

LETTERS BY GIORGIO DE CHIRICO, GEMMA DE CHIRICO
AND ALBERTO DE CHIRICO TO FRITZ GARTZ,
MILAN-FLORENCE, 1908-1911¹

1. Letter written in French by Gemma de Chirico (née Cervetto)

July 7, [1]908

Dear Mr. Gartz

Please be kind enough to write and let me know the reason why Georges has not answered the letters I wrote him a week ago. I telegraphed him on Sunday and he answered that he 'was fine' but he continues not to write to me. Please write the whole truth to me.

Address your letter to 'Villa Berta' Gardone Lago di Garda

I thank you in advance. My affectionate compliments to your wife, and my devoted friendship to you,

G.[Gemma] de Chirico

2. Italian postal card written in German by Giorgio de Chirico (first days of July 1909)

Postman's handwriting: 09-10 address Amalianstr. 19 unknown

Stamp: delivered late due to inexact address

To Mr. Fritz Gartz – Painter – Amalienstr. 19 II [cancelled by postman]

Germany Munich Theresienstr. 9/11

Milan

Dear friend!

Writing a letter is very unpleasant for me and this is why I write very rarely.

But as you told me that you would be moving to a new apartment in the summer, I would ask you to send me your new address. I would also love to have some news from you.

¹ The correspondence is held in private collections, except for the postcard dated January 9, 1911 by Alberto Savinio (document n. 11) which is kept at Munich's Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. Transcriptions of the original letters from G. Roos, *Giorgio de Chirico e Alberto Savinio. Ricordi e documenti. Monaco Milano Firenze 1906-1911*, Ed. Bora, Bologna 1999.

I'm working very hard. I will probably go to Rome in September...

I ask you to pay my heartfelt respects to your wife. My mother and brother send greetings, as I also do.

Via Petrarca 13 – G. de Chirico

3. Italian postal card by Giorgio de Chirico (first week of July 1909)

To Mr. Fritz Gartz

Theresienstr. 19 II. [cancelled and added:]

Sieghfriedstr. 8III Munich / Germany [date of arrival July 8, 1909]

Milan

Dear friend!

I sent you a postcard a few days ago, but as I have not received an answer, I'm thinking you haven't been to Munich. –

I hope you are well...

If you write me a postcard I will be very happy to read it. –

Please accept my most sincere greetings and take care. –

G. de Chirico

My mother and brother say hello.

Via Petrarca 13

4. Letter by Giorgio de Chirico on de Chirico family coat of arms letterhead paper
(December 27, 1909)

Mediolano Anno Domini M.CM.IX. Poseidione XXVII [in 1909 Poseidione XXVII corresponded to December 27]

Dear friend!

The day before yesterday I sent your honoured and kind wife a Milanese specialty from the Cova pastry shop. I hope you received it and that you liked it.

Do you still have your old studio or do you now work in your new apartment? I would be very happy to receive news of your work. –

I took a trip to Florence and Rome in October and in the spring I will probably go to Florence to live as it is the city I like the most. I have been working and studying a lot and I now have very different goals than before.

I intend to exhibit in the next springtime Secession exhibition, and therefore I would like to ask you

a favour, if you could send me the Secession regulation form and if you could ask if foreign artists can exhibit without being invited? –

When will you be coming to Italy? I will probably come to Munich in the autumn of 1910 to exhibit a couple of paintings. Take care. My best regards to your wife.

G. de Chirico

5. Italian postal card written by Giorgio de Chirico (April 11, 1910)

Two stamps: Florence 11.4.10.11 / Arrivals and Departures

Sender Viale R. Vittoria 3 Firenze

To Mr. F. Gartz Painter

Thomaestr. 29 Germany Soest

Florence

Dear Friend!

I received your postcard and the documentation regarding the Secession and I thank you for this.

I probably won't use it though... because I have decided not to exhibit after all, as I would like to hold a personal exhibition later on... and also because the works I am creating now are too profound and would appear out of place in a Secession hall.

Florence is very pretty in the spring... I have found a beautiful studio... please give your wife my greetings and take care.

G. de Chirico

6. Letter by Giorgio de Chirico on de Chirico family coat of arms letterhead paper (December 26, 1910)

Florence 26 [24 Juillet cancelled] Januarii 1910

Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 20 Florence

Dear friend!

Firstly, I want to wish you and your kind wife a happy new year.

I have not been able to write until now due to my many engagements and also my health, which has unfortunately not been very good this last year.

Please be patient, as I will now tell you a bit about myself.

What I have created here in Italy is neither very big nor profound (in the old sense of the word), but formidable. This summer I painted paintings that are the most profound that exist in the absolute. Let me explain these things somewhat, because surely you have never heard anything like it.

