

## Press kit

Lausanne, 15. October 2020

Giovanni Giacometti. Watercolors (16.10.2020 – 17.1.2021)

## Giovanni Giacometti Watercolors (16.10.2020 – 17.1.2021)

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### 1. Press release

MCBA the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne conserves many oil paintings and drawings by Giovanni Giacometti, a major artist from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a faithful friend of one of the institution's great donors, the Lausanne doctor Henri-Auguste Widmer. By putting on display an exceptional group of watercolors, all of them privately owned and almost all unknown outside their home, MCBA is inviting us to discover a lesser known side of Giovanni Giacometti's remarkable body of work.

Giovanni Giacometti (Stampa, 1868 – Glion, 1933) practiced watercolor throughout his life. As with his oil paintings, he found most of his subjects in the landscapes of his native region, Val Bregaglia and Engadin in the Canton of Graubünden. Still another source of inspiration were the members of his family going about their daily activities, as were local women and men busy working in the fields or fishing.

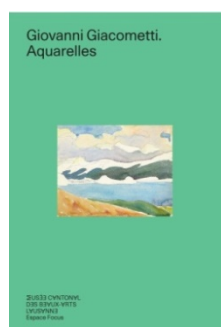
The artist turned to watercolor for commissioned works as well. Over the years he would produce in this exacting medium postcards promoting tourism in Graubünden, posters for exhibitions, and illustrations for a variety of books, including children's stories and travel accounts for adult readers.

The artist proved uncommonly bold in his use of color and that audacity is instantly apparent. Giacometti masterfully combines a number of effects that watercolor allows, transparency, gradations of color, a monochrome treatment of motifs. He freed himself from merely imitating the world's colors to forge his own harmonies.

**Exhibition curators:** Camille de Alencastro and Camille Lévêque-Claudet

**Dates of the exhibition:** 16.10.2020 – 17.1.2021

### Catalogue:



#### Giovanni Giacometti. Aquarelles

With texts by Camille de Alencastro and Camille Lévêque-Claudet

(FR), 64p., 76 color ill.

Lausanne, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, 2020.

(coll. Espace Focus, n°2)

CHF 8.-

On sale at the MCBA Bookshop

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### 2. Media images

The images of the installation are available here, <https://www.mcba.ch/presse>

The images are duty free for the duration of the exhibitions. Any reproduction of them must mention the following: name of the museum, author(s), title of the work of art and name of the photographer, and the copyright.

Other indications (dimensions, techniques, date, etc.) are welcome but not obligatory. Once the document is published, we would be grateful if a copy was sent to the museum's press department: Service de presse, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne.



1.

Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933)  
*Lac de Sils et Piz Lunghin*, undated  
Lead pencil and watercolor on vellum  
31 x 23.8 cm  
Private collection  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert



2.

Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933)  
*Annetta lisant à Minusio*, undated  
Lead pencil and watercolor on vellum  
34.9 x 25.9 cm  
Private collection  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert



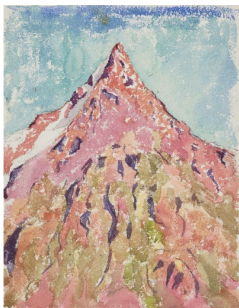
3.

Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933)  
*Lac de Sils*, undated  
Lead pencil and watercolor on vellum  
22.9 x 28.8 cm  
Private collection  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert

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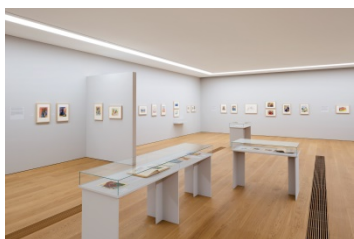
4.

Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933)  
*Pizzo Bacone*, undated  
Lead pencil and watercolor on vellum  
29.5 x 22.7 cm  
Private collection  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert



5.

Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933)  
*Trois enfants aux chapeaux*, undated  
Lead pencil and watercolor on vellum  
22.8 x 29.1 cm  
Private collection  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert



6.

Exhibition view / Espace Focus  
*Giovanni Giacometti. Watercolors*  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert



7.

Exhibition view / Espace Focus  
*Giovanni Giacometti. Watercolors*  
Photo © MCBA, Étienne Malapert

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### 3. Artist's biography

#### 7 March 1868

Born in Stampa in Graubünden.

#### 1884 – 1886

Secondary schooling at the cantonal school in Chur.

#### 1886 – 1888

Art studies in Munich at the School of Applied Arts in the hopes of enrolling at the Academy of Fine Arts. He also studies at two private schools. He befriends Cuno Amiet.

#### October 1888

Giacometti and Amiet travel to Paris. They study at the Académie Julian and take courses at the École nationale des Beaux-Arts. The two friends spend the summers of 1889 and 1890 in Stampa.

#### 1891

Giacometti has to interrupt his studies in Paris because of the financial straits he finds himself in. Returns to Stampa.

#### February – November 1893

Stays in the Abruzzi Mountains and later in Rome. During the summer, he visits Naples and Torre del Greco.

#### October 1894

Meets Giovanni Segantini, who is living and working in Maloja. Segantini becomes Giacometti's mentor and friend.

#### April 1898

First major success, alongside Amiet and Ferdinand Hodler, at Zurich's Künstlerhaus show, where he exhibits 7 paintings.

