluting the valley's blood.

<sup>39</sup> For this schism between francophone and germanophone calls to unity, see Codevilla, op. cit., and Chevallaz, op. cit., as well as Werner Rings, *La Suisse et La Guerre, 1933–1945 : La Menace, L'ébranlement, L'affirmation D'un Petit Etat*, translated by Charles Oser (Lausanne: Editions Ex Libris, 1975).

<sup>40</sup> Liehburg, op. cit., 11.

<sup>41</sup> Fredrick Engels, “The Peasant Question in France and Germany,” in *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Published, 1970), p. 74.

<sup>42</sup> As André Masson reported to James Lord, François Lachenal remarked, during a party at Lacan's house in 1946, that Giacometti was a Frenchman — except during the war. Giacometti was not amused. James Lord, “Notebook 19,” James Lord Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. GEN MSS 790 Box 24, Folder 273. Accessed August 6, 2015.

The challenge of living in the mountains produced a civic-minded Swiss, eager to help his fellow citizen in the event of an avalanche, a flash flood, the loss of livestock. Liehburg's elevation of the mountain peasant into “nature's primitive democrats” was the outgrowth of an international cult in mountain veneration initiated in the eighteenth century, and propagated by Albrecht von Haller's widely celebrated 1732 epic poem *Die Alpen*, and made a central theme of Helvetic liberty in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 480.

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<sup>43</sup> François Walter, “La Montagne Des Suisses. Invention et Usage D’une Représentation Paysagère (XVIIIe-XXe Siècle),” *Études Rurales*, no. 121/124 (1991): 99. What Gonzague de Reynold’s statement finesses is that, while the Alps predominated geographically in Switzerland, the great majority of its population was precisely *not* mountain people, but city dwellers, who were never quite the austere or virtuous anti-cosmonauts that Rousseau idealized.

<sup>44</sup> These characteristics are the foundation of the Swiss *Sonderfall*, or exceptionality. In his comparative sociological history, Barber takes the Graubünden as a “Switzerland in miniature” whose constitution and practices provide a foil to Anglo-American theorizations of freedom (as autonomy from the state) and democracy (as a check on state powers). In Switzerland, by contrast, freedom is understandable only within a communal context, and democracy is organized to support the spirit of localism rather than centralization, while emphasizing quality of participation over equality. See Benjamin R. Barber, *The Death of Communal Liberty: A History of Freedom in a Swiss Mountain Canton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 94-100.

<sup>45</sup> Oliver Zimmer, *A Contested Nation: History, Memory and Nationalism in Switzerland, 1761–1891* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) , p. 245.

<sup>46</sup> Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1984), p. 175.

<sup>47</sup> Barber, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>48</sup> This internalization, as will be discussed below, has long been the function of the arts. In 1890, the Symbolist painter and architect Albert Trachsel published a pamphlet titled “Quelques mots sur l’art en Suisse,” in which he claimed that the linguistic difference was only a superficial objection to Swiss identity, which was bound by far greater forces: those of Republicanism, and those of the Alps. If there is no national style in Swiss art, Trachsel argues, it is in part because politics have been unstable and wealth slow to acquire, and in part because the Swiss artists have too often followed foreign models. Instead, he suggests, the Swiss should study the artistic spirit of the past, and the morals and traditions of the Swiss people. This will naturally lead the artist, reasons Trachsel, to be attentive to the “harmonious correlation between the lines, forms, color, movements, attitudes, rhythms of the Soul and the Sculpture of the man of the mountains, and the lines, attitudes, forms, color, movements, rhythms of the mountain itself.” The Swiss man and Swiss mountains here at last converge — in style, in a formal character that merges their faces into one. Albert Trachsel, “Quelques mots sur l’art en Suisse” (Lausanne: Couchoud, 1890), p. 92.

<sup>49</sup> Philipp Etter, *Reden an Das Schweizervolk: Gahalten Im Jahre 1939* (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1939), pp. 12–13.

<sup>50</sup> Les groupes *Esprit* de Suisse, “Le Problème Suisse: Personne et Fédéralisme, Avertissement” *Esprit* 6, no. 61 (October 1937): p. 3. Plans for this issue trace back at least a year further. The July issue of 1936 of *Esprit* reports that there will be a meeting of “nos groupes suisses” in a “camp de vacances” on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of July. Philip Müller of Neuchâtel is named the point person. *Esprit*, n. 46 (1 July 1936).

<sup>51</sup> Several outright accused Ramuz of treachery, including E. Corrode in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* on 13 November 1939 and Fritz Ernst in the *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* in December 1939. It is significant that the strongest reactions came from German-speaking Switzerland where, as explained above, the desire to demonstrate unity was linked to the imperative to distinguish themselves from the German

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speakers to the North. For a thorough analysis of Ramuz's contribution and the subsequent reactions in the press, see Félicie Reymond, "Ramuz, Esprit et La Défense Spirituelle de La Suisse," in *19-39: La Suisse Romande Entre les Deux Guerres* (Lausanne: Payot, 1986), pp. 165–175.

Giacometti reports having befriended Ramuz in the summer of 1936 (presumably during one of Ramuz's trips to Paris) in a letter to his mother, where he suggests that Ramuz might come visit them in Switzerland. Although the two men likely crossed paths during the war years in Switzerland, this remains the only evidence of their acquaintance. July 20, 1936, SIK-Isea, HNA 274.A.2.1.138.

<sup>52</sup> Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz, "Lettre," *Esprit* 6, no. 61 (October 1937): 6.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Denis de Rougemont, "Neutralité oblige," *Esprit* 6, no. 61 (October 1937): 23.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>56</sup> For an analysis of this view in light of de Rougemont's postwar literary writings and advocacy of the "European idea," see Edward Ousselin, "Denis de Rougemont and the Literary Construction of Europe," *Dalhousie French Studies* 76 (2006): 73–84.

<sup>57</sup> de Rougemont, *op. cit.*, p. 27

<sup>58</sup> "Notre unité existe, mais sur un plan à la fois plus élevé et plus vaste que celui de «l'unification» à la mode jacobine ou classique. C'est l'unité originelle, et peut-être future et finale, des diversités de l'Europe, symbolisées par nos trois langues, nos deux religions, nos vingt-cinq républiques." *Ibid.*, 29

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>61</sup> De Rougemont's postwar writings are preoccupied with the status of the European idea, and his work as a committed voice for European federalism included founding both the Centre Européen de Culture in Geneva in 1950 and the Institut Universitaire d'Etudes Européens in 1963.

<sup>62</sup> Denis de Rougemont, "Qu'est-ce que la Ligue Gotthard?" (Neuchâtel: Editions de la Baconnerie, 1940).

<sup>63</sup> "Des petits jardins inaccessibles, îlots de rêve, interrompaient parfois la brillante réalité des produits de l'industrie. Des fleurs fragiles, des plantes rares, groupées avec un art subtil, rappelaient avec une discrète insistance, que la nature est l'inspiratrice de toute beauté. [...] Composés avec amour, ces jardins furent pari les plus charmantes trouvailles des architectes et des jardiniers décorateurs." De Chambrier, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Harbinson, *The Built, The Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable: In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> This is according to Bruno. In a letter to his mother dated June 25, 1938, Giacometti described his plans to visit Eggender in Zurich on the way to Maloja. A subsequent letter dated the day after Christmas,

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asking his mother to relay the information that Giacometti was “thinking about the statue but for the moment nothing precise” indicates the project for the facade had already been rejected by the late fall. SIK-Isea, HNA 247.A.2.1.167; HNA 247.A.2.1.171.

<sup>66</sup> This proposition appears in a notebook at the FAAG alongside sketches of a geometric form that appears to project from the facade, refracting its single surface into a jumble of canted planes — seemingly a second idea that never made it to Egender and Bruno’s desks, but played off Giacometti’s more recent faceted heads rather than his decorative projects.

<sup>67</sup> Sasha dolls were highly individualized, and initially produced with a “faceless” coffee-colored, hard vinyl skin (only later was a darker and then a lighter complexion added). Serious, unsmiling figures, Morgenthaler designed them for the postwar children who could not engage in imaginative play with the inflexible rictus of conventional dolls. “No grotesque caricature can awaken a child’s true feelings,” explained Morgenthaler. “A piece of wood, barely carved, is far superior to a conventional doll with an exaggerated smile.” Anne Votaw, Ann Louise Chandler and Susanne E. Lewis, *Sasha Dolls: The History* (Reverie Publishing Company, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> A variation of this account appears in Felix Baumann and Roland Frischknecht, *Bruno Giacometti Erinnert Sich: Gespräche Mit Felix Baumann* (Zürich: Scheidegger & Spiess AG, 2009), pp. 45–46.

<sup>69</sup> Diego expedited *Cube* to Zurich from Paris before the opening of the Landi, according to a letter written to their mother by Diego, dated May 9, 1939, in which he states, clearly with some relief, that at least “not all is lost and the affair is over with.” SIK Isea 274.A.2.2.87

<sup>70</sup> A facsimile of this letter is held at the FAAG along with a selection of family correspondence from the bequest of Bruno Giacometti in the Alberto Giacometti-Stiftung, now housed in Zürich at the SIK-Isea. The SIK-Isea, however, has no such letter in its collection. This may indicate that the letter was misplaced or otherwise removed from the collection during the migration of the correspondence to the SIK-Isea.

<sup>71</sup> Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 27.

<sup>72</sup> Giacometti’s hesitation on the word is likely a trace of linguistic, not conceptual, uncertainty: the letter to his family, which primarily addresses his francophone brother-in-law Francis Berthoud, was written in French, unlike the Italian he typically used in correspondence with the rest of his family.

<sup>73</sup> The distinction is, in fact, written into the history of telescopic representation in art. The transition of the telescope, from a theoretical enhancement of perception that would render the whole world visible, to a real device that ultimately demonstrated the incommensurability of human perception with all there is to see, was echoed in the shifting content of “telescopic” landscape roundels over the course of the seventeenth century. While early vistas disclosed great swaths of countryside with clear-eyed exactitude, the roundels that followed the production and diffusion of actual telescopes increasingly depicted landscapes that paralleled the actual experience of looking through a spyglass, emphasizing fore- and middle-grounds, and blurring at the canvas edge, where the telescope lens would have slightly bent or fuzzed the image. By thus depicting the limits of a human field of vision — limits demonstrated, rather than obviated, by real telescopes — these roundels suggested a “movement away from the [hypothetical or figurative telescope’s] postulate of visibility” and toward the description of the world seen through a

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seeing subject. Amy Knight Powell, "Squaring the Circle: The Telescopic View in Early Modern Landscapes," *Art History* Vol. 39, Issue 2 (April 2016): 296.

<sup>74</sup> "Entretien avec Yvon Taillandier" (1952), *Écrits*, p. 176.

<sup>75</sup> "Entretien avec David Sylvester," *Écrits*, eds. Michel Leiris and Jacques Dupin (Paris: Hermann Éditeur, 1990), p. 289. Translation from Bonnefoy, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>76</sup> Bonnefoy, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>77</sup> Carlton Lake, "The Wisdom of Giacometti," *The Atlantic Monthly* September 1965: pp. 117-26.

<sup>78</sup> Hohl, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>79</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962), p. 302.

<sup>80</sup> This frame-within-a-frame also appears in *The Artist's Mother* of the same year, where it seems to have been laid down after much of the painting was already complete. In it, Giacometti has dragged his brush, wet on wet, through his mother's lap to reinforce the frame.

<sup>81</sup> Valerie Fletcher reaches the same conclusion about the order of the apple paintings. See Valerie J. Fletcher, *Alberto Giacometti 1901–1955* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), p. 116.

<sup>82</sup> Comparisons of the two artists are legion, and were the subject of a 2008 exhibition juxtaposing the artists' oeuvres, Felix A. Baumann and Poul Erik Tøiner, eds., *Cézanne and Giacometti: Paths of Doubt* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2008).

<sup>83</sup> The first exhibition at the Musée de l'Orangerie was the context for a set of extended articles on Cézanne in *Le Point*, *Renaissance*, and *L'amour de l'art*, and also coincided with a number of pivotal studies, including John Rewald's Sorbonne dissertation, Lionello Venturi's two-volume catalogue raisonné, and Maurice Raynal's *Cézanne*.

<sup>84</sup> "Entretien avec Yvon Taillander," *Écrits*, p. 174.

<sup>85</sup> Jacques Dupin, "Textes pour un approche," trans. John Ashbery, *Giacometti* (Paris: Maeght Éditeur, 1962), n.p..

<sup>86</sup> Lévi-Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 55.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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<sup>90</sup> An *i* board had been exhibited at the Charles Ratton gallery where, as Hohl suggests, Giacometti may have gleaned the concept for his work. Hohl, op cit., p. 299, fn. 27. The reference to Fra Angelico was first noted by Casimiro di Crescenzo, “‘On Ne Joue Plus,’ 1932, di Alberto Giacometti,” *Venezia Arti: Boletino del dipartimento di storia e critica delle arti dell’univeristà di Venezia* (1992): 137.

<sup>91</sup> André du Bouchet, *Qui n’est pas tourné vers nous* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1972), pp. 21–22.

<sup>92</sup> The image in question, of the village of Gouflé, was published to accompany André Gide’s article on “Architecture nègre,” *Cahiers d’art*, no. 7/8 (1927): 265. See Krauss, “No More Play,” op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>93</sup> One of these sketches shows *Project for a Public Square* beside *Cage*, with the note “*a 3 metri*.” This latter work, in fact, appears to have been executed in multiple scales. While the wooden model now held in the collection of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 49 x 26.5 x 26.5 cm, an image from the VIe Salon des Surindépendants in 1933 shows *cage* seemingly at least two (though perhaps not three) meters tall.

<sup>94</sup> The exception to this is also the sole work to have actually been made at this large scale: the 1932 *Large Figure in a Garden*, commissioned by the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Noailles for their villa in Hyères, which in the drawing appears stippled to represent the burgundy stone that Diego and Alberto used for the work, in contrast to the figure standing neutrally beside it.

<sup>95</sup> The concept of designing something for the Plaza was initially extended to Giacometti in January 1959. Giacometti delayed sending works over the autumn, and ultimately Bunshaft wrote to Pierre Matisse that he was dismayed to find that the sculptor was unable to propose anything acceptable. “Unfortunately, he is great sculptor when he does something for himself — what we could call ‘easel sculpture’ — but without any relation to an architectural edifice.” Had he visited the site as Bunshaft proposed, he believed that Giacometti would have understood better the needs of the space. Alberto Giacometti, “Letter to Gordon Bunshaft (Trans),” January 17, 1959, , Pierre Matisse Gallery Archive, MA 5020 Box 11, Folder 16. Gordon Bunshaft, “Letter to Pierre Matisse (Trans),” July 7, 1960, Pierre Matisse Gallery Archive, MA 5020 Box 11, Folder 16, accessed February 20, 2015.

<sup>96</sup> Bunshaft reported to Lord that he worried that these works would be lost in the space of the plaza, and suggested that Giacometti enlarge them “like Miró.” Giacometti declined, but after his visit to New York in the fall of 1965, reported that he had new ideas. Giacometti died before he could propose them. James Lord Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, GEN MSS 790, Box 27, Folder 309, accessed August 6, 2015.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Brenson, “The Early Work of Alberto Giacometti: 1925–1935.” Phd Dissertation. Johns Hopkins, 1974, p. 149, fn.122.

<sup>98</sup> Hohl defines these two periods as “Cubism and Surrealism, 1925–34” and “postwar figuration, 1946–65”; the intervening years are called simply the “period in-between.” Reinhold Hohl, “What’s All the Fuss About? Giacometti and Twentieth-Century Sculpture,” *Alberto Giacometti, 1901–1966*, ed. Valerie J. Fletcher (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), p. 57–58.

<sup>99</sup> Alberto Giacometti, “Lettre à Pierre Matisse,” *Écrits*, p. 91.

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<sup>100</sup> The latter essay is a response to André Malraux's *La musée imaginaire* (published later in *Les Voix de silence*, the three-volume summa, which postdated Merleau-Ponty's essay), and takes issue in particular with the Malraux's contention that the subjectivism of modern art had led to an atomization of the modern experience of art. Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. and trans. Michael B. Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 88.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 88. For a very circumspect analysis of Merleau-Ponty art criticism and reception, see Alex Potts, "The Phenomenological Turn," in *The Sculptural Imagination*, op. cit., pp. 207–234.

<sup>102</sup> "Cézanne's Doubt," op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>103</sup> "Indirect Language," op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>104</sup> "Cézanne's Doubt," op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>105</sup> Viollet-le-Duc claimed drawing was superior to photography for accurately conveying the topography, since photography "reproduces the illusions to which the eye is liable amid these solitudes where there is nothing to indicate the scale — since points of comparison are wanting." Instead, Viollet-le-Duc appealed to the proto-photographic tool of the camera lucida, adapted to a telescope, an apparatus devised by Henri Révoil called the "teleiconograph" which allowed him to draw at great distances, and with considerable accuracy, the structure of the mountains. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Mont Blanc: A Treatise on its Geodesical and Geological Constitution; its Transformations, and the Ancient and Recent State of Its Glaciers*, trans. B. Bucknall (London: Samson Low, Marston, Searle, & Irvington, 1877), p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> Piz Lunghin, which is located just northeast of the Maloja Pass (the trailhead is walking distance from the Giacomettis' summer house) and rises to about 9100 ft., was formed from the conjunction of African and European tectonic plates, and has been called the "roof of Europe," since its waters flow into the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Black Sea.

<sup>107</sup> Gaston Bachelard describes tendency of certain thinkers to locate the "homography" of forms in the phenomenal world: to seek the grotto in a geode, the mountain in a pebble. That the task of classifying the phenomenal world engages itself in a kind of petrification or crystallization of its subject reveals, Bachelard claims, that this "amplifying game (*jeu amplifiant*) [is] not a simple change of scale, a simple geometrical augmentation of forms. There is, moreover, a sort of communication of substances." The stone in our hand calls up the "faraway hardness" of what rears up on the horizon. In the words of George Sand, "L'échantillon est une sorte de résumé de la masse." Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1948), p. 252.

<sup>108</sup> Denis de Rougemont, *La Suisse, ou, L'histoire d'un peuple heureux* (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 2002), p. 215.

<sup>109</sup> Michel Leiris, *Pierres Pour Un Alberto Giacometti* (Paris: L'Échoppe, 1991), p. 14.

<sup>110</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "Quest for the Absolute," *Essays in Aesthetics*. Translated by Wade Baskin (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1963), p. 83.

<sup>111</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, op. cit., p. 2.

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<sup>112</sup> “Allora forse, per intanto ne ho abbastanza a viaggiare sulla mie teste, su nasi, occhi colli orecchie guance ecc. E è come fare delle ascensione di montagna e così tanto, o più pericolo di perdere il passo, ciò che mi succede più o meno tutti i giorni finché arriverò a conoscere la strada ma non sono ancora lì, le più vanno a finire su dei precipizi si caduta lì senza accorgersene e poi a un bel momento si è già in fondo al burrone e si cerca il modo di uscire più o meno in tatto e così è tutti i giorni e sarà così credo bene per anni almeno lo spero credo che non vorrei più altro fino che vada come voglio. Non si ha nessuna idea come questo lavoro può acchiappare qualch’uno!” Letter dated March 2, 1937. SIK-Isea. HNA 274.A.2.1.141

<sup>113</sup> “We see them in the valley, busy as bees; eagerly studying all the information they can get respecting the altitudes, inquiring for the best guides, consulting the barometer, donning the accoutrements of mountaineers, and getting up in the middle of the night to set off... When they have reached a summit, do they stay here? Do they seem impressed by the spectacle beneath and around them? No: they hurry down again in order to climb some other peak on the morrow.” Viollet-le-Duc, op. cit., 2–3.

<sup>114</sup> Viollet-le-Duc, op. cit., 5. Particularly problematic was the “extreme purity of the air,” which made it hard to distinguish the distance between planes.

<sup>115</sup> Meyer Schapiro, “The Apples of Cézanne: An Essay on the Meaning of Still Life [1968],” In *Modern Art: 19th and 20th Centuries: Selected Papers* (New York: George Brazillier, 2011), p. 27.

<sup>116</sup> Giacometti’s concept of style seems to bear the influence of Riegl’s *Kunstwollen*, though he never uses the term: “A period is characterized by a global attitude vis-à-vis reality,” he explains to Jean Clay. By way of elaboration, he recounts being so moved by an Egyptian bust he saw in Florence that he traveled to Rome with the express purpose of seeing more. Only later did he understand that the first bust was a rather mediocre example, and yet, it partook of the masterpieces, having been inscribed with the “global attitude of Egypt regarding reality” “Entretien avec Jean Clay” (1963), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>117</sup> Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. Rolf Winkes, *Archaeologica* 36 (Rome: Bretschneider, 1985), p. 25.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>120</sup> Antonia Lant, “Haptical Cinema,” *October*, Vol. 74 (Autumn, 1995): 51.

<sup>121</sup> Carl Burckhardt, *Rodin und das plastische Problem* (Basel: Benno Schwabe, 1921), pp. 41-47. Carlo Huber first noted the importance of this text for Giacometti. Carlo Huber, *Alberto Giacometti: Aus der Reihe: Monographien Große Schweizer Künstler* (Lausanne: Edition Rencontre, 1970).

<sup>122</sup> Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>123</sup> Herbert Read, *The Art of Sculpture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), p. ix.

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<sup>124</sup> See, in particular, Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977) and Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 2-7, 18–23.

<sup>125</sup> Potts, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 167.

<sup>126</sup> In fact, this particular frame appears several times in the “How-To’s,” including “How to Look” and “How to Look at an Artist.”

<sup>127</sup> The caption appears on the page “How to Look at Space,” which is introduced with the following: “All through history a man’s idea of what was ‘real’ depended largely on how he felt and what he thought about space. Each age developed its own ways of describing space (and time). The history of modern art is a history of modern space (time) too.” Ad Reinhardt, “How to Look at Art,” *Art & Architecture* (January 1947): 23.

<sup>128</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* (1943), translated by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956), p. 342.

<sup>129</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (1938), translated by Robert Baldick (New York: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 183.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>131</sup> Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 145.

<sup>132</sup> The choice of the word “ecstasy” to describe this state no doubt references Heidegger’s concept of ecstatic temporality, the coming-into-being of man or *Dasein* in the being-outside-oneself of anticipating the future. In short, the “for-the-sake-of” that future anticipation gives us is where we come into being, even though the future is precisely where we are not (that it, is ek-static). Sartre, *Nausea*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>133</sup> Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature*, trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 27.

<sup>134</sup> Robert Musil, *Precision and Soul*, translated by Burton Pike and David S. Luft (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 112.

## CHAPTER 3

### BODY AND BOUNDARY

There were periods of groping when sculptors used the body; there are those which fill the vacuity, left by the absence of man, with nothingness. At such times one says: night has come.

— Anatole Jakovsky<sup>1</sup>

“Not only is she small, this woman, but she is damaged, not only is she small, but she claims to resemble someone: what’s more, for me, it’s a portrait.” These are the words that Giacometti reserves for his miniatures in 1963, tendering one in his palm to a visitor who asks, with sterling innocence, “Who is it? And why is she so little?” An involuntary subtractive impulse, Giacometti replies (he’s said it before). But when pressed this time, he offers an explanation of his sculptures’ miniaturization after the fact: that he had intended to reproduce the vision he’d seen one night in 1937 of his girlfriend, standing some distance away from him on the Boulevard Saint-Michel.<sup>2</sup> The woman in question was Isabel Nicolas, formerly Rawsthorne, formerly Delmer, an English artist and model whom Giacometti had met several years earlier, and who was one of the few to enter Giacometti’s limited pantheon of portraits in his crisis years (Fig. 3.1). Giacometti and Nicolas’s affair lasted through the war. Nicolas, then married to the

journalist Sefton Delmer, had returned to England; Giacometti was effectively marooned in Switzerland after departing for Geneva on December 31, 1941, the final day before his exit visa expired. Soon after the pair reunited at last in Paris in the fall on 1945, their romance ended. So did the fervid production of Giacometti's miniatures.

But lest this serve as too neat an explanation for Giacometti's mini-mania — as a craven fixation on, or a devotional rite for, his faraway lover — one should note that it complicates the miniatures' legacy considerably.<sup>3</sup> To understand his miniatures as the first fumbblings of Giacometti's phenomenological realism, as explored in the previous chapter, means imagining that their scale emerges in a present-tense scenario, as a live inscription of his perception of a person-plus-surrounding-space. Yet Giacometti's understanding in 1963 that the miniature was a portrait, or a specific attempt at resemblance (and of his lover, at that), implies that it was not simply a distillation of perception; rather, it was a particularly charged, particularly *particular* perception. And in this case, it isn't, strictly speaking, a perception at all, but rather a memory of one. In sum, the miniature in his palm is not "man as he is seen," but rather *a* woman as she *was* seen.

The distance at which Giacometti's miniatures appear thus recalls a physical as well as temporal remove. It is a remoteness that Rosalind Krauss, reflecting on another set of miniature constructions by the postwar sculptor Joel Shapiro, identified as the remoteness of memory.<sup>4</sup> Sartre describes this remove as the "coefficient of depth," the specific yet unquantifiable distance at which objects or people, when we summon them up in our imagination, appear "from us" — although "we" are conspicuously absent from this virtual space of appearance. The size of the imaged object or person is therefore not known through comparison with our body or any other object; instead, it "carries its smallness internally."<sup>5</sup> Sartre is writing about what he calls "irreal

objects,” the image of things as they surface in our mind. Giacometti’s miniatures, on the other hand, appear *in the room* with us — and it’s this co-presence that makes them something more than just the transcription of what it was to see something or someone. “Shapiro’s houses seem to be in perpetual retreat,” Krauss observed, “because they are simultaneously present within our space *and* infected by memory. It is this that identifies them as psychologized objects.”<sup>6</sup> If one is to conduct an etiology of Giacometti’s miniatures, it must therefore include — in addition to the analysis of display in the previous chapter — this psychologized aspect.

This aspect, to be sure, determines a predominant strain of Giacometti scholarship. These are the psychoanalytic interpretations of his sculpture, mediated largely through his relationships to women. They include Giacometti’s pathologized reverence for his mother; his suspected infertility, following a severe case of the mumps as a teenager, and even more conjectural impotence, apparently accounting for his interest in prostitutes and his frustrated affair with Rawsthorne; his vexed relations with his “frigid” wife, Annette Giacometti; and an injury sustained in 1938, when an American woman lost control of her car and pinned Giacometti to the base of a monument at the center of the Place des Pyramides, crushing his foot — symbolically deputized for another, more sensitive appendage — and leaving him with a lifelong limp. James Lord’s widely read biography of Giacometti perseverated on these relationships, while Yves Bonnefoy’s monograph likewise draws on them as interpretive keys to the oeuvre, from its early fixation on erotic violence to the hieratic, “untouchable” postwar female figures and the walking men, hobbled by the clotted bronze of their exaggerated feet.<sup>7</sup> These reports on Giacometti’s fraught relationship to his sexuality have provided the sole through-line for his oeuvre, offering a way to bind the sadism and eroticism in many of his Surrealist works to the rigidly gendered

formal tropes of his postwar sculpture. But they do so at the cost of shackling their arguments to the prurient details of Giacometti's biography.

In the interest of avoiding this gully of psychoanalytic interpretations, this chapter will understand the “psychological object” of Giacometti's miniatures on a larger scale. As with many political analyses in the build-up to WWII, that psychological object is no less than fascism itself as both an ambient context and forceful model of the individual and collective body, whose relation to Giacometti's miniatures has gone largely unrecognized.<sup>8</sup> But it will be the psychology of fascism understood, not through sado-masochistic tendencies, but rather through its relation to desire. In her trailblazing study of the intellectual and literary grounds of French fascism, *Reproductions of Banality*, Alice Kaplan argues that a narrow analysis of fascism's “evil-fathers” has obscured its oceanic, mother-bound dimensions. Fascism differentiates itself from totalitarianism through its appeal to desire: strategically, in its mobilization of that class defined *by* its desire, the petty bourgeoisie, and aesthetically, in spectacles and rhetoric that offer the masses fantasies of connection and intimacy, both with the leader of the fascist state and with a collective body.<sup>9</sup> The fascist ideal seduces by giving individuals a sense of limitlessness — an oceanic dissolution of boundaries. The primary mechanism of this dissolution is modern technology, especially film and the loudspeaker or radio, which diffuse the fascist subject far beyond its corporeal limits by replicating its representations (Fig. 3.2). That replication is, in turn, bound up in dynamics of destruction through consumption: a rhetoric of “palingenetic ultra-nationalism,” to use Roger Griffin's term, from *palin* (again, or anew) and *genesis* (birth or creation), or a rebirth of the nation through its destruction.<sup>10</sup>

These dynamics echo the palingenetic drive of the avant-garde. In particular, they recall Surrealism's bid to "win the energies of intoxication for the revolution," in the words of Walter Benjamin, by mobilizing a collective unconscious to accomplish the "dialectical annihilation" of the present order.<sup>11</sup> Beating the fascists at their own game was a well-articulated anti-reactionary vocation in the interwar years.<sup>12</sup> But in the late 1930s, tactical similarities between fascism and Surrealism became an open source of contention and, ultimately, programmatic failure. After all, it was the evocation of "surfascism" that put a swift end to the brief reconciliation of André Breton and Georges Bataille in the revolutionary collective *Contre-Attaque*.<sup>13</sup> And it was similarly on the grounds of its "totalitarian thought" that Sartre dismissed Bataille's *Inner Experience* in his cutting review of the book.<sup>14</sup> Yet even before these boiling points, Hal Foster notes, Surrealism had assumed the form of the "critical double of fascism, which it anticipates, partially collaborates with, mostly contests."<sup>15</sup> Both fascism and Surrealism exploited the uncanny — fascism, in order to muster atavistic tendencies and funnel psychic registers into a passionate politics, and Surrealism, to pierce the status quo with shards of the past and channel their irruptive energy into individual and collective liberation.<sup>16</sup>

Although these mobilizations of the collective unconscious were directed to different ends, fascism and Surrealism nevertheless remained connected on a deeper register: one that relied on an erotically-charged transgression of boundaries. Surrealism and fascism sought to blur the spatio-psychological categories of interior and exterior, or unconscious life and daily reality.<sup>17</sup> In Surrealism, these spaces are gendered. Not only does Surrealism decline to disrupt this gendering, it *depends* on the erotic transgressions and regressions of this gendered interplay for its grist. Kaplan's study of fascist aesthetics in France makes a similar argument. She writes,

What ideology could make it clearer than fascism does that people have a sexual, as well as material, interest in their life? The anger and excitement with which political issues are debated is not merely because of abstract commitments to liberty or social justice: when people discuss politics, they are discussing their ability to manipulate the world that houses them, to make intimate a gigantic “outside.” We could describe such feelings in terms of connection, of possession, of power: all eminently erotic ones, as “old” as our infantile grasping and sucking at life.<sup>18</sup>

Fascism is where politics shows itself to be most clearly about erotics. Foster’s notion of the “critical double” holds up here, too. In Surrealism, he argues, objects issuing from feminized space, or that are themselves objectifications of the hysterical/convulsive feminine subject, disrupt or confuse the masculine subject who interacts with them, and this contagious convulsiveness reinforces the blur of socio-spatial categories. In fascism, by contrast, the desire to merge with the maternal fascist body feeds a mania for domination — even as that domination is ambiguously experienced as occurring over oneself.

Disintegrating boundaries also characterize the problem that fascism poses to historians. Kaplan laments that it is near impossible to diagnose “when fascism is inside or out” — for instance, whether anti-Semitism is a reaction to a perceived flood of immigrants or attendant anxieties about national identity, or whether it results from historic processes and propaganda or from private traumas and psychoses made large, visible, and collective.<sup>19</sup> This confusion of inside and outside couples fascism’s ambiguities with this dissertation’s themes, from Leiris’s early definition of crisis as a sudden accord of psychic life with the outside world, to Giacometti’s “critically” small miniature figures, an errant thumb-stroke away from obliteration. The difficulty, or perhaps impossibility, of determining where an artistic crisis lies — in the reaction to external cataclysm or the internalization of untenable contradictions — thus finds a parallel in this chapter in a historical crisis less elliptical than those of the previous two chapters.

Not the crisis of reading the face of man, nor the crisis of seeing the nation whole, this chapter will concern the crisis of fascism for the representation of the body.

My hypothesis is that the disintegrated boundaries of the body in fascism are precisely the formal condition or predicament of Giacometti's miniatures. Condition and predicament, in fact, amount to the same thing for an art of crisis. Fascist aesthetics will nevertheless remain in the background. My interest is not to point out the "actually" fascist nature of Giacometti's work by drawing formal comparisons with fascist art or architecture, or, conversely, to argue for the miniatures' staunchly *anti*-fascist character. Neither case, I believe, is accurate. But, more to the point, both these claims forgo the difficulty of the inside-or-outside ambiguity of crisis, in art no less than fascism. To be against or aligned presumes that I've already solved the problem of where the crisis lies, when in fact the emergent relation of political and artistic crises is the basis of my argument. Instead, my characterization of fascist representations of the body will lie, conceptually though not necessarily descriptively, in the position briefly sketched already: that fascism is what Kaplan has called a "polarity machine," performing binding and splitting functions which are the source of its seductions and its deadly power. These binding and splitting functions, however, are also what makes it the terrible, totalitarian double of Surrealism.<sup>20</sup> It is by virtue of this doubling, almost in a prophylactic sense, that a post-Surrealist Giacometti can be *inside* fascism's polarity machine, and yet make work that looks nothing like the spatial arts of fascism, such as Leni Riefenstahl's films, Arno Breker's sculptures, or Albert Speer's architecture. What could appear further from these works, after all, than Giacometti's miniatures, vulnerable and delicate and aswim in space?

The primary work of this chapter will be to describe Giacometti's miniatures by probing the two consensus traits ascribed to them: their indivisibility and their aura, each of which both

resound and differ importantly from fascist figurations of the body. There is good reason for the consensus, as we'll see, since both Giacometti's statements and canonical texts written about him during his lifetime confirm them.<sup>21</sup> But describing the miniatures through their indivisibility and aura does not neutralize some basic questions we might ask about them. Firstly, how do the miniatures relate to each other? And secondly, where does each miniature end? Is their "aura" part of the sculpture, and if so, how do we understand a boundary around a body that is not coincident with its skin or its matter? These questions attune us to two specific "disintegrated boundaries" of the body in both fascism and modern sculpture: between its individuality and multiplicity, and between its inside and outside. In what follows, I will excavate three concerns of Giacometti's miniatures, in which indivisibility and aura are not just present, but mutually complicating: miniaturization, multiplication, and immolation. Although these concerns would appear to drive Giacometti away from a substantial, coherent representation of the body, I will argue that the myriad tiny, disintegrating sculptures that he produced throughout World War II carried sculpture's promise of an experience of substance — one delivered paradoxically through their destruction.

## **I. Miniaturization**

In his last year in Geneva, Giacometti did the sort of life-accounting one does in times of crisis. On a journal page, he set out two columns, one headed 1923, and the other 1944. Under 1923, he recorded:

Androgine.  
Attrac. repuls.  
reste[illegible]  
neg - pos  
Unité

Under 1944, he wrote:

Synthèse  
/ \  
homme extérieur

His chart both confirms and complicates what we might believe about the trajectory of Giacometti's early work. Primitivist sculptures like *The Couple* (1927) that distilled gender into a collection of signs, or *Spoon Woman* (1926), which set up the trope of the feminine indent or hollow, ramified through his Surrealist period (Fig. 3.3). Compositions drew together forms that menaced each other: the phallic spear of *Man and Woman* (1928–29), thrusting toward a tiny hollow nub at the center of a cesta (Fig. 3.4); the long tapered tusk of *Point to the Eye* (1932), perpetually threatening to inoculate a little head. Sculptures like *Gazing Head* were made, paradoxically, of hollows. *Caress* (1932) has slightly bowed-out sides, suggesting a vital tumescence; yet the contour of the work couples what appears like a pregnant belly with the jagged profile of a gaping death's head, with stepped projections and recessions that Giacometti reprised in works like *Head Fallen Into a Diagram* (1932) (Fig. 3.5).<sup>22</sup> In these sculptures, the basic plastic negotiation of positive and negative space, or form and mold, was charged with erotic content. And the basic solicitation of objects — to be used, handled, caressed — was constantly complemented by an edge of violence or decay.

As Giacometti sketched it in the Geneva journal, this erotic play of attractions and repulsions had been expelled from the work by 1944. In the place of antipodes was the dialectic: a synthesis of man and his environment. Giacometti was seeking, he wrote, a

third object [... a] recreation of a synthesis between the ext[erior] world and oneself[,] oneself and the ext[ernal] world recreated in an object that would be the synthesis. [...] The syn[thesis] that contains the most of the ext[erior] world and a brain, sum of syn[theses] of brains [illegible] is adopted by most people.<sup>23</sup>

Yet the form that this third object — this expansive synthesis containing “the most” of world and man — seemed to take was not exactly capacious. In fact, the miniatures that Giacometti made throughout the war and the years directly preceding it seemed incapable of containing *anything*, being themselves quite nearly *nothing*.

The Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti currently accounts for twenty-two distinct “small” or “very small figurines/busts,” dated between 1937 and 1946, some of which were cast in bronze in the postwar period. My choice to refer to these works as “miniatures” is anomalous in the Giacometti literature. In histories and museum collections, these works are typically referred to as “small” or “very small figurines,” or, on occasion, “very small figures” — and this is when reference is made to their size at all (the MoMA, for instance, refers to them simply as *Figures, I-VI*).<sup>24</sup> Giacometti never titled these works, simply describing them, in his famous letter to his dealer Pierre Matisse, as “minuscule.” The logic behind the choice of “very small figurine” is thus not in matter of the artist’s terminology. Instead, it might be better understood as a balk at associating with the genre of the miniature: to imply that they are scaled-down versions of something true-to-scale or normatively sized, instead of distinct works whose littleness reflected a particular formal goal.<sup>25</sup> Yet it seems to me that “figurine” is hardly a neutral a term,

and indeed implies something closer to what one might find objectionable in calling them “miniatures.” The figurine, like the *bibelot*, the tchotchke, or the trinket, implies not just diminutive size, but the minor status that can go along with it. Figurines are “not the real deal”; though they might be made out of delicate material, they are not the result of delicate production. Moreover, insisting that these “figurines” are simply depictions of a person “*seen a long way off*” obscures the attitude that their diminutiveness solicits: one of both attentiveness *and* remoteness. “To take up a magnifying glass is to pay attention, but isn’t paying attention already to have a magnifying glass?” asks Gaston Bachelard.<sup>26</sup> That we are both enjoined by and distanced from these works characterizes them as works of *scale* — which is precisely the notion that goes missing when we simply call these works “small” or “very small.”

A number of these miniatures were gathered from Giacometti’s studio following his death, while the rest are in public and private collections in Europe, with the exception of six miniatures that were sold to Thomas Hess by Pierre Matisse in 1955, and later donated to the MoMA. While Giacometti exhibited his miniatures twice during his lifetime — once, at Pierre Matisse’s gallery in 1948, and once at the Galerie Pierre Loeb in 1946 — virtually none were exhibited in the decades after his death, as his widow Annette set about distinguishing works suitable for exhibition from those deemed incomplete or damaged (a distinction that, as we’ll see, is debatable at best).<sup>27</sup> The smallest among these works are less than a centimeter tall, not counting their outsized pedestals of irregular plaster blocks, whose sides appear slapped together with a palette knife (Fig. 3.6). Some of these works are full figures, while others are busts whose shoulders terminate in the pedestal. While Giacometti continued to make small works after 1945 — including several diminutive busts of Marie-Laure de Noailles, Simone de Beauvoir, and Rol Tanguy — the miniatures made in the preceding decade are unidentifiable, lacking such features

as Beauvoir and the Vicomtesse's characteristic coiffures (Figs. 3.7, 3.8).<sup>28</sup> Almost all were made directly in plaster adhered to thin iron rods. That these works exist today seems as great a wonder as their capacity to articulate a body with so little means. It is impossible to estimate how many other miniatures didn't survive the century.

