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THAT  
CHANGES  
THE  
PICTURE



# FINAL PORTRAIT

## SYNOPSIS

NL

De totstandkoming van het laatste meesterwerk van Alberto Giacometti vastgelegd door de award winnende regisseur Stanley Tucci (bekend van Big Night & Blind Date). Met hoofdrollen voor Geoffrey Rush (The King's Speech), Armie Hammer (Nocturnal Animals) en Clémence Poésy (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows).

Stap in de wereld van de wereldberoemde kunstenaar Alberto Giacometti en maak kennis met zijn uitgesproken persoonlijkheid, humor, werkwijze, favoriete tijdverdrijf en spitsvondige manier van communiceren. We volgen de kunstenaar gedurende twee weken in het Parijs van de zestiger jaren. Giacometti wil een portret van zijn Amerikaanse vriend schilderen, de bekende schrijver en kunstcriticus James Lord. Zijn belofte dat het maar een paar uur duurt, kan hij niet waarmaken. James mist zijn vlucht. En de paar uren worden al snel dagen. Lord krijgt inzicht in de werkwijze van de kunstenaar en we zien de strubbelingen en frustraties in het proces en de uiteindelijk totstandkoming van Giacometti's laatste meesterwerk.

FR

La réalisation du dernier chef-d'œuvre de Alberto Giacometti capturé par le réalisateur primé Stanley Tucci (connu de Big Night & Blind). Avec des rôles principaux pour Geoffrey Rush (The King's Speech), Armie Hammer (Nocturnal Animals) et Clémence Poésy (Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows).

Plongez dans la vie de l'artiste mondialement connu Alberto Giacometti et apprenez à connaître sa personnalité distincte, humour, méthode de travail, son passe-temps favori et son façon intelligente de communiquer. On suit l'artiste pendant deux semaines à Paris dans les années soixante. Giacometti veut peindre un portrait de son ami américain, l'écrivain-artiste et critique d'art James Lord. Il ne peut pas tenir sa promesse que cela ne durera que quelques heures et ainsi James rate son vol. Les quelques heures deviennent rapidement des jours. Lord découvre la façon de travailler de l'artiste et on voit les luttes et frustrations dans le processus pour finir la réalisation finale du dernier chef-d'œuvre de Giacometti

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## CAST

Alberto Giacometti  
James Lord  
Diego Giacometti  
Annette Giacometti  
Caroline  
Pierre Matisse

Geoffrey Rush  
Armie Hammer  
Tony Shalhoub  
Sylvie Testud  
Clémence Poésy  
James Faulkner

## CREW

regie / réalisation  
scenario / scénario  
art direction / direction artistique  
cinematografie / photographie  
montage  
productie / production  
productiehuis / société de production  
geluid / son  
muziek / musique  
casting  
kostuums / costumes

Stanley Tucci  
Stanley Tucci  
James Merifield  
Danny Cohen  
Camilla Toniolo  
Gail Egan, Nik Bower, Ilann Girard  
Riverstone Pictures  
Tim Hands  
Evan Lurie  
Nina Gold  
Liza Bracey

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## Long Synopsis

It is 1964 and outside a Paris art gallery, the dishevelled 64 year old Alberto Giacometti (Geoffrey Rush) has walked out of his own exhibition opening. His American friend, the convivial and impeccably turned out 40-something James Lord (Armie Hammer) comes to find him.

Giacometti muses that Lord has never posed for him. Although Lord says he has to leave for New York in a couple of days, Giacometti reassures him that it will be quick so Lord agrees to sit for a portrait.

Lord arrives at Giacometti's ramshackle studio with its adjoining bedroom and rickety staircase, all leading off a cluttered courtyard. Annette Arm (Sylvie Testud), Giacometti's tired looking though much younger wife greets Lord warmly. Giacometti works on a sculpture but laments to his brother and right hand man, Diego (Tony Shalhoub) that the piece is a miserable failure.

Giacometti starts work on the portrait but tells Lord that he will never be able to paint him as he sees him. He also issues the ominous warning that it is impossible to finish a portrait. Lord reminds him that he has a flight to catch, but the artist reassures him.

