

CHRISTIE'S

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THE GIACOMETTI OF HUBERT DE GIVENCHY PARIS, 6 MARCH 2017



Paris – Christie's will offer a group of pieces by Diego Giacometti from the personal collection of Hubert de Givenchy in Paris on 6 March 2017 at 6pm. This exceptional sale will be preceded by a week-long viewing inspired by the only exhibition dedicated to Diego Giacometti curated by Daniel Marchesseau in 1986 at the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris. With this exhibition, Hubert de Givenchy will pay a final tribute to his dear friend Giacometti, who he cherished and valued.

Hubert de Givenchy: "It is thanks to Gustav Zumsteg, an important fabric creator in Zurich, whose company was called *Abraham*, that I met Diego Giacometti. During one of my visits to Zurich, he offered me a *gueridon* made by Diego for the *Kronenhalle*, the famous restaurant owned by his family. Fascinated by its pure aesthetic, I asked him if it was possible to meet the artist and he introduced him to me shortly afterwards. The relationship I had with Diego for nearly 20 years turned quickly into friendship. He was a very kind man, simple, welcoming, discreet, and a talented craftsman. He started to create some pieces for my first house at Jouy at the end of 1960, and then for the manor of Le Jonchet at the beginning of the 1970's. With this sale, I want to pay a further tribute to him, an additional recognition which he does not need, but which shows how important he was to me."



Diego Giacometti by Cecil Beaton

The life of the Giacometti brothers began at the very beginning of the 20th century in a small Swiss village called Stampa. Born a year apart, the two brothers remained very close all their lives. In 1925, Diego joined his brother Alberto in Paris, following the wishes of his mother Annetta, first settling together in Alberto's apartment in Montparnasse, before moving to a studio in Rue Hippolyte-Maindron. It is during this year that they began a lifelong collaboration together. Diego assisted his brother in the creation of his sculptures: assembling the frames, and helping with the plaster casts and bronzes patinas. Diego also became the preferred model for his brother, for whom he would pose every morning.

From 1929, the two brothers undertook an important collaboration with the most renowned Parisian interior designer of the time, Jean-Michel Frank. Thanks to him, Diego and Alberto were introduced to a circle of connoisseurs and renowned fashion designers, including Elsa Schiaparelli, Lucien Lelong, Coco Chanel, Hélène Rochas and Gustav Zumsteg, the Director of the fabric company *Abraham*.

Zumsteg was an important art collector and was working with fashion designers such as Cristóbal Balenciaga, Christian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, and Hubert de Givenchy. His mother was also the owner of the *Kronenhalle* in Zurich, a restaurant as renowned as Lipp in Paris. Close to Diego Giacometti, Gustav Zumsteg and his mother commissioned a series of lamps and *gueridons* in 1966, including the one offered by Hubert de Givenchy. This version, initially created in 1962 for the Maeght Foundation, is estimated at €150,000- 200,000.

François de Ricqlès, President of Christie's France: "It is with great pride that we present **The Giacometti of Hubert de Givenchy**. Through Hubert de Givenchy's collection, whose taste and elegance are the inspiration for many collectors, we are able to pay tribute to one of the most poetic and talented artists of the 20th century, Diego Giacometti."

In 1941, Alberto returned to Switzerland to flee the German occupation, while Diego decided to stay in France with his fiancée Nelly. This gave Diego the opportunity to work on his own and create individual pieces such as small animal sculptures. Five years later, the two brothers were reunited and resumed their collaboration, but it was Diego who received more personal orders to furnish private apartments, such as the one owned by Aimé and Marguerite Maeght. The couple, who always supported and promoted both artists, first acquired several sculptures by Alberto before asking Diego to furnish their apartment, Avenue Foch in Paris, followed by the Mas-Bernard and the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence.

After Alberto's death in 1966, Diego became devoted to his personal creations and the orders he received, including the one in 1984, for the Musée Picasso, inaugurated a year later.

Daniel Marchesseau: "Since his youth, Hubert de Givenchy, a born art lover, had kept the memory of the first time he saw Diego's works in Elsa Schiaparelli's Place Vendôme store. In 1950, when she entrusted him with managing her workshops as head designer he particularly remembered the plaster shells used in luminous appliqué-work which the artist-furniture maker had created for her".

The sale will present 21 objects such as a pair of magnificent bronze octagonal dining tables “aux caryatides” made by the artist in 1983 (€800,000-1,200,000 each), as well as four bronze stools (€300,000-500,000) and a third octagonal table “aux caryatides” which is slightly smaller (estimate: €600,000-800,000). A pair of andirons “aux deux oiseaux” realised with a brown patina in 1973 (estimate: €150,000-200,000) are presented alongside a major white patina lantern that hung in the main staircase of the manor, which preceded the one created for the Musée Picasso (€300,000-400,000). A pair of photophores “au cerf” (estimate: €400,000-600,000) completes this selection. Saint-Hubert, the holy patron of hunters, is represented by the symbol of a deer. Monsieur Hubert de Givenchy always liked to be surrounded by representations of deer and commissioned several pieces decorated by ornaments of the animal by Diego Giacometti such as the pair of photophores and the “grande console” present in our auction.



Auction: Monday 6 March at 6pm

Viewing: From 28 February to 4 March from 10 am to 6 pm and Sunday 5 March from 2 pm to 6 pm

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

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