Do you know for example what the name of the most profound painter who ever painted on earth

is? You probably do not have an opinion on this. I will tell you: his name is Arnhold Böcklin, he is the only man who has painted profound paintings.

Now, do you know who the most profound poet is? You will probably say right away Dante, or Goethe or yet others. – This is totally misunderstood. – the most profound poet is Friedrich Nietzsche. – When I told you my paintings are profound, you must have thought they were gigantic compositions, with many naked figures, trying to overcome something, like those painted by Michelangelo, the stupidest of all painters.

No, my dear friend, it is completely another matter – profoundness as I understand it, and as Nietzsche intended it, is elsewhere than where it has been searched for until now. – My paintings are small (the biggest is 50 x 70 cm, but each of them is an enigma, each contains a poem, an atmosphere (Stimmung) and a promise that you can not find in other paintings.

It brings me immense joy to have painted them – when I exhibit them, possibly in Munich this spring, it will be a revelation for the whole world.

I am studying a lot, particularly literature and philosophy and I even intend to write books in the future (now I will whisper something in your ear: I am the only man who has understood Nietzsche – all of my paintings demonstrate this.)

I have many other things to tell you, for example that now, my brother and I have composed the most profound music. I will sign off now, as I have already said too much. – You will see and hear for yourself and will be convinced. Won't you take a trip to Rome this spring to see the exhibition? Even here in Florence an exhibition will be opened in April. If you come to Florence, we will be very happy to host you and your kind wife – the room is already ready.

I would be very happy if you wrote me a letter. [? illegible - cancelled] Give your wife my regards.

[? cancelled] My mother and brother say hello and wish you a happy new year.

G. de Chirico

7. Letter by Giorgio de Chirico

Florence December 28, 1910

Dear Friend!

My brother and I would like to ask a favour of you. I know how kind you are and I am sure you will help us. – My brother wanted to hold a concert of music he has composed, here in Florence on January 9th. Everything was already organized, but when he saw how inept the orchestra was he decided to hold the same concert in Munich. He has written to the Tonhalle cultural association to ask about the price of renting the concert hall and the orchestra. The management sent a brief letter with the following prices:

Orchestra with usual number of instruments:

including 1 rehearsal	DM: 600
concert hall, including heating and lights	<u>id: 300</u>
	“ 900

Additional rehearsals DM:150

In the morning the length of the rehearsal is a maximum of 3 hours – the afternoon, 2 hours. –

We have written to the management in order to reach an agreement, although my brother thinks it might be better if you would be kind enough to go and speak personally with the Tonhalle management, and ask if 900 Marks is their final price, or if it would be possible to have a lower price. Regarding the rehearsals, the concert management wrote that the rehearsals are three hours long in the morning and two in the afternoon; does this mean that a complete rehearsal is 5 hours, or that one rehearsal is 3 hours and the other is 2 hours? We hope you would be kind enough to enquire about these things, and we thank you in advance for your help in arranging our affairs. Please be kind enough to let us know as soon as possible what the answers are. My mother sends greetings to you and to your kind wife.

Take care,

Georg de Chirico

20 Via Lorenzo il Magnifico Florence

P.S. Please, when you ask about the rehearsals, do not formulate the question as I have written, that is, if a rehearsal lasts 5 hours or less, but if you could find out for sure what the length of the rehearsal is without them thinking that we thought that one rehearsal was 3 hours long and the other 2 hours.

8. Letter by Giorgio de Chirico, with postscript by Alberto de Chirico (Alberto Savinio)

Florence January 3, 1911

Dear friend!

I received your letter today. My brother and I thank you very much for what you are doing for us and hope you will be kind and help us complete the arrangements. –

My brother has decided to hold the concert on January 24 or 23. However, the management wrote to us that they weren't sure if the concert hall was available on those dates. Would you please be so kind to go and ask the management if the 23 or 24th of January can be agreed upon (either is fine for us). I think it would be better if we had a written answer from the management as my brother is already preparing for the trip. So, dear friend, please ask and arrange things as you think best. – We would simply like to have a guarantee that the Tonhalle management will give us the Tonhalle concert hall for an evening concert on January 23 or 24 with an orchestra of 60 instruments at the price we know already. –

You can tell the Director that you speak in the name of my brother, from whom he received the letter. – My brother will leave on January 15 and will be in Monaco on the 16th. – With regard to the advertising and the programs, my brother will speak directly with them – he only wants a guaranteed to

have the concert hall and the orchestra for January 23 or 24. The management will surely ask my brother for a guarantee also. Please do everything that needs to be done and if there is anything that requires payment, please write and we will send the necessary funds. Of course, if the concert hall is not free on January 24, the concert will be held on February 7. – But we hope it will be free.

As soon as my brother arrives in Munich he will sign the contract with the management.

