



Stadt Zürich
Stadtpolizei

Giacometti Hall

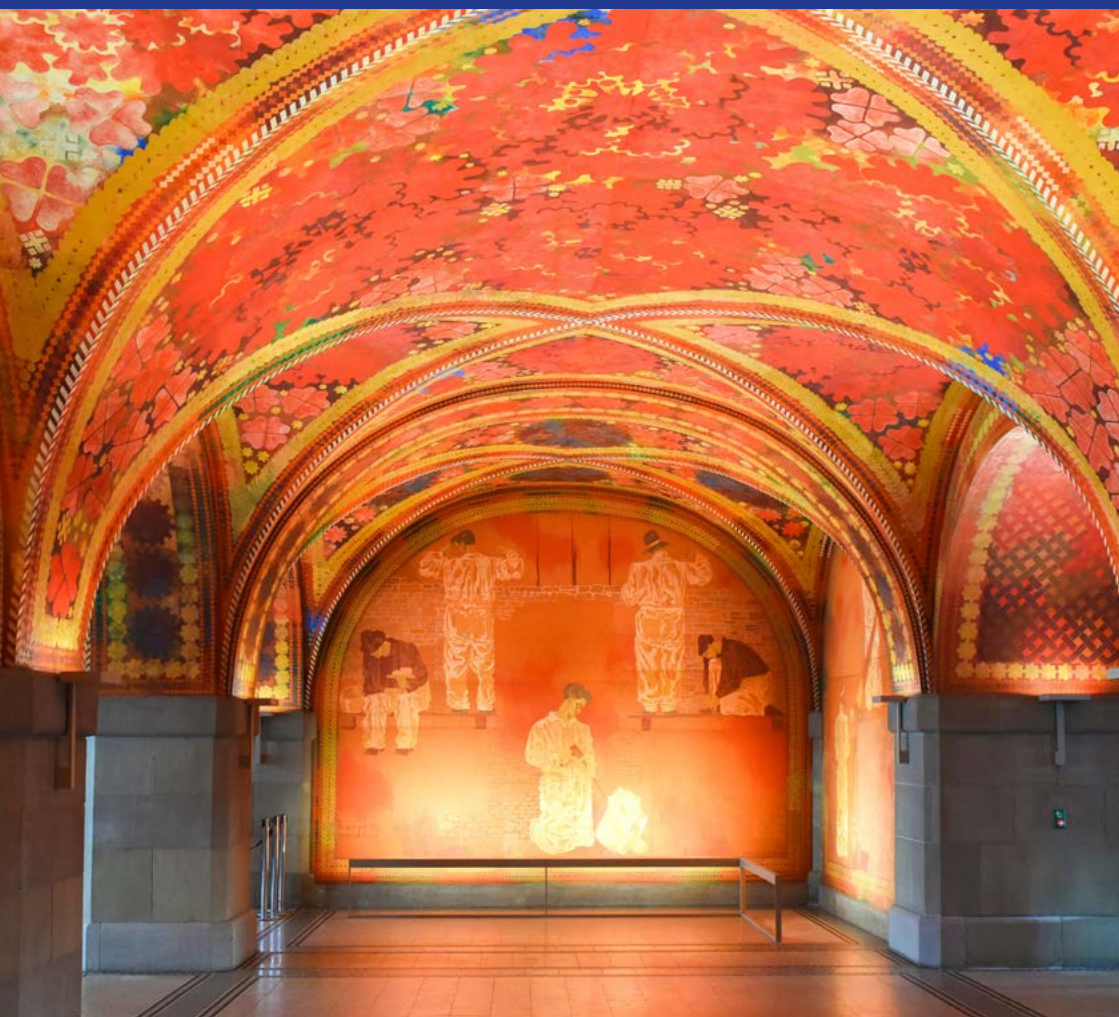
**A vaulted cellar as a bright garden
of colours**

**Immerse yourself in an important
20th century Swiss work of art**

Giacometti Hall,
Amtshaus I, Zurich

«The power of colour
makes the invisible visible.»

14 cupola ceilings, 5 murals:
the Giacometti Hall was once the cel-
lar of the Zurich orphanage.