#### 1900

Takes part in Paris's Exposition universelle. He marries Annetta Stampa 4 October. The couple settle in Borgonovo, in Val Bregaglia. They will have four children together, Alberto (1901), Diego (1902), Ottilia (1904) and Bruno (1907).

#### 1901

Geneva's Musée Rath is the first public institution to acquire two pieces by the artist. From this year on, the family spends its summers in Capolago by Lake Sils.

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### 1905

The family settles in Stampa, where Giacometti installs his studio the following year in a converted barn. It will be in this studio that Alberto Giacometti will later work whenever he is in Graubünden.

### 1909

The family moves to Capolago and the house that Annetta has inherited.

### 1912

Major show at Zurich's Kunsthaus, where he exhibits 50 works.

### 1920

Retrospective at Bern's Kunsthalle and Basel's Kunsthalle.

### 25 June 1933

Dies in Glion, above Montreux, at the clinic of his friend and collector Dr. Henri-Auguste Widmer, one of the main donors of MCBA Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne.

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### 4. Questions for the exhibition curators

#### **Why mount this show now?**

MCBA Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts of Lausanne conserves several works by Giovanni Giacometti, thanks to the artist's patron and friend the collector Henri-Auguste Widmer, who bequeathed his private collection to the museum in 1936 and 1939. In the years that followed, the MCBA collections were enriched with additional oil paintings and drawings by the artist but the museum boasts none of his watercolors. Originally the idea of the project was to study a group of works that is in private hands and almost entirely unknown, and to present to the public a body of work that is less well known but no less important in Giovanni Giacometti's overall output.

#### **How many works are being shown and what period do they cover?**

Nearly 80 watercolors, representing all of the artist's career, from the late 1880s to the 1930s.

#### **The provenance of these watercolors?**

All of the works come from a private collection.

#### **How many works by Giovanni Giacometti does MCBA possess?**

The Museum has 26 works (10 paintings, 16 drawings).

#### **What was the first work by Giovanni Giacometti to hang in MCBA? Was it part of the Widmer Collection?**

It was a portrait depicting the artist's son Alberto Giacometti, an oil on canvas from 1921 that was donated to the museum in 1929 by Dr. Widmer. The last one to join the collections did so in 2018, thanks to the Jean-Claude Givel Acceptance in lieu Succession.

#### **Giacometti and Dr. Widmer were very close. Can you tell us more about that?**

The Widmers, husband and wife, regularly stayed in Engadin, the landscapes of which were an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Giovanni Giacometti. The love and enthusiasm they felt for this region certainly played a part in their wish to meet Giacometti and collect his painting. In the letters the two men exchanged, the artist dealt with questions having to do with artmaking in general and his practice in particular. It was in Dr. Widmer's clinic in Glion-sur-Montreux that Giacometti passed away on 25 June 1933.

#### **The last Giovanni Giacometti exhibition mounted at MCBA?**

*Giovanni Giacometti. Aquarelles* now on view at MCBA is the first ever show devoted to the artist's watercolors. The last MCBA exhibition devoted to Giovanni Giacometti was a retrospective that was also seen in Winterthur's Kunstmuseum and Chur's Bündner Kunstmuseum in 1997. It was devoted especially to the artist's oil painting.

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### Not to be missed

MCBA is also featuring, as part of its “Invited Works” series in the collection’s display, two bronze pieces by Giovanni Giacometti’s son the famous sculptor Alberto Giacometti:

- *Grande femme II*, 1960
- *Buste d’homme (Lotar II)*, around 1964-1965

## 5. Public engagement – Public outreach services

### Guided tour open to the public (registration required; free admission)

Thursday 12 November at 6 pm

Thursday 14 January 2021 at 6pm

By Camille de Alencastro and Camille Lévêque-Claudet, curators of the exhibition

## 6. Museum services

### Book- and Giftshop

In the MCBA Book- and Giftshop you can find books on all of the shows currently on view, and a selection of publications on artists in the collection, the history of art and techniques and mediums, books for children, along with a range of items (notebooks, jewelry, scarves, pencils, etc.).

Hours: Tues., Fri., Sat., Sun.: 10 am – 6 pm / Thurs.: 10 am – 8 pm / Mon. closed

### Café-restaurant *Le Nabi*

Before or after your visit, *Le Nabi* invites you to take a break. The menu, reflecting the open, welcoming spirit of our museum, is both family oriented and refined. Drinks are all artisanal and the menu emphasizes local products that change with the seasons.

Hours: Tues., Fri., Sat., Sun.: 10 am – 6 pm / Thurs.: 10 am – 8 pm / Mon. closed

Reservations: T. 021 311 02 90 / [info@lenabi.ch](mailto:info@lenabi.ch)



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### 7. MCBA partners and sponsors

The MCBA building was inaugurated on 5 April 2019. The museum's new premises were built by the Canton of Vaud with the generous support of the City of Lausanne and the following private partnerships:

Fondation Les Mûrons

Loterie Romande



Fondation Anita et Werner Damm-Etienne

BCV



Fondation Gandur pour l'Art



Audemars Piguet



Mrs. Alice Pauli

Fondation Ernst Göhner



Nestlé



Fondation Art et Vie

Philip Morris International



ECA – Établissement cantonal d'assurance

Abakanowicz art and culture charitable foundation

Fondation Payot



Association rétrospective Pierrette Gonseth-Favre