Caroline (Clémence Poésy), a prostitute who is Giacometti's lover, muse and model arrives and Lord smiles as the pair kiss and giggle. Lord sees that Annette is also watching. Giacometti has been openly having an affair for four years.

Lord writes an account of all that goes on. Giacometti and Caroline go out to have fun with friends and drink wine in their local restaurant before falling into bed together. Giacometti then gets up and returns to his studio to work through the night. As day breaks, he crawls into bed next to his wife and turns the light on, as he is afraid of the dark. This is his routine.

The following day, an unseasonably warm March morning, Lord meets Giacometti who is telling his dealer that he will never sell his latest portrait. He plans to give it to Lord. Back behind the canvas, Giacometti starts to show the first signs of frustration. He exclaims that it is impossible to get the portrait right. He will need an extra day or two. Lord is left with no choice but to change his flight. He can't understand how Giacometti can doubt his ability so greatly, especially as he becomes ever more

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successful. The artist responds that there is no better breeding ground for doubt than success. He feels that everything he has ever exhibited has been unfinished – it's impossible for him ever to be satisfied.

Diego arrives from the gallery with a huge bundle of cash. Giacometti peels off some notes for his brother, a smaller amount for himself and he asks Lord to help him find a hiding place the rest.

Lord witnesses Giacometti doing business with a dealer, trading some of his new work for his old drawings, a transaction that surprises Lord, but the artist can't let go of his original works, and the art world loves his most recent which they see as iconic. As he paints, Giacometti gets more frustrated and exclaims that he doesn't even know if he should continue.

The two go out to eat with Annette, but once in the restaurant, Giacometti sees Caroline and disappears to sit with her, much to Lord's discomfort. Annette is used to being abandoned but she is hurt and leaves.

Day four and, whilst Lord feels the painting is going well, Giacometti says he simply cannot reproduce what he sees. Giacometti says he just needs another week. Lord changes his flight again.

Annette is in her bedroom with Isaku Yanaihara, a Japanese friend who had modelled for Giacometti and who the artist encouraged into an affair with his wife. Meanwhile, Caroline is in the studio cajoling Giacometti into buying her an expensive car. Much to her delight, finally he agrees.

Diego tells Lord how, as a boy, he used to love watching his brother and father sculpting together. He didn't choose to join them as he was happier getting into mischief. Lord says he was the same, busy being thrown out of various institutions.

Giacometti bursts in, violently ripping up drawings. He has been to see a lithographer about transferring his art onto stone, but he has been told that the paper is too old for this process to work. Lord tries to save the drawings, some of which have been included accidentally. Diego just watches; he is used to this tumultuous behaviour. Later, Diego presents Lord with one of his own sculptures and explains that Caroline has gone missing, which explains the artist's particularly crazy behaviour.

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Giacometti turns to Annette to model for him, in the freezing cold studio, but she doesn't please him. In her frustration, Annette despairs that she gives him everything but he gives her nothing. He doesn't understand what more she could possibly want for, beyond a roof over her head. But for her this is not the home, nor that marriage, that she longs for, plus she sees him giving all of his money to Caroline. In response, he throws some cash at her before storming out to search the streets for his lover.

Caroline reappears as suddenly as she disappeared and the delicate balance of Giacometti's life is restored.

Lord is on the phone justifying to someone back home why he must delay his return yet again. Although Giacometti is happy to have Caroline back, after two weeks of posing, Lord sees the struggle that Giacometti faces to express in visual terms the reality that he sees. They walk through the streets together and talk about their acquaintance Picasso and that artist's own insecurities. Their next sitting goes even more badly and Giacometti has to stop before he destroys the work. Lord laments the endlessness of the process to Diego, who empathises with his brother but advises that Lord should not change his flight again and should instead set a deadline.

Annette has used her money to buy a new dress. Her husband has promised to take her to the opening night of Chagall's ceiling at the Opera House. Caroline jubilantly screeches up in her beautiful new convertible car. She insists on taking Lord and Giacometti for a white knuckle drive that both amuses and terrifies the two men.