*Very Small Figurine* (c. 1937–38), perhaps the first of these works, measures less than two centimeters high (Fig. 3.9). Made of plaster applied directly to a thin iron rod, reworked with a pen knife and the point of a pencil, it is the form of a woman standing straight with her arms tucked into her sides. She stands on a rectangular plaster base of roughly the same height. Paler than the figure now, since the latter has been darkened by a parting compound used in casting, the work fortuitously matches the tone of a drawing dated several years later: a nude with similar proportions, erased and redrawn several times, so that she seems float in a nimbus of former selves (Fig. 3.10). The nude is symmetrically and almost spiritually surrounded by a transparent sphere, like a mystic Vitruvian woman measuring, not ideal proportions, but the numinous dimensions of memory: Isabel, perhaps, at a distance.<sup>29</sup> But the sketch also depicts a body *contained* by its frame — defended from what is *not* that body by its penciled-in chassis. The *Very Small Figurine*, by contrast, is most especially defenseless. When it has been installed in exhibitions, it often stands alone at the center of a glass case — peculiar, vulnerable, and cosmically isolated. Surely this is not the third object that binds us to the world?

If she *were* such an object, moreover, then the rupture between Giacometti's Surrealist work and what followed would have been once again overstated. His Surrealist objects, after all, were what Michel Leiris first described as “petrified crises” that manifested internal states, housing them “in the vast, foreign room we call space.”<sup>30</sup> A decade later, Leiris was still on the

hunt for such objects. In a journal entry from the spring of 1939, he confesses to his habit of roaming his apartment in search of something to relieve his anxiety,

an object to apply myself to, that will agree with my activity. Will I go see that woman? that friend, to tell him (what an illusion!) something that I see as essential? or instead will I debauch myself? drink? Having considered friends — and some more or less visible women — I discover nothing. So I set about manipulating books — or whatever — under the pretext of straightening up: handling objects, for lack of having found the “object.” Frequently, my anxiety leads me to contemplate suicide; frequently, I don’t make a move. [...] It’s this “object,” this exterior thing, tender and impossible to find, that would have to be defined. And to define it would be — of course — to find it. [...] All my fear of dying is tied to the anxious desire for this object that is impossible to discover. [...] an object to which I could bind myself and in which I could forget myself.<sup>31</sup>

Leiris’s search is the anxious counterpart to what André Breton described as the Surrealist eagerly “wander[ing] *in search* of everything,” waiting to receive the marvelous in the genuine encounter with objective chance, consolidated in the found object.<sup>32</sup>

Leiris’s certainty that the object is impossible to find, however, makes his desire for it something more than what Breton called a “will to objectivation.” In a special issue of *Cahiers d’art* in 1936 devoted to the object, Breton distinguished this state from the condition generated by Surrealist objects, which aimed to “unleash the *forces of invention* exalted by the contact with objects of dream-origin, veritable solidified desires.”<sup>33</sup> One sought to reduce and stabilize, the other to be extensive and inductive.<sup>34</sup> Yet Leiris’s sharply contrasting pessimism has its source in precisely what is neglected by Breton’s optimistic contact with these oneiric objects. For Breton, it is enough to encounter these things for them to set off forces of invention. For Leiris, the binding and forgetting is made impossible because of his “inability to get past his limits (of which [he] has the physical sensation, in so far as [he is] always aware of the existence of [his] skin and what it represents for erotic possibilities.”<sup>35</sup> The boundary of Leiris’s body blocks this

accord of internal and external states, “*soi et l’extérieur*.” Boundaries may be the source of what eroticizes the body, making it capable of the play of negative and positive forms, attraction and repulsion. But boundaries are also what bars the subject from the longed-for communion.<sup>36</sup>

Both objectivation and objectivization, according to Breton, were products of a common plight, the “anxiety inherent to a time where human fraternity is more and more lacking, while the best constituted systems — including social systems — are petrifying in the hands of those that cling to them.”<sup>37</sup> The Surrealist object promised the possibility of community; it depended on it and reaffirmed it. Breton’s most complete articulation of the Surrealist object is an account of a visit to the St. Ouen flea market with Giacometti, in which both men found objects that “freed them from paralyzing scruples.”<sup>38</sup> Giacometti happened upon an inscrutable half-mask that ostensibly provided a formal solution to the head of his sculpture *The Invisible Object*, while Breton discovered a wooden “slipper-spoon” that consummated an unnerving chain of erotic associations (Figs. 3.11, 3.12, 3.13). For Breton, these discoveries were only possible because they were done *in communion*, through a shared sympathy between himself and Giacometti.<sup>39</sup> Just how fragile that sympathy could be — considering that Giacometti would split from the Surrealists less than a year later — may be an indication of what rang hollow in Breton’s optimism across the evacuation of social solidarity in France at large in the 1930s. His description of a lack of human fraternity and the ossification of social structures echoed statements made across the political spectrum in France and Switzerland in that decade, as anxieties about the integrity of the national body informed nearly every agenda. The blurring of gender roles, the specter of miscegenation, the appearance of the actually damaged bodies of the veterans and the abstractly damaged body of a nation with a declining and aging population,

motivated both pacifist calls to abandon the concepts of nation and home, and fascist summons to return to more primordial, atavistic communities.

But it left others, like Leiris, abjectly aware of their own physical boundaries. Leiris and Giacometti had been friends for almost a decade, and still saw each other, though less regularly as they retreated into their work toward the end of the 1930s. In those years, Leiris was just as obsessive about sculpting an image of a body that threatened to crumble into dust or deliquesce into a formless puddle.<sup>40</sup> “[W]ar or peace, resistance or capitulation: the combatant world horrifies and crushes me; the world of abandon liquifies me, I dissolve like it dissolves itself,” he wrote to himself in the spring of 1939.<sup>41</sup> Giacometti’s miniatures are just as vulnerable as Leiris’s body seemed to himself, true, but they also appear like attempts to mitigate Leiris’s abject condition by minimizing its source. Giacometti’s equation was simple: to reduce the boundary, reduce the sculpture itself.

Giacometti’s miniatures keep themselves at a distance. They are neither brought into, nor even brought close to, the body. They appear to carry, not their smallness, but their distance internally.<sup>42</sup> Yet this distance is also registered internally, felt rather than measured. Megan Luke has thus argued that these works call upon our embodied perception to calibrate the space that separates us from them, even though they address themselves only to our vision.<sup>43</sup> Her point of contrast is the pocket-sized sculptures that Kurt Schwitters’s made toward the end of his life as he fled to England from Norway, where he had first been forced into exile once the Nazis invaded Norway in the spring of 1940 (Fig. 3.14). Luke argues that these “sculptures for the hand” invite us to fuse with the object by taking it up in our fingers, yet confront us with their fundamental alterity and inaccessibility: they relentlessly redeliver us to their surface. By inviting tactile engagement (through knobs or indentations that suggest where one might place our thumb or the

meat of our palm) and using color to complicate rather than repeat its contours, Schwitter's small sculptures concentrate our attention on the improvisational undulations of their surfaces.

In doing so, they expose the "true fault line in the modern history of sculpture" between an "aesthetic of the surface and an "aesthetic of ideal form."<sup>44</sup> An aesthetic of the surface directs attention not only to the materiality of the sculpture, but to our bodies as we interact with it and to the conditions of our encounter. An aesthetic of ideal form, conversely, demotes these perceptions as epiphenomena of a stable and autonomous "core" that determines the work independent of its context or its viewer's embodied experience. This aesthetic renders the sculpture transparent and timeless: we look *through* its material surface to comprehend it as a "mental thing."<sup>45</sup> This, in turn, allows the sculpture to function as a surrogate self.<sup>46</sup> Schwitter's small sculptures, however, refuse this comfort. Their surface offers a constantly shifting and often interrupted experience that complicates any self-evident relation to their core.

As Giacometti's portrait busts progressed in 1937 and 1938, they increasingly plied this discontinuity between the surface and structure of the head. This discontinuity carried over into Giacometti's postwar work. From far away, the figures read as hieratic women or men on the move; from up close, their forms are submerged in texture, in an overwhelming materiality that is incommensurate and incompatible with their legibility as figures (Figs. 3.15, 3.16). These tempestuous surfaces, Gottfried Boehm observes, generate a radical rupture between the haptic and optical experiences of the sculpture, one that demonstrates the fundamental incompatibility of materiality and form.<sup>47</sup> Such divergent experiences, moreover, correlate with our bodily proximity to the works. To be close enough to touch is to be lost in materiality; to stand at some distance is to approach them as the starting point of perception and to participate as "co-creator," claims Boehm, in the construction of the figure as such. Pointedly, however, one participates

only as a hands-off creator, held at bay by the optical nature of the collaboration and the optically-obliterating haptic quality.

The miniatures occupy a peculiar position in these two projects of late Schwitters and postwar Giacometti. Rather than confront the values of surface and inaccessible core, the miniatures reduce both quantities to as close to zero as possible. What occurs, however, is something like the calculus party trick of “Gabriel’s horn”: the apparent paradox whereby the form produced when one spins the graph of the asymptotic equation  $1/x$  around the x-axis, which resembles something like an infinitely tapering trumpet, can be shown to have a finite volume but an infinite surface (Fig. 3.17). Or in the case of the miniatures: a negligible volume, and a surface whose capacity for figuration is immeasurably greater, even as it is winnowed down.

Certain of the tiny figures have a liquid aspect. Constructed from wet plaster applied directly to a thin post, they are almost entirely modeled rather than whittled. The most dramatic instance of this liquidity is in the collection of the MoMA, New York. *Figure, II* is a slender, 1 1/4” tall tongue of plaster that flares toward the top and curves just slightly forward like the head of a cobra (Fig. 3.18). Its surface and its contour ripple slightly, making it appear to tremble in space like the bobbing silhouette of someone walking in the far distance. The plaster narrows steadily as it approaches the base until it has thinned to nothing, so that a millimeter of bare iron post peeks out between the pedestal and the figurine. Dirt has accumulated over the years to “color” its coiffure. No feature on the figure can be securely isolated from the rest, nor can any be said to be securely a product of work and not accident. Rather than divide the experience of materiality and form in the sculpture according to the proximity of one’s body, the miniature continues to disclose its form at the closest range. We marvel at its detail, nose pressed to the

vitrine, or we examine its precision in reproductions that show it twenty times its size — this unique apparition of distance, no matter how close we get.

“The unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be” is how Walter Benjamin defines aura, and how the miniatures appear to exert their fascination.<sup>48</sup> In the Artwork essay, Benjamin argues that the reproductive technologies that diminished this distance drove out aura from the reproduced artwork, wresting it from its traditional ritual context in order to submit it to ideological ends.<sup>49</sup> Auratic distance thereby betokens a (lost) aesthetic status, and aura in the essay becomes, writes Miriam Bratu Hansen, “laminat[ed] with the idea of beautiful semblance.”<sup>50</sup> This entails a bracketing of the term from non-aesthetic experience. Yet in other texts, Benjamin’s definition of aura is considerably more capacious.<sup>51</sup> In the “Little History of Photography,” aura is explained through a scene in nature: “While resting on a summer afternoon, to trace a range of mountains on the horizon, or a branch that throws its shadow on the observer — this is what it means to breathe the aura of those mountains, that branch.”<sup>52</sup> His description recalls Georg Simmel’s poetic analogy of aesthetic distancing (which “stretches a veil between us and [the objects of our contemplation] just like the fine bluish haze that envelops distant mountains”).<sup>53</sup> However, this aura that we inhale also effaces the distinctions between the viewer and the scene. It threatens the ability of subjects to distinguish between themselves and physical and temporal states of the object they contemplate. Aura’s capacity to disintegrate the boundaries between subject and object makes the auratic experience both intoxicating and potentially self-ablative.

This capacity suggests, in aura, that distance and nearness are not opposites, but polarities. The experience of one of Giacometti’s miniatures, for instance, is simultaneously one of remoteness as described above and exceptional closeness, as one draws as near as possible (or

allowable) to see the work. The Artwork essay restricted the definition of aura to a historical — that is, lost — quality of “beautiful semblance” in order to set up distance and nearness as two antithetical perceptual regimes. This rhetorical design, Hansen argues, suppresses the broader definition of aura that appears in Benjamin’s earlier texts.<sup>54</sup> There, distance and nearness are understood as a *polarity*, “in the Goethean sense of mutually imbricated opposites that generate a force field.”<sup>55</sup> To understand this polarity, Hansen turns to a significant if problematic intertext: the work of Ludwig Klages, the neo-Nietzschean Kosmiker whose writings articulated a strand of anti-Semitic anticapitalism. Klages’s emphasis on the “reality” of the *Urbild* or primal image — which enters people in dream-states by materializing out of their collective *physis* — along with his theory of nearness and farness, informed Benjamin’s concept of aura. For Klages, nearness and farness describe different modes of perception rather than quantifiable distances: one can analyze the far-away, giving it the “thing quality” of nearness, or one can be lost in the contemplation of the image of something, even if the thing itself is close at hand. Benjamin retained this polarity, which indeed informs his articulation of aura as the “apparition of a distance, however near it may be,” even if the rest of the Artwork essay works to undo this entwinement.

Moreover, Klages’s claims for the reality of the *Urbild* and its penetration of the collective *physis* allowed him to theorize modernity’s version of the same: the mechanisms by which new technologies innervated the collective *physis* through the interpenetration of body and image.<sup>56</sup> This last phrase closes Benjamin’s essay on Surrealism, published in four installments in 1929, and yet prescient for Surrealism in its second decade. Titled “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,” it is devoted in great part to understanding Surrealism’s excavations of the revolutionary energies in the outmoded. Yet the automatic camera of the

“snapshot,” and all it indicates for a world of immediate and copious images, remains always in the background. Surrealism’s rejection of the politics of morality of socialist realism, embrace of the archaic and infernal (and, more tenuously for Benjamin, the occult), and above all its pursuit of freedom defined as an absolute and unpragmatic experience of unrestrictedness, had made it the bearer of an alternate concept of revolutionary art: one given over to the discovery in political action of a pure image sphere. This sphere, he argued, was not set up for contemplation. If bourgeois art had failed to reach the proletarian masses, it was because it had yet to understand this lesson, to wit:

The collective is a body, too. And the *physis* that is being organized for it in technology can, through all its political and factual reality, only be produced in that image sphere to which profane illumination initiates us. Only when in technology body and image so interpenetrate that all revolutionary tension becomes bodily collective innervation, and all the bodily innervations of the collective become revolutionary discharge, has reality transcended itself to the extent demanded by the *Communist Manifesto*.<sup>57</sup>

Artists did not need to adjust their content for the proletariat; they needed to deploy themselves in the image-sphere, and thus facilitate this new negotiation of the body and image. Aura was not just a remainder of cult practice that was irremediably on its way out, as new technologies demolished its basic structural condition of distance. Instead, aura was *entwined* with those technologies’ transformations of the collective *physis*. Nearness and farness — as the regimes of the tactility and shock of technological modernity, on one hand, and the objectivity of the image, on the other — thus appear as two poles around which to organize an epochal reality shift. In Benjamin’s analysis, the Surrealists were the first to suggest forms for this new reality.

Breton made his own statements about the relationship of Surrealism to technology, and, in particular, the snapshot of the camera. At first, his description sounds like boilerplate.

“Liberated from the need to reproduce forms essentially taken from the outer world,” he writes, “painting benefits in its turn from the only external element that no art can get along without, namely inner representation, *the image present to the mind*.”<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, he writes, there can be no real or absolute separation from an exterior world, no question of the “spontaneous generation” of mental images. Instead, Surrealists rely on and return to “visual residues” of their perception (a concept he borrows from Freud) of a shared exterior world. These residues provide a basis for the collective character of their work — not because of some faith Breton places in the common understanding or self-evidence of the *world*, but rather because of the objectivity of these mental images, a Klagesian *Urbild* of his own devising. Since Surrealism has taken as its goal the visual articulation of these residues, it has succeeded, he concludes, “in *dialectally* reconciling these two terms — perception and representation — that are so violently contradictory for the adult man.”<sup>59</sup> As Thomas Augais observed, this sounds very much like Giacometti’s intentions for the “third object.”<sup>60</sup> In 1944, it was doubtful that Breton, who was in exile in the U.S., knew what the sculptor was doing with himself. And yet, no doubt he might be pleased to feel that some of their shared sympathy from the St. Oeun flea market has carried across the years. Perhaps he even intuited it, when we wrote what may seem to some readers an unexpected appraisal of Giacometti’s figures in the catalogue for Peggy Guggenheim’s *Art of this Century*: “In Giacometti’s work — and it is a touching moment, like that in Gothic novels, when characters walk out of their pictures frames — new figures, sprung from the head and heart of man, step to earth with infinite caution and, in the materialisation of the burning light that bathes *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* or *Aurélia*, victoriously brave the test of reality.”<sup>61</sup>

## II. Multiplication

To be simultaneously present in our space *and* infected by memory, as Krauss wrote of Shapiro's work — this is the condition that the miniature shares with what seems furthest from it: the monument. By the 1930s, France was glutted with monuments: a result of what historians called “statuomania,” for the feverish rate at which local administrations erected statues, often of dubious quality.<sup>62</sup> The historicization of this term was launched by the work of Maurice Agulhon in the 1970s and 80s, who characterized statuomania as a phenomenon of liberal humanism and the pedagogical structures that supported democratic institutions. Agulhon regarded the profusion of monuments to “grands hommes” as the reflection of an ideologically inclusive environment, eager to provide the citizens with multiple examples for self-instruction and to stimulate patriotism.

Behind each surge of statue-making thus stands a revolution: 1789, 1830, 1871.<sup>63</sup> Of these, the last spawned the most monuments, due to a combination of technical and economic progress, and the necessity of segregating and — as critics of Agulhon's rosy image of liberal inclusivity have suggested — quelling political antagonisms left in the wake of the Commune.<sup>64</sup> Statues, once instruments of popular edification and national glorification, increasingly became a means for both the governors and the governed to propagate their political positions. This bidding war for bronzed legitimation left the France's urban centers so congested with statues that one critic referred to their number as the “poisonous mushrooms of the Paris fauna.”<sup>65</sup> These statues were blamed for urban congestion, for traffic accidents, for a decline in aesthetic sensibilities (Fig. 3.19). They “shock our eyes, blemish and sadden the aesthetic of our promenades, and transform our gardens into veritable cemeteries [*nécropoles*],” deplored

Gustave Pessard in 1912; their ugliness “cretinizes and disfigures those who look at them,” wrote Paul Eluard.<sup>66</sup> They produced “a suffocating perspective,” Louis Aragon stated, “Humanity will perish from statuomania.”<sup>67</sup>

Ultimately, it was the statues that would perish: following the Occupation, the bronzes were one of the sole remaining sources of non-ferrous metals for German armaments and telecommunications following the closure of copper trade routes to Chile, the U.S., and the Congo. In 1942, General Pétain signed into effect the “Bronze Mobilization Campaign,” authorizing the systematic destruction of public monuments, some 1,500–1,700 of them.<sup>68</sup> In the 1950s, Louis Réau quipped that their destruction was “the only service that [...] the invaders did for Paris. [...] No Parisian mourned the disappearance of [Claude] Chappé [inventor of the semaphore telegraph], maneuvering the intersection of the Boulevard Raspail and the Boulevard Saint-Germain, like a scarecrow for sparrows, his arms dislocated from his aerial telegraph” (Fig. 3.20).<sup>69</sup> The temperature of public opinion regarding the statues “mobilized” for the war might be taken from the absence of scandal in the wake of Réau’s statement: the silence, perhaps, of agreement.

It was only natural that the avant-garde should have had its own responses to these statues. In 1925, Tristan Bernard and Pierre Seize founded a society pledged to the nocturnal abduction and destruction of public monuments.<sup>70</sup> Several years later, the Surrealists wrote an open letter, “*Permettez!*,” addressed to officials from the Department of Ardennes, protesting the re-erection of a monument to Rimbaud that had been destroyed in WWI, on the grounds that the glorification flagrantly contradicted the poet’s values — the most visible of a number of statements made against the “ignoble exploitation” of such figures for civic agendas.<sup>71</sup> In certain cases, the Surrealists imaginatively invested the monuments themselves with the capacity to

avenge this state of affairs. In *Paris Peasant*, Louis Aragon, one of “*Permettez!*”’s signatories, placed a vengeful diatribe in the bronze lips of unnamed statue in the Buttes-Chaumont, who calls out for the fusillades to “enleaden” the passerby, stopping them in their tracks with a bullet-shaped injection of his own material.<sup>72</sup> Marcel Sauvage’s 1932 novel *La Fin de Paris, ou la révolte des statues* fulfills this vision: in his book, the statues across Paris suddenly come to life and proceed to massacre the populace (Fig. 3.21). Dario Gamboni has characterized these works as “metaphorical iconoclasm,” a visual or rhetorical expression of the widespread antipathy for Parisian statues.<sup>73</sup> Yet, on the whole, Surrealist interventions in the monumental landscape served largely to (re)vivify the statues, not to destroy them.<sup>74</sup> Aragon’s ventriloquism of the statue in *Paris Peasant*, Breton’s concentration on statues of Rousseau and Etienne Dolet in *Nadja*, which infuses them the same disruptive energies of the found object, and Sauvage’s vengeful bronzes on the march, all present what Simon Baker called the “sublime triumph of irrational signification” over the conventional symbolism of these monuments (Fig. 3.22).<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, it was precisely the statues’ material presence in the city — long after their iconography had ceased to ground them in the secular, democratic values described by Agulhon — that enabled their drift toward these alternative meanings and afterlives. “But are marble, porphyry, granite, and bronze insensible? Don’t they enjoy any life? Bronze is sonorous. The veins of marble are real veins...” wrote Robert Desnos in his report on Parisian statuary, published in *Documents* in 1930.<sup>76</sup> Anticipating the collages that accompanied Sauvage’s novel — in which the homicidal statues were shown wandering the city, adhered to the street by cleverly added drop-shadows, rather than by their pedestals — Desnos imagined commemoration as he would have it: “Leaning on the parapet of the Île Saint-Louis, you would encounter a bronze gentleman who could be Baudelaire; Fortune, on her wheel, could roll down the road to

the Haussman intersection; Courbet, with motionless footfall, would turn his back on the column, and come back up the rue de la Paix without moving, smiling at the pretty women...<sup>77</sup> The image is something like what Rodin had imagined several decades before for the *Burghers of Calais*, who would have been placed on the level of the passerby. For Desnos, the problem with statues lay not in the petrification of the historical figure so much as his *elevation* by the pedestal. The pedestal's capacity to instate what Peter Springer termed a "dignity distance" [*Würde-Distanz*] made the statues useless and thereby *undignified*, inspiring in turn the indignation of the critics.<sup>78</sup> Pedestals, those "walls enclosed at their summit, this shut shack" corralled the poetic sensibilities of the material and boxed them off from the needs and uses of the living.

The abolition of the pedestal was the Surrealists' recommendation, not just for civic statuary, but for sculpture altogether. The Surrealist object, from its earliest conception, was defined as one that would both "objectify" subjective or oneiric states and be placed in circulation, mingling with the objects of daily life.<sup>79</sup> Giacometti's Surrealist objects have been judged largely on these terms. In one broadly accepted narrative, modern sculpture, under Rodin and then Brancusi, had increasingly assimilated the pedestal into the body of the sculpture, until their grammars were inverted: modern sculpture, Rosalind Krauss has claimed, became pure pedestal — a pedestal, however, without its former monumental function of binding a symbol or allegorical figure to a site.<sup>80</sup>

Giacometti's avant-garde work took the opposite route, by eliminating rather than absorbing the pedestal.<sup>81</sup> Instead of the self-reflexivity of the modern-sculpture-as-pure-pedestal, his Surrealist objects call out for any number of indeterminate engagements with its viewer. Consider Man Ray's photographs of a woman holding Giacometti's *Disagreeable Object* (1931)

against her bare torso (Fig. 3.23). The sculpture is grooved like a phallus and the size of a swaddled infant. The model presses her fingers into the small depressions that suggest eye sockets: a means to grip it, should she elect to avail of its spiked end as a mace. The softly indented plane of *Disagreeable Object to be Thrown Away* (1931) is speared by three tusks so that it teeters unstably on one edge or another (Fig. 3.24). One could pick it up, using the tusks as handles, and therefore neutralize this installation problem — but this would leave one of the three tusks hanging free, both vaguely threatening and awkward supplemental.<sup>82</sup> The only thing to do with the *Object* may be what the title suggests: throw it away. Yet disposing of it, firstly, would be taboo (the work, after all, is bronze in one version, and finely formed wood in another). Moreover, it would only displace the disagreeableness to a more profound level, where one is forced either to mull the questionable ethics of disposing of unstable things, or sit with a dissatisfaction that persists even after its source is gone. Similar to Hans Arp's multi-part concretions, Giacometti's Surrealist objects confront their viewer with an essential arbitrariness of their disposition, yet without Arp's biomorphic appeal to the irrationalism of nature (Fig. 3.25). On the contrary, they gesture toward, and sometimes even tantalizingly offer, the rudiments of an expected conduct. In "gameboard" works like *Circuit* (1931–32) or *On ne joue plus* (1932), the viewer is provided with pieces (a ball, a couple hieratic "players") and a suggested action (to run the ball along a track, or move the pieces from hollow to hollow) (Fig. 3.26, 3.27). But these actions offer no real satisfaction and no real consummation or completion. Frustration would only increase by making this *potential* physical engagement *actual*.<sup>83</sup> By doing away with the pedestal and its symbolic grammar, Giacometti's Surrealist objects open sculpture onto a range of relations characterized by instability that one could catch like a cold.

Rosalind Krauss addresses this instability as an operation of “declassing.” In the 1980s, Krauss intervened in Giacometti historiography by distancing the sculptor from the “transcendent” Surrealism of Breton, which had theretofore dominated interpretations of his early work, in order to draw out his affiliation with Georges Bataille and the *Documents* circle. Giacometti’s objects, she argued, engaged in “categorical blurring,” reproducing the slippages and alterations of identity that undermine the logic of classification through binary oppositions.<sup>84</sup> His *Suspended Ball* typifies this blurring: a cleft orb sliding suggestively over a wedge, it initiates a “constantly shifting theater of relationships” that run rapidly from the heterosexual frottage of vulva and phallus to the sadistic or transgressive contact of eyeball (or testicle) and blade, buttocks and wedge, and so forth (Fig. 0.6).<sup>85</sup> Thus despite its formal crispness, *Suspended Ball* participates in the anti-idealist program of so-called dissident Surrealism, which sought to depose the structures that privileged spiritualized, dematerialized forms of knowledge. The defining feature of Giacometti’s Surrealist work is therefore its *horizontality*: sculpture is “lowered” literally, doing away with the pedestal, as with the “disagreeable objects” discussed above, and conceptually, by setting in motion a transgressive, categorical blurring that undermines the elevated or spiritual meanings that distinguish man from beast, and the *representations* of man — namely, statues — from the “mud of the real.”<sup>86</sup> Krauss narrated Giacometti’s break from Surrealism, by contrast, as a turn away from the horizontal (read: the real, and the anti-ontologies of base materialism) and toward the vertical, understood as a return to stable categories and transcendental models of the subject.

Krauss’s conclusion echoes the withering criticism of Giacometti’s postwar work published by Clement Greenberg in the *Nation* on the occasion of his first solo exhibition after the war, at Pierre Matisse Gallery from January 19 – February 14, 1948. After delivering high

praise to the Surrealist sculptures for aiming at a “new sincerity that will no longer conceal what is, humanly speaking, the arbitrary absurdity of the present world” — a description that, despite invoking such decent characteristics as sincerity, is still akin to a recognition of the categorical blurriness reflected in this work — Greenberg turns to his new style.<sup>87</sup> A “sad falling off from his previous standard,” he writes,

[his new sculptures] constitute nothing more or less than a retreat to the statue, to the monolith. [...] Let no one think that the prominence of the human figure in Giacometti’s latest work means a return to “humanism.” Today “humanism” in art means the very opposite — pessimism about man’s powers, a fear of facing any reality without precedent. Giacometti’s earlier, more abstract work, which showed as little concern for the shape of the human figure as it did for that of a car barn, expressed a far more genuine humanism, a humanism that took into itself the whole realm of sight and touch.<sup>88</sup>

Greenberg saw Giacometti’s return to figuration as a regression toward defunct foundations, and an expression of doubt faced with the task of inventing new forms.<sup>89</sup> But most striking is his conviction that the *true* humanism of Giacometti’s Surrealist work lay in its solicitation of embodied experience. For this embrace of sight and touch is precisely what typically characterizes Giacometti’s *postwar* project, and putatively distinguishes it from his “abstract Surrealist parentheses.” Indeed, in spite of the significance of Krauss’s reading of Giacometti to Surrealism and Giacometti’s Surrealist objects in particular, her (and Greenberg’s) framing of his oeuvre after 1945 never entered the critical characterizations of it in the Giacometti literature.

The canonical interpretations of the postwar oeuvre, as we have seen, understand it as a reckoning with the instability of perception and the phenomenal emergence of a subject. “Before the war, I had the impression that things were stable. Today, not at all,” declared Giacometti to André Parinaud in 1962. It is a sentiment that has authorized many to see an unpredictable postwar world reflected in the ravaged and endlessly variegated surfaces of Giacometti’s

sculpture.<sup>90</sup> These accounts give the miniatures a distinct role to play, one which couldn't be further from the concept of stable categories and transcendent subject-models.

They are, precisely, crises — either understood in the explosive yet redemptive mood of Jacob Burckhardt, or as instances when the “the real” is suddenly laid bare.<sup>91</sup> In Burckhardt's cosmology of crisis, described in his lecture “The Crises of History,” crisis is a passionate, periodic upwelling that “clear[s] the ground” of convention, allowing for the sudden bounds of true spiritual growth.<sup>92</sup> This position is most summarily represented in the structure of Bernard Lamarche-Vadel's synopsis of the miniatures as the “discovery of the integration of the distance between the one observing and the observed object, [which] Giacometti probably experienced as a new challenge or new impossibility [...]. [H]e lamented the catastrophic reduction of his creation to minuscule scales, but his singular genius was to have been able to transform the challenge of this impossibility [...] into a powerful and convincing metaphor of human existence.”<sup>93</sup> One sees further echoes of this mode of crisis in Jaques Dupin's description of the miniatures as a “purified vision” which required doing without the instruction of artistic culture, mastery, and sensibility alike, as well as Benjamin Delmotte's claim that the miniatures are demonstrations of the “*manifest impossibility* of the figure and the object, of life and death. [They are] not the eternity of a material form *that has appeared*, but the *appearing* of a force capable of subjugating itself to the material, even when this apparition remains indirect, unstable, contingent, and incomplete — which is to say, essentially threatened by disappearance.”<sup>94</sup> The fragility and ephemerality of the miniatures thus reflects a novel subject for sculpture (i.e., “appearing”), which merited Giacometti's devotion for the rest of his life.

For other interpreters of Giacometti, the miniatures are symptomatic of a “moment of truth,” a tearing back of the veil of artistic convention. Though not in themselves the start of an

epochal shift, they have a telos. To paraphrase this explanation, by rebelling against the conventions of figurative sculpture, Giacometti was forced to reckon with the instability of true appearance, on one hand, or in the inadequacy of his materials to properly capture life, on the other. “A face, he tells us,” writes Simone de Beauvoir, “is an indivisible whole, a meaning, an expression; but inert material, whether bronze or plaster, is infinitely divisible; each bit of it isolates itself, contradicts the whole, destroys it. He tries to reabsorb the material to the extreme limits of the possible: thus he ended up making heads almost without volume, where he believed was inscribed the unity of the human face, as it appears in a living gaze.”<sup>95</sup> Giacometti’s miniatures were “atomic”: so tiny that any further division would amount to their non-existence. Yet through their tininess, they achieved the unity and immediacy that characterizes the individual as seen by a “living gaze.” Giacometti thus arrived at something *beyond* sculpture, or at least beyond its (Western) tradition — a “last judgment” of sorts on the act of producing figurative sculpture.<sup>96</sup> This notion aligns his miniatures with crisis as conceived by Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: a situation that reveals the limits of existing concepts or techniques for representing the subject, which, though it may initially look like an impasse, eventually provides a way forward to form new historical subjects.<sup>97</sup> Or, in Giacometti’s case, new figurations of them.

Strangely absent from these accounts, however, is the presence and form of the pedestal in the miniatures.<sup>98</sup> This is strange, firstly, because of the role the pedestal (or more precisely, its abolition) plays in Krauss’s interpretation of the Surrealist work. But it is strange on a far more basic level because the pedestal is the most evident aspect of these tiny works; it is their most visible, most consistent feature. The majority of the pedestals on the surviving miniatures are at least the height of the figure itself, but they can be as much as twice that size (Fig. 3.28). They

serve, of course, as something to plant the thin iron armatures of his figures. Yet they are clearly also an object of his attention. Whereas previously, Giacometti had either declined to use any plinths (Rita and Diego's busts, recall, simply sat on their necks) or reimagined the base in some manner (by putting it on wheels, as with *Cube*, turning it into a scaffolds in *Suspended Ball*, or rendering it as a floating disk in *The Palace at 4 a.m.*), the miniatures mark both an apparent return to a conventional plinth and its integration into the body of the figure above it. Modeled perfunctorily out of plaster, often irregularly shaped, the plinths appear to be not merely serviceable but, indeed, sculpted in the same spirit of economy as the figures themselves.<sup>99</sup> A number of them, moreover, are not simple blocks but "double pedestals," a rectangular plinth topped by a smaller base that recalls the ornamental styles of civic pedestals (Fig. 3.29).<sup>100</sup> In several sketches, Giacometti imagines these stepped plinths as ziggurats that stretch into the sky, like Brancusi's *Infinite Column* (Fig. 3.30). The topmost plinths are so narrow that they might, indeed, be figures — a hyperbolic "dignity-distance" having rendered the crowning statue a mere punctuation point in the monumental grammar.

Nevertheless, the pedestals of Giacometti's miniatures have been most frequently understood to work simply like the *repoussoir* in a painting: a large object in the foreground of a composition that serves illusionistically to "push back" smaller details into the deep distance.<sup>101</sup> These discussions find cause in Giacometti's statement regarding his initial vision of the immense darkness above Isabel on the Boulevard Saint-Michel: "I should have made a painting and not a sculpture. Or otherwise, I should have made a huge pedestal so that the ensemble corresponded with the vision I had."<sup>102</sup> Of course, Giacometti *did* make a "huge" pedestal — comparatively, that is — to achieve this effect. Insofar as his miniatures might most reductively be understood as wartime sculpture, a sculpture of little means and scarce materials,

their size is just an expedient to these proportions: if you can't make a huge base for a normalized statue, make a small base for a minuscule one. But in the obviousness of this size-translation, the pedestal itself has been liquidated into pure pictorial effect.

Bringing the pedestal back into view recuperates its monumental associations in both general and historically specific terms. The simpler conjunctions of busts and block-like plinths in Giacometti's oeuvre suggest ancient Egyptian funerary statues, examples of which he would have seen in his well-loved copy of Hedwig Fechheimer's *Plastik der Ägypter*, as well as in reproduction in the same issue of *Verve* that first published an image of his miniatures in 1939 (Fig. 3.31).<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, the double pedestal that Giacometti used in the majority of the still-existing miniatures recalls the "declension of the base" increasingly popular in monuments beginning in the eighteenth century, when both the framing and access of became ideologically modulated by nesting repetitions of the pedestal form (Fig. 3.32).<sup>104</sup>

Variations of the pedestal acknowledge that it is both a form and a transition. "To make a plinth is also to fit the sculpture to the scale of the city," writes Catherine Chevillot. "The support appears like the prolongation of the urban world; it is there like a protuberance, a promontory."<sup>105</sup> Without performing a deep dive into Derrida's *parergon*, it may suffice to note that the pedestal thus understood follows the same path of the frame, by simultaneously elevating the statue and disappearing into the urban continuum.<sup>106</sup> Yet this disappearance happens precisely when the pedestal is performing this pedestal-work — whether it is when the stone plinth blends into the city square or the plaster block vanishes into the "deep distance" of Giacometti's miniatures.<sup>107</sup> That the pedestals-*as*-pedestals have faded into silence in the critical history of Giacometti's oeuvre follows the same logic.

Giacometti's pedestals for the miniatures evoke the monument, not just in their propensity to "disappear," but in their discursive effects. Consider, for instance, the account of the sculptor Hugo Weber, who visited Giacometti in his room in Geneva, where Giacometti lived and worked for the duration of the war. In the gloaming, Giacometti was worrying a nub of plaster with his pocketknife. Around him were still more sculptures, little larger than a pin — especially on the washstand, where their dimensions made the sink seem as wide as the ocean, or at least, thought Weber, as big as Lake Geneva.<sup>108</sup> The observation was borne out some time later, when the two men ventured together to visit the studio of Fritz Huf across the lake. As the boat pulled way, they turned back to see the withdrawing city, and spotted what appeared to be a woman on a concrete jetty, silhouetted against Mont Blanc. In the contrast between her fragile silhouette and the mountains, Weber wrote later, "we both recognize[d] the 'pin' Giacometti had been working on so intensely. The experience called for no words; it was enough for us both to see and feel the same thing."<sup>109</sup> The pedestal, which — practically speaking — allows the little pin to stand upright, also isolates it, removing it from the space of the hand or pocket. It render the miniature something to be *seen* rather than handled or scrutinized. To engage it, it suffices to recognize it, like a landmark from afar.

This speechlessness of recognition was part and parcel of the ideology of realist commemorative monuments in the interwar period. While allegorical monuments of national mourning continued to be commissioned in the 1920s and 30s, commemorative fashion increasingly favored monuments of a more sober, simple, and non-allegorical mode, which were mass-produced by monument firms (Fig. 3.33).<sup>110</sup> This was a mode that moreover substituted, in semiotic terms, the allegorical symbol for the sign of the commemorated object: the *poilu*, or infantryman. In contrast to allegorical monuments, which often featured a female figure in

postures of mourning or grief and foregrounded the interpretive act of reading these emotions as statements of the nation as a whole, the realist monuments seemed to render an explicatory text, or any language at all, unnecessary.<sup>111</sup> Whereas the allegorical statue foregrounded the interpretive act of reading — one that stabilized the volatile figure of the interwar woman by describing her as the personification of nation’s mourning or grief — the realist monument of the *poilu* projected self-evidence: the standardization of his accessories (helmet, canteen, greatcoat, puttees), no less than the standardization of the industrially-produced statue itself, allowed the task of representation to take place automatically, without need of commentary. “In this way,” writes Sherman, “realism offered a means of cloaking and bypassing the allegorical aspect of *all* monuments, their reference to a moral or political meaning larger than the visual sign they offer.” Due to the high demand for these statues, the production of these statues of the *poilu*-type turned increasingly industrial, left largely to the work of monument firms rather than individual artists — a shift that was presented as an improvement, since it ensured that the representation of the soldier would be “direct,” unmediated by individual sensibilities. The Vaucluse monument-making firm Jacomet described its work in one advertisement as “not a personal conception — so many of them are in dubious taste, lacking in any aesthetic sense — it is the TRUE POILU, modeled from life, the POILU transformed into bronze to immortalize himself.”<sup>112</sup> The adventitiously modernist sensibility of this statement, in which the identity of the artist is swept aside by the force of the representation to communicate meaning, speaks to the rhetoric of immediacy around these monuments. That immediacy was not blunted by their reproduction; it was enhanced by it, insofar as their standardization and proliferation stood in for the widespread loss of French soldiers. The repetition of the *poilu*-type across the French countryside

generalized the faces of those one lost, and thus replaced acts of individual mourning with an image of collective memory, a homogenized *lieu de mémoire*.

