

Retracing the Future: Giacometti's genius summary

28/09/2011

"An exhibition by Giacometti makes up for an entire nation," once wrote Jean-Paul Sartre, who emerges here in a comparison with Etruscan art, with an exchange of materials, emptiness, light, freeing the shadows of yesterday as well as those of today...



Published on Wednesday, September 28th, 2011. Paris, 1955. The Louvre is organizing a grand exhibition on the Etruscans; this will be an important step in the work of sculptor Alberto Giacometti (Borgonovo di Stampa, 1901 - Coira, 1966), but the decisive meeting will take place only a few years later in Volterra, with the celebrated votive statuette *Ombra della Sera* - Shadow of the Night (Guarnacci Etruscan Museum, Volterra, third century BC.). A threadlike well-known figure, it is sensual and mysterious at the same time and it evokes a shadow on the ground and it reveals to be quite striking for its modernity. Present at the exhibition, it appearing for the first time outside of Italy. "Does Giacometti draws, paints and sculpts referring to this art piece? The series *Femme de Venise* and that of *Homme qui marche* can be thought of, conceived, without reference to the *Shadow of the Night*?" This is the main questioning around the exhibition, according to Marc Restellini, director of Pinacothèque de Paris and curator of the

show along with Claudia Zevi. A true comparison between Etruscan art and the work conducted by the Swiss sculptor, this show wants to be a global re-reading of Giacometti. The sculptor's specialists and connoisseurs expected it for more than 50 years.



L Ombre du Soir; III secolo a.C.; - Bronzo; Volterra, Museo etrusco Guarnacci; Foto Arrigo Coppitz

The exhibition, divided into two parts, traces chronologically the four history highlight periods of the Etruscan people, ranging from Villanova, to the Oriental one, the Archaic and Classical up to the Hellenistic. The rich itinerary reveals the high quality that characterised Etruscan goldsmith, in addition to the black ceramic, the so-called "bucchero", showing the nuances of bronzes by Giacometti. Among other things, the Etruscan woman and her social status is treated throughout the exhibition. As it emerges through the Tomb of the Chariots'

frescoes (Tarquinia, 500 BC), the woman enjoyed a relative strong freedom so much so that she was given the opportunity to assist in various athletic competitions. This is also shown in a series of funerary statues, and divining placed in parallel with the feminine sculptures by Giacometti, like the *Femme nue debout au chignon* (1953-1954). Interesting the comparison between the disposition of the Etruscan tomb Inghirami of Volterra, here presented with a series of polls, and the placement of works in Giacometti Parisian atelier, a pencil drawing by the artist (private collection, Switzerland). But it is only after a closer look at the Etruscan art and its many facets that the visitor, literally imbued with this, is then invited to penetrate the universe, where Giacometti can understand fully well the significance of this comparison. In about sixty works not miss is the *L'Uomo che Cammina I - The Man Who Walks I* (Bronze, 1960), and various *Femme de Venise* all coming from the Fondation Maeght's collection in Saint-Paul de Vence, including among them several small curiosities among which are notes and drawings pinned in journals such as *Quaderni Grigioni Italiani* or on exhibition catalogues.



Donna in piedi con chignon 1949; - Bronzo - 117 x 20 x 29 cm; Collezione Fondazione Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence; Successione Giacometti / ADAGP, Parigi 2011 Foto Claude Germain

Nevertheless, as pointed out by critic and art historian, Mark Bean, "Giacometti's path follows a double orientation, on the one hand that typical of the evocative force of African tribal sculpture, the Cubists, while on the other hand lies the appeal of ancient sculpture, the one of Cycladic figurines from the Etruscan canopic and Gallo-Roman coins, as shown by sculptures such as *L'objet invisible* -

Mains tenant saw them (1934) and Femme qui marche (1932-34). Summary of Giacometti genius".

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18,30

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