An Avant-Gardist of the Abstract

Escape to the City

Antonio Augusto Giacometti (1877–1947) was a pioneer in abstract painting, innovator in stained glass and important exponent of monumental mural art. He was part of the famous Giacometti painter dynasty from the mountain village of Stampa in Bregaglia. After training as an art teacher in Zurich, he lived in Paris and Florence before settling down in Zurich in 1915.

Master of Colours

His extraordinary talent for colouring was already evident in his early works. Giacometti developed his own colour system to capture sounds and moods structurally. Starting from tiny colour squares, he sought to understand the macrocosm from within the microcosm. He writes: “I always sensed that colour must have a life of its own, detached from every object.”

A sky full of flowers

Giacometti rose to fame when he painted the entrance hall to Amtshaus I with bright floral motifs. As a significant 20th century Swiss work of art, the Giacometti Hall is one of Zurich's most important sights.



Augusto Giacometti in his studio at Rämistrasse 5 near Zurich's Bellevue Square.

A canopy for people and their feelings

Kaleidoscope of the Imagination

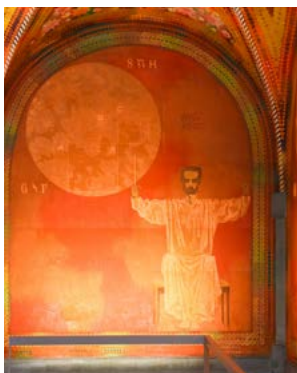
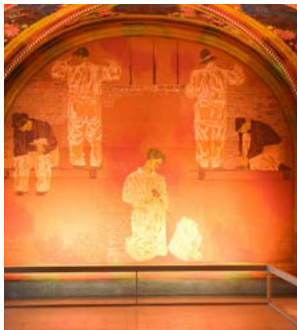
Decorative fantasy flowers and cog-like rosettes: Augusto Giacometti and three assistants decorated the 14 cupola ceilings from 1923 to 1925, but the work took longer than anticipated. Pressed for time, he increasingly moved from a fresco to a secco technique.

Impossible to correct

Fresco painting involves pigments being applied to fresh, still moist lime plaster. This is tricky in that colour gradations require hatching or an exact juxtaposition of colours. Corrections and overpainting entail reapplying the plaster. Secco means painting on dry plaster or masonry, so it is far less durable

Homage to trades

While the floral pattern illuminates the ceiling like fireworks, the walls radiate peace and grandeur. Vintners and reapers stand for agriculture and a fertile landscape; carpenters, bricklayers and stonecutters for the growing city; and an astronomer and magician for the intellectual professions and natural laws.



Tradespeople and scientists form the foundation of a prosperous city.

A sense of the extraterrestrial: the astronomer looks through the telescope into another world.



**Giacometti creates a
structure for moods and
sounds.**

From Orphanage to police station



Metamorphose: Als der Hügel dem Bahnhofquai weicht, wird aus dem Keller die Eingangshalle.

Pisoni's Orphanage

The city built a new orphanage in 1765 on a hill between Limmat and Oetenbach. Architect Gaetano Pisoni (1713–1782) from Ascona, who was also working on the St. Ursen Cathedral in Solothurn, designed the main façade. In 1771 the first orphans moved in.

Gull's Vision

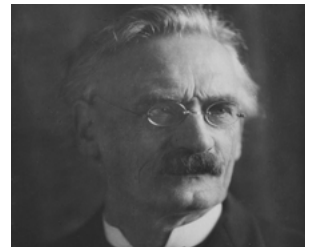
Around 1900, the city administration was short of space and had its eye on the orphanage. Municipal architect Gustav Gull envisaged a huge administrative complex for Greater Zurich, though only buildings I to IV were realised.

From cellar to Foyer

To transform the orphanage into Amtshaus I, Gull had the side of the hill removed and extended the now ground floor towards the river. The orphanage's former cellar became the main entrance to Amtshaus I.

Art and Police

With its sandstone columns, however, the cross vault was gloomy and uninviting. Six Zurich artists were asked for ideas on using colour to brighten up the foyer, and Giacometti won the commission. Today the foyer is famous as "the most beautiful entrance to a police station". Amtshaus I houses Urania Police Station and the City's Department of Public Safety.



ETH Professor and urban planning visionary:
Gustav Gull (1858–1942)

Giacometti Hall, Amtshaus I, Bahnhofquai 3, 8001 Zurich

You can find the opening hours and further information here:



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