This final point may clarify just what is so monumental about the miniatures, even in descriptions of them that neglect altogether their incorporation of the pedestal. The capacity of these works to produce a generic image of a generic person (Giacometti's claim that the first miniature was a portrait of Isabel notwithstanding) appears reinforced by their repetition, a repetition that increases both their immediacy and their generality, without the latter undermining the former. If they thus appear like "monuments for one" — a statue at an intimate, portable scale — they also suggest "monuments *of* one," in the generic rather than singular sense of the word "one." Too small to bear any details that might identify them (say, as Isabel, Diego, or Rita), they suggest a *someone*, in that remoteness keyed to memory: someone whom we might believe to recognize as we can recognize a friend approaching from faraway, long before we can make out her face. Yet the repetition of these someones, in miniature after miniature, solicits the searching projection that characterizes not the instant of perception, but the memory of it. There is a tension in Giacometti's miniatures between, firstly, their "atomic" singularity and their multiplicity, and secondly, between the immediacy of their impression and the recursiveness of something recalled. This tension generates the same contagious instability that characterized his Surrealist sculptures. It suggests that if Giacometti did beat a retreat into generic monumentality, as Greenberg suspected, he retreated so far that its terms began to quiver, like a figure striding away on blisteringly hot blacktop.

### **III. Immolation**

When Giacometti set off for Geneva on the very last day of 1941, he intended to stay for only a matter of weeks — just long enough to visit his mother and his nephew, the son of his sister, Ottilia, who had died during childbirth several years before. He would then return to Paris to take back up work in the studio, and Diego would take his turn to visit the family. But as it became clear that he would not be able to obtain another visa as the regulations of the occupation tightened, Alberto and Diego came to a new understanding of their arrangement in wartime: Diego would stay in Paris, tending to the studio and a trickle of decorative arts commissions while waiting out the occupation with his companion, Nelly.<sup>113</sup> Alberto, meanwhile, found a room in the Hôtel de Rive, closer to the city's nightlife but not so far that he couldn't drop in regularly on his family in the home of his brother-in-law, Francis Berthoud, on the route de Chêne. Giacometti's Geneva lodgings were austere — a single bed, a chair, a washstand with a basin, and a sculptor's stand — and paid for largely through an allowance from his mother and the rare commission.<sup>114</sup> This room was where Weber saw the congregation of pin-sized statues described above. His impressions of the miniatures in Geneva are paradigmatic, not just because of their discursive closure, but because they set up the two scenes in which the miniatures are largely perceived and written about: as a numberless group in the studio, and as a single, isolated figure that elucidates the whole enterprise.<sup>115</sup>

These two dispositions parallel two basic frameworks for understanding the miniatures: as drafts or as variations on a theme. The latter interprets the miniatures as the consequence of Giacometti's attempts to render the human figure or face as an indivisible whole. The iterations of the miniatures follow a logic in which Giacometti sought to reduce the material as much as possible — either, as Simone de Beauvoir described above, to mitigate the inevitable *divisibility*

of any sculptural material or, as François Stahly recounted, to avoid the distortions and fractures caused by perspectival shifts as the viewer approached or moved away from the work.<sup>116</sup> In this case, the miniatures are all individual works, and their resemblance to one another is analogous to the stylistic similarity of Giacometti's postwar work, whose likeness is likewise owing to a singular pursuit of a formal goal.

The other draft hypothesis holds that the miniatures all share the status of a sketch or maquette. They are numerous — and, implicitly, failed — attempts, ostensibly in preparation for a sculpture, or models for a project to come.<sup>117</sup> While Giacometti's letters and journals describe many of the miniatures as distinct works, often in the form of to-do lists in his notebooks, he also recounts to Isabel that he is working at various moments during the war on a single figure in a dogged pursuit that caused him to delay his return to Paris after the end of the war.<sup>118</sup> The notion that the miniatures are failures, meanwhile, traces back to a nugget of Giacometti lore: the unsubstantiated claim that Giacometti would have destroyed everything he made, had not someone intervened to spirit it off to the foundry before he could stop them.<sup>119</sup> Sartre himself is one of the myth's propagators. "Giacometti," he writes, "is forever beginning anew..."

But involved here is more than an infinite progression; there is a fixed boundary to be reached, a unique problem to be resolved: how to make a man out of stone without petrifying him. All or nothing: if the problem is solved, the number of statues is of little consequence. "If I only knew how to make one," says Giacometti, "I could make them by the thousands ...." Until he succeeds, there will be no statues at all but only rough hewings that interest Giacometti only insofar as they bring him closer to his goal. He shatters everything and begins anew. From time to time his friends manage to save from destruction a head, a young woman, an adolescent.<sup>120</sup>

The thrust of Sartre's description is that Giacometti's works lie somewhere between exercise and research; they are scribbles on a chalkboard, kitchen lab tests, uncountable "rough hewings"

that allow Sartre, further on, to contrast the heavy, morbid eternity in one of Maillol's statues with the flux of Giacometti's sculptures.<sup>121</sup> Yet if they are unstable, it is due less to their material nature than to the mercilessness of Giacometti's process. "Sculpting unceasingly" (*sculpture sans relâche*), as Véronique Wiesinger called it, Giacometti's dogged pursuit of his goal is the cause of their short existence (and thus the need to "begin anew"), not the other way around.<sup>122</sup>

Giacometti's statement about the number of works he aspired to produce, however, is puzzling. For while Sartre suggests that it matters little how many sculptures or "rough hewings" must be sacrificed in pursuit of solving the problem of representation without petrification, Giacometti indicates something different: that *resolving* the problem would allow him to produce works "by the thousands." If one were to take Sartre's description of Giacometti's appetite for destruction at his word, then one might assume the artist meant simply that he would be able to make *and not destroy* sculptures by the thousand. Yet from photographs taken throughout the postwar period, it is clear that Giacometti willingly let accumulate around his studio sculptures and objects from the whole length of his career, Surrealist works as well as miniatures. What rather seems at issue is not the number, or numerousness, of the miniatures in themselves, but the relation of these miniatures to each other — a relation that seems insufficiently described as drafts or as variations. Giacometti demonstrated too little satisfaction with the miniatures for them to be the latter, and too much regard for them to be the former.<sup>123</sup>

In a notebook that Giacometti maintained during his years in Geneva, he recorded a short meditation on number, in the middle of a broader and schematic evaluation of his oeuvre over the last twenty years, that complicates the scenarios of variations or numberless attempts.

Winter 1943

1/ number by divisions 1/10 1/100 infinity thus 1 infinity  
also  
1/75 = *esprit* [sic]  
          *matière* ??  
Multiplication by division  
Unification by multiplication?  
~~unification~~  
1  
Finite and infinite 1, synthesis  
Desire to bring ? the multiple 1s to a unique 1  
Infinitely  
[illegible barred-out phrase]<sup>124</sup>

Question-marks and barred-out phrases in this passage suggest that Giacometti had not arrived at a program so much as a statement of possible relations — or, more precisely, possible measures that might bring about a new relation of the many to the one, and the innumerable to the singular. It also suggests that the traits of divisibility and indivisibility are not as monolithic as Simone de Beauvoir's account might suggest, since the reduction of scale (1/10, 1/100...), as a byway to the unity of the figure, appears accompanied by a corresponding concept of multiplication (speculatively, of individual figures). Division presents itself as both a way to cleave mind from matter and as an indirect means to unification. To understand this proposition, requires yet a third framework to understand the production of the miniatures: not as drafts, nor as variations, but as habit — or perhaps even addiction.

In this framework, the habit or addiction is conceived as performing a function, however depraved, by satisfying some kind of longing or lack. Should we take at face value Giacometti's explanation of the miniatures as the distant sight of Isabel, the habit might suggest an obsessive return to a memory, in which the works are the physical remainder of a therapeutic working-through of a recollection, or a mnemonic in themselves, or perhaps ultimately both. But the habit also provides a way of thinking repetition beyond the terms of psychology and those provided

readily by art history. Yves Bonnefoy acknowledges that there was “obviously something compulsive about this work which led nowhere,” as though Giacometti were not carving but *using* his figures, as one uses a drug.<sup>125</sup> One might, less dramatically, liken the work to cigarette-smoking. I nominate cigarettes not because Giacometti smoked them (though he did, incessantly), but because they present a particular ontological status that recalls the configurations in Giacometti’s journal entry. More importantly, the smoking of cigarettes models a certain “palingenetic figuration” — an embodiment by way destruction — that illuminates Giacometti’s miniatures, while also appearing in fascist figurations of the individual.

“The distinctive character of cigarettes,” Richard Klein observes in his elegiac *Cigarettes are Sublime*, “compared to other forms of tobacco is their indistinctness; one cannot distinguish one smoke from another. [...] Deprived of any irreducible specificity or distinguishing characteristics, the cigarette has only a collective identity, not an individual one. The one is the many; number seems to belong to its identity.”<sup>126</sup> Because of their indiscriminateness and multiplicity, cigarettes make poor surrogate selves — unlike other key commodities, like automobiles, that allow for more fluid exteriorizations of the self. Sartre describes this act of exteriorization as the functioning bond of ownership. To *possess* a thing is to endow it with a function that resides in its *being possessed*, and thus to its being a reflection of your being. “Possession is a magical relation,” he writes, “I *am* these objects which I possess, but outside, so to speak, facing myself; I create them as independent of me.”<sup>127</sup> One cannot easily engage a cigarette, however, in the act of exteriorizing the self, being at once fungible and mass-produced, resistant both to the durability of possession and the fantasy of creation.

To cadge some of this fantasy nonetheless, one must roll one’s own, thereby participating literally in this creative appropriation. The Parnassian Théodore de Banville, in a late essay

devoted to the cigarette, put forth sculptural terms for these little creativities. For him, the cigarette was a “shape [that] must never be fixed and defined; ceaselessly removed, rolled again, according to the particular genius of whoever is smoking it, it remains varied, diverse, impressionable, sensitive, living” — a description that may as well have been appended to any one of Giacometti’s post-Surrealist sculptures, in their excessively palpated, variegated surfaces.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, the shape of “the” cigarette described by Banville refers at once to any *one* cigarette and to the class of objects “cigarettes”; their changing form describes both the variation between individual cigarettes, as impressions of their moment of hand-manufacture, and the impressionability of each individual smoke, as it is rolled and palpated and pressed between lips and shoved into ashtray divots and sucked down and snubbed out. Formed, deformed, and consumed: their fate not unlike a gob of plaster in Giacometti’s fingers. The indistinctness of cigarettes is thus not necessarily merely a function of their mass production. Even when the cigarette is an artisanal product, it is still unfixated and indistinct — part of an unbounded and mutable set.

For analogous reasons, it is perplexing when Yves Bonnefoy mentions that there are “perhaps only about twenty [tiny figures], *but countless others remained unfinished.*”<sup>129</sup> While Bonnefoy’s first estimate is fairly close to the number registered by the FAAG, his stipulation that many were “unfinished” raises the question of what possible measure could distinguish the “damaged” or incomplete miniatures from the complete, intact ones. Leaving aside the question of when Giacometti’s post-Surrealist works were ever to be said to be finished (Sartre’s anecdotal answer of “never” notwithstanding, there is ample evidence from conservators that Giacometti did in fact rework his plasters, occasionally even after they had been exhibited), the formal qualities of the miniatures call the term’s suitability into question.<sup>130</sup> Consider the liquid

miniatures like *Figure, II*, or *Small Bust on a Double Base* (1939–45), an ovoid head separated from its shoulders by a millimeter of metal post, atop a pedestal several inches tall of similarly dubious construction — the plaster throughout daubed on brusquely (Fig. 3.34). Where the shadow and russet parting compound settle into tiny details in the head, they make the bust appear to be caught mid-phrase, mouth open and nose upturned. But the illusion is just as soon undermined by the accidental or non-signifying tumult in the surface of the pedestal below it. The perception of the figure thus echoes the unceasing sculpting, or making and unmaking of a figure, that characterized Giacometti's process. Details of the miniatures emerge mimetically, then fall away into meaninglessness.

This making and unmaking is not exactly reciprocal, however, but rather tends toward the figure's destruction — much as the mutating form of the cigarette as it is smoked is the mark of its use *and* its being-used-up. If these tiny sticks of plaster continue to read as figures, they do so by the skin of their teeth. This is the case of *Small Figurine on a Base* in the collection of the Kunsthaus Zürich (Fig. 3.35). Unlike the “liquid” *Figure, II*, the plaster in this work has been carved extensively and minutely. At close range, one can make out the deft knife cuts that produce two arms — as ridges that undulate on the sides of the figure — breasts, and even a tiny hole indicating a belly button. But the plaster under the figure's head has been chipped down to the iron post, as have the legs below the knees. What appears like a shadow at the seam of the figure's thighs is, in fact, more of the post showing through where the plaster has been flaked away. In the MoMA's *Figure, VI*, the figure has been so reduced by this meticulous carving that the post extends past the head, cleaving the face in two (Fig. 3.36). Its feet, on the other hand, have been anchored to the thimble-sized pedestal with an added blot of plaster that recalls the sloping, supersized feet of Giacometti's postwar figures. The works suggest an equilibrium —

where the *minimum* of detail for the work to function as a representation of a figure is also the *maximum* of gestures that it can support before it falls apart. Yet they promptly defy this balance, as traces of their near fatal destruction makes their representation appear charmed and triumphant. *Figure, VI* thus continues to read as a figure despite the iron post that erupts out of its head. Dupin observes this dynamic in Giacometti's postwar sculpture:

To make and unmake incessantly is to diminish, to deaden each gesture, to drown it gently in sequence and number, as the sea absorbs its waves. [...] Kneaded with an imperious, violent touch, it would seem that so fragile an apparition must inevitably return to the chaos from which it came. Yet it resists. The destructive assaults which it endures modify it only imperceptibly. Their repetition immunizes and protects it, allowing it to live its life on the sidelines.<sup>131</sup>

Dupin attributes something like an apotropaic function to the repetition of gesture on the surface of Giacometti's sculptures. But for his curious conclusion — “to live its life on the sidelines” — which indicates that it survives not despite this destructive accumulation of marks but, indeed, through it, or alongside it.

This existence-through-destruction is typified by the cigarette as well. A cigarette only becomes my cigarette when I am smoking it — which is to say, appropriating it through its destruction.<sup>132</sup> Klein refers readers to an unusually personal passage in *Being and Nothingness*, in which Sartre recounts his experience of quitting smoking to illustrate Sartre's concept of “destructive appropriation.”<sup>133</sup> (It was short-lived victory; Sartre, like Giacometti, was a lifelong smoker.) To consume, says Sartre, is both to enjoy and to use up; “it is to destroy by incorporating into oneself” in a “creation-destruction” I engage in whenever I am using up what is mine.<sup>134</sup> This seems obvious enough to the smoker, yet it is only upon resolving to give up smoking that Sartre uncovers the extent to which destructive appropriation defines the motive

behind all possession. What he would miss when he stopped smoking, he reasons, is not the taste of tobacco, but its *meaningfulness*: its ability to “crystallize” his experience of the world through the act, and then to allow him, by rhythmically destroying the cigarette as he inhales it, to symbolically appropriate that whole world — a world incinerated and reabsorbed into him, much as one breathes the aura of a landscape through the delectation of a branch or a ridge-line.<sup>135</sup> Klein therefore concludes that, though cigarettes resist appropriation through their indistinctness, smoking in fact discloses the motive behind all appropriative acts: not to have the thing itself, but to have everything it “crystallizes” for us, and to flee the radical freedom of our essential negativity (the “for-itself”) by compulsively seeking to give ourselves the stability and groundedness of that external world (the “in-itself”).<sup>136</sup> While all things present “indefinite prolongations” into the world, the dissipation of the cigarette makes both this diffuseness and this incorporation concrete.

These prolongations of the self and assimilations of the environment, which gratify the desire to seek false security in the “in-itself,” have a sinister contemporary parallel. For the modes of subjectivity offered by the fascist state gratified exactly this desire to lose one’s borders and thus appropriate the world.<sup>137</sup> In the increasingly global and chaotic world of the interwar period, earlier forms of prolonging selfhood and symbolically appropriating or mastering the world proved untenable. “The traditional mastery promised by nineteenth-century liberalism was one in which the individual subject owned and controlled a small universe (the nineteenth-century subject-as-small businessman),” observes Kaplan.

This mastery collapsed, for many, and was succeeded in fascism by a sense of being able to *follow* and *belong to* a limitlessly large world. [...] Participation in fascism was not as selflessly masochistic as its most outraged, disbelieving critics would have it appear, for it gave the masses the impression of intimacy, not just with the leader, but with the

myriad representations of themselves supplied by the state. This seductive fascism is not, as [Eric] Fromm would have it, a “flight from freedom” but an imagined “flight to freedom” in the collective will to breach all limits.<sup>138</sup>

The fascist subject engages in fantasies of boundlessness. (*Je suis partout* was not the name of the far-right French organ for nothing.) He is swallowed by the state, and swallows it in turn, through something akin to Sartre’s “destructive appropriative reaction.”<sup>139</sup> By consuming those myriad representations of himself, he gains the impression of having appropriated the whole world.<sup>140</sup> It is therefore not the precise content of the images themselves that is powerful — they are often, Kaplan observes, quite banal. Rather, it is their distribution and their indiscriminateness, which allow them to feed the desire for incorporation through appropriation.

The grounds for this desire were laid out in a rhetoric of crisis that saw modern man not just as damaged or emasculated, but as critically hollow or porous. In 1932, Henri Bergson diagnosed a kind of soul delay in the interwar years, as spiritual growth had not kept abreast of industrial leaps. “The enlarged body awaits a supplement of the soul,” he wrote.<sup>141</sup> Hollowness was also represented as a national problem in France: population growth had slowed to a halt, in contrast to the rising populations in neighboring countries: 3 percent in France, versus 36 in Germany, 33 in Italy, 23 in Britain between 1900 and 1939.<sup>142</sup> Maulnier warned that a hollow nation was vulnerable to a “claim to possession” by the foreigner and Jew.<sup>143</sup> In particular, the male body was conceived as porous and under assault by Jews, women, deviant sexuality, and any other group conceived as a threat to normative masculinity.<sup>144</sup> The countering desire was to become full again, but the seduction of fascism was to resist the fulfillment, to constantly indicate, in the same propaganda that supplied mirroring representations, threats to the boundaries of the collective body that would point out its porousness. In smoking, the emptying

cigarette pack corresponds to the widening space of desire: “Filling a lack hollows out an even greater lack that demands even more urgently to be filled.”<sup>145</sup> The visual rhetoric of fascism — repetition upon repetition of the fascist subject — thus fed in both senses these anxieties of hollowness and porousness, at once staunching and stoking them.

The mechanisms for surrounding the masses with these representations were the technologies of mass media: the radio and cinema, as well as photographic reproduction. The visual and sound spheres were flooded with representations of the leader and ideal citizen. These representations gave certain subjects a sense of belonging to a new totality, a self without limits because perceived everywhere.<sup>146</sup> The reproduction of images also altered how their origins were perceived. Images that have been broadly reproduced and redistributed, Walter Benjamin reflected, become no longer seen as the creations of individuals, but rather as collective property — one so extensive that it must be miniaturized in order to be assimilated. “In the final analysis,” he writes, “mechanical reproduction is a technique of diminution that helps people to achieve control over works of art.”<sup>147</sup> This control is exerted over what has come to seem a collective creation, a control or sense of mastery of what is precisely the reflected image of the masses. In the Artwork essay, Benjamin is even more explicit about the relation between diminution and mass appropriation in the “*desire of the present-day masses to ‘get closer’ to things spatially and humanly, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each thing’s uniqueness by assimilating it as a reproduction.*”<sup>148</sup> The reproduction serves this drive or desire for intimacy with the self-same, since it entails the characteristics of both transitoriness and repeatability, and thus fuels an appetite for a “sense for sameness in the world.”<sup>149</sup> We have thus come near full circle: it is not just that little reproducible objects like cigarettes allow one to assimilate one’s world, but that this assimilation, as an overcoming of both difference and distance, is facilitated

by mechanical reproduction, which is itself a technique of diminution. Institutionalized fascist art and architecture may be conventionally understood to traffic in the colossal — monumental architecture, imposing statues, and so forth — but the technologies that allowed this aesthetic to proliferate, and to produce a sense of collective boundlessness for the fascist subject, were techniques of diminution.

Giacometti was not a stooge of institutionalized fascist aesthetics. Nor was he protected from the conditions of image production and the anxieties about the body that fueled its operations. Yet there is something fundamentally different about the “consumption” of images that produces a collective body, and the immolation of Giacometti’s miniatures — the immolation of the works themselves, no less than the conventions of figurative sculpture that came before them. Benjamin had an insight for the nature of this labor as well, one he called the “destructive character.”

The destructive character sees nothing permanent. But for this very reason he sees ways everywhere. Where others encounter walls or mountains, there, too, he sees a way. But because he sees a way everywhere, he has to clear things from it everywhere. Not always by brute force; sometimes by the most refined. [...] What exists he reduces to rubble, not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way leading through it.<sup>150</sup>

Giacometti was not a fascist, not a communist, not a personalist, no longer a Surrealist, not ever an Existentialist. But he was a destructive character, and this was also what made the miniatures more than just a work of desperation.

### **Conclusion: Sculpture Out of Nothing**

In Geneva, Giacometti found the social world that eluded him in Paris after his falling-out with the Surrealists. A group of Swiss writers and artists, some of whom had repatriated from France during the war, others who had never left, congregated in the cafes on the Place du Molard and the seedier clubs in adjacent alleys. Giacometti's closest friend at the time was a geographer named George Duclos, who worked for the Resistance from Switzerland, along with Roger Montandon, who at that time was editing the Communist organ *Voie ouvrière*. Their circle also included the critic Charles-Albert Cingria, the poets Claude Aubert and Henri Noverraz, the painters Balthus and Charles Rollier, a young Jean Starobinski, still a medical student at the time, and Ludwig Hohl, the reclusive writer manically fabricating miniatures in prose, like Giacometti's literary double. Among the group was also Eli Lotar, a photographer and occasional cinematographer, who had made his start in *Documents* like Giacometti. Lotar shot the only photographs of Giacometti's workspace in Geneva, the small room he occupied in the Hôtel de Rive. One photograph captures Giacometti at work on two tiny figures, his head looming large behind them; another shows his simple washstand; another the sculptor's stool, stacked with wooden cubes to elevate the working surface — a vision of aksexis. Giacometti praised Lotar's photographs as being the perfect execution of, and thus substitute for, the sketch of the space that he'd been meaning to draw himself.<sup>151</sup>

The images were published in the first issue of *Labyrinthe*, the journal published by Albert Skira between 1944 and 1946.<sup>152</sup> Giacometti worked as a de facto member of the editorial staff, contributing his thoughts to the layout and editorial decisions of the journal from its conception onwards, as the group began to split time between the cafe and the publisher's office.<sup>153</sup> Skira was the Sun to this particular social scene of wartime Geneva. His office at 4, place du Molard, was steps away from the Brasserie Centrale, where the group met daily.

*Labyrinthe* itself, a broadsheet modeled on *Minotaure*'s mix of urbanity and eccentricity, provided a sounding board for the discussions of this small circle of the repatriated and culturally restless.<sup>154</sup> They spoke mostly, Henri Noverraz recalls, of the war:

Always the war — the Balkans, the Russian Front, Africa... East-West tensions — already — polarized our preoccupations. The V.2s over Paris and London, the Allies' new exterminating and mysterious weapon, the implication of '*l'art engagé*,' the political position of French artists, resistants or turncoats suborned by the Nazi sculptor Arno Breker, under the banner of a "new art"...<sup>155</sup>

Giacometti's opinions on these subjects were as grandiose as his sculptures were miniscule. He would assert:

The event is a variable dimension. Right? - There are lines of force that direct us.... - Drawing is a matter of fighting, you know! - Yes, it's terrible, cruel... It's like children, you know, who tear off the legs of insects... - You've got to be strong, to denounce, like Callot, Goya! Poussin, the massacre of the innocents... no?<sup>156</sup>

Beyond the bombast is an indication that Giacometti was not merely content to go about whittling his figures in his little corner while the war raged on every border.<sup>157</sup> "Lines of force" could wage battle on paper as well, or so he pontificated in the presence of his activist and partisan friends.<sup>158</sup>

These comments were collected in a short essay Giacometti contributed to the seventh issue of *Labyrinthe*, dedicated to the art of the Baroque. This essay was a brief commentary on the engravings of the prolific seventeenth-century artist Jacques Callot, best known for extraordinarily detailed etchings and engravings that often measure no larger than the palm of one's hand. It was likely that Giacometti had seen Callot's engravings in 1937 when a selection of them was presented at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Among them was Callot's *Les*

*Misères et les Malheurs de la guerre* (1633), a series of eighteen etchings illustrating the vicious exchange of atrocities between soldiers and civilians in Lorraine during the Thirty Years' War. The most famous plate in the series, *The Hanging*, depicts twenty-one thieves dangling from a tree, while a henchman hoists one more up the ladder, followed by a priest brandishing a cross (Fig. 3.37). Innumerable soldiers and their tents populate the background, the army's numbers suggested by the fine comb of staffs pointed skyward that echo the etched clouds that gather around the boughs. Separating sky and earth is a blank band of space that silhouettes the slack legs of the hanged men, articulating each individual limb. Callot thus reserves a comparatively vast blank space in his tiny composition to force the eye toward these morbid variations.

Henri Focillon recalled seeing the exhibition of Callot's work directly after his visit to the "Peintres de la Réalité," and thus being prompted to contemplate "by an inevitable return to mind, real-life examples and lessons of objectivity" — presumably, of present forms of chaos and violence in Spain.<sup>159</sup> As this chaos and violence intensified over Europe, Callot remained a signal figure for the expression of war's miseries. In 1942, Francis Gruber, a friend of Giacometti's in the late 1930s, painted his *Homage à Callot*, a ravaged landscape peopled with allegorical figures (Fig. 3.38). A sketch of Callot's engraving *The Beggar with the Wooden Leg* (*Le Mendiant à la jambe de bois*), one of his series of "Gueux" (1622), is propped on a folding chair at the center of the painting. Meanwhile, birds of prey, drawn from Callot's *Temptation of St. Anthony* (1617), tear through the upper portion of the painting, as ex-urban factories go up in flames in the background.<sup>160</sup> At the center of the composition, a female nude is draped over a stone slab, a citation of Gruber's own 1941 painting *The Drowned Woman*, which itself cites Jacques-Louis David's *Death of Bara*. Originally, she had held in her hand a tricolor bouquet, although censors ordered Gruber paint it out.<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless, the purpose behind the homage

was clear enough: Callot was the unflinching chronicler of war's barbarism, an example that Gruber sought to emulate in the present-day.

Giacometti's article diverges from this conception of Callot's significance. In contrast to the received notion that the *Misères* are fundamentally anti-war works, whose prime motive was to express dismay and distaste for the atrocities of war, Giacometti insists that Callot's etchings betray an attraction to violence in and for itself — noting that even Callot's religious subjects detail scenes of martyrdom and torture, some so baroque that they must have been imagined by the artist himself. Giacometti's article was illustrated with two of Callot's engravings: the *Cinquième acte du Soliman* (1620) and *Les Martyrs au japon* (ca. 1627). In the latter, a central martyr is flanked by two rows of crucified men of the robe, receding sharply toward the horizon. The martyrs' heads mark the midpoint of the composition; above, angels cast down laurels like frisbees; below, soldiers and townspeople mill about with alarming nonchalance. The force of the work lies in its play of contrasts, both between these three registers of activity, morbidity, and passivity, and between the indifference of the executors and the precision of the engraving itself. Even Callot's apparently non-violent subjects, such as his caricatures of buffoons and brigands and "delirious half-savages" are brutal in their assaults on the rational, dignified human form. According to Giacometti, Callot is therefore like those other great visual chroniclers of war, Goya and Géricault: "frenetic desire for destruction in all domains, down to the destruction of human consciousness," pervades even their still-lives ("livid and mutilated sheep heads") and their anatomical paintings.<sup>162</sup> It is the same destructive drive of children, who take pleasure in mutilating insects and other animals.<sup>163</sup> Giacometti asserts that, for these artists, the subject is primordial, and "not necessarily Freudian": it is the void, "the great gaping void in which his characters gesticulate, exterminate and abolish each other."<sup>164</sup> This void, which Giacometti calls

the only “permanent and positive” element in Callot’s work, becomes the figure for this destructive drive, whose expression supersedes any activist intentions on behalf of the artist.

Empty space both hosts and lends precision to these scenes of violence. Yet it does not precede them or exist as a neutral category to be filled, whether with brutal or peaceful visions. Engravers and etchers are naturally “masters of the blanks [*blancs*],” writes Focillon, since in these techniques, blank space is not given (as it is in paintings or drawings), but must be generated at the same stage of the process as the incisions that yield lines in the print.<sup>165</sup> On the plate, the void is, quite literally, the only permanent and positive element. This process draws Callot closer to Giacometti’s own peculiar combination of additive and subtractive sculptural techniques in the miniatures. The miniatures are both modeled and carved plaster, and they are iterated, if not entirely reproducible.<sup>166</sup> Giacometti’s interpretation of Callot’s *content* therefore draws out the *formal* similarities between their two bodies of work. It moreover asserts the connection between this particular form and this particular content. “Form is always to the measure of this obsession [with the primordial subject of violent destruction],” writes Giacometti.<sup>167</sup> Destruction is the means by which both Callot and Giacometti arrive at their positive void, while the void is the barometer of their destructiveness.

The pairing of bloody mass and empty space is yet another bound polarity of fascism — more specifically, of fascist terror. Klaus Theweleit recalls two descriptions of firing shots into crowds in order to disperse them, from Ernst von Salomon’s 1929 “Hexenkessel Deutschland” and Edwin Erich Dwinger’s 1939 *Auf Halben Wege* respectively. Terror’s aim in these actions is to produce an empty space, a “white totality.”<sup>168</sup> A single shot often suffices to render a void by clearing out the “bloody mass,” leaving an empty space that is both pleasurable and threatening. Theweleit writes:

The soldier male's perception of "empty space," is produced by an act of devivification that is both concrete and hallucinatory. A shot is fired into the mass and its effects are brought into association with the hallucinatory perception that the space has all along been devoid of things living (save a few dead residues of what was previously alive). Devivification in this case seems predominantly to reproduce earlier situations of pleasure in which nothing swarmed around or penetrated the self, and everything was clearly bounded. The "we" and its guns are made synonymous with totality, life in the singular. The man's dominant feeling is one of glee, eruptive good-humor. His body is focused on the core action of squeezing the trigger, an act that is more magical than muscular, the flick of a switch that miraculously produces absolute emptiness. It switches the man into a different reality: the trigger functions as a transmission switch to a brighter life in the future.<sup>169</sup>

A similarly gleeful, obliterating gesture was how Giacometti described the fate of many of his miniatures: "one strike of the thumb and — hop! — no more sculpture."<sup>170</sup> For the soldier male, the satisfaction is two-fold. Pleasure comes from the "magical" incommensurability of the small gesture and the vast emptiness it produces, and from the return within that clear space to a prior state when the body's boundaries were clearly demarcated, before the threat of the invasion of an implicitly feminine, messy mass. Yet the paradox is that, by restoring the "white totality" to the square, he finds himself diffused through absolute emptiness, his boundaries now imperceptible.

Terror then returns to him, and he casts about for something to dispel the anxiety, something to which he can hold fast, like a stick or a riding crop. Theweleit compares the soldier in this state to the "ocnophilic" type, theorized by the Hungarian psychoanalyst Michael Balint.<sup>171</sup> The word is from the Greek verb that means "to shrink, to hesitate, to cling" — the very acts of which Giacometti-of-the-miniatures stands accused.<sup>172</sup> Balint defines "ocnophilia" as a reaction to the harsh discovery of a world of independent, aggressive, resistant objects that sever the subject from a world of undifferentiated *substance*, a "friendly expanse" in which there were no certain boundaries between the child and her environment.<sup>173</sup> The ocnophile responds to

this discovery by phantasizing the existence of reliable, firm objects, which the subject first posits and then cleaves to for comfort. The philobat, the ocnophile's opposite, attempts to return to the prior stage by avoiding objects or treating them as fungible and disposable. Giacometti's relationship to the miniatures — "I've destroyed the same one twenty times since I've been here," he recounts to Isabel in 1945, "or actually [I've] destroyed twenty sculptures" — makes him too much the philobat to be Theweleit's ocnophilic soldier.<sup>174</sup> Though he shares the soldier's initial glee at the empty space, he doesn't quite share his terror. Yet Giacometti's desire to arrive at a "third object" by ceaselessly remaking his miniatures suggests that these tiny objects carried the promise of being *a way through* to an experience of substance — one to be achieved, as this chapter has proposed, through their destruction.

Perhaps Giacometti's only purely ocnophilic tendency, in fact, lay with a newspaper clipping that he carried in his wallet through the last spring and summer he spent in Geneva. It was an image of Mussolini and his mistress, Claretta Petacci, hung from their feet in the Piazzale Loreto in Milan after their execution by the firing squads (Fig. 3.39). "Giacometti was fascinated, almost intoxicated, by Petacci's legs," Jean Starobinski remembers.<sup>175</sup> Drawn together and bared up to the thigh, they resemble the joined legs of his standing female miniatures — and deliver them, jarringly, to the eroticism and sadism of his Surrealist work.

In the spring of 1945, Giacometti's talismanic relationship to Petacci's legs is as unexpected — which is to say, as bad for optics — as his interpretation of Callot. By characterizing Callot, Goya, and Géricault as destructive obsessives rather than artists of conscience, Giacometti appears to have passed up a clear opportunity to align his miniatures with the great visual chronicles of war's atrocities, making them records of the vulnerable and obliterated bodies of WWII's victims.

And yet, he says, “the event is a variable dimension.” And yet, “drawing is fighting, too.” Declining to write about Callot as a moralist makes space for something *more* than opposition to the state of conflict, something *more* than commentary delivered from the outside. What Callot’s engravings and the newspaper clipping of Petacci’s legs share with Giacometti’s miniatures is the nearness at which they must be perceived. This nearness, however, never dispels their distance, whether it is denoted by the sheer expanse of the scene depicted by Callot, or discharged by the repulsiveness of the dead fascists or of a degraded clump of plaster. Giacometti’s sense of critical form resides in this tension. Ultimately, his “third object” may be understood as *no object at all*. It does not embrace you and the external world, fulfilling Leiris’s desire to bind himself to something “in which [he] could forget himself” in order to merge, in Balint’s terms, with pre-objective substance or some devivified empty space. Instead, the third object is whatever holds you *in suspension*: neither dissolved into the world (or work), nor commenting on it from the outside, but — as with all works of scale — standing in relation to it.<sup>176</sup>

In the 1930s, the disintegrating boundaries of the body in fascism were both a source of deep anxiety and a mechanism for political consolidation. This dual status constituted the formal conditions and the predicament of Giacometti’s sculpture during the war, for the very history that positioned him to approach fascism as its critical double — his history as a Surrealist sculptor — had entangled him in its polarities. In those circumstances, Giacometti could not propose an alternative model of the body. But he could perhaps be the destructive character, reducing everything to rubble because he imagines a way leading through it after all.

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<sup>1</sup> Anatole Jakovski (Jakovsky), “Inscriptions Under Pictures,” *Axis, a quarterly review of contemporary abstract painting and sculpture*, no. 1 (January 1935): 18.

<sup>2</sup> “Entretien avec Pierre Dumayet,” *Écrits*, pp. 299–300. Giacometti recounted the same thing to Isabel in a letter sent in July 1945: “The figure is you and you seen once a long time ago, immobile boulevard Saint-Michel, one evening.” But, he continues, “in saying that in that way it’s not really right because it carried with it at the same time a lot of other things.” Letter to Isabel Nicholas (Delmer), July 30, 1945. Tate Gallery Archives, Inv. 9612.1.2.5. Reprinted in Véronique Wiesinger, ed., *Alberto Giacometti, Isabel Nicholas, Correspondances* (Paris: Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti and Fage Éditions, 2007), p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> This explanation of the romantic fixation/rite, indeed, is the one given by Roger Montandon, one of Giacometti’s closest friends during the war, in a late manuscript on the artist. Roger Montandon, “Sur Les Aléas du regard et la comestibilité des pommes en peinture [2001],” pp. 55–56, Fonds Roger Montandon. BPU Neuchâtel, RMO-106-6-6.

<sup>4</sup> Rosalind Krauss, “Objecthood,” *Critical Perspectives in American Art* (Amherst: Fine Arts Center Gallery, University of Massachusetts, 1976), p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination* (1940), translated by Jonathan Webber (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> Krauss, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Yves Bonnefoy judges that the accident at the Place des Pyramides had a “decisive influence” on his work, by confronting him with the full, existential weight of contingency, and thereby awakening him the pursuit of pure presence through the “living unity” of his figures. Bonnefoy, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., to name only a few, Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), translated by Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1980); Georges Bataille, “The Psychological Structure of Fascism,” *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–39*, translated by Alan Stoekl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 137–60; Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); and Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), translated by James Strachey (London and Vienna: The International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1922).

<sup>9</sup> Alice Yaeger Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 35. Cf. Klaus Theweleit’s two-volume *Male Fantasies, Volume 1, Women Floods Bodies History*, translated by Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) and *Male Fantasies, Volume 2, Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, translated by Erica Carter and Chris Turner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) — in particular, *Volume 2*, pp. 78–88.

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<sup>10</sup> Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 27-28 and 32-39. For an analysis of this concept and its relations to Sorelian thought, see Mark Antliff, *Avant-Garde Fascism: The Mobilization of Myth, Art, and Culture in France, 1909-1939* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 6. Cf. Theweleit: "Fascism's most significant achievement was to organize the resurrection and rebirth of dead life in the masses." *Op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>11</sup> See Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), pp. 190-91.

<sup>12</sup> "It is high times to knock these weapons [of irrationality and non-contemporaneity] out of the hands of the forces of reaction. Especially high time to mobilize contradictions of non-contemporaneous strata against capitalism under socialist direction. The 'Irratio' must not be ridiculed wholesale here, but occupied: and from a position which has a rather more genuine awareness of the 'Irratio' than the Nazis and their big business partners." Ernst Bloch, "Preface to the 1935 Edition," *Heritage of Our Times*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Breton and others signed a letter on March 26, 1936 announcing that the "Surrealist members of the group Contre-Attaque report with satisfaction the dissolution of the so called group, within which had emerged some tendencies called 'superfascist' whose purely fascist character has become more and more evident." André Breton, "Trois interventions d'André Breton à contre-attaque," *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2, *Inédits I 1931-1935* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 665. The term was Pierre Andler's, who wrote that "In the same way that fascism is in the end nothing more than a surmarxism, Marxism on its feet, similarly the force that will reduce fascism cannot but be a *surfascisme*." Georges Bataille, *L'Apprenti Sorcier: Du Cercle communiste démocratique à Acéphale*, ed. Marina Galletti (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1999), p. 296. Michael Surya attributes the term to Pierre Dugan, but likewise claims that Bataille himself never used it. Michael Surya, *Georges Bataille, la mort à l'oeuvre* (Paris: Garamont, 1987), p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> Sartre's critique, "Un nouveau mystique," was published in 1943 in *Cahiers du Sud*. For a contrary opinion of Bataille's mysticism, and a treatment of the intellectual conflict between Sartre and Bataille, see Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), p. 189.