Giacometti falls ill and can't take Annette to the Opera house. She cares for him through his sickness, whilst Caroline's pimps make sure that she is kept busy with other clients. Once he recovers, Giacometti has a new lease of life and he agrees to finish the painting in four more sittings.

His studio has been ransacked, which Diego tells Lord is a warning from the pimps. Lord accompanies Giacometti to a meeting with these men where he pays them off, nonchalantly giving them way more money than they have demanded for Caroline's services: both posing and for sex.

When Giacometti returns to his portrait, he becomes more dejected and, seizing a large brush, he obliterates the painting, saying he is "undoing" it. Lord says he had thought it looked very good, but this only reinforces Giacometti's intent.

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They work on the painting for three more days and at the end of every session, Giacometti reaches for the brush and wipes out everything he has achieved. Lord changes his flight once again but then tells Diego he has a plan; Lord has noticed a pattern in the artist's behaviour and has made up his mind to stop the work when he senses Giacometti to be at his most positive and before the big brush comes out. At the next sitting, Lord implements the plan, leaping up at the exact moment and declaring the painting to be the best it has ever been. Giacometti is taken by surprise and concurs that this could be the beginning of something, but Lord brightly insists that no, it is the end. He will leave Paris the very next day. He cheerfully proclaims that it has been his very great honour to sit for the artist.

Lord and Giacometti take a final walk together, Giacometti insisting that his good friend must come back to Paris so that they can continue their work as they have made "some" progress.

However, this is to be their last meeting; Giacometti dies a short time later, having written to Lord to tell him how much he had enjoyed their time together. Giacometti's final portrait is packed up and shipped off to an exhibition in New York.



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## Interview with Geoffrey Rush (Alberto Giacometti)

I read the script and I thought it was a bit of a gem. Stanley, very flatteringly, said this has got your name all over it and I want you to do it. It's a very nice, very smart piece of cataloguing of Lord's experience of sitting for a person who at that stage was quite a famous living icon. He gives a wonderfully insightful analysis of the dilemmas in the creative process.

Armie is almost perfect as Lord - this guy is like the clone. He brings a very natural, very authentic quality to this guy's American energy in this European art world. It's a nice thing to bounce off.

Giacometti and Diego's is a very symbiotic relationship and they had a very natural anti authoritarian attitude. The film has a nice sense of natural comedy and that is one of Tony Shalhoub's gifts. He looks for the pure truth of what can make the most benign moment fascinating and amusing, just because of the human frailty revealed or the brotherly connection.

**Sylvie Testud** brings such fantastic, natural, very French energy to the room and in this particular little slice of their lives together over a period of 18 days; she is fraught with everything she has had to endure about his wayward, eccentric, self obsessed ways. Stanley's script captures the bigger picture of their **domestic rapport**, around the edges of that obsession.

**Stanley** is so determined that this doesn't fall into the trap of being the biopic of the great moments of the maestro's work. There are no eureka moments, it's all the shabby and messy bits that go on in a very messy and shabby atelier where he lived and worked for years. Stanley's got a great sense of rhythm, seeing people deal with celebrity and the torturous process of making art. He's very good with the camera - working with Danny Cohen and shooting fast, it's almost guerrilla filmmaking. It feels like fly on the wall kind of camera work - quite artful.

It's refreshing to see somebody who is totally denying what we now know as celebrity culture. In a lot of the interviews that Giacometti does he says: forget about the metaphysical and existential questions, I'm just messing around with some plaster, fiddling around with some clay. I don't know where I'm going, I'm just **playing** and then somehow it emerges into something.

I think from a contemporary perspective, people would come in with very challenging morality questions. Giacometti knows he has certain manic impulses that allow him to exist and he just pursues them, not in a malevolent or a selfish way, he just does what he needs to do.

Stanley's script draws you into the microscopic banalities of characters that are vividly etched, who have this level of celebrity and academic appraisal, fame and fortune. But their lives stumble along in a pretty ordinary, banal way. There's a fair amount of natural comedy that comes out of that.

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DE WINKELHAAK | HOUSE OF C  
LANGE WINKELHAAKSTRAAT 26  
+32 3 231 09 31  
INFO@CINEMIEN.BE  
CINEMIEN.BE  
f t i o y /CINEMIENBE