

Press release  
Zurich, 10 October 2012

**Kunsthaus Zürich presents investigations into the Giacometti plasters**

**Until 17 February 2013, the Kunsthaus Zürich is presenting the initial results of research and restoration on the plasters by Alberto Giacometti. Visitors will encounter both plasters whose forms were used for the celebrated bronze casts and plaster sculptures that, following analysis, can now be definitively classified as works of art in their own right. These findings will form the basis for the phase of restoration and conservation that is scheduled for completion in 2014.**

In 2006 Bruno and Odette Giacometti donated their share of Alberto's then undistributed estate, including almost 80 original plasters, to the Alberto Giacometti Foundation in Zurich. Discussions about the degree of restoration required highlighted the difficulty of distinguishing between dirt and damage on the one hand, and traces of the various moulding processes on the other. It was also unclear whether all the plasters could indeed be categorized as originals or 'one-offs,' or whether some might be 'plâtres de tirage' – additional plaster copies that merely served as a moulding template for the bronze casting. The four-year research and restoration project began at the end of 2010 with extensive technological investigations designed to prevent over-hasty restoration destroying vital evidence.

FROM SUPPOSITIONS TO FACTS

The team of restorers has now examined more than 60 plasters, and has accumulated a wealth of evidence and material samples that has been crucial to answering questions about the manufacture, function and history of the plasters. In almost all cases, it is now possible to say with certainty how they were created and subsequently used. Numerous technical preferences in terms of production method have also been identified and attributed – to Alberto himself, his brother Diego (who chiefly produced the mouldings from the clay model), or one of the foundries. But it is a long way from initial evidence to confirmed finding. On numerous occasions, interpreting individual items of information required the assistance of outside experts. In particular, visits to the Susse Fondeur foundry and the Fondation Annette et Alberto Giacometti in Paris helped the team gain a better understanding of the details and peculiarities of casting technique. Materials analyses carried out by the Swiss Institute for Art Research translated suppositions into facts, eliciting clear results concerning the materials used. Traces of moulding sand, gelatin, shellac and talc were

detected on the surfaces; these materials provide an indication of the moulding technique used for the bronze casting.

### EXAMINATION BY THE FEDERAL MATERIALS TESTING INSTITUTE

Radiological examinations by Empa Dübendorf delivered results of a very different kind: a 3D computed tomography scan of a selected sample as well as X-rays of all the plasters provided valuable information about what is inside them and how they were made. Almost all contain armatures of wire and filaments. Such data is also extremely useful in terms of conservation, helping to assess the objects' fragility and optimize handling and transport.

### PRESENTATION UNTIL 17 FEBRUARY

A small presentation which opened on 5 October reveals the most important findings of the last two years. Half a dozen works are on display, accompanied by illustrated documentation of the various steps in the analysis and the information gleaned from them. As well as showcasing the technological findings, the exhibition also acts as a discussion forum, forming the basis for decisions on the second, practical stage of the project: conservation and restoration. The latest developments will be published on [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch). As part of the current special presentation 'Giacometti. The Donations,' entrance to the exhibition is included in the price of admission to the collection.

The project is supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and by Ars Rhenia, the foundation for the transregional promotion of art and culture.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthhaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich. Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch). Open: Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Public holidays: 26 December 2012, 1/2 January 2013: 10.00 a.m. – 6 p.m. 24/25/31 December closed.

Admission: CHF 15 / CHF 10 (concessions), including the collection. Children and teens up to age 16 free of charge. Combined ticket including the exhibitions 'The New Kunsthhaus' and 'Paul Gauguin' CHF 25 / CHF 18 (concessions) / CHF 20 for groups of 20 or more.

Advance sales: SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by ground line), [www.sbb.ch](http://www.sbb.ch). Magasins Fnac: sales points in Switzerland: Rives, Balexert, Lausanne, Fribourg, Pathé Kino Basel, [www.fnac.ch](http://www.fnac.ch)

### NOTE TO MEDIA

Illustrations are available at [www.kunsthhaus.ch](http://www.kunsthhaus.ch) > Information > Press. Contact: Kunsthhaus Zürich, Björn Quellenberg, [bjoern.quellenberg@kunsthhaus.ch](mailto:bjoern.quellenberg@kunsthhaus.ch), tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 13