<sup>16</sup> On fascism's "passionate politics," see Denis de Rougemont's 1940 *Love in the Western World*, trans. Montgomery Belgion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). The section on love and war was initially delivered as a lecture to the Collège de Sociologie ("Arts d'aimer et arts militaire," November 15, 1938; See Denis Holier, *Le Collège de sociologie, 1937-39*, Paris: Gallimard, 1995, pp. 403-408). De Rougemont argues that nationalism requires the transfer of human passions to the level of the collective — specifically, "a narcissistic love on the part of the collective self." The conclusion of this transfer will either be imperialism or war, and this war will be increasingly bloody, fierce, tragic, and ultimately, total. In a state of total war, the destruction of the opponent's capacity to resist — Carl von Clausewitz's definition of war, again in vogue in the 1930s — meant not the courtly patterns of war-waging in eras past, but the full-scale decimation of the whole might of the enemy, soldiers as well as civilians, battlefields as well as cities. Total war lumped people and things together; war was waged against the flesh-and-blood who manufactured the canon, rather than against the cannon-fodder. Warfare, meanwhile, was increasing automatized, making the soldier "no more than the servant of matter; he

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himself became a material, and one that is more effective the less human it is in its individual reflexes.” De Rougemont, *op. cit.*, p. 260, 266.

<sup>17</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 191. In his 1934 lecture, “What is Surrealism?” Breton stated that Breton had attempted since 1925 to “present interior reality and exterior reality as two elements in process of unification, of finally becoming *one*. This final unification is the supreme aim of surrealism.” In “Legitimate Defense,” he sketched the broad reaching aims of this unification: “It is time, we vehemently assert,” he writes, “it is more than ever time, for the mind to revise certain purely formal oppositions of terms, such as the opposition of act to speech, of dream to reality, of present to past and future. The basis of these distinctions, in the deplorable conditions of European existence at the beginning of the twentieth century, even from the practical point of view, cannot be defended for a moment. Why not mobilize all the powers of the imagination in order to remedy this situation?” André Breton, “Legitimate Defense,” [1926] and “What is Surrealism?” [1935] *What is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), p. 39, 116.

<sup>18</sup> Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24–35.

<sup>21</sup> In the case of Sartre’s “Quest for the Absolute,” which has already made an appearance in this project, Giacometti even reviewed and annotated a draft of the essay before its publication, which is currently held in the FAAG.

<sup>22</sup> *Caress* was titled *Despite the Hands* in the issue of *Cahiers d’art* in which it first appeared, supposedly because its editor, Christian Zervos, disliked that Giacometti had carved the contours of his hands into both sides of the sculpture. The contour works at once to authorize touch — “place hands here” — and to denote its absence, like chalk outlines around a body: the spot where hands are no longer. Christian Zervos, “Quelques notes sur les sculptures de Giacometti,” *Cahiers d’art*, n. 8/10 (1932): 337-342.

<sup>23</sup> FAAG 2000-0111. Giacometti used notebooks his entire life as sketchbooks, diaries, datebooks, inventories, and to-do lists, but this notebook is exceptional in containing the only attempt to describe the phases in his career and lay out a program for the work to come. The notebook was purchased from the Papeterie Briguet & Fils in Geneva. This notebook is partially, and in a few places erroneously, transcribed in *Écrits*. Given that it sketches this trajectory in his work through 1944, and refers to work that he must do once he return to Paris, the notebook must have been largely, if not entirely, completed before September 1945.

<sup>24</sup> Christian Klemm is the one exception to this, referring to them as “microsculptures [*Mikroskulpturen*].” The term similarly avoids the art historical category of the *Kleinplastik*, while also overstating the littleness of the works. Christian Klemm, “Alberto Giacomettis Mikroskulpturen,” in *Die Sammlung Wächst*, (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess AG, 2011), pp. 23–27.

<sup>25</sup> Bonnefoy claims something similar. See Bonnefoy, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>26</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l’espace* (1957) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2012), p. 148.

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<sup>27</sup> In a letter from Cora Rosevear, Assistant Curator at the MoMA, to Mary Lisa Palmer, Annette Giacometti's assistant, on January 31, 1983, includes that note that "[a]t Mrs. Giacometti's request, because of their condition, we no longer include as works in our collection six small plaster and metal figures and the bronze cast of each which was arranged for before Mr. Rubin had responsibility for the matters." Nevertheless, two of these works — *Figure, I* and *Figure, II* — were listed in the 1988 edition of *Painting and Sculpture in the MoMA* (p. 414). Archives of the MoMA, New York, Painting and Sculpture Department.

<sup>28</sup> The exception are several busts and one full-length figure of Giacometti's nephew, Silvio, which come in at around 12 cm tall, and a standing female figure known as *Chariot* at a comparatively monumental 145 cm. The latter will be discussed further along in this chapter. Regarding the "recognizability" of Silvio in contrast to the anonymity of Giacometti's other works, one might observe that these were perhaps the only sculptures done from a model between 1941 and 1945.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Giacometti's description of Henri Laurens' sculpture as a "*sphère claire*" in which "space itself becomes volume." Alberto Giacometti "Un sculpture vu par un sculpteur, Henri Laurens par Alberto Giacometti," *Labyrinthe*, n. 4 (January 15, 1945): 3, republished in *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> Michel Leiris, "Alberto Giacometti," *Documents* Vol. 1 No. 4 (1929): 209.

<sup>31</sup> Michel Leiris, "Mai 18, 1939," *Journal 1922 – 1989*, ed. Jean Jamin (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 323–34.

<sup>32</sup> André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> André Breton, "La Crise de l'objet," *Cahiers d'art*, n. 1–2 (1936): 22.

<sup>34</sup> One aimed at its prey, the other at that which was "already no longer the shadow and not yet the prey: the shadow and prey mingled into a unique flash." Breton, *Mad Love*, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Leiris, *Journal*, op. cit., p. 324.

<sup>36</sup> The relation of this sense of communion with Robert Musil's "Other Condition" is highly suggestive here. Musil describes the "other condition" as a "secret rising and ebbing of our being with that of things and other people." Robert Musil, "Toward Another Aesthetic," *Precision and Soul*, translated by Burton Pike and David S. Luft (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 199. In the *Man Without Qualities*, this "other condition" is invoked to describe the ego-less love of Ulrich and Agathe, that climaxes in moments when the boundaries between their bodies begin to blur, a condition that "crystallized after relatively few days full of countless impressions not easy to review in a moment, that Agathe's mouth was on his hair with no further claim, and that his hair was becoming warm and moist from her breath." Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, Vol. II (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 817. As Heinz-Peter Preußner has argued, Musil's concept was likely inspired by Ludwig Klages's "pathic condition," in which the self dissolves into an Ur-phenomena or Ur-image. Klages and this concept of the body's penetration by an image will return, as we'll see, in Benjamin's concept of aura. Heinz-Peter Preußner, "Die Masken des Ludwig Klages. Figurenkonstellation als Kritik und Adaption fremdlicher Ideen in Robert Musils Roman Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften," *Musil-Forum* 31 (2009/10): 224–253.

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<sup>37</sup> Breton, “La Crise de l’objet,” op. cit., pp. 21–22.

<sup>38</sup> He described this as the answer to a fragment of a “waking sentence” that consisted of the phrase “*le Cendrier Cendrillon*,” or Cinderella ashtray. Breton had several times asked Giacometti to fabricate this Cinderella ashtray, however the sculptor had neglected to execute it. It was only after returning from the market, and placing the spoon before him, that Breton recognized its connection to his waking sentence, and saw in it the answer to his unsatisfied request. Looking upon, or one might say, *attending to* the spoon, Breton “suddenly saw it charged with all the associative and interpretive qualities which had remained inactive while I was holding it. It was clearly changing right under my eyes.” The spoon itself took on the silhouette of a dance slipper, and the wood took on the transparency of glass, and the whole seemed capable of moving autonomously — just like the pumpkin-carriage in the fairy tale. “The marvelous slipper potential in the modest spoon” thereby assumed the moral of the Cinderella story itself, and provided closure previously unimagined, and by means previously unimaginable, to Breton. “A perfect organic unity had been reached,” Breton concluded. *Mad Love*, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>39</sup> “This sympathy inscribes in the realm of favorable happenstance [...] encounters which when they take place for one being alone are not taken account of [...] For individuals, as for societies, friendship and love, the relations created by the community of suffering and the convergence of demands, are alone capable of favoring this sudden dazzling combination of phenomena which belong to independent causal series.” *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>40</sup> The opening paragraph of *L’Age de l’homme* is one such attempt at self-portraiture. Michel Leiris, *L’Age de l’homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Leiris, *Journal*, op. cit., p. 322.

<sup>42</sup> François Stahly recalls his initial resistance to Giacometti’s explanation for his miniatures: his attempt to depict the appearance of a person, which only impresses us from a certain distance. Stahly initially regretted not telling Giacometti that one can of course simply *stand* at the right distance from a sculpture, and thus avoid this micro-mania, but later reflected that conventional sculpture had no means of stabilizing this distance, or calculating its variations as part of the work. The only thing to be done was to “prescribe a fixed standpoint for us.” Stahly, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>43</sup> Megan Luke, *Kurt Schwitters: Space, Image, Exile* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 192.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>45</sup> A “mental thing” is how Henry Moore describes the status of scale in his work, as something one judges according to an “innate vision” rather than any concrete engagement with a particular medium. Moore’s “innate vision” is the perfect inverse of the “absolute distance” Sartre locates in Giacometti’s sculpture. Whereas Moore maintains that monumentality is a property of certain forms — allowing them to be enlarged at will without losing their integrity — the monumentality of Giacometti’s miniatures is only apparent on the condition of their tininess (they must be, indeed, at the brink of losing their integrity to avail of it). *Cit. ibid.*, p. 182, from Henry Moore, “Size and Scale” (1964), *Henry Moore: Writings and Conversations*, ed. Alan Wilkinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 207.

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 1, as well as Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1977) and Yve-Alain Bois, “The Sculptural Opaque,” *SubStance* 10, no. 31 (1981): 23–48.

<sup>47</sup> Gottfried Boehm, “Das Problem der Form bei Alberto Giacometti,” *Louis Aragon mit anderen. Wege zum Giacometti*, ed. Axel Matthes (Munich: Matthes & Seitz, 1978), pp. 50–55.

<sup>48</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Little History of Photography,” op. cit., p. 518; “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Third Version),” op. cit., p. 255.

<sup>49</sup> “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility,” op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>50</sup> Miriam Bratu Hansen, *Cinema and Experience: Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), p. 115.

<sup>51</sup> Hansen argues that the Artwork essay critically limits the concept of aura to this “beautiful semblance,” in what she suggests is a “fetishistic deflection” to preserve the vitality of his concept, so that the only aura to get swept up in Benjamin’s critique of the totalitarian and industrial co-option of auratic force is aura in this very limited sense. In other words, Benjamin could only protect the political potential of aura by placing the term itself “under erasure” — either by “blasting it to pieces” in the Artwork essay, or by dismantling it and recoding it as other concepts (namely, the mimetic faculty and the optical unconscious). *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>52</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Little History of Photography,” op. cit., p. 104–5.

<sup>53</sup> Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, p. 473, qtd. in Hansen, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>54</sup> The other lost element of aura, she observes, is its “daemonic aspect,” which Benjamin develops in “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” where aura is defined as a way of seings that invents an object with the ability to “gaze back” at the viewer. On the relationship between this conception of aura, in particular insofar as it recalls a repressed or “forgotten human dimension” of objects, and the Surrealist uncanny, see Hal Foster, “Auratic Traces,” *Compulsive Beauty*, op. cit., pp. 193–206. The relationship of this uncanny aura and the claims made by Giacometti to sculpt “for the gaze” or indeed to sculpt a “living gaze” merits further work.

<sup>55</sup> Hansen, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124–25.

<sup>57</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,” *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 192.

<sup>58</sup> Later he repeats the point, with slightly different phrasing and tenor, writing that the invention of photography and cinema forced painting and sculpture respectively to “beat a retreat [...] behind *the necessity of expressing inner perception visually*.” André Breton, “Surrealist Situation of the Object/Situation of the Surrealist Object (1935),” *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press and Ann Arbor Paperback, 1972), p. 260, 272.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Augais, “Trait pour trait. Alberto Giacometti et les écrivains par voltes et faces d’ateliers,” PhD dissertation, Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2009, p. 204.

<sup>61</sup> André Breton, “Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism in the Plastic Arts,” *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), p. 227.

<sup>62</sup> Between 1880 and 1910, Paris saw the construction of more than 230 new public statues: 67 of the “men of letters,” 65 to “men of progress,” 56 of political figures, 45 of artistic luminaries. Based on the research of Jacques Lafranchi, as cited in June Hargrove, “Les Statues de Paris,” trans. M. Chatenet in Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Vol. II: La Nation (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), p. 256. See also Jacques Lanfranchi, *Les statues des grands hommes à Paris: Cœurs de bronze, têtes de pierre* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004).

<sup>63</sup> Maurice Agulhon, “La ‘statuomanie’ et L’histoire.” *Ethnologie Française*, Vol. 8, no. 2/3 (1978): 147.

<sup>64</sup> See Lars Berggren, “The ‘Monumentomania’ of the Nineteenth Century: Causes, Effects, and Problems of Study,” in *Memory and Oblivion*, edited by Wessel Reinink and Jeroen Stumpel, Proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art Held in Amsterdam, 1-7 September 1996 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), pp. 561–66; Janice Best, *Les Monuments de Paris sous la Troisième République: Contestation et commémoration du passé* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010).

On the Commune’s own grand instance of monumental iconoclasm, see Kristin Ross’s account of the toppling of the Vendôme column in *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 6–9.

<sup>65</sup> Gustave Pessard, *Statuomanie parisienne. Étude critique sur l’abus des statues* (Paris: H. Daragon, 1912).

<sup>66</sup> Breton, Andre, Gala Eluard, Paul Eluard, Nusch, Alberto Giacometti, J.M. Monnerot, Georges Wenstein, et al. “Recherches Expérimentales: sur la connaissance irrationnelle de l’objet: Boule de Cristal; Sur La Connaissance irrationnelle de l’objet : Un morceau de velours rose ; Sur Les Possibilités Irrationnelles de Pénétration et d’orientation dans un tableau ; Sur Les Possibilités irrationnelles de vie à une date quelconque ; Sur Certaines Possibilités d’embellissement irrationnelles d’une ville,” *Le Surréalisme Au Service de La Révolution*, No. 6 (May 15, 1933): 10–24.

<sup>67</sup> Louis Aragon, *Paysan de Paris* (Paris: Gallimard, 1953 [1923]), p. 187.

<sup>68</sup> Kirrily Freeman, *From Bronzes to Bullets: Vichy and the Destruction of French Public Statuary, 1941-1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); June Ellen Hargrove, *The Statues of Paris: An Open-Air Pantheon* (New York: The Vendome Press, 1990). Pierre Jahan and Jean Cocteau’s saccharin photo-essay documents the removal and destruction of some of these bronzes. Pierre Jahan and Jean Cocteau, *La Mort et les statues* (Paris: Seghers, 1977).

<sup>69</sup> Louis Réau, *Histoire Du Vandalisme: Les Monuments Détruits de L’art Français* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1994 [1959]), p. 875.

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<sup>70</sup> Claude Roger-Marx, “Le Moment est venu de mettre des statues sur les socles dépouillés,” *Le Figaro littéraire*, January 21, 1950. See Kirrily Freeman, “The Expression of Us All, Young and Old: Public Perceptions of the Bronze Mobilization Campaign,” in *Bronzes to Bullets: Vichy and the Destruction of French Public Statuary, 1941–1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> José Pierre, ed., *Tracts surréalistes et déclarations collectives 1922–1939* (Paris: Terrain vague, 1980), pp. 84–88. For a thorough accounting and analysis of the Surrealists’ opposition to the idolatry of statues, see Simon Baker, *Surrealism, History and Revolution* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 147–230.

<sup>72</sup> Aragon, *op. cit.*, p. 189–90.

<sup>73</sup> Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), pp. 18, 255–60.

<sup>74</sup> Serge Michalski argues that the Surrealists never saw the monuments as intruders in their landscape, but rather “appropriated the monuments because of their supreme qualities as icons and their gestural poignancy. [...] Surrealists saw in the public monuments suitable elements of a dialogue, a dialogue between the flâneur and his city. They constituted, in Breton's words, a ‘figure de participation’ to be questioned and provoked in a free play of rhetorical and poetic associations.” Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage, 1870-1997* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998), p. 47.

<sup>75</sup> Simon Baker, “Surrealism in the Bronze Age: Statuephobia and the Efficacy of Metaphorical Iconoclasm,” in *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, edited by Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 205.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Desnos, “Pygmalion and the Sphinx,” *Documents*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (1930): 38.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Springer, “Rhetorik Der Standhaftigkeit: Monument Und Sockel Nach Dem Ende Des Traditionellen Denkmals,” *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch: Westdeutsches Jahrbuch Für Kunstgeschichte*, no. 48–49 (1987): 370.

<sup>79</sup> André Breton, “Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality” [1924], *What is Surrealism?*, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Salvador Dalí, “Interprétation paranoïaque-critique de l’image obsédante d’Angélus de Millet,” *Minotaure* no. 1 (1933): 66.

<sup>80</sup> See Rosalind Krauss, “Echelle/Monumentalité: La Ruse de Brancusi,” in *Qu’est-Ce Que La Sculpture Moderne?* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1986), pp. 247–248.

<sup>81</sup> Pace Krauss, who writes that Giacometti’s Surrealist works are “simply and directly conceived as a base,” noting as examples his gameboard works like *Circuit* and *On ne joue plus* as well as horizontally-organized sculptures like *Project for a Passageway* or *Fall of a Body into a Diagram*. A gameboard or fallen body, however, are distinctly *not* pedestals as she defines them: as objects that grammatically link a site to a symbolic object. Krauss, “No More Play,” *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1984), p. 73. The exception that proves the rule may be *Cube* (see Chapter 1).

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<sup>82</sup> The variation of the title of the object captioned in a Serbian surrealist publication, “*objet embarrassant à poser*,” communicates the idea well. The photograph, by Marc Vaux, is furthermore published on its side, thus making the work appear to levitate, obscurely shouldering a table on its long edge. *Nadrealizam Danas i Ovde* [Surrealism Here and Now], n. 2 (January 1932): 54.

<sup>83</sup> In this sense, they are like Lygia Clark’s *Bichos*, those many hinged forms that clank noisily as one attempts to reconfigure them. If they are psychological toys for adults, are the kind of toy that teaches you to suffer dissatisfaction and gracelessness.

<sup>84</sup> Krauss, op. cit., pp. 43–85. See also Rosalind Krauss, *Bachelors* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000), pp. 5–7.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. David Getsy has taken qualified exception to this distinction, arguing that Giacometti’s later “fallen women,” such as *Woman with her Throat Cut*, are still statues — they’re just *toppled* statues, representations of a gender that has been denied the “erect subjectivity” of the male subject. See David J. Getsy, “Fallen Women: The Gender of Horizontality and the Abandonment of the Pedestal by Giacometti and Epstein,” in Alexandra Gerstein, ed., *Display and Displacement: Sculpture and the Pedestal from Renaissance to Post-Modern* (London: Courtauld Institute of Art Research Forum and Paul Holberton publishing, 2007), pp. 114–29.

<sup>87</sup> Clement Greenberg, “Art: Kurt Schwitters and Alberto Giacometti,” *The Nation* (February 7, 1948): 162.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Sam Hunter’s review in the *New York Times* similarly concluded that these works were failures, yet persisted in viewing them as important, sincere ones. Giacometti, along with Schwitters and Stanislas Lepri, may have “retired [...] into private sensibility and a desperate indifference to the world,” but what else could one expect from the “climate of nihilism and despair artists were confronted with in Europe between and after wars”? Sam Hunter, “Modern Extremists,” *New York Times* (January 25, 1948).

<sup>90</sup> “Entretien avec André Parinaud” (1962), *Écrits*, op cit., p. 242.

<sup>91</sup> For some, Giacometti himself had even fallen *into* this chasm between the real and the normative. Simone de Beauvoir reported how, at the turn of the 1940s, Giacometti would nervously maintain contact with walls as he walked through the streets, as though to “resist the gulf that was opening up beside him.” Simone de Beauvoir, *La Force de l’Age* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 502.

<sup>92</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom: Reflections on History*, ed. James Hastings Nichols (Boston, 1964), pp. 289–90.

<sup>93</sup> Bernard Lamarche-Vadel, *Alberto Giacometti* (Paris: Nouvelles Éditions françaises, 1984), p. 78.

<sup>94</sup> Jacques Dupin: “The purified vision [...] demands that the sculpter discover new means and new instruments, that he re-invent them at each moment. That he abandon the hand of former days, the obsolete tool, so as to learn everything all over again, and to approach, correct, prune, destroy and begin again without respite.” Dupin, op. cit., n.p..

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“Faire œuvre, cela signifie alors tenter, autant que faire se peut, non pas de résoudre, mais d’affronter l’in-compossibilité réalisée de la figure et de l’objet, de la vie et de la mort. Faire œuvre, c’est donc viser non pas l’éternité d’une forme matérielle *apparue*, mais l’*apparaître* d’une force capable de se subjuguer la matière, quand bien même cette apparition demeure indirecte, instable, contingente et inachevée – soit essentiellement menacée par la disparition.” Benjamin Delmotte, “Au Risque de La Disparition.” *Nouvelle Revue d’esthétique*, no. 8 (February 2011): 108.

<sup>95</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, op. cit., p. 632.

<sup>96</sup> On the concept of crisis as “last judgement,” and thus as a crucial periodizing function in the construction of modern history, see Reinhart Koselleck, “Crisis.” Translated by Michaela W. Richter. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 2 (April 2006): 357–400; Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” (1997), translated by Robert Hurley, in Paul Rabinow, ed., *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, Vol. 1 (New York: New Press, 1997), pp. 303–19; Michel Foucault, “What is Critique?” in *The Politics of Truth*, eds. Sylvère Lotringer and Lysa Hochroth, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997); Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993). See also Tom Boland, “Critique as a technique of self: a Butlerian analysis of Judith Butler’s prefaces”, *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 20, no. 3 (2007): 105-122.

<sup>98</sup> While Thierry Dufrêne mentions that the architectonic form of the plinths gives the miniatures a relationship to the monument, he nevertheless calls them “anti-monuments where the base isn’t there to support a volume, but instead to support space.” Thierry Dufrêne, “Art et Réalité : l’oeuvre d’Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Le Monumental à rebours,” PhD Dissertation, 1993, p. 107.

Yves Bonnefoy also briefly acknowledges the pedestals, by way of returning to his claim for the significance of the Place des Pyramides accident: the experience of the figure in the distance, which seems remote and indifferent, recalls Giacometti’s experience when pinned against the pedestal of the statue of Joan of Arc at the center of the square. Bonnefoy, op. cit., p. 272.

<sup>99</sup> Giacometti’s interest in the pedestal as a form for its own sake reappears in his design for the tomb of the photographer Gerda Taro, or Gerta Pohorylle, the first female war photographer to be killed in action near Brunete during the Spanish Civil War in 1937, and who became at the time of her death a celebrated martyr for PCF. The tombstone was commissioned by Aragon in 1938 and unveiled in May of that year, and consisted of a simple slab with three objects spaced on top of it: a granite falcon and urn, in reference to Egyptian funeral statuary, and a simple plinth resembling a mile-marker bearing an inscription. It is possible that this “mile marker” references a photograph of Taro taken by Robert Capa and published with her death announcement on the cover of *Ce Soir* on July 29, 1937. In this image, Taro is curled around a stone marker inscribed with the letters “P.C.” — likely for “*partido comunal*.” Giacometti’s design thereby would recreate Capa’s image, minus Taro, whose body had been displaced below, and whose reference to the Party had been substituted with the details of Taro’s life and sacrifice. See Casimiro D. Crescenzo, “La Tomba Di Gera Taro: Un Lavoro Inedito Di Alberto Giacometti,” in *Alberto Giacometti*, edited by Marco Belpoliti, Claudio Fontana, and Elio Grazioli (Milan: Riga, 1991), pp. , 251–67; Irme Schaber, “The Eye of Solidarity: The Photographer Gerda Taro and Her Work During the Spanish Civil War, 1936-37,” in *Gerda Taro*, ex. cat. “Gerda Taro,” organized by the International Center of Photography, New York (Göttingen: Steidl, 2007), pp. 9–37; François Maspero, *L’ombre D’une Photographie, Gerda Taro* (Paris: Seuil, 2006).

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<sup>100</sup> Catherine Chevillot, “Le Socle,” in *La Sculpture Française Au XIXe Siècle*, (Paris: Editions du Réunion des musées nationaux, 1986), pp. 242–51.

<sup>101</sup> See Thierry Dufrière, “Les << Places >> de Giacometti Ou Le <<monumental a Rebours >>.” *Histoire de L’art*, no. 27 (October 1994): 87; Valerie Fletcher, *Alberto Giacometti, 1901-1966*. Washington, D.C.: Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 1988), p. 33; Hendel Teicher, “Du *Minotaure* au *Labyrinthe*,” ex. cat. *Alberto Giacometti, Retour à la figuration* (Geneva and Paris: Musée d’art et d’histoire, Genève and Musée nationale d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986), p. 23; Yves Bonnefoy, op. cit., p. 272. Jacques Dupin more simply describes this as an operation of (dis)proportion: “the larger the pedestal in relation to the sculpture, the farther away the figure appears to be.” Dupin, op. cit..

The exception to this may be Véronique Wiesinger’s passing comment that “it is clearly sculpture and not people who are represented” in his oeuvre, making it fundamentally a “meta-oeuvre (an oeuvre conceived through other oeuvres).” Wiesinger does not elaborate on this statement. Véronique Wiesinger, “Etant Donnés: Un espace, une tête, et une figure,” *Alberto Giacometti: Espace, Tête, Figure* (Grenoble: Actes Sud/Musée de Grenoble/Fondation Giacometti, 2013), p. 136.

<sup>102</sup> “[P]our faire l’impression que j’avais, j’aurais dû faire une peinture et non une sculpture. Ou alors, j’aurais dû faire un socle immense pour que l’ensemble corresponde à la vision.” “Entretien avec Pierre Dumayet” (1963), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 300–301.

<sup>103</sup> Sketches from Fehheimer’s book appear in one of Giacometti’s notebooks dated to these years, along with a detailed copy of the “cube statue” of Senenmut, c. 1937. FAAG 2000-1119. Fehheimer’s book is also in the inventory of Giacometti’s library. Hedwig Fehheimer, *Die Plastik der Ägypter* (Berlin: Bruno Cassierer Verlag, 1914), pp. 60–61, 86–87. See also Christian Klemm and Dieter Wildung, eds., *Alberto Giacometti, Der Ägypter* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2008).

Hugo Weber recounts at these images in *Verve*, and contrasting them with Maillol’s sculpture, which Giacometti had judged as having “too much fat.” Cit. in Rienhold Hohl, *Giacometti: A Biography in Pictures* (Berlin: Hatje, 1998), p. 95.

<sup>104</sup> Etienne Jollet, “Objet d’attention. l’intérêt pour le support en France à l’époque moderne,” in *Display and Displacement: Sculpture and the Pedestal from Renaissance to Post-Modern*, edited by Alexandra Gerstein (London: The Courtauld Institute of Art Research Forum and Paul Holberton, 2007). While a number of (French) historians and artists distinguish between the *socle* and the *piédestal*, I have chosen to use the words interchangeably here — both because contemporary English tends to treat the terms interchangeably, and because “base” carries associations that (as seen in the brief discussion of Bataille above) go far beyond the “box-shape under a statue.”

<sup>105</sup> Chevillot, op. cit., p. 249.

<sup>106</sup> The role of the frame, argues Derrida, is to become invisible just as the moment when it exerts itself against the antagonizing forces around it, “une violence qu’il aura mission d’organiser.” The *parergon* thus defined as “une forme qui a pour détermination traditionnelle non pas de se détacher mais de disparaître, de s’enfoncer, de s’effacer, de se fondre au moment où il déploie sa plus grande énergie. Le cadre n’est en aucun cas un fond comme peuvent l’être le milieu ou l’oeuvre mais son épaisseur de marge n’est pas non plus une figure. Du moins est-ce une figure qui s’enlève d’elle-même.” Jacques Derrida, *La Vérité en peinture*, pp. 72–73.

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<sup>107</sup> The conception of the pedestal as a “figure qui s’enlève d’elle-même” could provide a framework for narrating the evolution of the pedestal in Giacometti’s postwar work, from the monumental plinths of the miniatures to the torso-as-plinth in his late work, such as his *Lotar II* (c. 1964–65) and his series *Annette I-X* (1962–65). For a different classification of Giacometti’s monument types, divided into those that share a pedestal and those more “compositional” dispositions in which sculptures appeared with their own bases on a shared plane, see Thierry Dufrière, “Les « Places » de Giacometti ou le « monumental à rebours »,” *Histoire de L’art*, no. 27 (October 1994): 81–92.

<sup>108</sup> “Regardant plus loin autour de moi, je repère encore de nombreuses autres pièces de la dimension d’une épingle, principalement sur la table du lavabo [...] Leurs dimensions donnent à la cuvette du lavabo l’étendue d’un océan, à tout le moins du lac Léman.” Hugo Weber Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Reel 844. An excerpt of Weber’s account, “Avec Giacometti à Genève 1942–1944,” edited by Willy Rotzler and translated by André Kenzi, was published in *Alberto Giacometti*, ex. cat. (Martigny: Fondation Pierre Gianadda, 1986), p. 171.

<sup>109</sup> “Un matin, nous empruntons un bac devant l’hôtel de Giacometti pour nous rendre sur l’autre rive chez le sculpteur Fritz Huf. Jetant de cette rive un regard en arrière, curieusement en même temps, nous apercevons tous deux une silhouette féminine -- du moins nous apparaît-elle ainsi - debout sur la rampe de béton de la piscine et se détachant sur l’étendue du lac. A l’arrière plan s’élève le puissant Mont-Blanc. ... Le contraste entre la frêle silhouette et l’ampleur du lac et des montagnes en surplomb est énorme, vous couple le souffle. Tous deux, nous reconnaissons l’ ‘épingle’ à laquelle Giacometti travaille si intensément. L’expérience n’appelle aucun commentaire; il suffit que nous voyions et ressentions les deux la même chose.” Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Daniel Sherman, *The Construction of Memory in Interwar France* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 150–59.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 210. Sherman’s excellent analysis of these realist monuments in relation to the allegorical commemorations argues that their gendered terms, and the corresponding discursive differences, emerged out of interwar anxieties about women — at once privileged signs of the civilian and the values of peacetime society, and also individuals resented, either for being spared the violence of war, or for “profiting” from it (through increased freedom, through sexual liberation). See also Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>112</sup> Qtd. in Sherman, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>113</sup> Nelly, Diego, and Alberto had tried to flee Paris on bicycle on June 13, 1940, just before the German army arrived in the city. They reached the outskirts of Estampes the following morning as a bombing raid began, and were forced to join the stream of refugees fleeing machine-gun fire. After being overtaken by invading troops in Moulins two days later, the trio turned back and arrived back on Paris on June 22, the day of the cease-fire.

<sup>114</sup> These included Giacometti’s work for Albert Skira’s publication *Labyrinthe*, as well as a pair of decorative vases commissioned by Skira for his home. See Teicher, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>115</sup> In recent years, installations of the miniatures in exhibitions have modeled themselves after one of these two alternatives. Either a miniature is displayed on a large plinth, typically with a protectively vitrine, such as in recent retrospectives in Landernau, France, and the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, or a

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number of smaller-scale sculptures are displayed close to another, echoing postwar photographs of Giacometti's studio that show a disordered assembly of miniatures, mingled with somewhat larger works, on the artist's shelves. This grouping was featured in the exhibition "L'Art en guerre" (Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris and the Guggenheim Bilbao), where the groupings — especially the installation in Paris — evoked an aestheticized version of the studio environment to convey a sense of wartime *labor* or process rather than individual masterworks.

<sup>116</sup> Stahly records Giacometti's explanation of his sculpture thusly: "Ich versuche, dem Kopf die richtige Größe zu geben, die tatsächliche Größe, wie es dem Außerirdischen erscheint, wenn er einen Kopf in seiner vollen Sicht übersehen will, die Dinge können nur durch unser Auge in einem reduzierten Maß übersehen werden. Wir nähern uns Dingen, perspektivische Übertreibungen und Schwellungen entstehen, die den Gesamteindruck zerstören, der Gesamteindruck aber in der Plastik ist, ohne dass wir um die Skulptur herum sind, wenn uns ein Mensch gefällt und uns fasziniert, dann sind wir was man von seinem Aussehen beeindruckt, erfordert eine gewisse Distanz." François Stahly, "Der Bildhauer Alberto Giacometti." *Werk XXXVII*, no. 6 (June 1950): 182.

<sup>117</sup> David Sylvester refers to them in passing as "prototypes of all the later female standing figures." David Sylvester, *Looking at Giacometti* (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 142.

<sup>118</sup> In May 1945, he writes to Isabel, "I've begun the same thing numerous times, missing the mark each time. My figure ended up becoming so minuscule each time that the work became imponderable and yet it was almost what I wanted, only I have a certain size in mind which I have to achieve and only a year ago did I get to it, but not the point I want (the size yes). I know nevertheless that I will no longer give up what I've been working on since September and that I will get there, despite everything, in the end, at least if I'm not living in the most complete illusion, which I struggle to believe because every day there a little progress..." Letter to Isabel Delmer, May 14, 1945, Tate Gallery Archives, Inv. 9612.1.2.4. Reprinted in *Alberto Giacometti, Isabel Nicholas, Correspondances*, op. cit., p. 81.

During the early 1940s, indeed, Giacometti did produce one large sculpture, titled *Chariot*. While *Chariot*, like many of the miniatures, is a frontal, slightly elongated statue of a female figure centered on a plinth, the only description of these miniatures as *drafts* of the large work occurs in a journal entry by Michel Leiris, who describes encountering Giacometti in his studio in early November of 1945, just a couple months after Giacometti's return to Paris. There, he finds Giacometti still working on the "female figure that he took up many years ago and for which he made maquettes barely larger than a pin." Leiris, *Journal*, op. cit., p. 423.

<sup>119</sup> In fact, Giacometti was in the practice in the postwar period of making plaster casts from clay models, which were then sent to the foundry, and then continuing to work on the clay form. Giacometti moreover often carved into his plaster casts. There is nevertheless little indication that intervention was needed for Giacometti to produce a "finished" bronze. On Giacometti's various techniques of working, see Philippe Büttner, "Alberto Giacometti's Use of Sculptural Materials," in *Alberto Giacometti: Beyond Bronze*, op. cit., pp. 22–43.

<sup>120</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, "The Quest for the Absolute," *Essays in Aesthetics* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1963), p. 84.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>122</sup> Véronique Wiesinger, "Sculpting Unceasingly," in *The Studio of Alberto Giacometti*, (Paris: Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti/Centre Pompidou, 2007), p. 79.

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<sup>123</sup> “A large figure was false for me, but a small one intolerable all the same,” Giacometti recalled to Pierre Matisse. Alberto Giacometti, “Lettre à Pierre Matisse,” *Écrits*, p. 93. By way of further evidence for this claim, one might cite Giacometti’s decision to include these miniatures in his first exhibition after the war, at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in 1948. Six of the smallest works were displayed in a vitrine alongside two relatively larger figures, as well as several works dating from Giacometti’s surrealist period, including *Dreaming Woman*.

<sup>124</sup> FAAG inventory 2000-0111.

<sup>125</sup> Yves Bonnefoy, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>126</sup> Richard Klein, *Cigarettes are Sublime* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 30–31.

<sup>127</sup> Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, *op. cit.*, pp. 753–55.

<sup>128</sup> Qtd. in Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>129</sup> My emphasis. Bonnefoy, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>130</sup> See Büttner, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–39.

<sup>131</sup> Dupin, *op. cit.*, n.p..

<sup>132</sup> This is the case of the possessive in the singular. “My cigarettes” designates a *pack* of cigarettes, which I can consume myself or offer to others — but it would be strange if, had you to taken one, I were to refer to it still as “my *cigarette*” that you are smoking.

<sup>133</sup> See Sartre, *op. cit.*, pp. 756–762.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 757.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 760–61.

<sup>136</sup> Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Sartre draws his concept of crystallization from Stendhal’s notion of the beloved woman who “manifests the sky, the shore, the sea which surrounded her when she appeared” — an image echoed in Giacometti’s description of Isabel on the boulevard St. Michel. Yet crystallization was also a privileged term for André Breton. “There could be no higher artistic teaching than that of the crystal,” Breton writes in the opening pages of *Mad Love*. Crystal has lucidity and structure, and yet is precisely the opposite of an imposed form (*natura naturans* as opposed to *natura naturata*); “nonperfectible by definition,” it spontaneously ramifies, building outward in space without prior design or point of completion. Giacometti’s interest in the crystal — most evidently in *Cube* and the “crystallized” faceting of *Cubist Head*, though crystal forms appear throughout his early notebooks — provide one indication that the crystal was a significant formal model for Giacometti as well. But this shared ground is even more apparent in what the crystal embodies for Breton: convulsive beauty, or the razor’s edge between motion and stillness. The crystal quartz that he observed in a grotto near Montpellier was a manifestation of convulsive beauty because it was at once inert mineral, and continually in formation — much like the formally non-crystalline “liquid” miniatures. André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 11.

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<sup>137</sup> One can trace a thematic of transgressed boundaries in Céline's *Bagatelles* no less than Bataille's concept of the labyrinth. On the transgression of the boundaries of the male body in Céline — in particular, his *Bagatelles* — see Sanos, op. cit., pp. 178–185 and Carolyn Dean, *The Frail Social Body: Pornography, Homosexuality, and Other Fantasies in Interwar France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), as well as Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). As Kaplan argues, however, Kristeva's reading of Céline broadens to incorporate modern writing *tout court*, nominating him as a “prophet of the apocalypse” that is “rooted, *no matter* what its socio-historical conditions might be, on the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so — double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject.” Cit. in Kaplan, p. 124.

<sup>138</sup> Kaplan, op. cit., pp. 34-35. One might quibble that seductive fascism is precisely a flight from freedom, in its existential sense, although Fromm's use of the word connotes a more conversational sense of personal autonomy or agency.

<sup>139</sup> The place of the death drive in the myth of fascist national building is at the heart of Roger Griffin's definition of fascism as “palingenetic ultra-nationalism”: an ideology that seeks the birth (genesis) of the nation in beginning anew (“palin-”), through a destruction of the present order that brings forth the future. Projects on the aesthetics of fascism like Emily Braun's study of modernist fragmentation and distortion in the painting of Mario Sironi and Sandrine Sanos's analysis of anti-semitism in bodily metaphors for the French nation in 1930s far-right rhetoric trace this palingenesis through the scenes of bodily transgression. Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 26. See also Antliff, op. cit., p. 26–7.

<sup>140</sup> Kaplan draws on Klein's model of projective identification. “The fascist subject incorporates the state, experiences the state within himself [...]. The fascist ideal is being swallowed by the subject at the same time as it is being projected onto the leader. Projection and introjection are not always even that distinguishable.” *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>141</sup> Henri Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Presses universitaires françaises, 1932), p. 331.

