

MEDIA RELEASE

Zurich, 23 April 2019



Augusto Giacometti, *Chromatic Fantasy*, 1914,
oil on canvas, 95.5 x 95.5 cm, Kunsthhaus Zürich,
Inv. 1954/30, gift of Erwin Poeschel
Photo: Kunsthhaus Zürich

Augusto Giacometti. Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Murals and Stained Glass

Augusto Giacometti is regarded as one of the outstanding Swiss painters to emerge from Art Nouveau and Symbolism. With this Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Murals and Stained Glass the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) has initiated an in-depth project devoted to this artist. It will provide a further addition to the Institute's series of catalogues raisonnés centring on art in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Augusto Giacometti has a reputation for his innovative stained glass and as an exponent of monumental wall painting in Switzerland. In the realm of non-commissioned art, his significance is rooted in his paintings. Alongside the landscapes, portraits and still lifes there are also semi-abstract and purely non-representational works. The abstract pastel drawings begun in 1899 and the non-figurative oil paintings ("chromatic fantasies", from 1910 to 1917) established Giacometti's posthumous reputation as a "pioneer of abstract painting". In his own day, greater significance was attached to the decorative elements in his late work.

The Catalogue Raisonné will contain systematic documentation and commentary on Giacometti's painted oeuvre, which together with the mosaics and stained glass consists of about 650 works, and will examine links between his creative periods. Particular attention will be paid to Augusto Giacometti's exploration of colour theory and the way colour constitutes a thread within his oeuvre, and to his self-definition as an artist who combined commissions with independent output. His membership of the group known as *Das Neue Leben* and his contacts with the Dadaists prompt an enquiry into whether Giacometti challenged the distinction between high-brow art and ornamentation by drawing on the decorative arts. Moreover, research into his role as a member and chairman of the Federal Art Commission will generate insights into the art world in Switzerland during the first half of the 20th century. The Catalogue Raisonné will present an analysis of his works that serves both to place the artist in context and to enhance our broader understanding of how Modernism developed in Switzerland.

The SIK-ISEA team (project leaders: Katharina Ammann and Michael Egli) have benefited from the participation of Beat Stutzer, the prominent specialist on Augusto Giacometti. In technical fields the research team have been working with the Art Technology unit at SIK-ISEA, with the monument preservation agencies in Graubünden and the Canton of Zurich, and with the Vitrocentre Romont. The findings from this research project, which is being supported by third-party funding, will be made accessible in 2023 both as a book and online through open access (www.augusto-giacometti.ch). The project has been funded by Ars Rhenia, the Finance Committee of the City of Zurich, the Swiss National Science Foundation and private benefactors.



Call to collectors

Information about paintings by Augusto Giacometti will gladly be received by: SIK-ISEA, Michael Egli, Zollikerstrasse 32, Postfach, CH-8032 Zürich, michael.egli@sik-isea.ch, T +41 44 388 51 20.
All communications will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Contact for further details

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*The **Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA)**, founded in 1951, is a competence centre for art scholarship and art technology with both a national and an international focus. Its primary activities are research, documentation, dissemination of knowledge and services in the field of fine art. Its core speciality is the production of art in Switzerland from the Middle Ages to the present day.*