<sup>142</sup> Eugen Weber, *Hollow Years*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>143</sup> Qtd. in Sanos, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>145</sup> Giacometti locates this desire-run-backward in the drive of modern art. “The whole *démarche* of modern artists is in this desire to seize, to possess something that is constantly fleeing. They want to possess the sensation that they have of reality, more than reality itself.” Alberto Giacometti, “Entretien avec André Parinaud,” *Écrits.*, pp. 241–42.

<sup>146</sup> Another operation of the polarity machine is to have swapped the terms of abstract and figurative in naming the constituents of this totality: the abstract or spiritual idea of “the people” becomes a specific group designated by the pseudo-science of scientific racism, while real, concrete threats and difficulties in interwar Europe are displaced onto the abstract idea of a Jewish menace. Kaplan, op. cit., p. 32.

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<sup>147</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Little History of Photography,” *Selected Writings, Vol. II, Part 2: 1931–1934*, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 523.

<sup>148</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility (Third Version),” *Selected Writings, Vol. IV, 1938–40*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 255. Benjamin’s italics.

<sup>149</sup> The phrase appears in quotations in the Benjamin’s text, from Johannes V. Jensen’s 1919 *Exotische Novellen*. Ibid., p. 256, 272 fn 10.

<sup>150</sup> Benjamin, “The Destructive Character,” *Reflections*, pp. 302–3.

<sup>151</sup> Giacometti, Alberto. “Letter from Alberto Giacometti to Albert Skira [?],” October 26, 1944. Fonds Eli Lotar. Centre Pompidou - MnaM.

<sup>152</sup> The accompanying text was signed Strambin, a single-use pen-name for Cingria. *Retour à la figuration*, p. 69. Hendel Tiecher, confirmed this, but could not recall who had told them so; perhaps Montandon. Though the images depict Giacometti at work on two tiny figures, the text itself is a byzantine reflection on his onetime position in the Parisian avant-garde and the effect of his mountain-shepherd mien. In the same letter to Skira, Giacometti calls the text “mechant” and says he hates shepherds, preferring instead the social life of the brothels. Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Giacometti, in fact, drew the first mock-up of the journal’s cover, when it was to be named *L’Œil*. The decision to ultimately call it *Labyrinthe* assured continuity with Skira’s previous project, *Minotaure*.

<sup>154</sup> *Labyrinthe* printed 23 issues between October 15, 1944 and December 1946. Montandon signed on as managing editor from its eighteenth-issue onward.

<sup>155</sup> Henri Noverraz, “Hommage a Alberto Giacometti,” s.d. Fonds Henri Noverraz. Bibliothèque de Genève. Arch. Noverraz 73. “No subject was off limits,” affirmed Hugo Weber, “from meta-politics to contraband morphine smuggled for Resistance fighters to the relative beauty of an embryo.” Weber, op. cit.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> In a letter to his family from Paris, dated, c. 1939, Giacometti wrote: “Now it’s like total delirium everywhere. It’s true that in the Russian plains like in the French villages and everywhere else, life continues slowly, hardly changing, on another system, and it’s so complex that you don’t understand anything anymore. You can only work for yourself in a little, limited corner (?) but the little corner itself can become so vast, limitless. People who claim that they can’t work for themselves because for ex. there is fighting in Spain or think that fascism is advancing are incomprehensible to me.” Alberto Giacometti, “Letter to Family,” undated [c. 1939]. SIK-Isea, HNA 247.A.2.1.146

<sup>158</sup> “Critical no,” he wrote a decade earlier in one of his journals, “it must be contained in the things that I do, their existence will be the critique of certain things, it’s a positive and continuous critique.” FAAG 2000-0116, reprinted in *Écrits*, p. 483.

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<sup>159</sup> Henri Focillon, “Jacques Callot ou le Microcosme,” in *De Callot à Lautrec*, (Paris: La Bibliothèque des arts, 1957), p. 28.

<sup>160</sup> See Gwilherm Perthuis, “Misères de la Guerre : de Callot à Gruber,” *Les Années Labyrinthe: Giacometti, Balthus, Skira*, ex. cat., p. 18.

<sup>161</sup> Catherine Bernard-Gruber and Armelle Vanazzi, *Francis Gruber* (Neuchâtel: Ides et Calendes, 1989), p. 27.

<sup>162</sup> Alberto Giacometti, “A propos de Jacques Callot,” *Labyrinthe* n. 7 (April 15, 1945): 3; reprinted in *Ecrits*, op. cit., pp. 63–65.

<sup>163</sup> The point recalls Bataille’s argument about the relation between sacrifice, auto-mutilation, and other forms of “alteration” with artistic creation. See Georges Bataille, “Sacrificial Mutilation and the Severed Ear of Vincent Van Gogh,” in *Visions of Excess*, op. cit., pp. 61–72. Many years later, Henri Noverraz, recalling the memory of Giacometti’s miniatures, wrote that seeing them pinned for an eternity to their pedestals, he could not help but see Giacometti as an “entomologist of human insects.” Henri Noverraz, “Hommage À Alberto Giacometti,” c. 1986, Fonds Henri Noverraz. Bibliothèque de Genève., Arch. Noverraz 73.

<sup>164</sup> Giacometti, op. cit.

<sup>165</sup> Focillon, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>166</sup> This strategy of redescribing artists’ work in terms that make them a proxy for himself was one Giacometti used at several points in his life, including in articles on Henri Laurens, André Derain, and Georges Braque. On Giacometti’s writings, see Donat Rütimann, “Is It the Thrill of Writing or an Obsession with a New Beginning,” in *Alberto Giacometti: Retrospective* (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2009), pp. 193–232.

<sup>167</sup> Giacometti, “Callot,” op. cit..

<sup>168</sup> Theweleit, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>170</sup> Alberto Giacometti, “Entretien avec Jean Clay” (1963), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 315.

<sup>171</sup> Theweleit, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>172</sup> Michael Balint, *Thrills and Regressions* (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1959), p. 25.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67–68.

<sup>174</sup> Letter to Isabel, 30 July 1945, Tate Gallery Inv. 9612.1.2.5. Reprinted in *Alberto Giacometti, Isabel Nicholas, Correspondances*, op. cit., p. 83.

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<sup>175</sup> Jean Starobinski, "Extraits d'un entretien filmé le 10 juillet 2008," *Giacometti, Balthus, Skira Les années "Labyrinthe" (1944-1946)*, edited by Stefan Zweifel (Geneva: Musée de Rath, 2009).

<sup>176</sup> One might observe that the viewer of this third object has thus taken the place of the statue, simultaneously present and remote.

## CONCLUSION

46, rue Hippolyte-Maindron, Alberto Giacometti's studio, is not a landmarked site. Half of the building was torn down in the 1980s to widen the enclosed courtyard, while the other half — the one that Giacometti inhabited from February 1926 until his death on January 6, 1966 — has been stripped of any evidence of the sculptor, down to the plaster walls that served as an ad-hoc sketching pad. Sections of these walls now hang in private collections, while the space itself remains humbly tucked into a residential corner of Paris, sunk back into anonymity, as I imagine Giacometti would have liked it.

Someone lives there now, and by the looks of it, they share his low bar for domestic comforts. The metal door to the courtyard hung open the day that I passed by. There was an old man inside, stirring the fallen leaves with a stick broom, who quizzed me about Giacometti before he let me enter. I'd already examined the contents of the studio at the Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, filed and sorted like objects from a crime scene: the plaster models of a Goudean head and the Venus of Lespugue, a wooden hand as mannered and delicate as a Parmagianino's long-necked Madonna's, sundry books from old friends with tender dedications ("To Alberto, for all the conversations we haven't had, Affectionately, Louis," wrote Aragon), old copies of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, their margins swarming with doodles in blue ballpoint pen. My visit to the old studio was prompted by a desire for something more abstract: a

sense of scale — though the *gardien* naturally assumed that I was there to cadge the aura of the place (which was, of course, also true). After leaving me to wander for several minutes, he beckoned me over to a bench where I waded a few questions. Did Diego continue to work there every day, even after Alberto's death? Was Annette there when she wasn't modeling? Who were the neighbors in the 1960s? Did he know anything about Rita? With each question, the *gardien* grew increasingly evasive, his nonsequiturs ever stranger, until eventually, I came upon the right question: How long have you been living here? I asked. Never, it turned out. He just lived in the neighborhood; the residents sometimes let him enter when he had nothing else to do and they were feeling magnanimous. It was, after all, a charming courtyard, didn't I agree?

The true gatekeepers of the canon may be narratives, not people. I began this dissertation with a description of three consequences of the standard crisis narrative for Giacometti's career, three ways it barred entry to this decade of sculpture. By way of conclusion, I would like to return to them now. The first consequence concerned the impression of Giacometti's crisis as an inscrutable "moment of truth." This rendered the works either symptoms of shock or precursors to revelation. Both statuses remain unspeakable because they are figurations of something that can only be *represented* in Chartier's strong sense. Yet the dramatic alterations to the figure in Giacometti's sculpture between 1935 and 1945, first on the face and then in the image of the body, were not isolated from the political contexts in which the self-evidence and stability of these forms had been called into question. The interaction between these two arenas of the human form's significance frames the history of modern sculpture in the problems of figuration and the perceiving body. It moreover points the way toward an alternate history that does not relegate depictions of the human form to the periphery, as Rosalind Krauss did in her influential and polemical *Passages of Modern Sculpture*, but instead narrates sculpture's dialectical struggle

with the monument by keeping the figure front and center.<sup>1</sup> As a result, crucial figurative works from the last half century (made by Ed and Nancy Kienholz, Charles Ray, Duane Hansen, Paul Thek, and George Segal, to name only a disparate handful) may reemerge powerfully on the timeline, while the efflorescence of contemporary figurative sculpture — from Nicole Eisenman to Paul McCarthy, Urs Fischer, Francis Upritchard, Maurizio Cattelan, Rebecca Warren, Cathy Wilkes, Josh Kline, and many others — can be situated in a fulsome history. In light of the now common comparison of our own times to the 1930s, the intelligibility of this history as it intersected with the political upheavals of the interwar period and World War II, appears all the more essential.

Representation and figuration in modern sculpture are bound together, not just because of the latter's historically symbolic, monumental functions, but because the (morphologically) representative and the (rhetorically) figurative interleave through the third body that they mutually address: the nation. Phrases like the “sordid face” of France or “the mountains are the body of the country” of Switzerland, or even “Je suis partout,” are metaphors for the national-social body designed to take form. And form itself can become a means to either resist or express their logic. Giacometti's heads of Rita and Diego applied the “concrete gestalt” of their operative violence to the rigid schema of the face — an abstract schema that had enabled and justified both racism and despotism in the 1930s. This concept of form was amplified in the artist's miniatures, but now in a dialectic of the destructive drive and the positive void that also characterized fascist terror. Between these linked concepts of form lay the one properly revelatory moment for Giacometti in this decade of work, in which he uncovered scale as a means to figure relations that cannot be consolidated in a single volume. In all three stages, form defies integration with

the sculptural body. By refusing to cohere, it suggests that these works appeared heretofore inscrutable because we had been looking for objects rather than their unmaking.

The second consequence of the crisis narrative was the impression of a definitive rupture between his sculpture before 1935 and after 1945, and its corollary of the insufficiency of Surrealism and the triumph of postwar figuration. Instead, this dissertation has argued that Giacometti's sculpture after 1935 *emerged from* the preoccupations of his avant-garde objects. The conceptual and formal frameworks for these objects consequently pervaded his practice through the following decade. Giacometti's tenure in Surrealism, as well as his contemporaneous relationship with Carl Einstein, facilitated his critique of the dominant examples of modernist sculptural surface and provided new models for the relation of objects and interiority. The polarities in his Surrealist work, between erotic promise and violent force or between immediacy and memory, continued to operate through the first half of the 1940s, even as his work began to resemble, in miniature, the forms and repetitions of his iconic postwar oeuvre.

But the implied convergence of Surrealist and postwar Giacometti, and the pre- and post-crisis artist, is hardly fluid. The conceptions of form that emerge in these chapters are respectively disruptive, jarring, and annihilating. The works themselves are recalcitrant, repetitive but discomfiting, fetishistic yet negligible, and ultimately uncountable. And that may be precisely the point. To recall Adorno's theory of the essay, these fragments and miniatures were doing their job: brusquely exposing the underlying connectedness of terms that the historiography of twentieth-century sculpture has kept apart, whether we choose to call them the monument-foil and the commodity-foil, the constructed and the ready-made sculpture, or the phenomenological and semiological object. The fractiousness of this convergence in modern

sculpture at large becomes clear through the difficulty of historicizing Giacometti's portrait busts and miniatures.

This difficulty was the basis of the third consequence of the crisis narrative. Since established Giacometti discourse conceives the postwar sculpture as the work of pure perception or the ground zero of figuration, it telescopes the preceding breakdown of an art *practice* in the breakdown of artworks themselves. As a result, the sculptures become impossible to see because they are conceived as negations (as “unlearning”) or as incoherencies.<sup>2</sup> My attempt to look at these works nonetheless — without looking past their banality, fragility, or fundamental fungibility — has centered on three aspects of sculpture: its surface, its scale, and its singularity. These aspects bridge Giacometti's work before 1945 with his postwar iconic oeuvre. Its stylistic consistency is built up from the lessons of crisis as described in this project. The turbulent surface texture, the embodied experience of scale, and the proliferation and destruction of the representation of the body account for the most recognizable features of Giacometti's postwar oeuvre. A style emerged from the insights of crisis; crisis persists in the repetition of a style.

In September 1945, Giacometti returned to Paris to find his studio exactly as he left it. He'd brought with him a few of his miniatures, and set to work on a few others — this time, on commission. Small heads of Simone de Beauvoir, Marie-Laure de Noailles, and Rol Tanguy were on order, but as he set to work, something at last was shifting. He once again felt the desire to make large sculpture, he related to Pierre Matisse, but to his surprise “they only resembled something [*elles n'étaient ressemblantes que*] when they were long and thin.”<sup>3</sup> They would remain that way until his death on January 6, 1966.

The consistency of his postwar style did not bother Giacometti, even as France changed dramatically around him. Once Sartre had named his “quest for the absolute,” no deviation was

necessary or warranted. “The most loyal vision is the one rendered from style,” Giacometti asserted to Pierre Schneider, as they wandered the Louvre in 1962.<sup>4</sup> Isn’t everything truer when it has a style? he queried other interviewers over the years. A style for Giacometti was epochal and collective; placing his own oeuvre alongside the civilizations before, like the Egyptians and the Etruscans, made the matter of a couple decades seemed insignificant.<sup>5</sup> Giacometti’s concept of style was not exactly a *Kunstwollen*, however, since it was almost entirely static: to each civilization, its own style, its own manner of seeing the world with more or less force of expression, greater or lesser verisimilitude. Revolution had no place in it, and the periodizing historicity of crisis even less of one.

A different model of crisis, however, seemed to bear down on Giacometti in the postwar period. “Three years ago,” Giacometti recounted in 1963 to Jean Clay, “I began to make very complicated calculations. I said to myself: time progresses geometrically. This head that I made in six months, now I could make it in an hour. So six months = one hour. But, what now takes me an hour, soon I’ll be able to make in five minutes. On this basis, even if I only lived two years, I would arrive at one hundred thousand years of real life.”<sup>6</sup> These calculations describe the conditions of time before the ultimate crisis — “purely and simply the final crisis of all history that precedes it,” writes Koselleck.

When measured with respect to the prior course of our history, it can no longer be excluded that this model, necessarily characterized as utopian, has every chance of being realized in light of present-day means of self-destruction. In contrast to the others, this concept of crisis is a purely future-oriented one and aims at a final decision.<sup>7</sup>

Christian theological thought holds that, when the end approaches, God will make time run faster — shortening the time of calamity as a final gesture of grace. Months will become weeks, weeks will become days; what destruction man wreaks in six months will be accomplished in an hour.

For Bacon and Leibniz, this eschatological foreshortening had a secular analogue. As time progressed, they predicted, the rate of important historical events, from scientific discoveries to political conflicts, would accelerate as the intervals between these events exponentially decreased.<sup>8</sup> From both a Christian and non-Christian perspective, this foreshortening is a crisis: it is the mounting and inescapable pressure of accumulating time, as we stare down our annihilation.

Giacometti's portrait busts and miniatures arrived in another period of rapid acceleration, with the sense that the coming crisis might be the last. Yet the obverse of this acceleration, as Giacometti experienced it in the early 1960s, was a vast accumulation of possibility concentrated in a tiny interval in time. When he came to republish *Heritage of Our Times* in 1963, Ernst Bloch wrote a postscript in which he acknowledged the desperation of interwar art. But like Benjamin's destructive character, he also imagined a way through, one that opened out of the failures of interwar gestures and imagined them as accumulated possibilities. His postscript is a formula for navigating darkness: an "art of crisis," you could say, as others have written an art of war or an art of cooking. I will leave you with his words, with their diagnosis as well as their hope.

"The Golden twenties": the Nazi horror germinated in them, and no light fell down below here, experimental art drew its lines into unheard of regions and found nothing it can hold on to — may that be different one day. Hollow space with sparks, this will probably remain our condition for a long time, but a hollow space which allows us to walk undisguised, and with sparks which increasingly model a figure of direction. The paths in the midst of collapse are layable, right through the middle.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1981), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The distinction between “unlearning” here and “unmaking” above is crucial for an understanding of Giacometti’s sculpture between 1935 and 1945 not merely because the latter is undergone materially rather than intellectually or psychologically, but because unmaking does not imply a reversion or clearing-away in any true sense (one cannot, after all, un-bake a cake). Giacometti’s process of unmaking thus entails further operations — multiplication, miniaturization, and immolation described in Chapter 3, as well as the maceration of the surface in his portrait bust recounted in Chapter 1 — which are integral to an understanding of modern sculpture’s unmaking of itself.

<sup>3</sup> *Écrits*, op. cit. p. 93. In fact, the date was likely closer to the start of 1946, when Giacometti began making drawings on large sheets of paper, stretching the entire length of the page, composed of vertical lines laid close together like iron filings. See also Reinhold Hohl, *Giacometti: A Biography in Pictures* (Ostfildern/Stuttgart: Gerd Hatje, 1990), pp. 109–110.

<sup>4</sup> “Entretien avec Pierre Schneider” (1962), *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> “Entretien avec Jean Clay” (1963), *Écrits*, *ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 320–21.

<sup>7</sup> Koselleck, op. cit., p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 245–46.

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Bloch, “Postscript, 1963,” *Heritage of Our Times*, op. cit., p. 8.

## FIGURES



Fig. 0.1 René Burri, *Alberto Giacometti*, 1960  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 0.2 Brassäi, *L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti (Alberto Giacometti's Studio)*, 1947  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 0.3 Jacques Ernest Bulloz, *Vue d'ensemble de Pavillon de l'Alma à Meudon*  
(*View of the Alma Pavilion at Meudon*), 1904–05  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 0.4 Alberto Giacometti, *L'Homme qui marche II* (*Walking Man II*), 1959–60  
Bronze, 78 x 35 x 8.5 in.



Fig. 0.5 Alberto Giacometti, *Pointe à l'oeil (Relations désagrégants)*  
*((Point to the Eye (Disaggregating Relations))*), 1931–32  
Wood, painted iron, 12,7 x 58,5 x 29,5 cm



Fig. 0.6 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Diego (Head of Diego)*, c. 1937  
Plaster covered with casting agent, 19.2 x 11.5 x 16.7 cm, Giacometti-Stiftung, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 0.7 Alberto Giacometti, *Petite figurine sur socle* (*Small Figurine on a Base*), c. 1939–45  
Plaster, 7.3 x 3.5 x 3.7 cm, Giacometti-Stiftung, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 0.8 Brassäi, *L'Objet invisible éclaboussé par plâtre dans l'atelier de Giacometti*  
(*The Invisible Object Splattered with Plaster in Giacometti's Studio*), 1947  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 0.9 Ernst Scheidegger, *Alberto Giacometti's Desk in his Studio*, 1958



Fig. 0.10 Alberto Giacometti, *Femme [Plat, II]* (*Woman [Flat II]*), c. 1928–29  
Bronze, 39.4 x 17 x 7.8 cm



Fig. 0.11 Alberto Giacometti, *Boule suspendue (Suspended Ball)*, 1930  
Plaster, iron, and string, 61 cm, Giacometti-Stiftung, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 0.12 Pablo Picasso, *Nude Standing by the Sea*, 1929  
Oil on canvas, 129.9 x 96.8 cm, Guggenheim Museum



Fig. 0.13 Alberto Giacometti, Response to the survey, “Où va la peinture?” (Where is painting headed?), *Commune*, June 1935



Fig. 0.14 Alberto Giacometti, *Attelés ou chaumeurs*, c. 1932  
Ink on paper, 8.8 x 31.8 cm, Centre Pompidou – Cabinet des arts graphiques



Fig. 0.15 Man Ray, *Gift*, c. 1958 (Replica of 1921 original)  
Painted flatiron and tacks, 15.3 x 9 x 11.4 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 0.16 Meret Oppenheim, *Objet (Déjeuner en fourrure) (Object (Fur Breakfast))*, 1936  
Fur-covered cup, saucer, and spoon, 23.7 x 20.2 x 7.3, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 1.1 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête qui regarde* (*Gazing Head*), 1929  
Plaster, 15.74 x 14.33 x 2.55 in



Fig. 1.2 Alberto Giacometti, *Cube*, 1934  
Plaster, 94 x 60 x 60 cm



Fig. 1.3 Erna Lendvai-Dircksen, *Das deutsche Volksgesicht (The Face of the German People)*, 1932



Fig. 1.4 August Sander, "The Art Scholar," from *Antlizer der Zeit (Face of Our Time)*, 1929



Fig. 1.5 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Rita (Head of Rita)*, before August 1936  
Plaster, 24.7 x 13.9 x 18.8 cm, FAAG



1.6 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Diego* (*Head of Diego*), c. 1914  
Plasticine, 26.3 x 11.4 x 13.4 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 1.7 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de femme (Rita)* (*Head of a Woman (Rita)*), 1935  
Wood and pencil, 17.6 x 7 x 8.6 cm, Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti



Fig. 1.8 Alberto Giacometti, *Masque de femme (Rita)* (*Mask of a Woman (Rita)*), c. 1935–38  
Plaster, 20 x 14 x 11.6 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.9 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Rita (Head of Rita)*, c. 1936  
Plaster, 10.8 x 6.2 x 8.4 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.10 Alberto Giacometti, *Petite tête de Diego (Small Head of Diego)*, 1936  
Plaster, 10.8 x 6.5 x 8.7 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.11 Henri Matisse, *Jeannette I*, 1910  
Bronze, 33 x 22.8 x 25.5 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 1.12 Alberto Giacometti, *Paysage Tête-couchée/Tête tombée dans une graphique (Head Landscape/Head Fallen into a Diagram)*, 1932  
Plaster, 22.5 x 60 x 37 cm, Centre Pompidou-MNAM

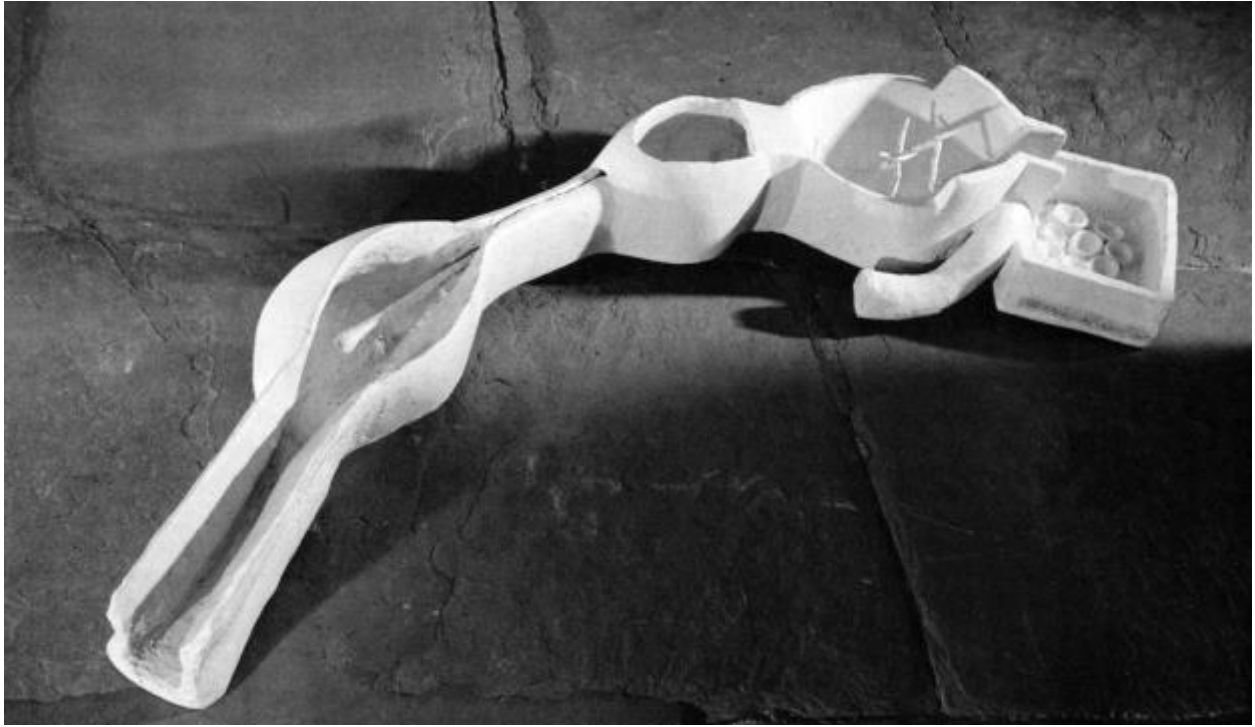


Fig. 1.13 Alberto Giacometti, *Projet pour un passage (Project for a Passageway)*, 1931  
Plaster, 15 x 126 x 42 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 1.14 Alberto Giacometti, *Femme qui marche II (Walking Woman II)*, 1936  
Guggenheim Museum



Fig. 1.15 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Diego* (*Head of Diego*), c. 1937  
Plaster covered with parting compound, 19.2 x 11.5 x 16.7 cm



Fig. 1.16 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Maria (Head of Maria)*, c. 1935–36  
Plaster, 21.5 x 17.5 x 20.5 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich

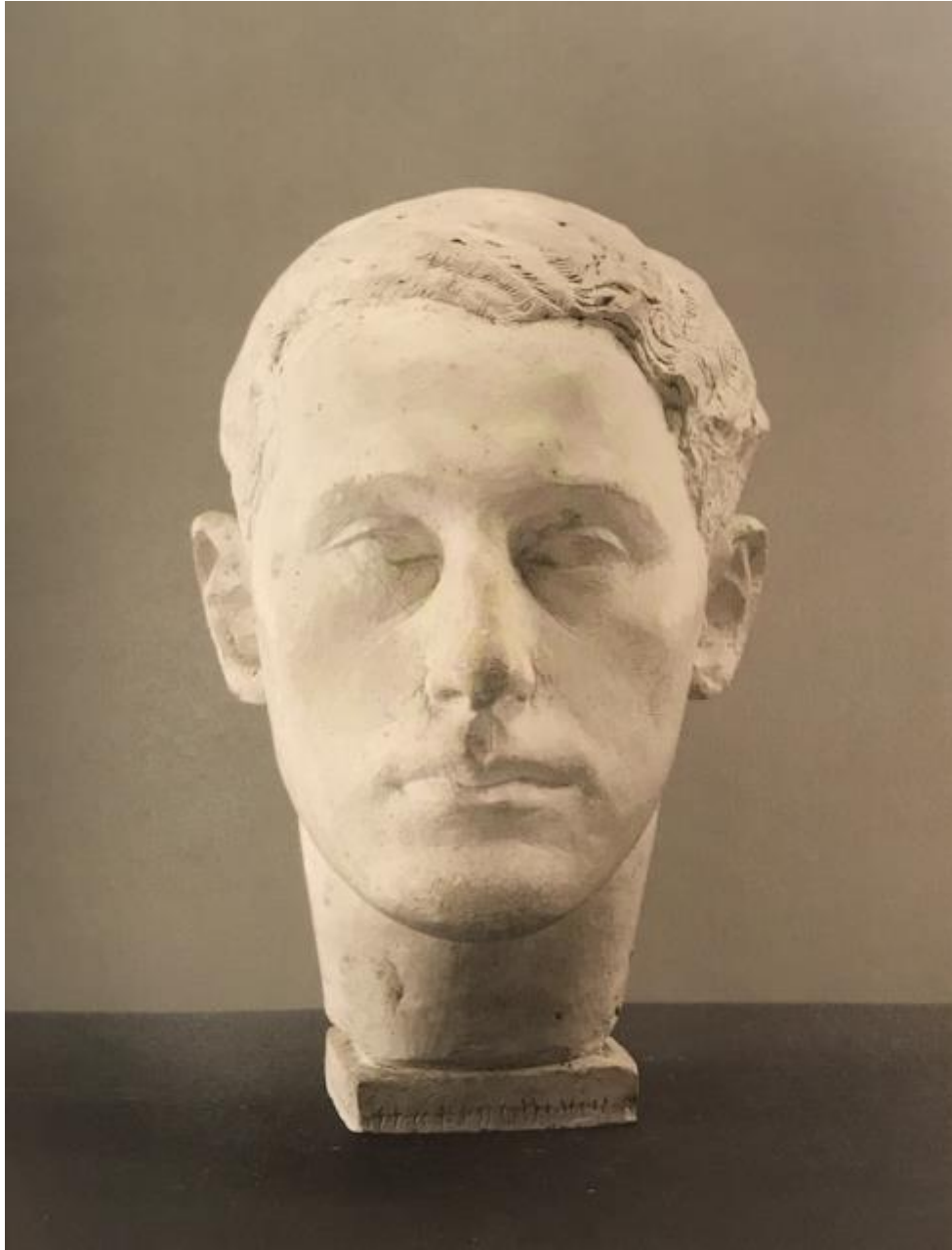


Fig. 1.17 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Bruno (Head of Bruno)*, 1930  
Plaster, 31.4 x 19.7 x 23.6 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 1.18 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête du père* (*Head of the Artist's Father*), 1927  
Granite, 30 x 21 x 22 cm, Private collection

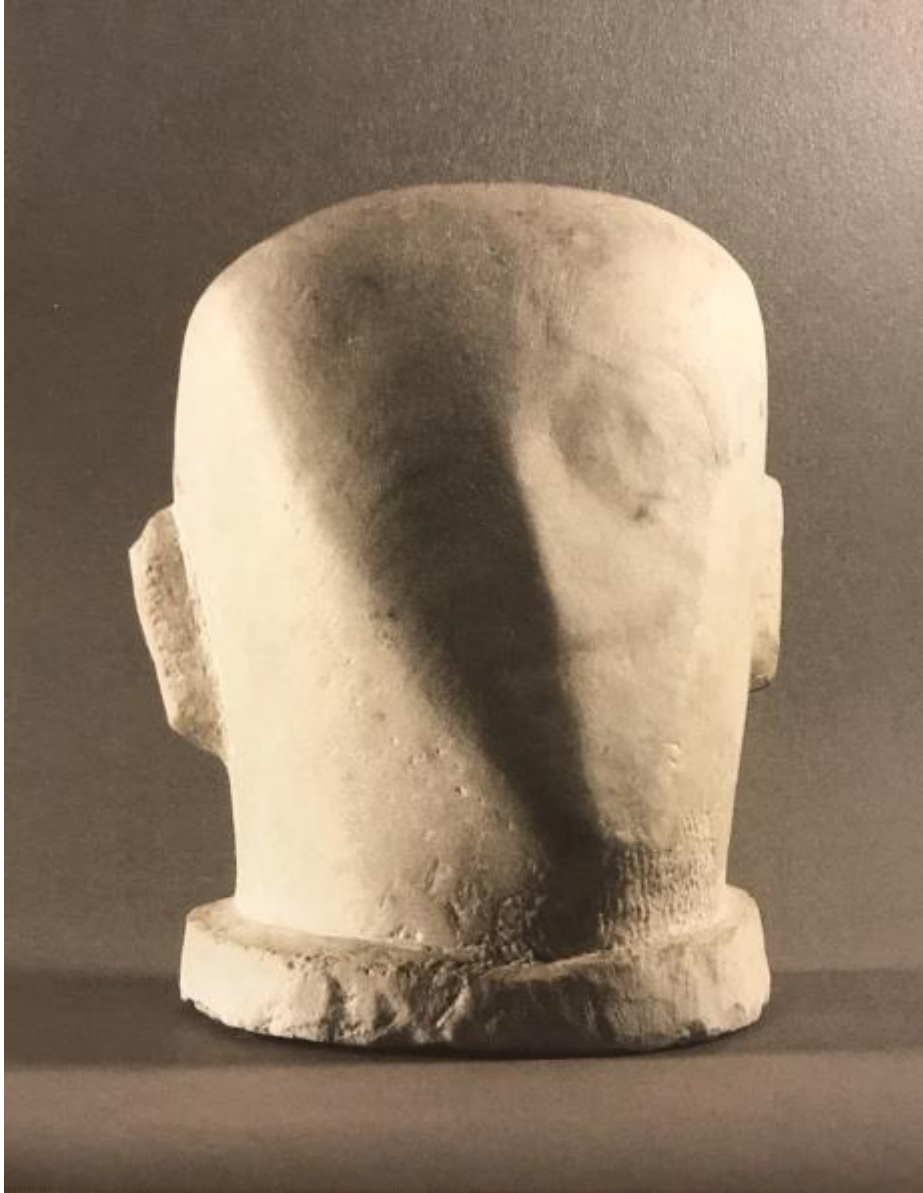


Fig. 1.19 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête du père* (*Head of the Artist's Father*), 1927  
Marble, 30 x 23 x 21 cm, Private collection



Fig. 1.20 Alberto Giacometti, *Autoportrait (Self-Portrait)*, 1925  
Plaster, 41 x 21 x 28 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



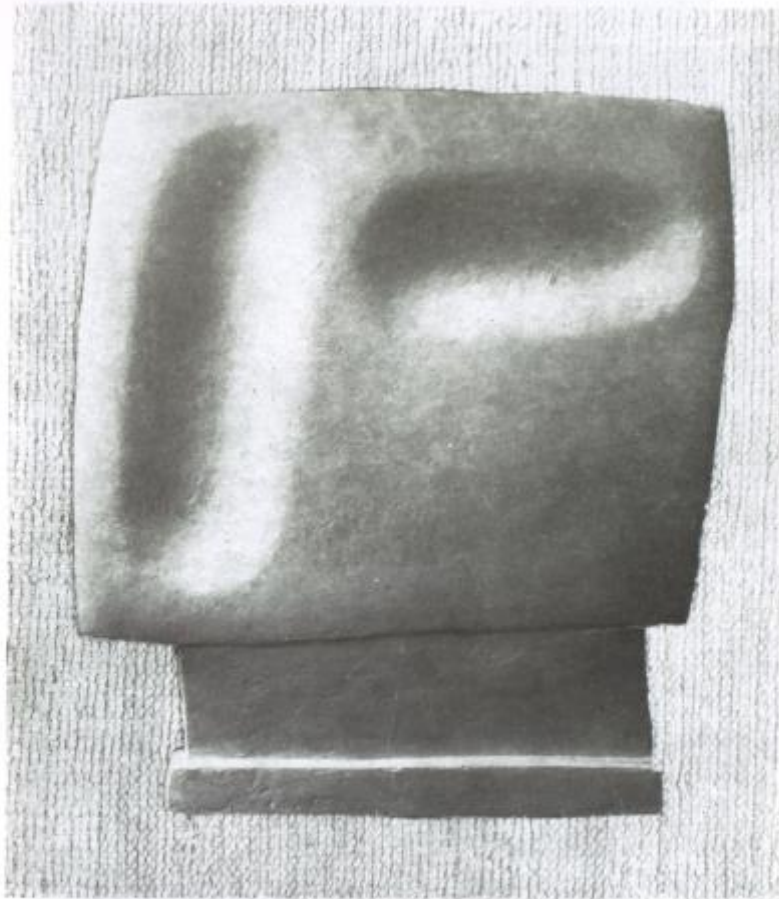
Fig. 1.21 Alberto Giacometti, *Le Couple (The Couple)*, 1927  
Plaster, 60.4 x 37.7 x 18 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.22 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de mère (Plat)* (*Head of the Artist's Mother (Flat)*), 1927  
Plaster coated with sealant, 33.4 x 23.7 x 12.5 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.23 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Josef Müller* (*Head of Josef Müller*), 1927  
Plaster, 34 cm, Private collection



GIACOMETTI TÊTE QUI REGARDE (1929) HAUT. 34 CM. - COLL. DU VICOMTE DE NOAILLÈS.  
PHOT. DÉCOUPÉE PAR L'AUTEUR.

Fig. 1.24 Michel Leiris and Alberto Giacometti (?), *Tête qui regarde* 1929 (collage)  
*Documents* n. 4, vol. 2



Fig. 1.25 Auguste Rodin, *Balzac, Tête monumentale* (*Balzac, Monumental Head*), 1898  
Bronze, 50.8 x 44.5 x 40.6 cm, Brooklyn Museum



Fig. 1.26 Baule, Ivory Coast, Upright female figure  
Wood, 47.6 cm

Plates 54 and 55 in Carl Einstein, *Negerplastik* (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher, 1915)



Fig. 1.27 “Le Secret de la guérison du franc...,” *L’Espoir français*, 14 January 1938



Fig. 1.28 Abraham Bosse, *Leviathan Frontispiece*, 1651, detail



Fig. 1.29 Display of facial profiles, 1928 *Rassenkunde* Exhibition  
Museum für Volkerkunde, Hamburg



Fig. 1.30 Musée de l'homme, Senegal display, 1942  
Photo: Musée Quai Branly



Fig. 1.31 Marc Vaux, *Femme*, [*Alberto Giacometti (Woman, Alberto Giacometti)*], c. 1928  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 1.32 René Magritte, *Le Viol (The Rape)*, 1934  
Oil on canvas, 73.3 x 54.3 cm, Menil Collection

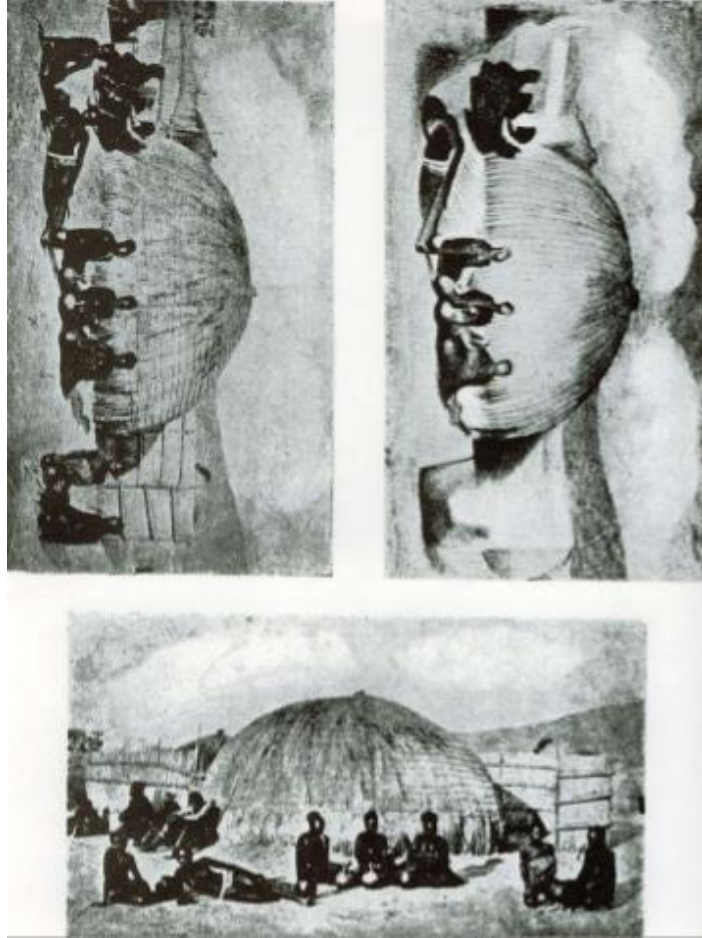


Fig. 1.33 Salvador Dalí, “*Communication: Visage paranoïaque*”  
(*Message: Paranoiac Face*), 1931  
Published in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, no. 3 (1931)

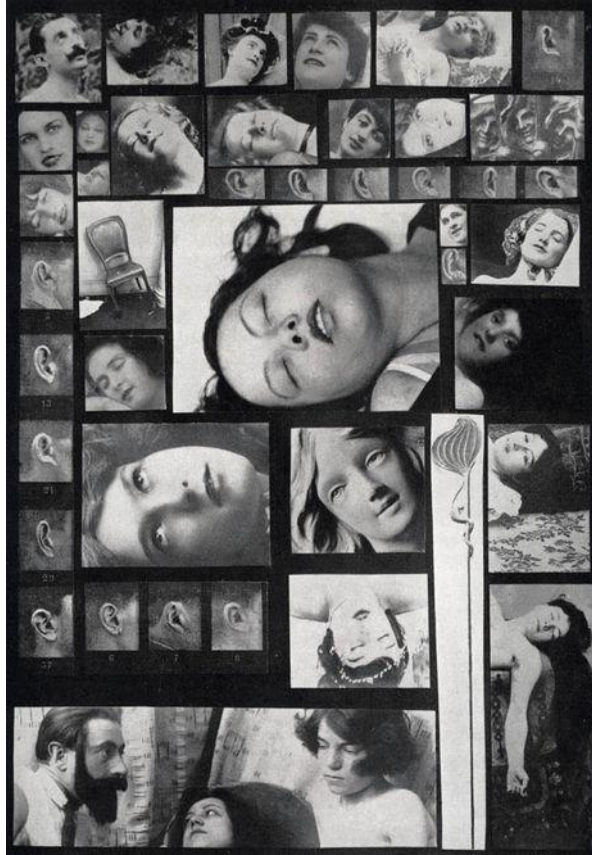


Fig. 1.34 Salvador Dalí, *Le Phénomène de l'extase* (*The Phenomenon of Ecstasy*), 1933  
*Minotaure* no. 3–4 (December 1933)

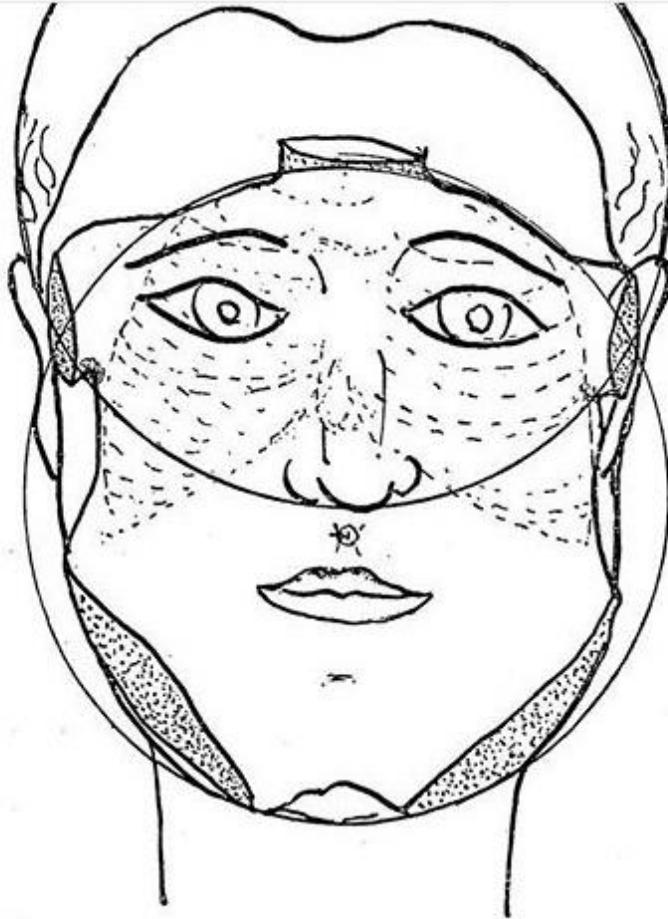


FIG. 32. — Projection du cylindre axial sur la face. Yeux correspondant aux seins; le cartilage nasal au manubrium sternal et à l'appendice xyphoïde. L'ombilic se projette dans le sillon au-dessus de la lèvre supérieure. La racine du membre supérieur correspond au temporal et à la tempe, celle du membre inférieur au muscle masséter et à l'angle de la mâchoire.

Fig. 1.35 Pierre Mabille, *La Construction de l'homme*, 1936

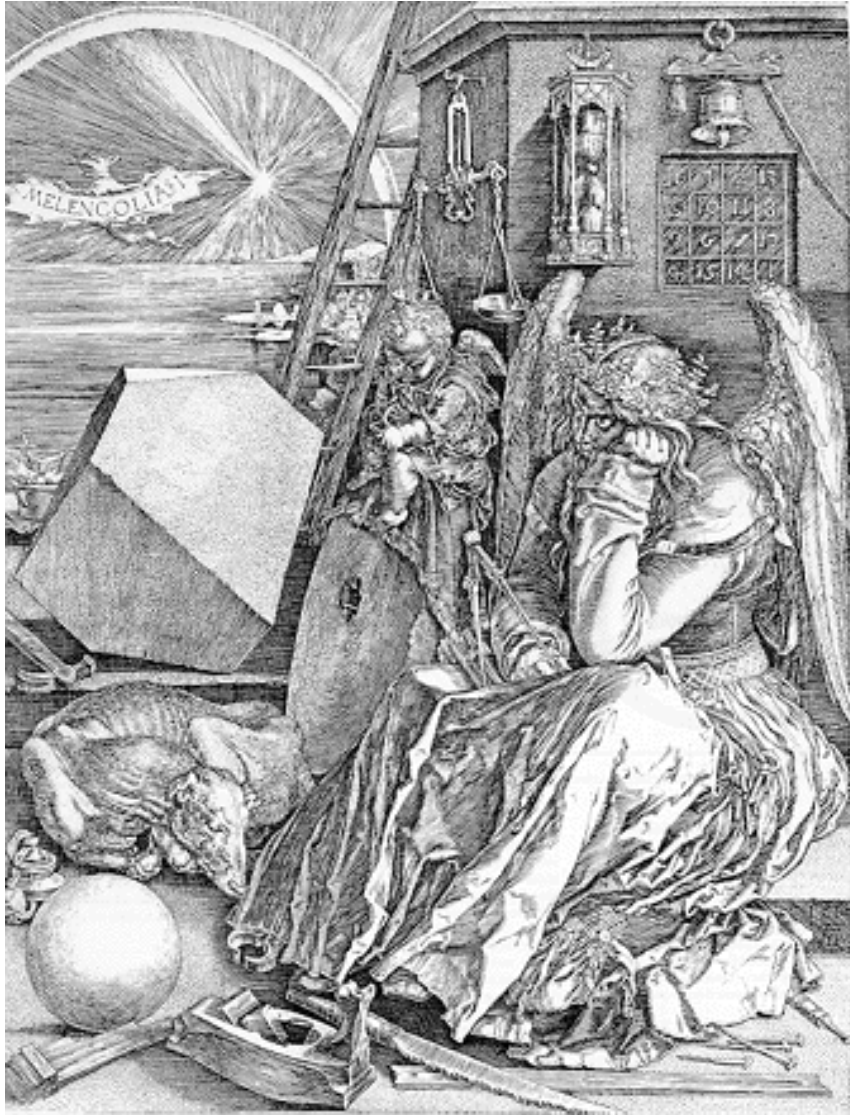


Fig. 1.36 Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514  
Engraving, 9 7/16 x 7 5/16 in.



Fig. 1.37 Alberto Giacometti, *Surrealist Table*, 1933  
Bronze, 56 ¼ x 40 ½ x 17 in.

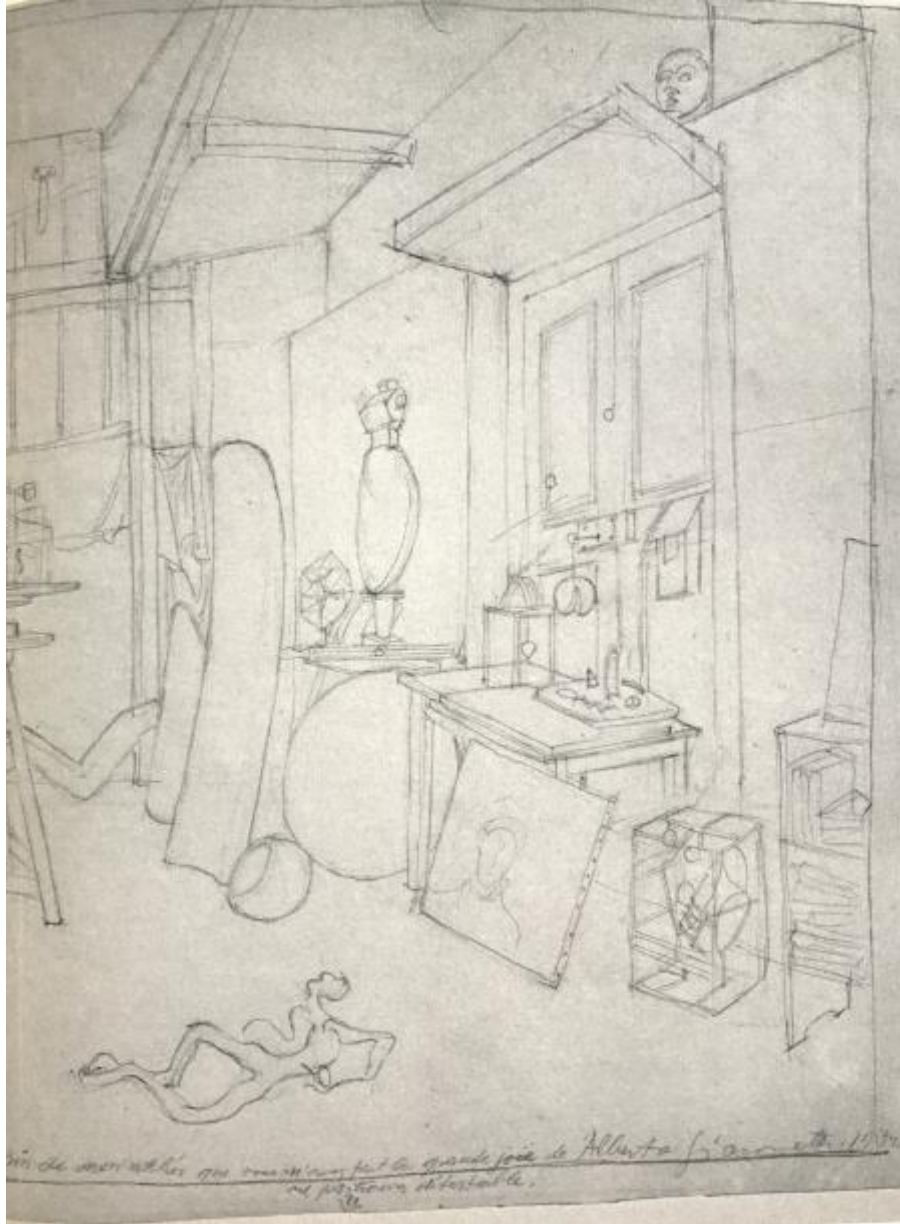


Fig. 1.38 Alberto Giacometti, *Studio [for the Countess Visconti]*, 1932  
Pencil on paper, 32.8 x 45 cm, Basel Kunstmuseum



Fig. 1.39 Alberto Giacometti, [*Figure dans un polyèdre (Figure in a Polyhedron)*], c. 1933–34  
Engraving, 15.9 x 11.9 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.40 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête du Père (Ronde II)* (*Head of Father (Round II)*), c. 1927–30  
Bronze, 27.8 x 21.2 x 22.2 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1. 41 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête du père (Plat I)* (*Head of father, Flat I*), c. 1927 - 1930  
Plaster, 11,18 x 8,66 x 5,74 in., FAAG

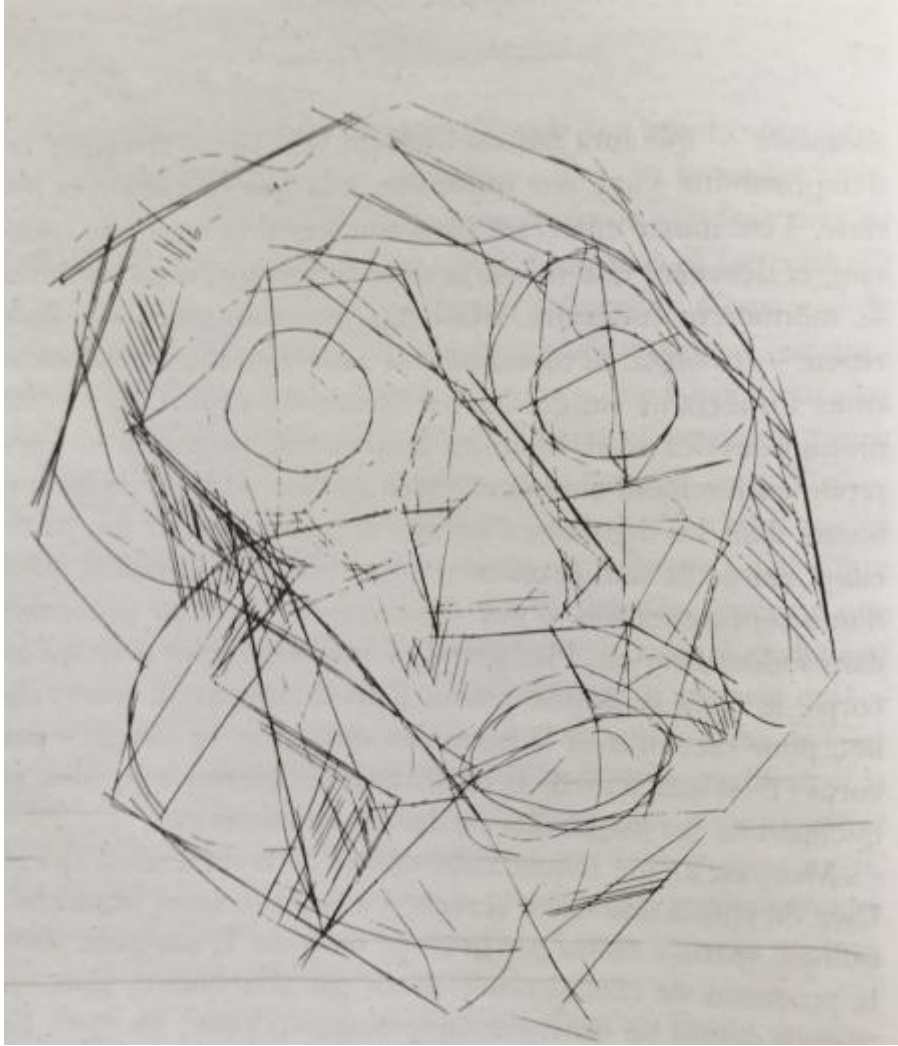


Fig. 1.42 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête cubiste (Cubist Head)*, 1933  
Engraving, 31.1 x 26 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 1.43 Alberto Giacometti, *Head-Skull (Cubist Head) [Tête crâne (Tête cubiste)]*, 1934  
Plaster, 17.5 x 18.5 x 20 cm



Fig. 1.44 Marc Vaux, [*Tête (Head)*, *Alberto Giacometti*], c. 1934 (destroyed)  
Fonds Marc Vaux, Centre Pompidou



Fig. 1.45 Alberto Giacometti, *Head-Skull (Cubist Head) [Tête crâne (Tête cubiste)]*, 1934, rotated  
Plaster, 17.5 x 18.5 x 20 cm



Fig. 1.46 Marc Vaux, *Vase, Alberto Giacometti*, c. 1934 (destroyed)  
Fonds Marc Vaux, Centre Pompidou



Fig. 1.47 Arthur Jackson Hepworth, *Studio of Alberto Giacometti* (L-R: *mold of Femme cuillère*, 1927; *component from L'Objet invisible*, 1934; *Femme qui marche I*, c. 1934 ; "Marianne" Vase, c. 1934), c. February 1935

© Tate Archive Photograph Collection



Fig. 1.48 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête sur un tige* (*Head on a Rod*), 1947  
Bronze, 16.0 x 14.9 x 15.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

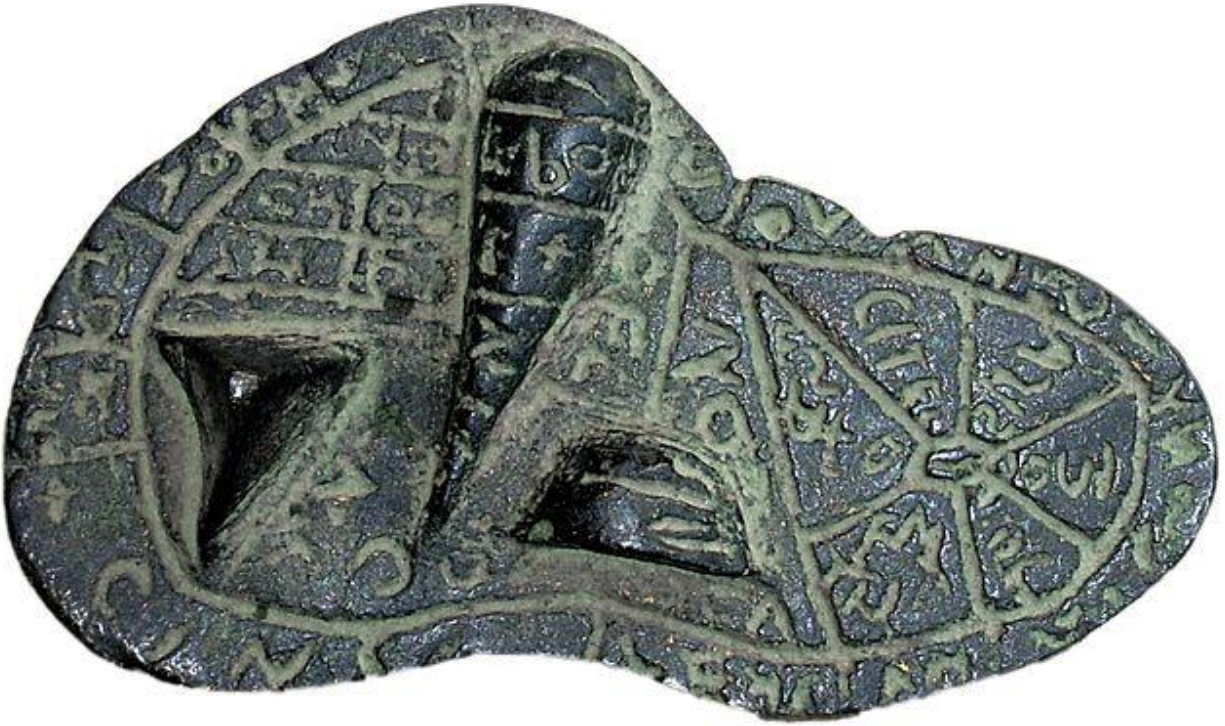


Fig. 1.49 Liver of Piacenza  
Municipal Museum of Piacenza



Fig. 1.50 *La Difesa della Razza*, August 5, 1936

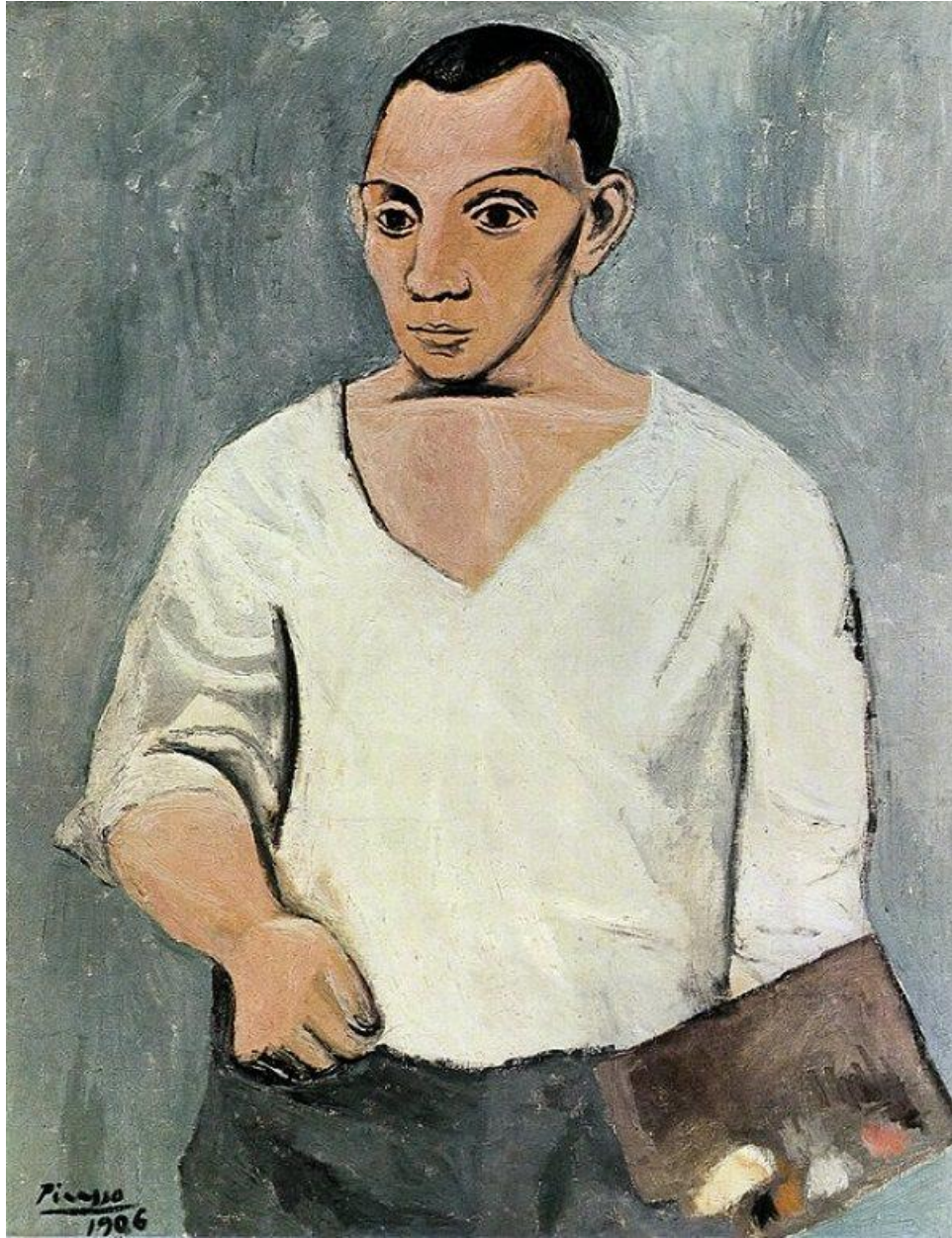


Fig. 1.51 Pablo Picasso, *Self-Portrait with a Palette*, 1906  
Oil on canvas, 91.1 x 73.3 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art



Fig. 1.52 Pablo Picasso, *Gertrude Stein*, 1905–06  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 81.3, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 1.53 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Rita* (*Head of Rita*), c. 1937–38  
Plaster reworked with a pen knife, 22.5 x 12.7 x 16.2 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.54 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête de Diego (Head of Diego)*, c. 1937  
Plaster coated with sealant, 19.2 x 11.5 x 16.7 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 1.55 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête d'une femme (Rita)* (*Head of a Woman (Rita)*), c. 1938  
Plaster, 21.4 x 12.2 x 13.2 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.56 Alberto Giacometti, *Tête d'Isabel* (*Head of Isabel*), c. 1938–39  
Plaster and pencil, 21.6 x 16 x 17.4 cm, FAAG



Fig. 1.57 Francis Galton, Composite Portraits

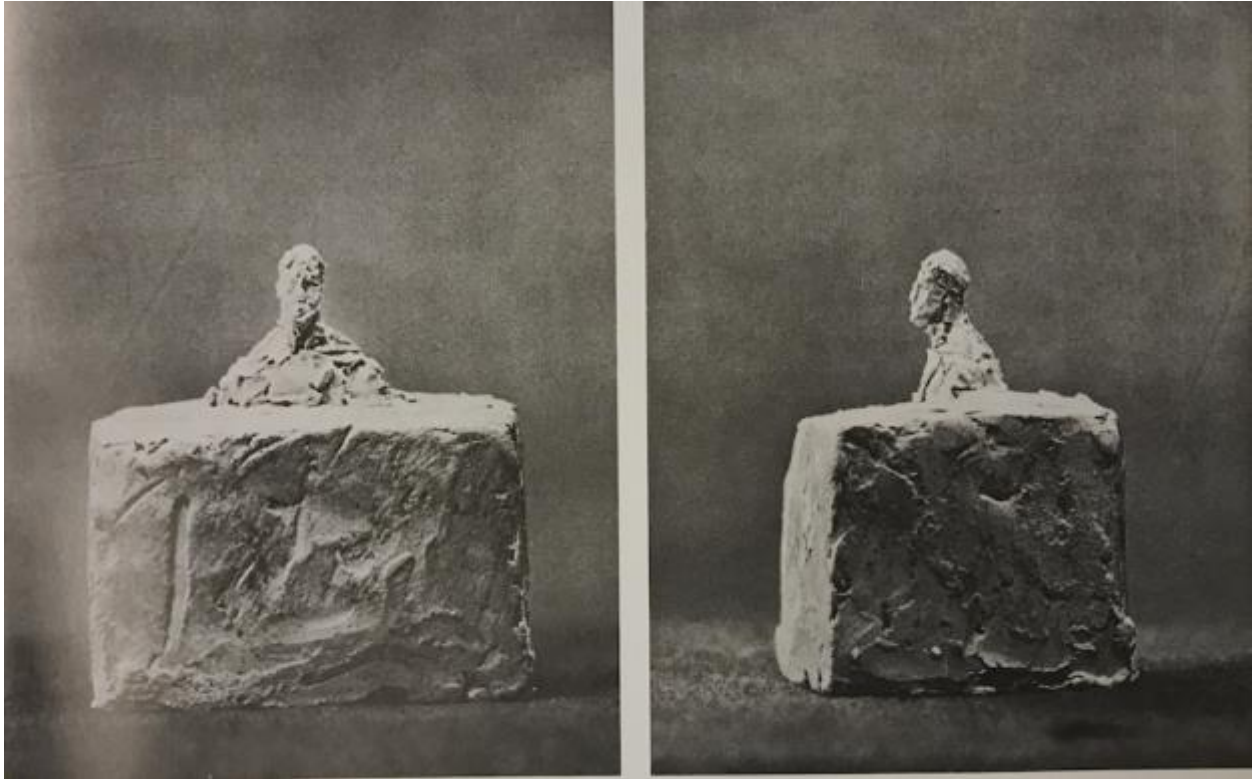


Fig. 1.58 Marc Vaux, *Alberto Giacometti, Bust of a Man (Destroyed)*, 1939  
Published in *Verve*, no. 5–6 (1939)

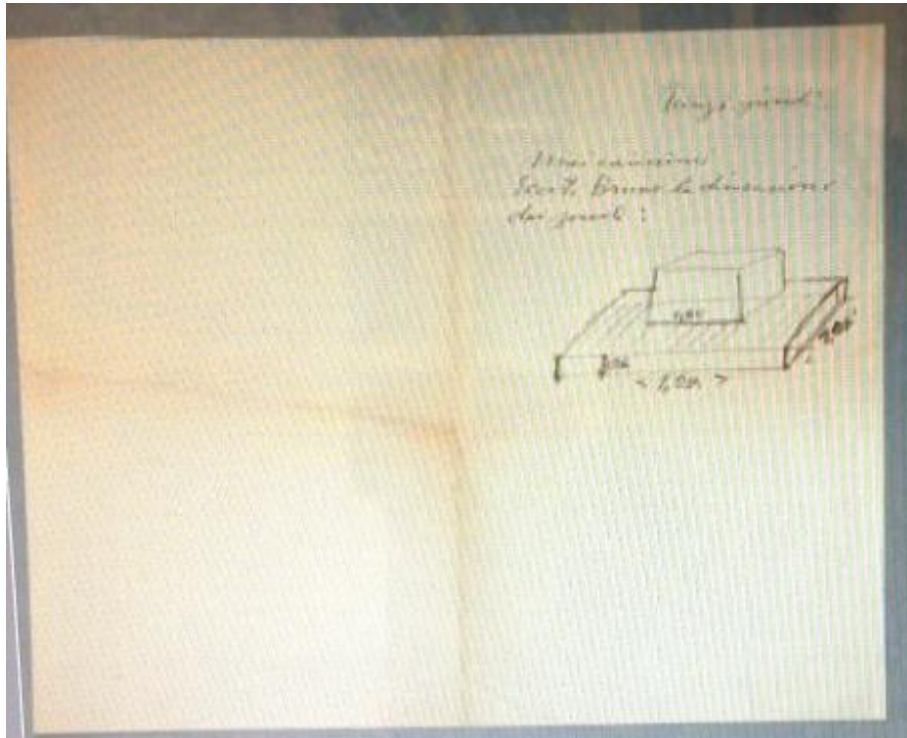


Fig. 2.1 Alberto Giacometti, Draft (?) of a letter from Bruno Giacometti, Spring 1939  
Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti



Fig. 2.2 Alberto Giacometti, *Petit figurine sur double socle*  
(*Small Figurine on a Double Base*), c. 1939–45  
Plaster, 9.5 x 4.1 x 4.3 cm, Giacometti-Stiftung, Kunsthaus Zurich

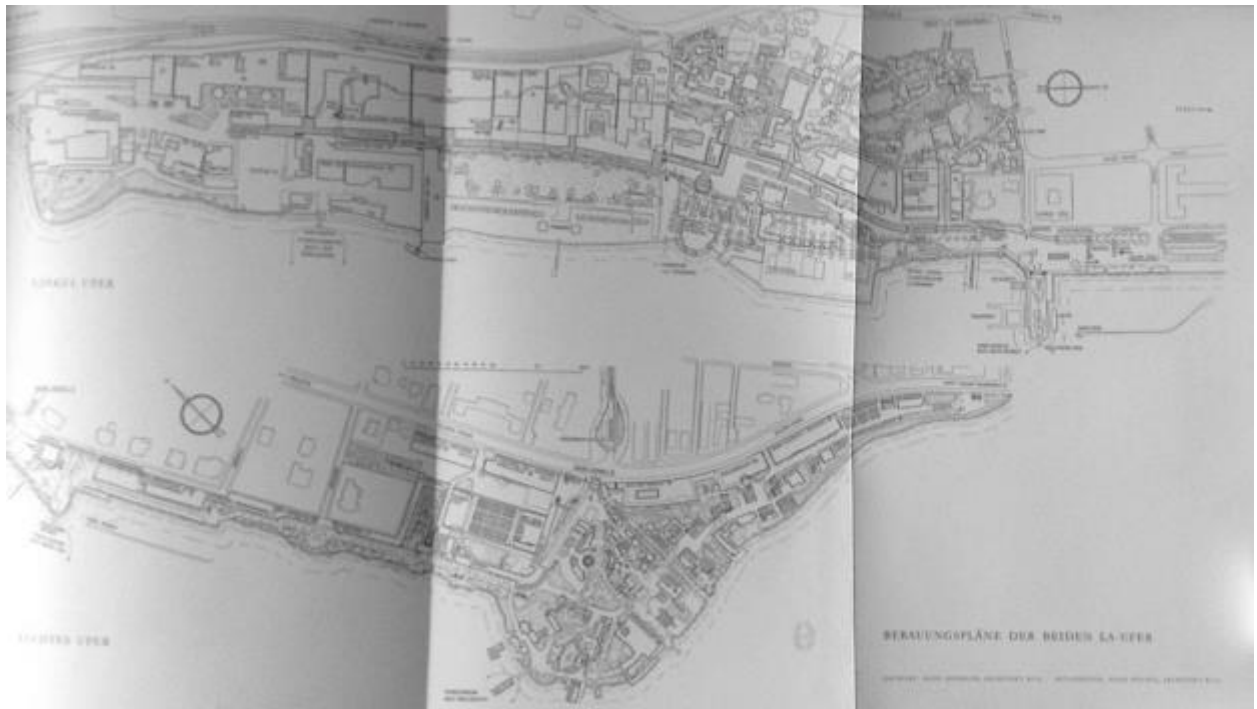


Fig. 2.3 Aerial plan of the “Landi”



Fig. 2.4 Louis Beringer, Ticinese Grotto, Zurich, 1939  
ETH-Bibliothek Zurich



Fig. 2.5 Michael Wolgensinger, “Schifflibach” in the Iron Works Exhibition Hall, Zurich, 1939  
ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich



Fig. 2.6 Anonymous, *Demonstration of workers at the Maggi factory*, Zurich, 1939



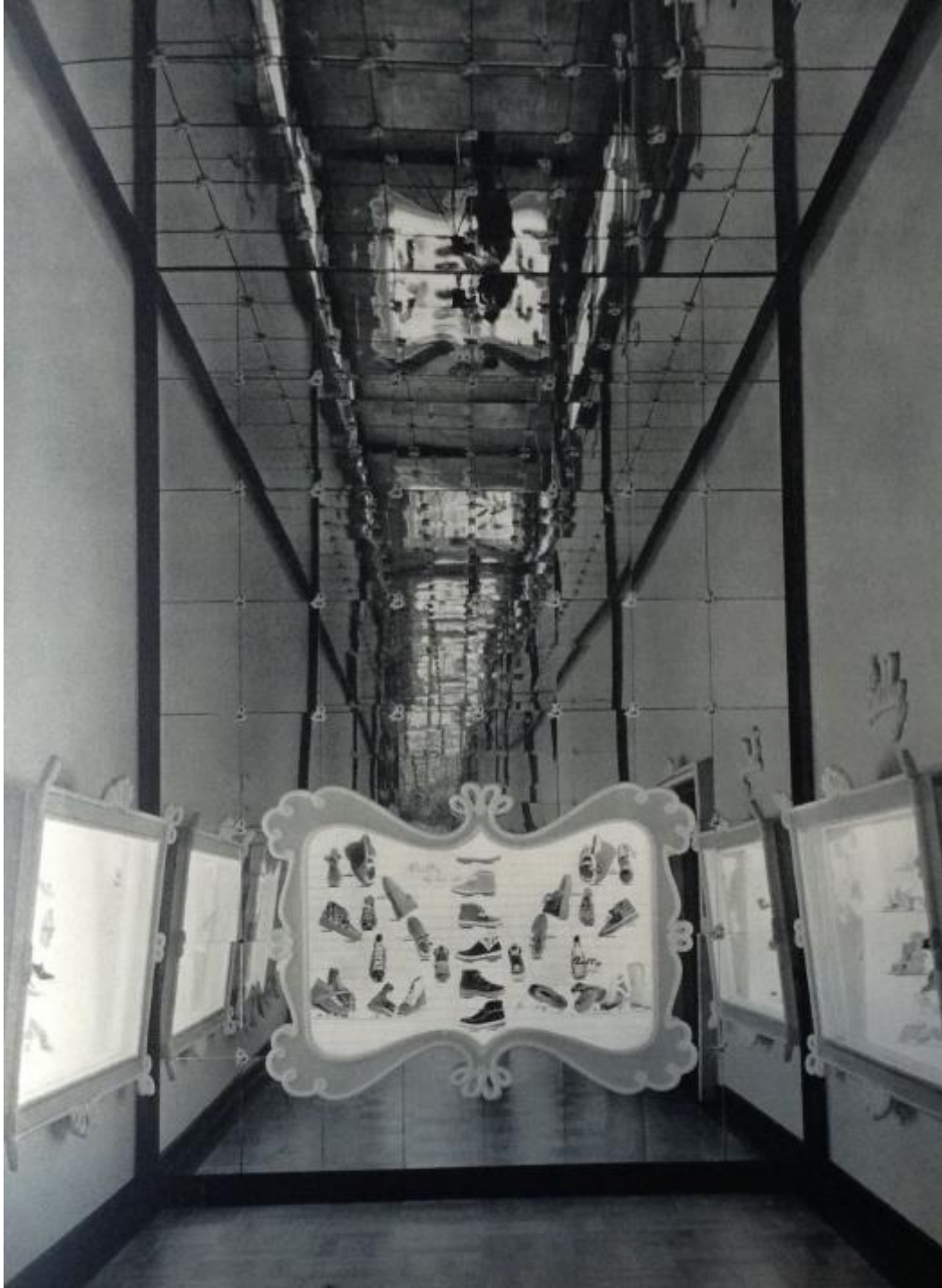


Fig. 2.8 H. Finsler, *Bally Shoes in the "Kleider Machen Leute" Pavilion*, 1939  
*Das Werk* no. 26 (1939)



Fig. 2.9 *Display of Hats in the “Kleider Machen Leute” Pavilion, Zurich, 1939*  
*Livre d’Or* (Zurich: Atlantis Verlag, 1940)

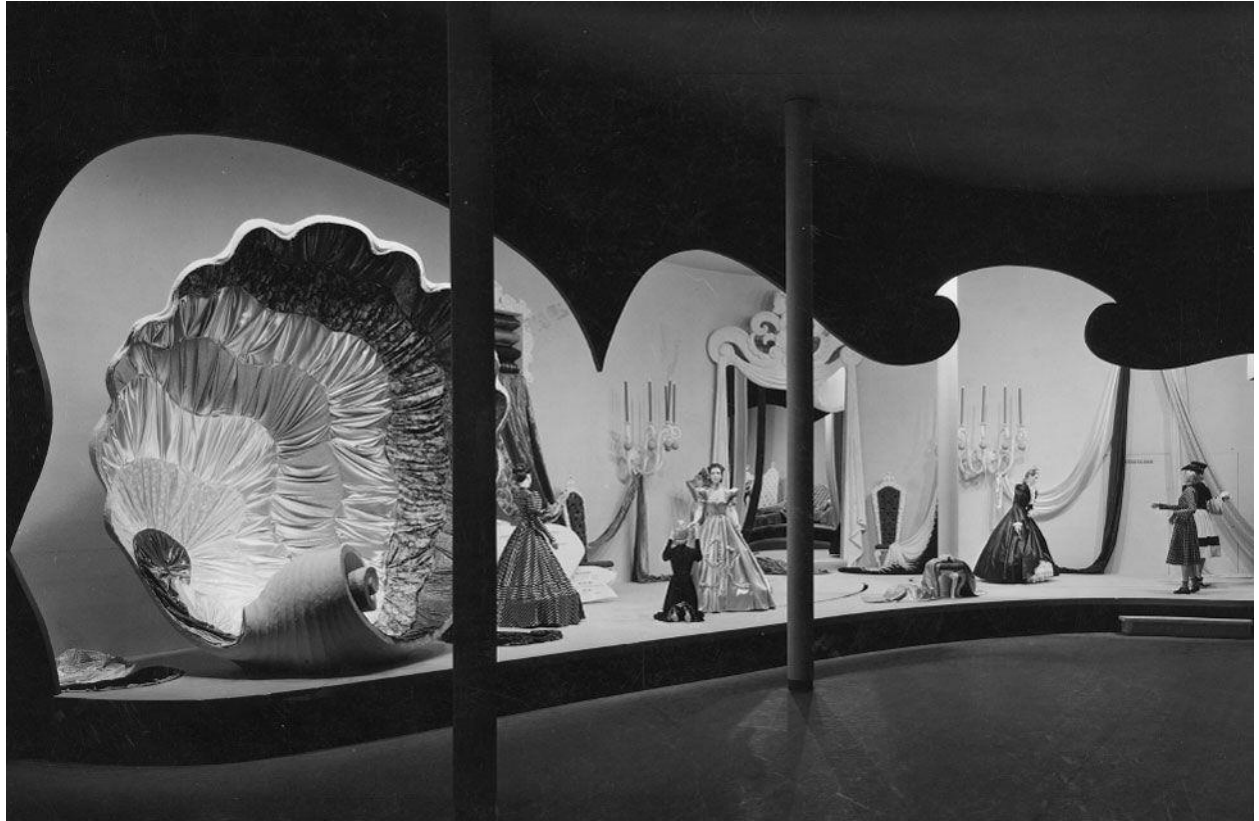


Fig. 2.10 R. Spreng, *The "Textilhalle" of the "Kleider Machen Leute" Pavilion, 1939*  
Designed by Robert Piguet, *Das Werk* no. 26 (1939)



Fig. 2.11 Raoul Ubac and Man Ray, *Installation view of the "International Exhibition of Surrealism," Paris, January 17 – February 28, 1938, 1938*  
Mannequins by Max Ernst and Wolfgang Paalen



Fig. 2.12 R. Spreng, “Modetheater” of the “Kleider Machen Leute” Pavilion, Zurich, 1939  
Designed by Karl Egender with Serge Brignioni  
*Das Werk* no. 28 (1941)



Fig. 2.13 Louis Beringer, *“Kleider Machen Leute” Pavilion*, Zurich, 1939  
Architect, Karl Egender  
ETH-Bibliothek Zurich



Fig. 2.14 Anonymous, *Switzerland, the World's Vacationland*, 1939  
Mural by Hans Erni, Hotel designed by Otto Drayer



2.15 Hans Erni, *Switzerland, The World's Vacation Land*, 1939  
Installation view from Hans Erni's retrospective at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, 2009



Fig. 2.16 Hans Erni, *Switzerland, The World's Vacationland*, details, 1939  
 Photographs by Louis Beringer, ETH-Bibliothek Zurich



Fig. 2.17 Giovanni Segantini, *La Morte (Death)*, c. 1896–99  
Oil on canvas, 190 x 322 cm, Segantini Museum St. Moritz

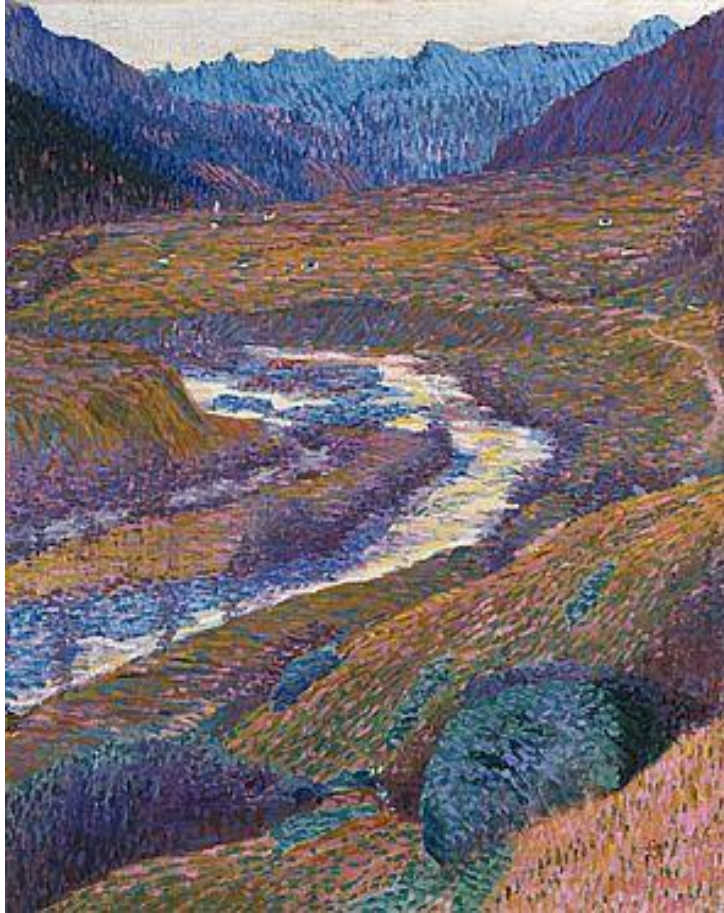


Fig. 2.18 Giovanni Giacometti, *Sera d'autunno* (*Autumn Evening*), c. 1903  
Oil on canvas, 90 x 70 cm, Aargauer Kunsthau



Fig. 2.19 Giovanni Giacometti, *Das Ober-Engadin*, c. 1903  
Eight of a set of ten postcards produced for the Engadin tourism office, Private collection



Fig. 2.20 Otto Baumberger, *The Electric St. Gotthard Line*, 1935  
Wolfsburg-Druck, Zurich

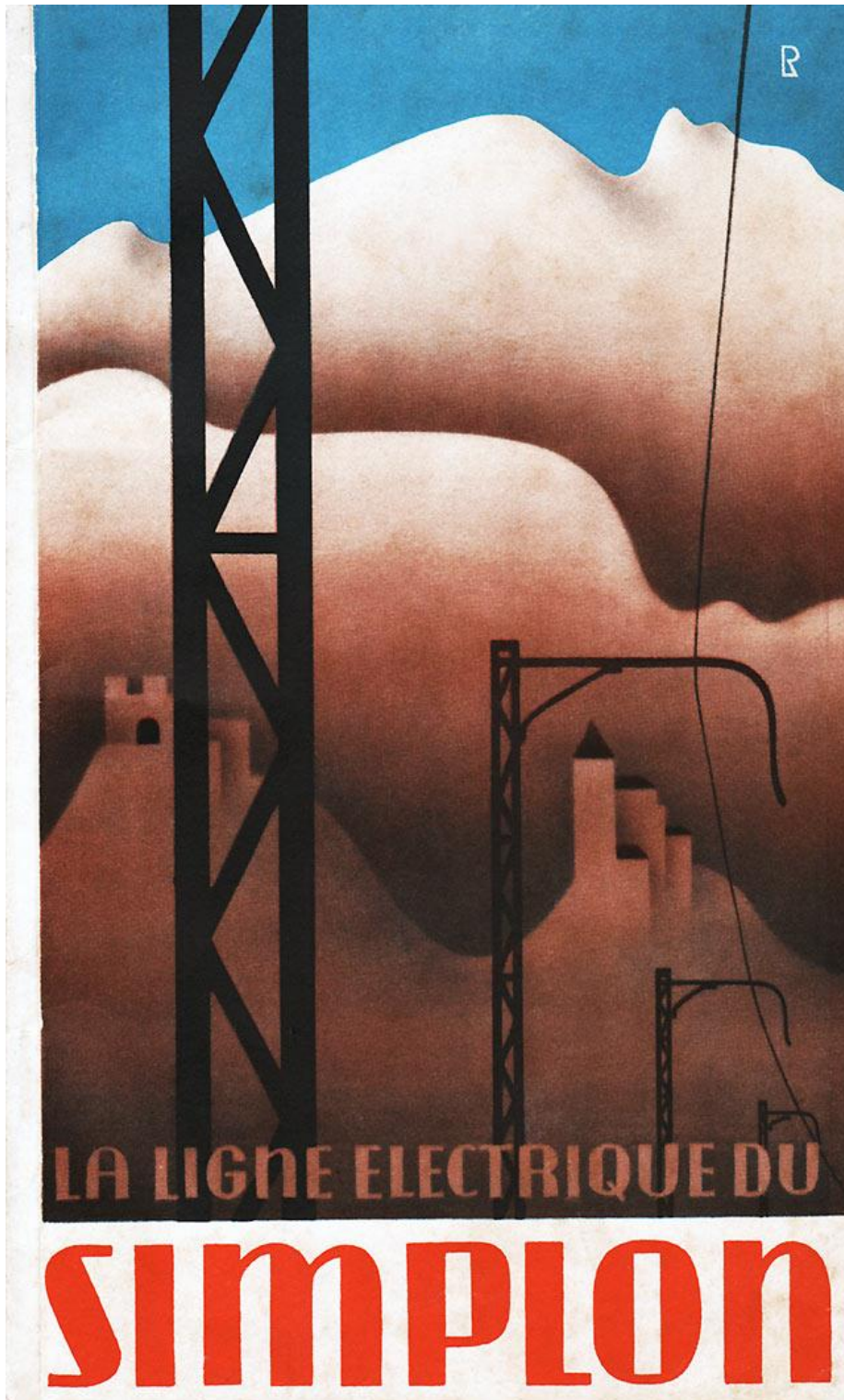


Fig. 2.21 Bernhard Reber, *La Ligne électrique du Simplon*, 1933

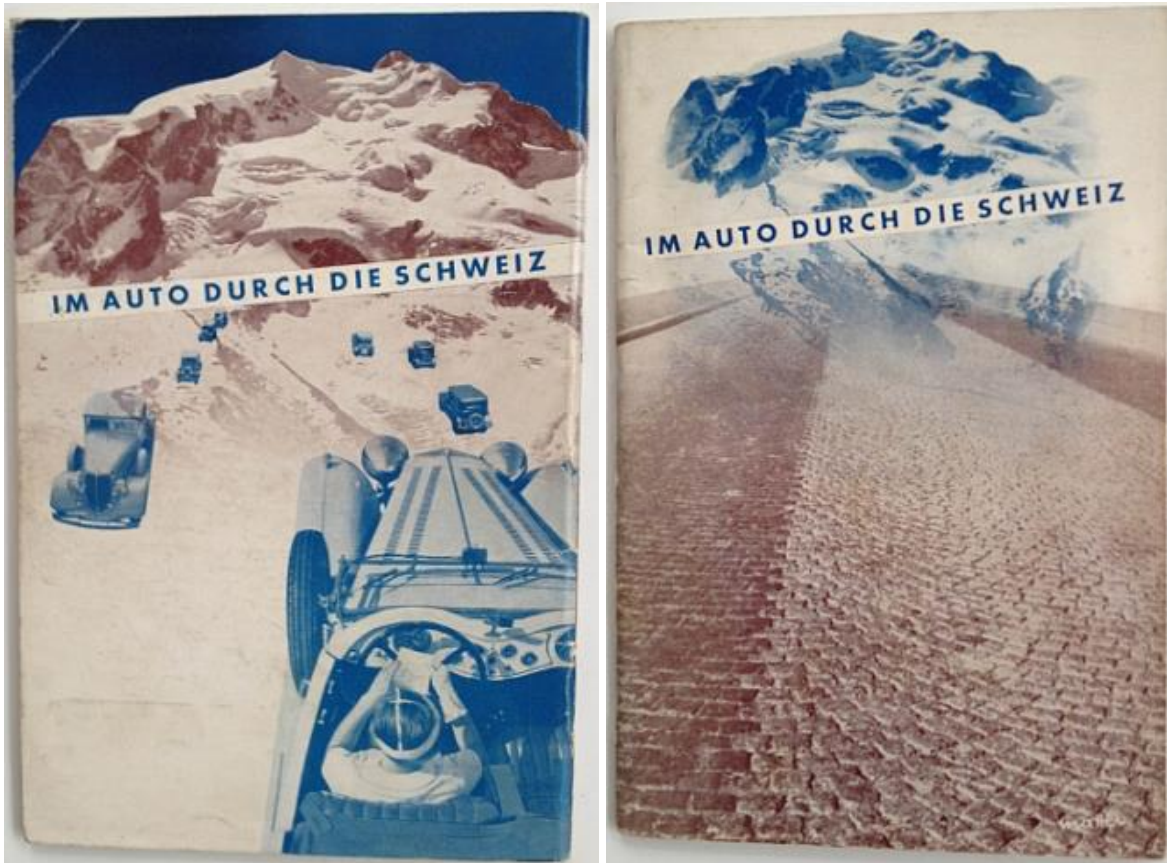


Fig. 2.22 Herbert Matter, *Im Auto Durch die Schweiz* (*Switzerland By Car*), 1936  
Schweizerischen Verkehrszentrale Zürich (Swiss Tourist Office)



Fig. 2.23 Oberalpass Bunker, Tujetsch



Fig. 2.24 Johann Heinrich Fuseli, *Die drei Eidgenossen beim Schwur auf dem Rütli* (*The Three Oath-Takers on the Rütli*), 1780  
Oil on canvas, 267 x 178 cm



Fig. 2.25 General Guisan ordering the defense of Switzerland to the high-ranking Swiss Officers in the Rütli meadow, July 25, 1940



Fig. 2.26 Alps from without, Bergell, June 2016  
Fig. 2.27 Alps from within, Piz Lunghin, Bergell, 2016



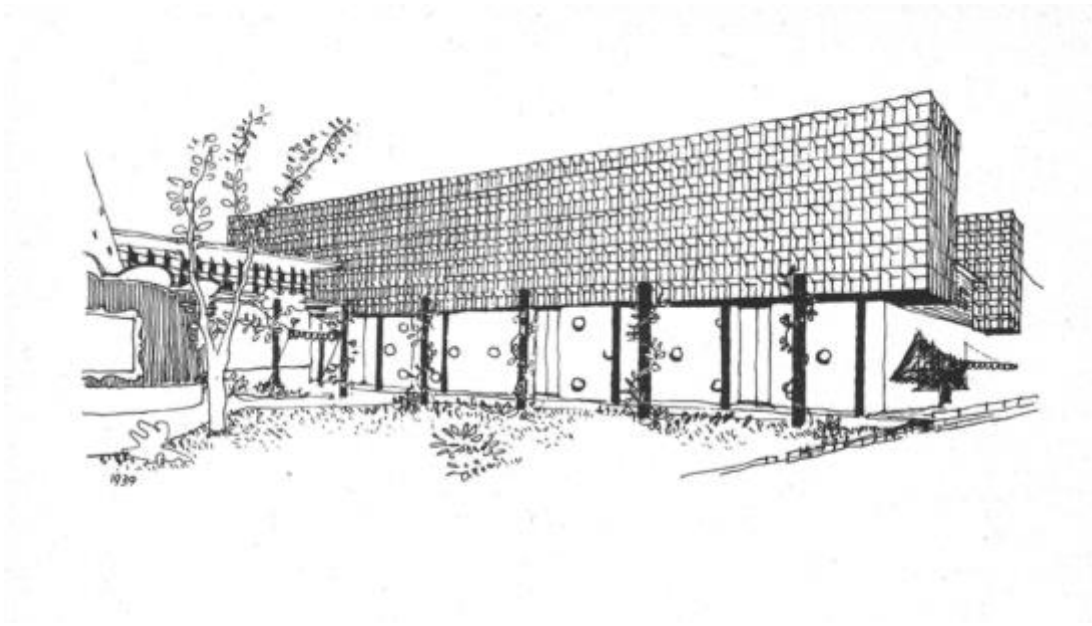


Fig. 2.28 Karl Egender, *Kleider Machen Leute (ModeTheater)*, 1939  
*Das Werk* no. 29, (1941)



Fig. 2.29 F. Froebel, *Courtyard of the Fashion Pavilion with Exotic Plants*, 1939  
Garden design: Gustav Ammann, *Das Werk* no. 26 (1939)



Wasserhof in der Abteilung «Zwischen» von «Kleider machen Leute»  
 Architekt: Karl Egander ESA, Zürich. Garten: Gustav Ammann 1880, Zürich  
 Peñís curat au basalt japonais dans «Flaköl full flooms» Foto: H. Froebel SWH, Zürich



Fig. 2.30 F. Froebel, *Courtyard with Japanese Pool in the Fashion Pavilion*, 1939  
 Garden design: Gustav Ammann, *Das Werk* no. 26 (1939)



Fig. 2.31 Alberto and Diego Giacometti, *Plaster curtains for the perfumier Lucien Lelong, Paris, 1935*



Fig. 2.32 Alberto Giacometti, *[Sketches for the fashion pavilion's façade]*, c.1939  
Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, inv. 1994-2720



Fig. 2.33 Maurice Barraud, *Textilkunst (The Art of Weaving)*, 1939  
Sgraffito



Fig. 2.34 Otto Schilt, *Untitled*, 1939  
Plaster with textile



Fig. 2.35 Sascha Morgenthaler, *Mannequin*, 1939  
wearing haute couture from the house of Scheidegger-Mosimann



Fig. 2.26 R. Spreng, *Entrance to the Mode Theater with View of Inner Courtyard*, 1939

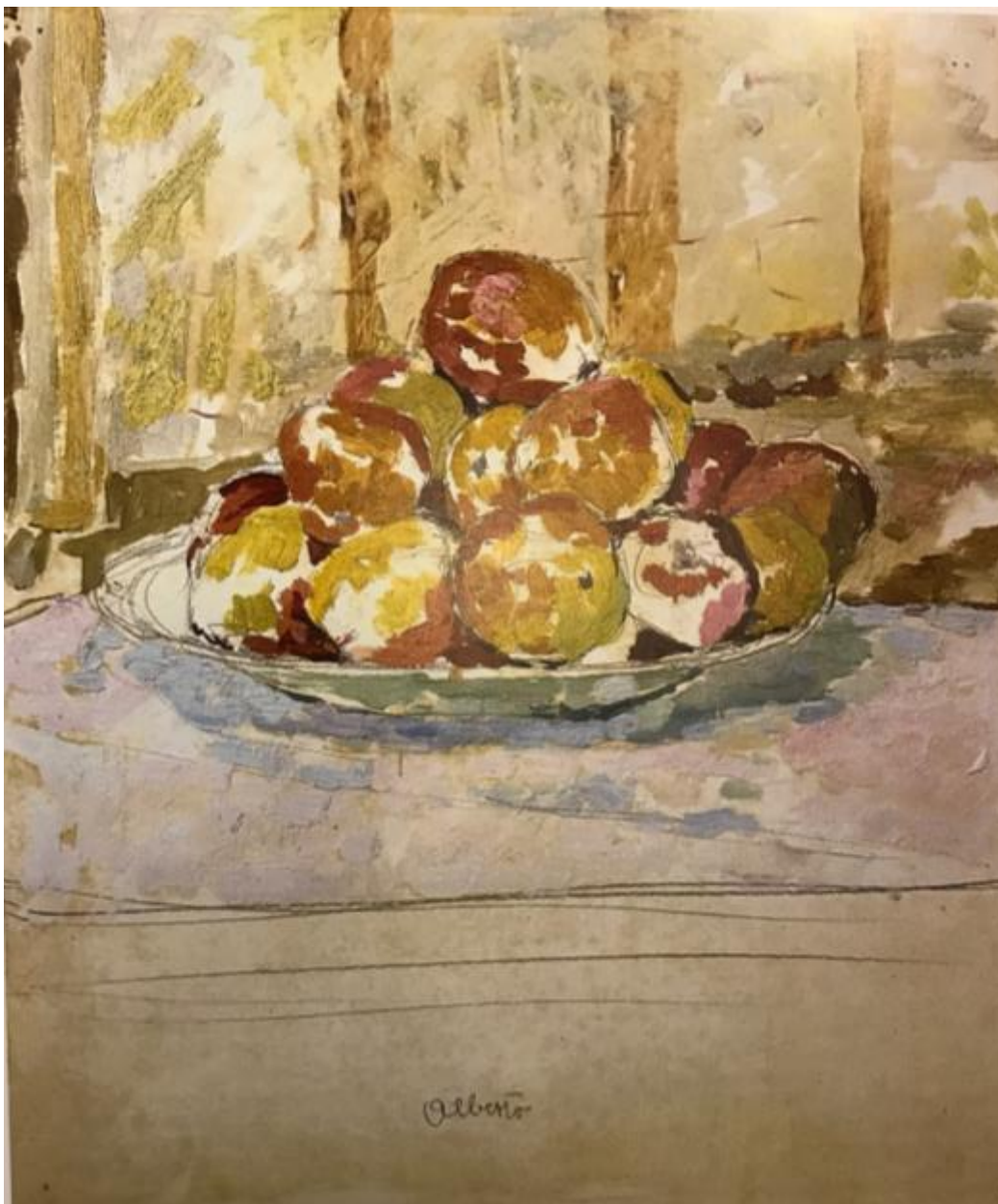


Fig. 2.37 Alberto Giacometti, *Still-Life with Apples*, 1920  
Oil on cardboard, 42 x 35.7 cm



Fig. 2.38 Alberto Giacometti, *Still-Life with Apple* (also called *Apple on the Sideboard*), 1937  
Oil on canvas, 72 x 75.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art



Fig. 2.39 Alberto Giacometti, *Still-Life with Apple (detail)*, 1937



Fig. 2.40 Alberto Giacometti, *Apple on the Sideboard* (1937)  
Oil on canvas, 27 x 27 cm, Private collection

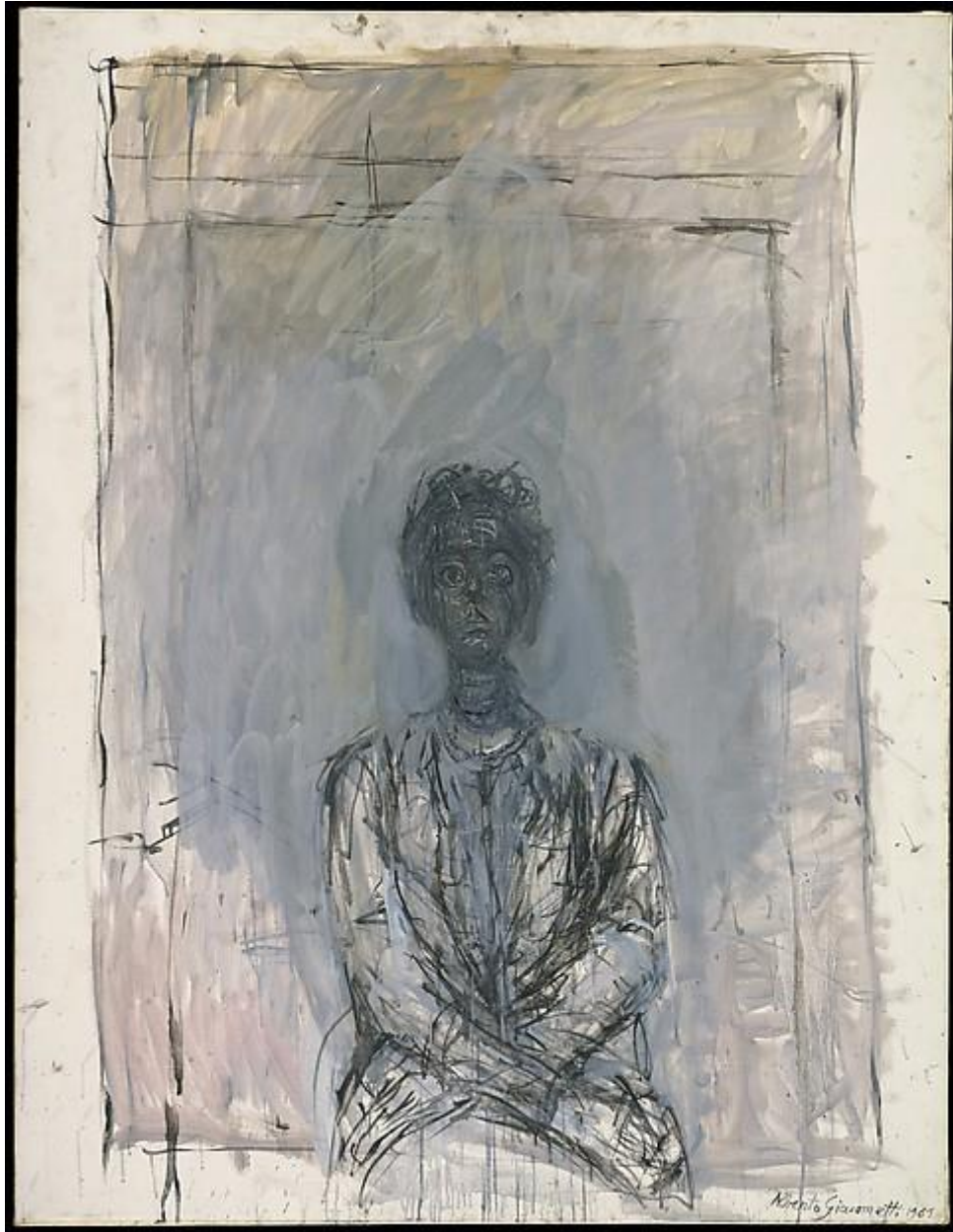


Fig. 2.41 Alberto Giacometti, *Portrait of Annette*, 1961,  
Oil on canvas, 116.2 x 89.5 cm



Fig. 2.42 François Clouet, *Elizabeth of Austria*, c. 1571  
Oil on canvas, 36 x 21 cm, Musée du Louvre



Fig. 2.43 Alberto Giacometti, *The Palace at 4 a.m.*, 1932  
Wood, wire, string, and glass, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 2.44 Arnold Böcklin, *Die Toteninsel III (The Isle of the Dead III)*, 1883  
Oil on panel, 150 x 80 cm, Alte nationalgalerie, Berlin



Fig. 2.45 Alberto Giacometti, *On ne joue plus (No More Play)*, 1931–32  
Marble, wood, and bronze, 4.1 x 58 x 45.2 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

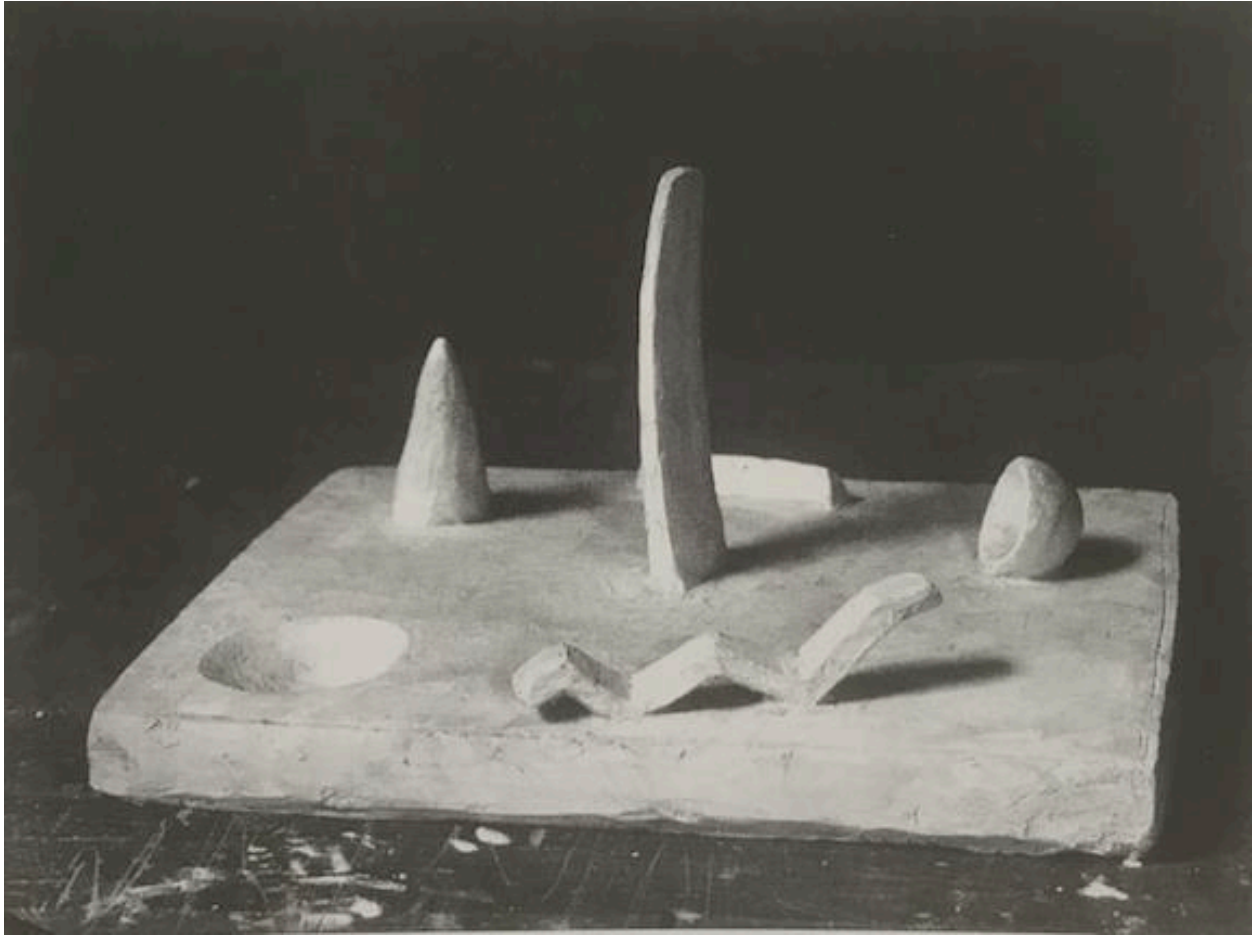


Fig. 2.46 Alberto Giacometti, *Projet pour une place* (*Project for a Public Square*), 1932

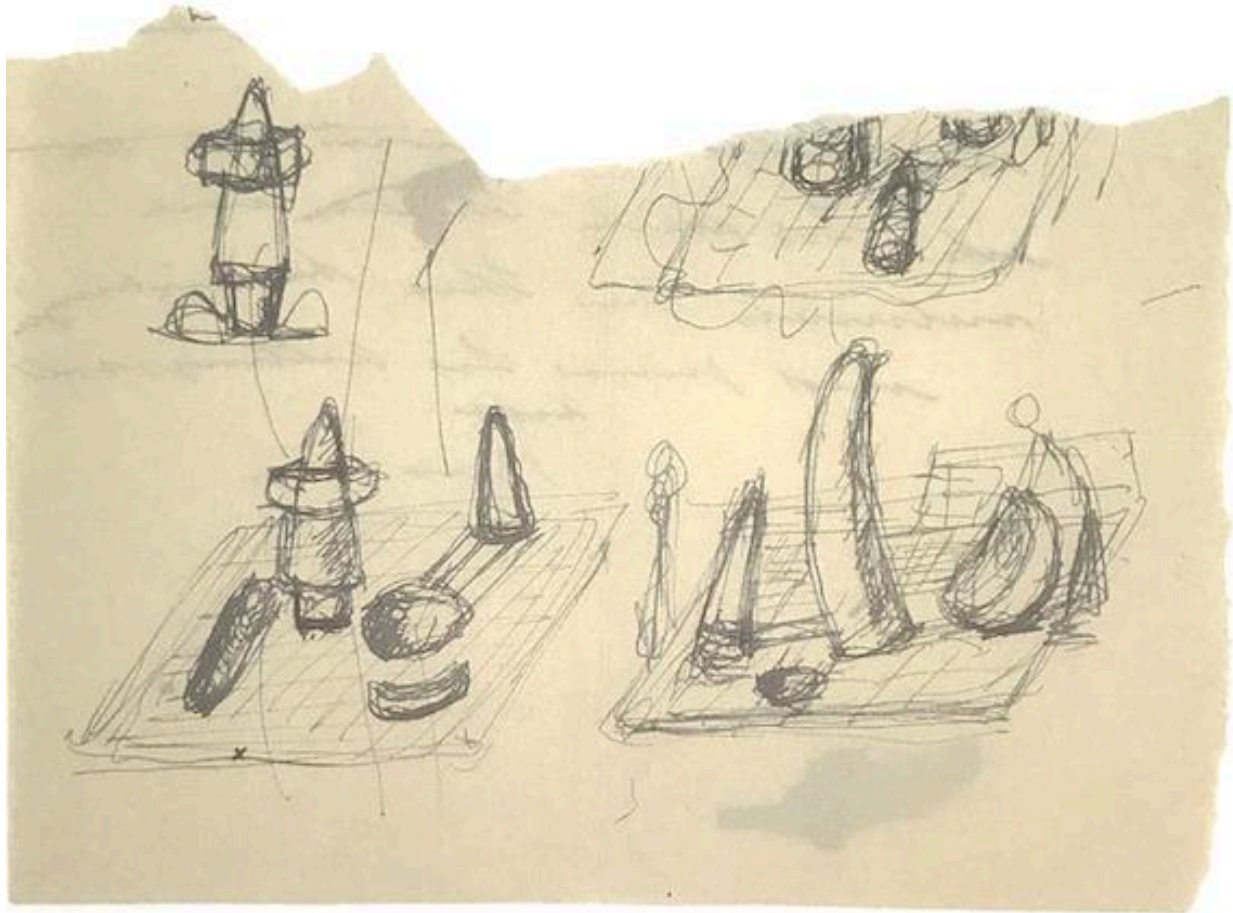


Fig. 2.47 Alberto Giacometti, *[Projects for a Public Square]*, c. 1930  
Pen and ink on letter paper, FAAG

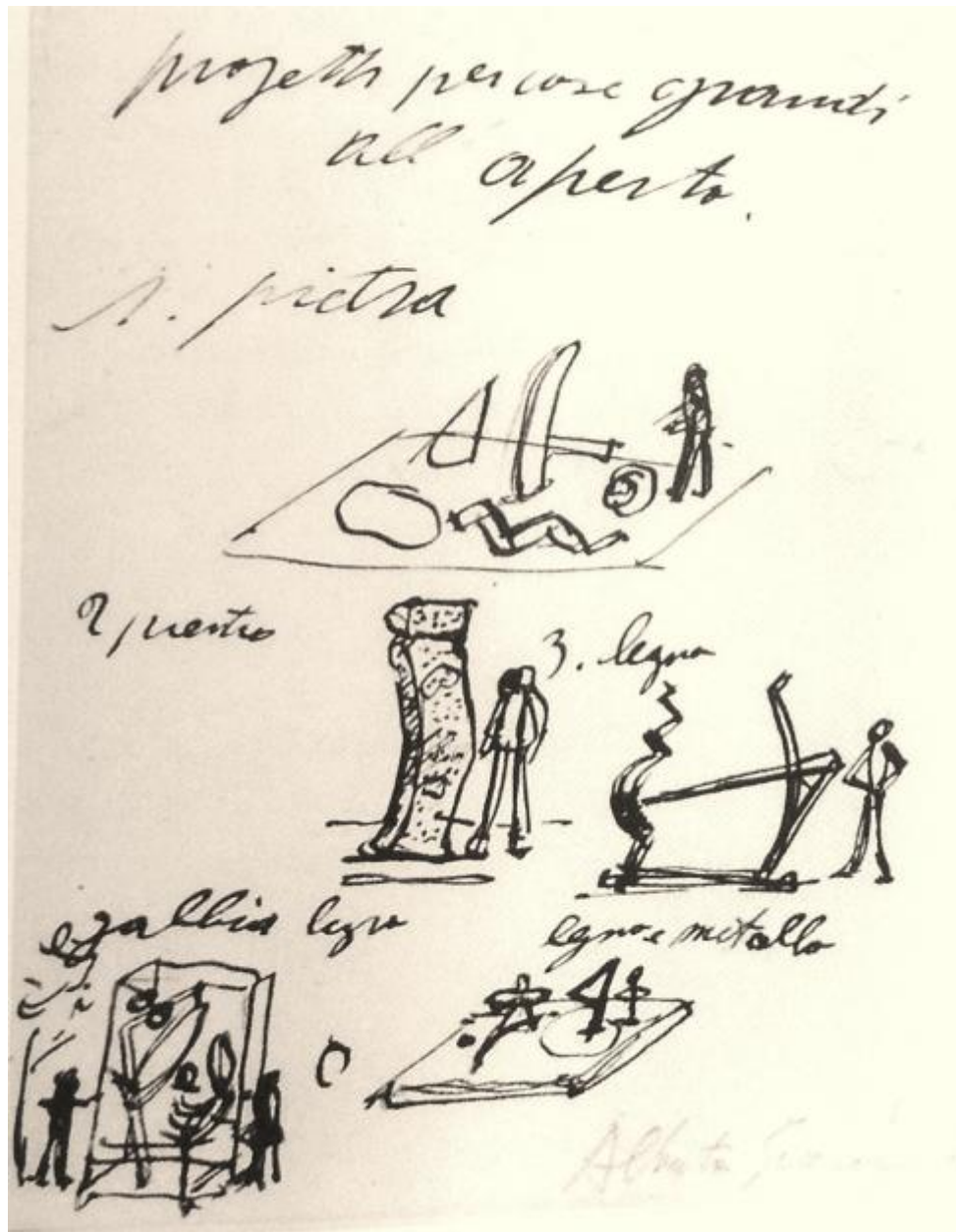


Fig 2.48 Alberto Giacometti, *Progetto per cose grandi all'aperto* (Project for Large Sculptures Outdoors), 1932  
Pen and ink, 12 x 10.4 cm, Collection of E.W.K., Bern



Fig. 2.49 Emile Savitry, *Alberto Giacometti in His Studio*, 1946  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 2.50 Paul Cézanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, c. 1902–06  
Oil on canvas, 57.2 x 97.2 cm

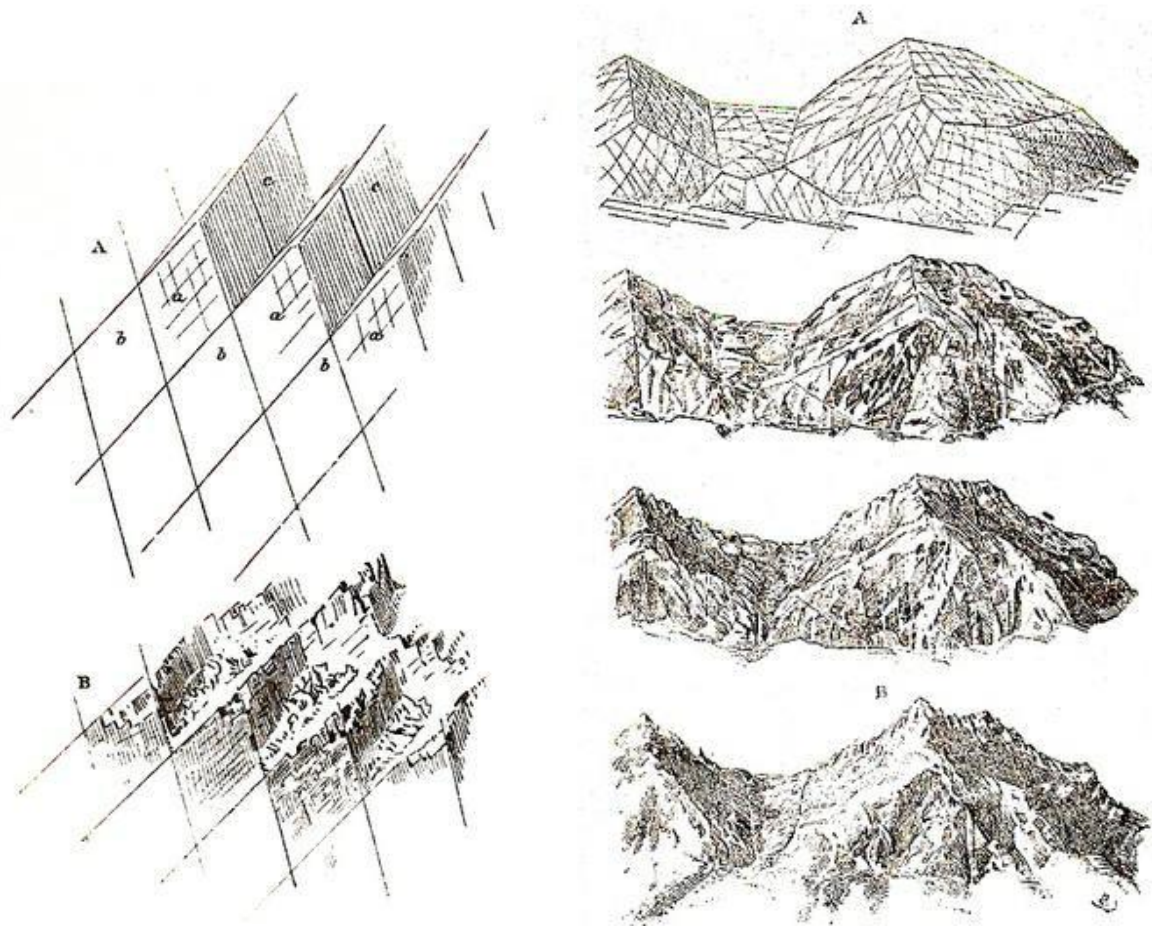


Fig. 2.50 Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, Illustrations from *Le Massif du Mont Blanc, étude sur sa constitution géodésique et géologique* (Paris: J. Baudry, 1876)

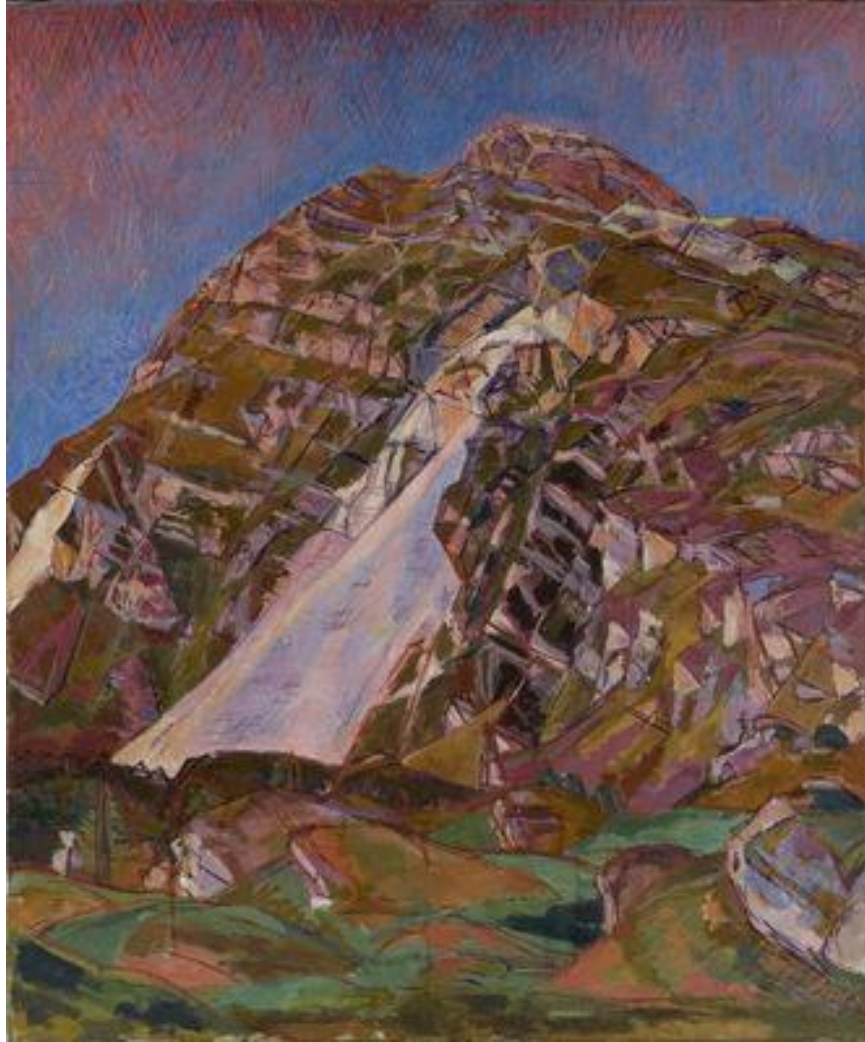


Fig. 2.51 Alberto Giacometti, *The Mountain*, c. 1930  
Oil and pastel on canvas, 60.1 x 50.4 cm



Fig. 2.52 Piz Badile, Bregalia, Switzerland

Fig. 2.53 Alberto Giacometti, *Grande tête mince (Large Thin Head)*, 1955  
Bronze, Private Collection





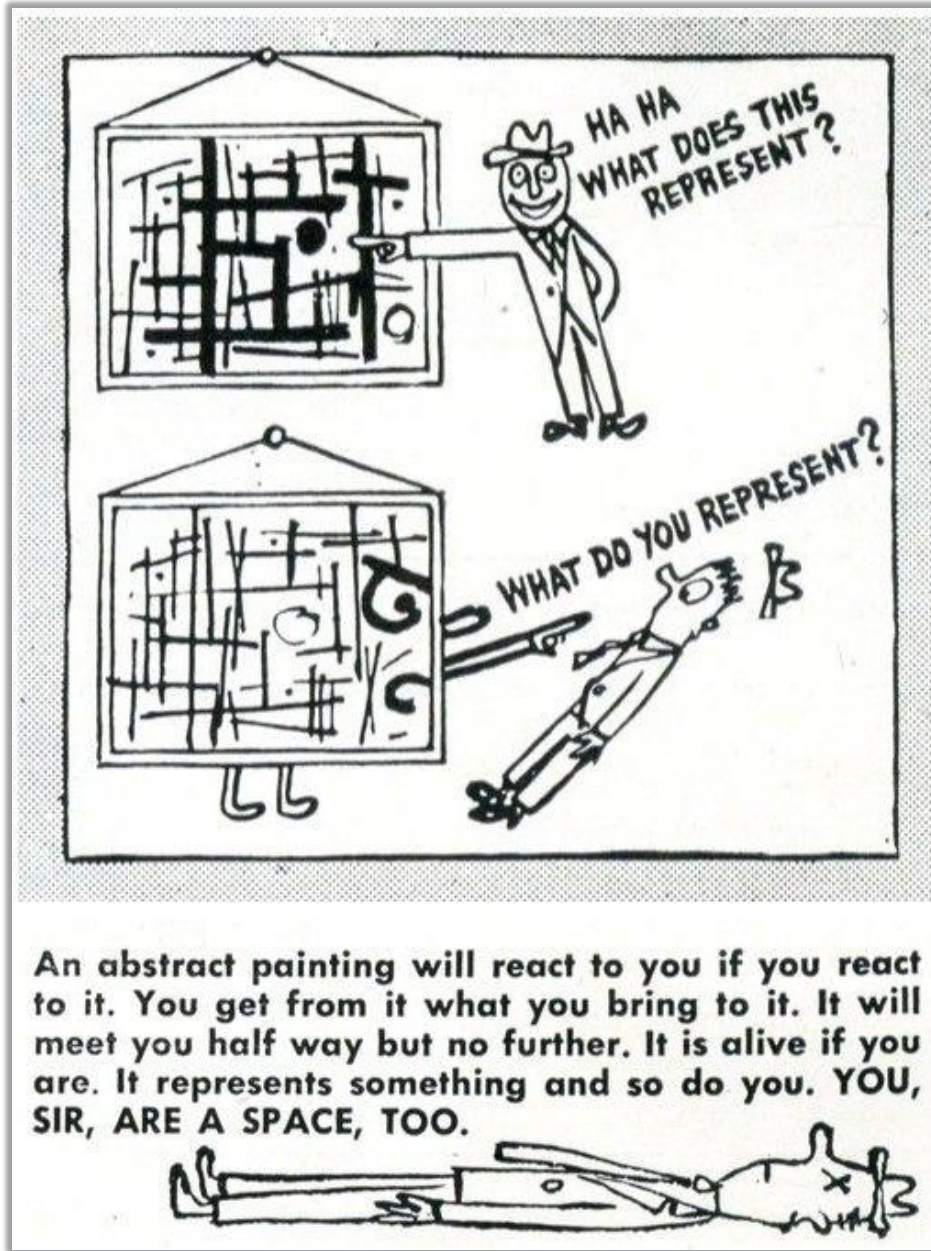
Fig. 2.54 Interior of the "Golden Stone," Stampa, Switzerland

Fig. 2.55 Alberto Giacometti, *Lotar II*, 1965, Bronze, 58.2 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich





Fig. 2.56 Kurt Schwitters, *Untitled (Sculpture with Hook)*, 1945–47  
Paint on wood and plaster, 10.5 × 14 × 15 cm



2.57 Ad Reinhardt, "How to Look at Space" (detail), *Art & Architecture*, January 1947



Fig. 3.1 John Deakin, *Isabel Nicholas*, 1952  
Silver gelatin print

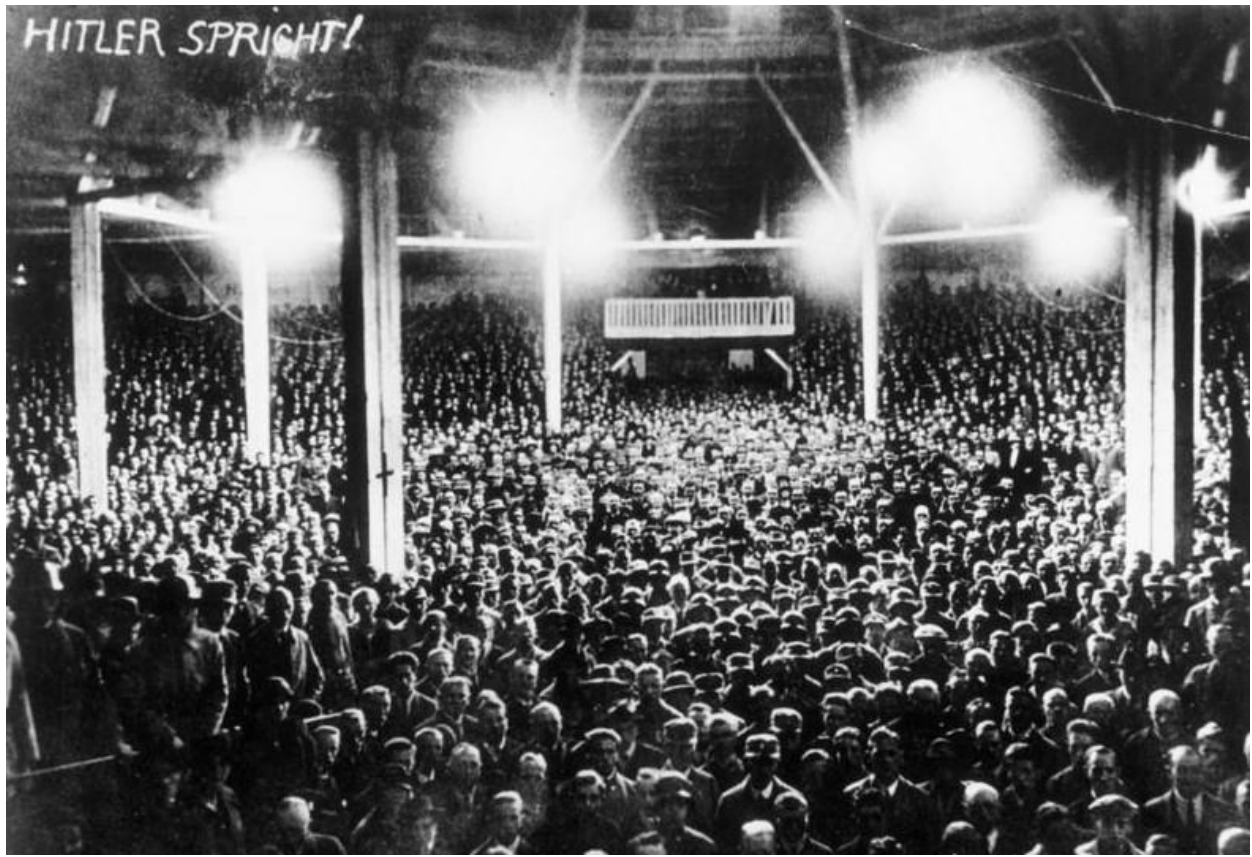


Fig. 3.2 *Hitler Spricht!*, c. 1925  
Circus Krone, Munich, Bundesarchiv



Fig. 3.3 Alberto Giacometti, *Femme cuillère (Spoon Woman)*, 1927  
Plaster, 146.5 x 51.6 x 21.5 cm, FAAG



Fig. 3.4 Alberto Giacometti, *Homme et femme (Man and Woman)*, 1928  
Bronze, 40 x 40 x 16.5, Centre Pompidou – MnAM



Fig. 3.5 Alberto Giacometti, *Caresse (Malgré les mains) (Caress (Despite the Hands))*, 1932  
Marble, 47.5 x 49.5 x 16 cm, Centre Pompidou - MnAM

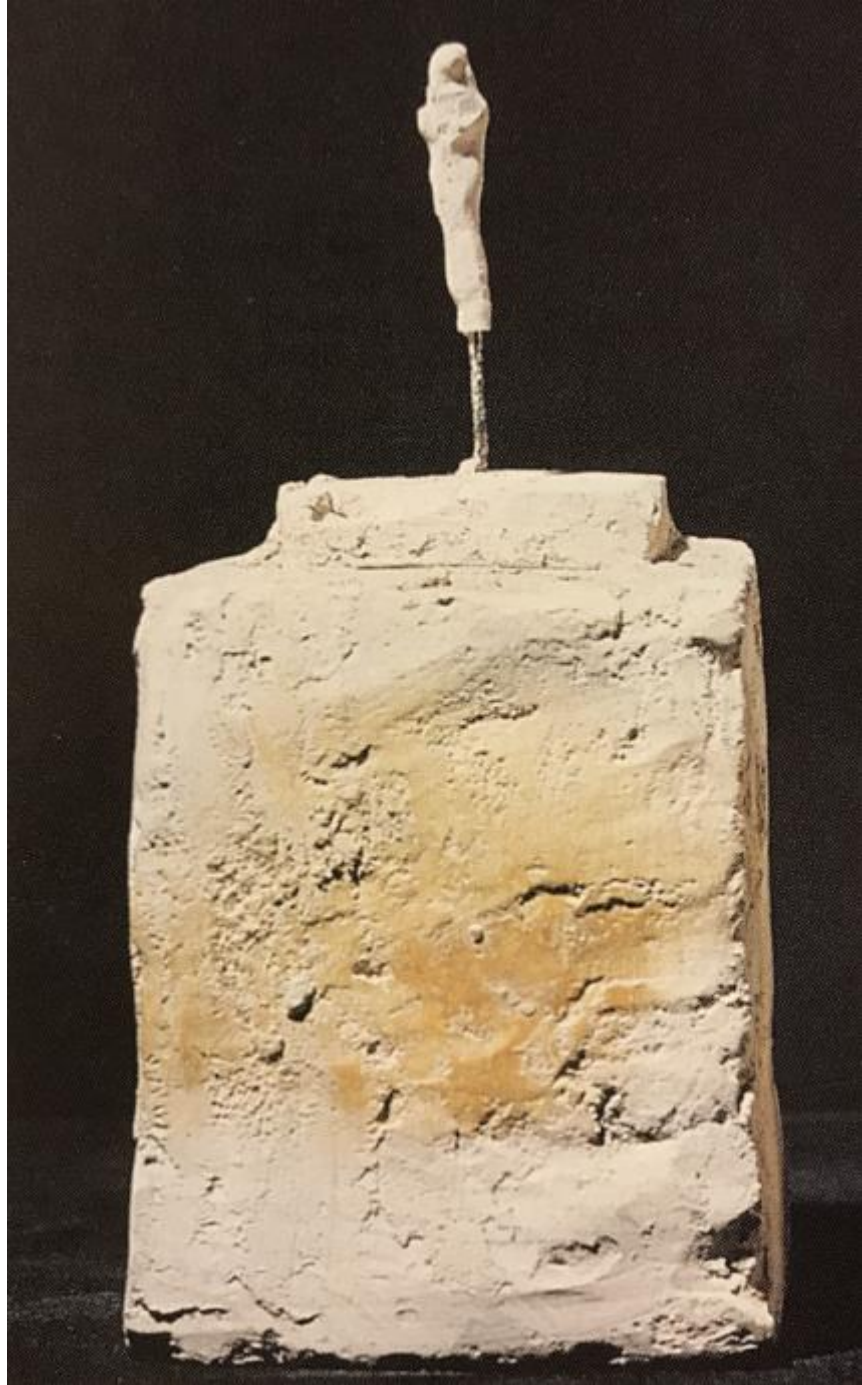


Fig. 3.6 Alberto Giacometti, *Figurine sur double socle* (*Figurine on a double base*), c. 1945  
10.3 x 5 x 4.9 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 3.7 Alberto Giacometti, *Marie-Laure de Noailles*, 1946  
Plaster reworked with a pocket knife, 6.2 x 4.3 x 4.2 cm, FAAG



Fig. 3.8 Alberto Giacometti, *Simone de Beauvoir*, 1946  
Plaster and paint, 13.9 x 4 x 4.1 cm, FAAG



Fig. 3.9 Alberto Giacometti [*Toute Petite Figurine (Very Small Figurine)*], c. 1938  
Plaster reworked with pencil, coated with a parting compound, 4.5 x 3 x 3.8 cm, FAAG



Fig. 3.10 Alberto Giacometti, [*Standing Nude circled and framed*], c. 1942  
Pencil on paper, 33.2 x 24.3 cm, FAAG



Fig. 3.11 Alberto Giacometti *Mains tenant le vide (Objet invisible) (Hands Holding the Void (Invisible Object))*, 1931–32  
Plaster, 156.2 x 34.3 x 29.2 cm, Yale University Art Gallery

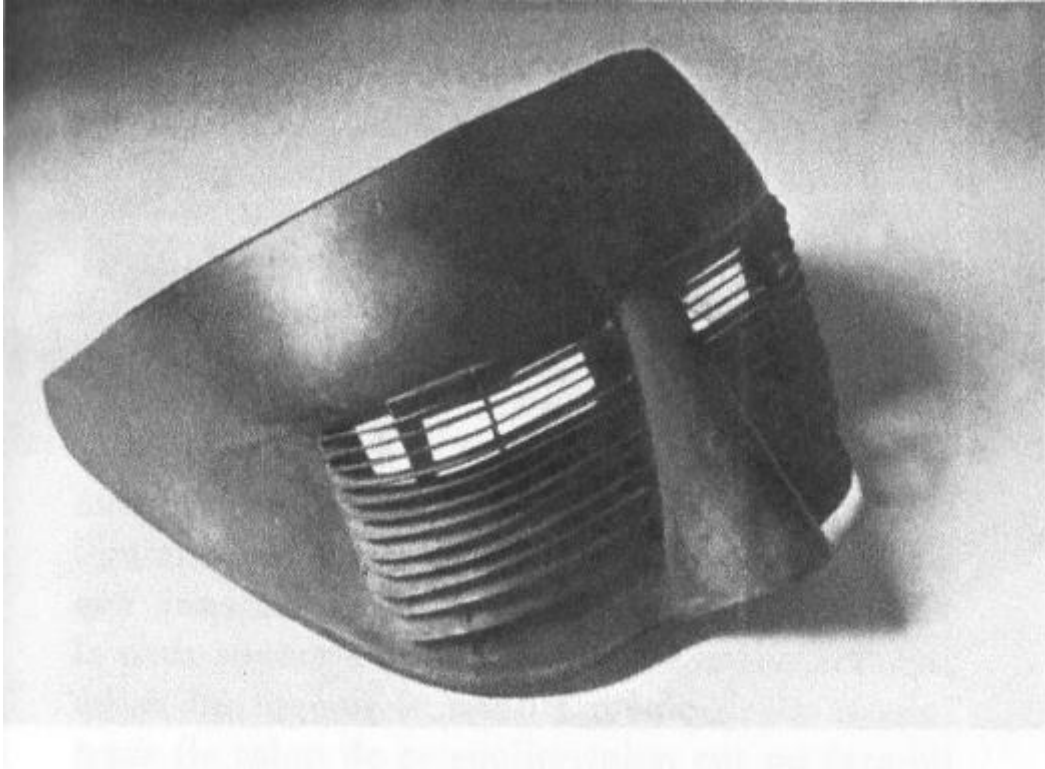


Fig. 3.12 Man Ray, [*Half Mask*], 1934

Fig. 3.13 Man Ray, [*Slipper Spoon*], 1934  
André Breton, *L'Amour fou*, 1934





Fig. 3.14 Kurt Schwitters, *Untitled (Colored Half-Moon)*, 1937/40  
Sculpture, plaster, painted, 8.3 x 14.3 x 10.7 cm



Figs. 3.15 and 3.16 Alberto Giacometti, *Femme de Venise VIII* (and detail), 1956  
Plaster, 124.8 x 14.5 x 34 cm

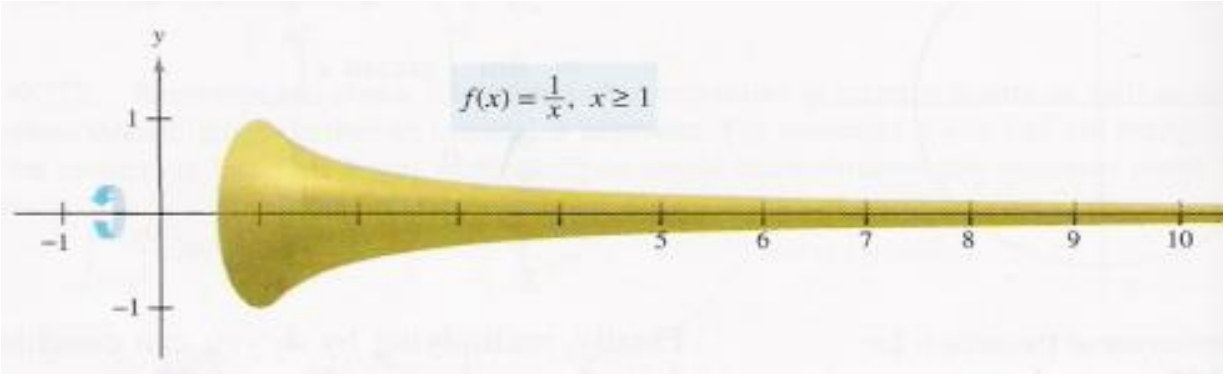


Fig. 3.17 Gabriel's Horn



Fig. 3.18 Alberto Giacometti, *Figure, II*, c. 1945  
Plaster, 9.5 cm high including plaster base (5.6 x 4.3 x 4.2 cm)

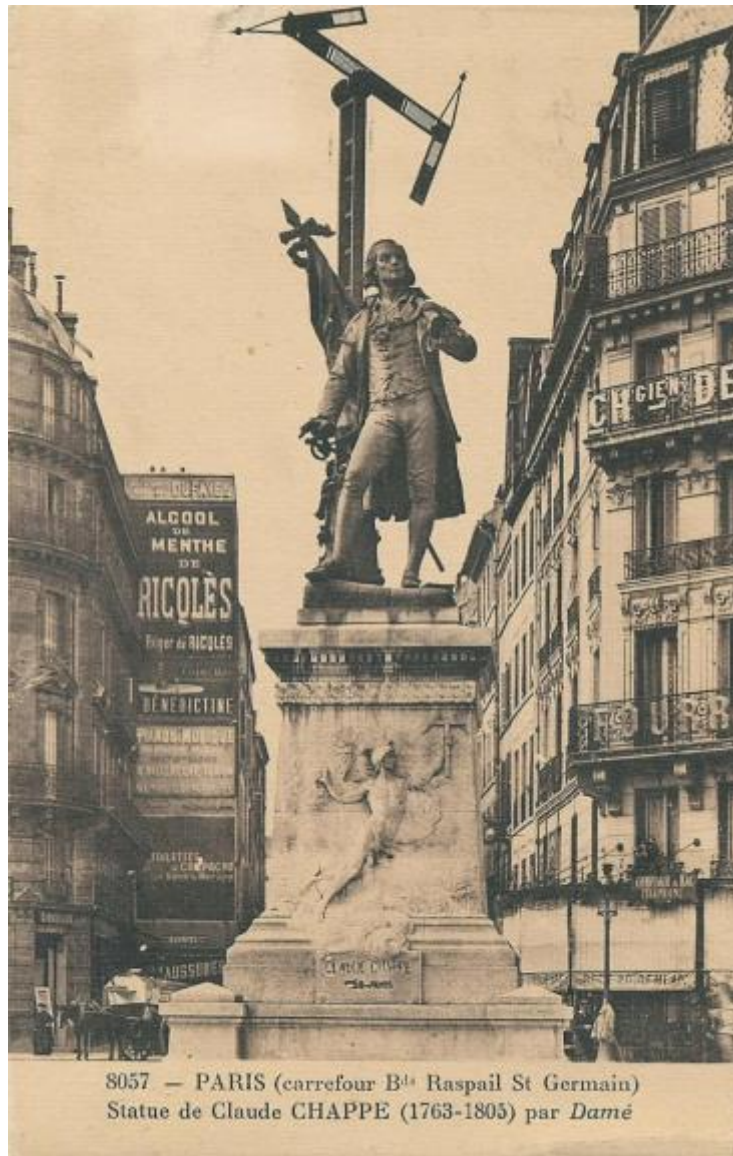


Fig. 3.20 Damé, *Postcard of the Statue of Claude Chappé*



*La première colonne d'attaque venant du Louvre.* Photo Constantinesco.



*Le maréchal Ney descendait les Champs-Élysées.*

Fig. 3.21 Constantinescu, *The first attack column coming from the Louvre*, 1932  
M. Sauvage, *La Fin de Paris*, Denoël et Steele: Paris, 1932.



PLATE 3. When I say that the statue of Etienne Dolet on its plinth  
in the Place Maubert in Paris has always fascinated me  
and induced unbearable discomfort . . .

(SEE PAGE 24)

Fig. 3.22 *Etienne Dolet*, from André Breton, *Nadja*, 1928



Fig. 3.23 Man Ray, *Woman Holding Disagreeable Object*, 1932  
Gelatin silver print



Fig. 3.24 Alberto Giacometti, *Objet désagréable à jeter* (*Disagreeable Object to be Thrown Away*), 1931  
Bronze, 22 x 28 x 29 cm, Centre Pompidou – MnAM



Fig. 3.25 Hans Arp, *Sculpture to be Lost in the Forest*, 1932  
Bronze, 90 x 22 x 15 cm, Tate Gallery



Fig. 3.26 Alberto Giacometti, *Circuit*, 1931–32  
Wood, 4.5 x 48.5 x 47 cm, Centre Pompidou - MnAM



Fig. 3.27 Alberto Giacometti, *On ne joue plus* (*No More Play*), 1931–32  
Marble, wood, and bronze, 4.1 x 58 x 45.2 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



Fig. 3.29 Alberto Giacometti, *Petite figurine sur double socle* (*Small Figurine on a Double Base*), c. 1939–45  
Plaster, 9.5 x 4.1 x 4.3 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 3.30 Alberto Giacometti, [*Notebook with Ziggurats*], c. 1938–45  
Pencil on paper, FAAG 1994-1643

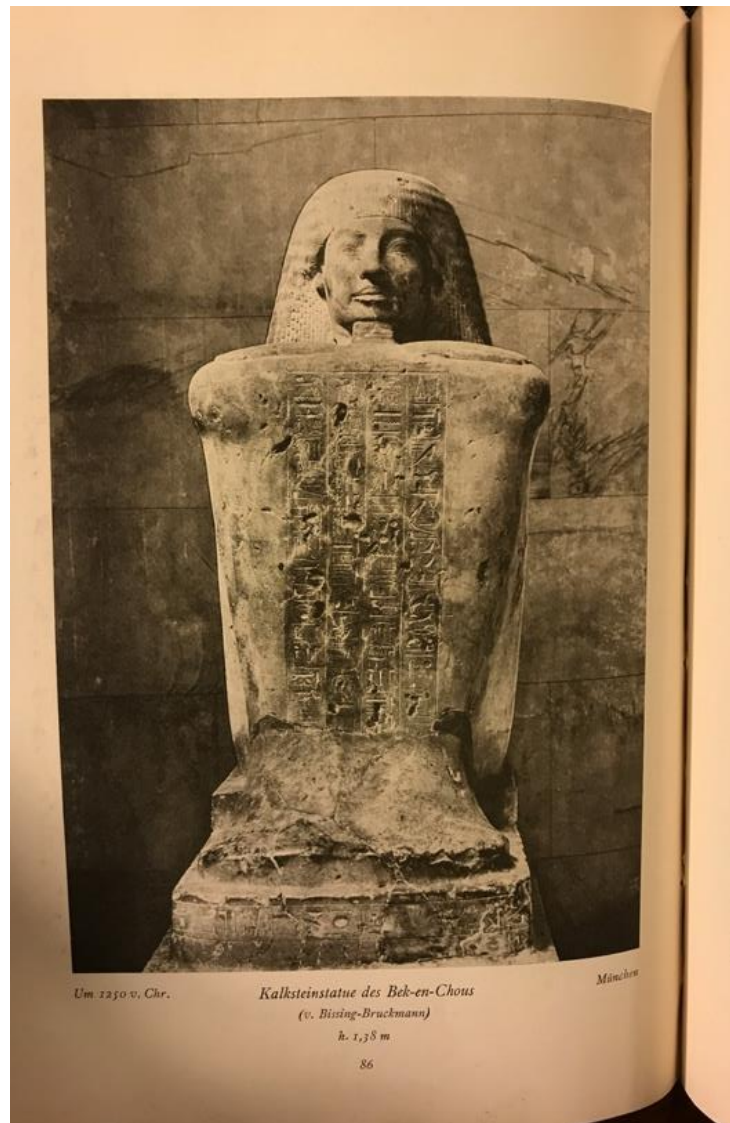


Fig. 3.31 Limestone statue of Bek-en-Chous, c. 1250 BCE  
1.38 m  
In Hedwig Fechheimer, *Die Plastik der Ägypter* (Berlin: Bruno Cassierer Verlag, 1914)

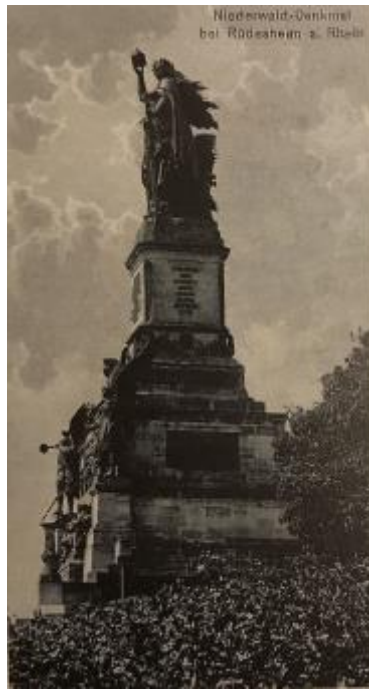


Fig. 3.32 Johannes Schilling, Niederwald Monument, Rudesheim, 1883



Fig. 3.33 War Monument, St. Caradec-Trégomel (Morbihan)  
Photo: Daniel J. Sherman



Fig. 3.34 Alberto Giacometti, *Small Bust on a Double Base*, c. 1939–45  
Plaster, 12.9 x 6.8 x 7.4 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich

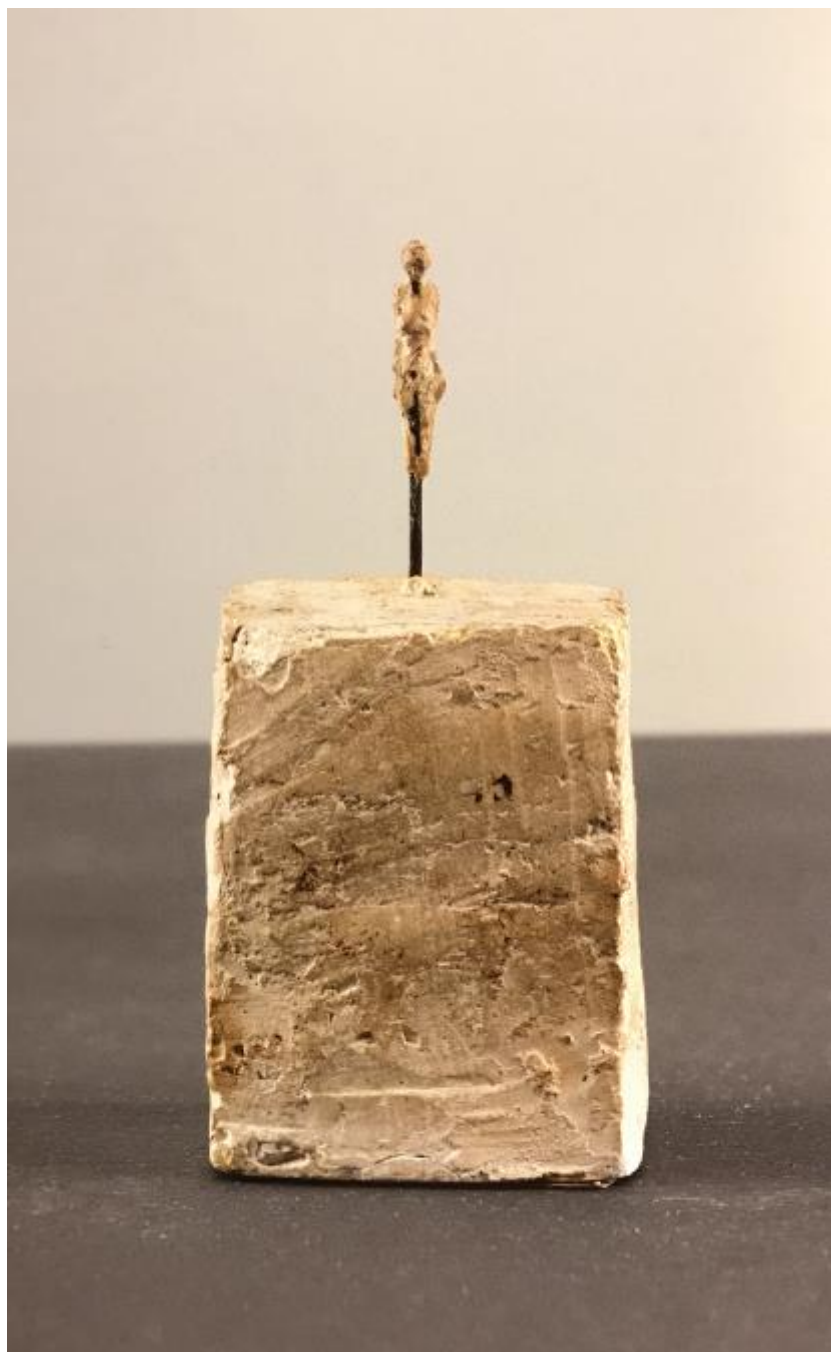


Fig. 3.35 Alberto Giacometti, *Petite figurine sur socle* (*Small Figurine on a Base*), c. 1939–45  
Plaster, 7.3 x 3.5 x 3.7 cm, Kunsthaus Zurich



Fig. 3.36 Alberto Giacometti, *Figure, VI*, c. 1945  
Plaster and metal, 4.1 cm high including base (1.6 x 1.3 x 1.3 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York

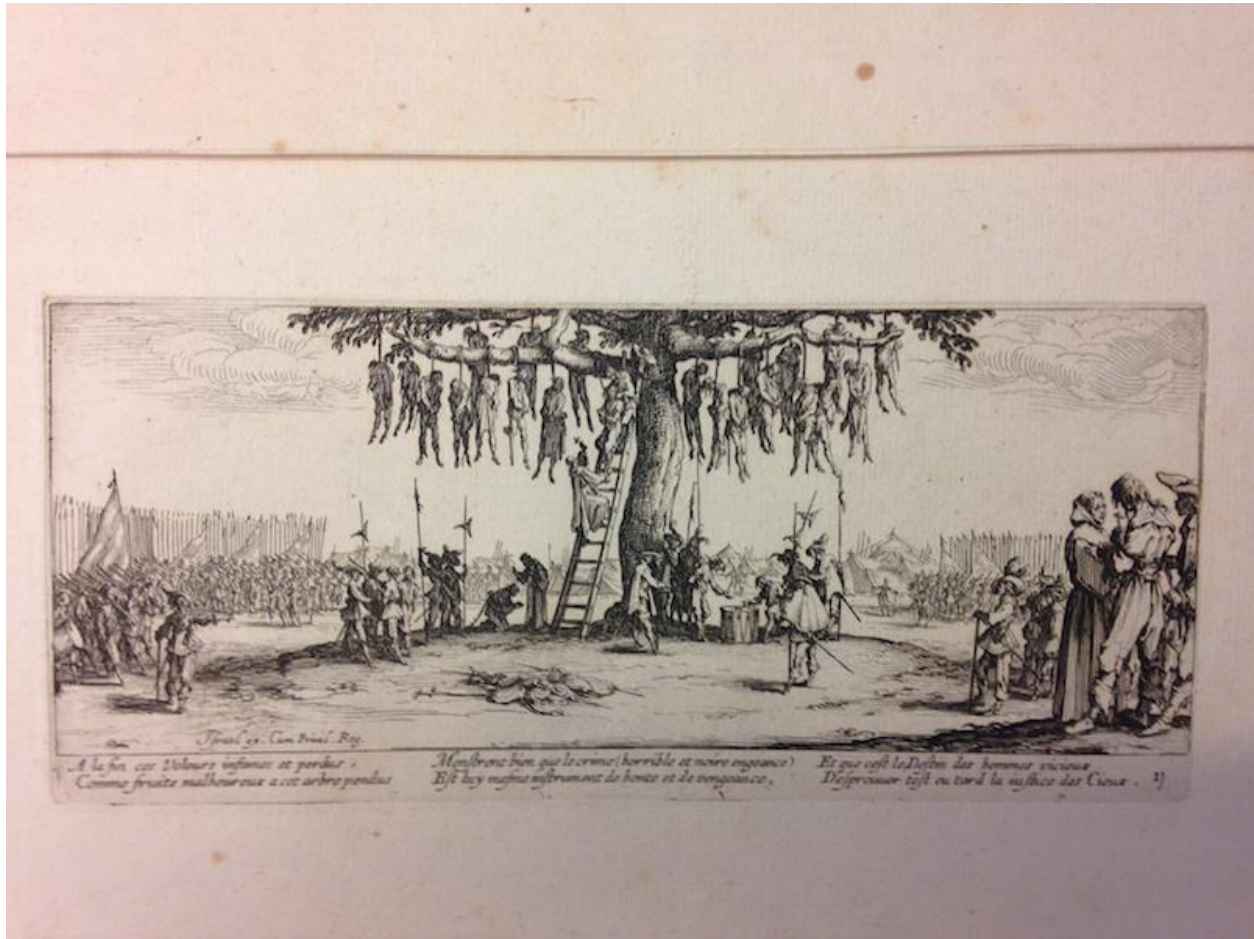


Fig. 3.37 Jacques Callot, *La Pendaison (The Hanging)*, 1633  
Etching, 8.1 x 18.5 cm, Getty Research Institute



Fig. 3.38 Francis Gruber, *Hommage à Callot*, 1942



Fig. 3.39 Mussolin and Petacci in the Piazzale Loreto, 29 April, 1945

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