My mother will be coming with my brother, as she is better at dealing with these things and I can not interrupt my studies and my work at this time. – I will be obliged to go to Munich at the end of March to see about my exhibition. If you have a spare bed I would be very happy to accept your kind hospitality.

My brother and my mother would like to stay at an inn very close to the Tonhalle. – Would you be kind enough to see if there is one nearby and also enquire how much this would cost? I thank you very much for your kindness.

I hope to receive an answer from you soon. With my best respects to your wife and cordial greetings from my brother.

Your friend G. de Chirico

Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 20

P.S. I wrote to the Tonhalle today that you would deal directly with them on my behalf. We believe that this way everything will be settled more quickly...

Many thanks and greetings, Alberto de Chirico.

9. Letter by Giorgio de Chirico (undated; January 5, 1911)

Florence

Dear friend!

The news of your brother's death hurt me very much. I therefore ask you, dear friend, to accept my condolences and those of my mother and my brother. If I had known, I wouldn't have bothered you with my second letter. If you haven't gone to the Tonhalle management yet, don't go. Please, it is not really important, my brother will arrange things with them. – I'm sending you the program of the concert that was planned for Florence with this letter. My brother will perform the same Program at the Tonhalle in Munich probably on February 7th. –

Yesterday, I thought about your brother's psychological drama almost all night long – it is terrible that only in Germany there are people who live in such a state of being – he was too weak! If only more people could be as weak! The terrible thing, in fact, is the stupidity, the lack of conscience in people – no one is capable of understanding an important piece of news – everyone looks at it in a terribly tranquil manner. Can you imagine that no one noticed that my brother wrote "the most profound music" in the concert program – and no one noticed it or understood what courage and what a marvellous promise these words contain. – Let us hope the people of Munich are not so laid-back

and stupid. My brother also wrote a lesson on his music, which I am in the process of translating to German with the help of a German professor whom I met in Vallombrosa (he is a very stupid fellow). My brother will read this lesson prior to the concert. –

You misunderstood my words when I said that Michelangelo was a stupid artist. – He is for me because I now know a new world and everything else seems too coarse and too insignificant. Because I have drunk from another source and a new and marvellous thirst burns my lips – how can I still believe in such artists?! I know what you are thinking when you ask me: ‘isn’t David a superman?’ This is how I used to feel, this is what I used to think. The majority of the world’s great spirits thought it so. – The young hero that has overcome everything, a free spirit, without dogma – certainly this is better than all the stupidity of modern life and of life in the past – but now a new air has entered my soul, a new song has reached my ears and the whole world appears totally changed – the autumn afternoon has arrived, the long shadows, the clear air, the serene sky –, in a word: Zarathustra has arrived, do you understand??

Do you understand the enigma this word holds – the great cantor has arrived, he who speaks of eternal return, he whose song has the sound of eternity. – It is with a new magnifying glass that I now examine the other great men and many appear small and coarse, some even smell bad – Michelangelo is too coarse – I have thought about these questions at length and can no longer be mistaken. –

It is only with Nietzsche that I can say I have begun a real life. –

Believe me, my dear friend, when I say it would be a great pleasure for us if you and your kind wife would come to visit us in the spring. – We have enough room in this house and it would be a great pleasure for my mother to have such pleasant company. –

If you like, we could go to Rome and visit the exhibition, as my mother would also like to see it.

Give my regards to your very kind wife and take care.

G. de Chirico

Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 20

Florence

10. Letter by Giorgio de Chirico

Florence, January 8, 1911

Dear friend!

I received your very kind letter yesterday – and I thank you very much for the work you have been doing. Just today I wrote the Tonhalle that my brother is leaving on Saturday 14 and will be in to speak to them first thing Sunday morning of the 15th.

We were going to send the money for the deposit to the organization in the middle of the week, but as my brother and mother will be in Munich on Sunday morning (January 15th), they felt it better to pay the deposit at that time. – We even wrote to the management about this – I hope it doesn’t make a difference to them. –

Could you pass by once again this week to make sure nothing unpleasant happens? We wrote to the Tonhalle that, if they have any objections, to write to us before we leave.

My brother and my mother would like to have two rooms at the inn. – Please inform us of the prices and give us the address of the inn.

Regarding what you wrote about “the most profound music”, you will have to speak to my brother. I knew it would have seemed a bit strange to you, but...

Thank you once again for your kindness. – My brother and my mother send you and your wife their greetings and hope to have the pleasure of seeing you on Sunday.

Take care, G. de Chirico

Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 20

11. Italian postal card by Alberto de Chirico (in Giorgio de Chirico's handwriting)

Two stamps: Florence 9 I – II 17 Ferrovia

To Mr. Fritz Gartz Siegfriedstr. – 8 III Bavaria. Munich

Florence, January 9, 1911

Dear friend!

Today I received your letter in which you ask about the publicity – thank you very much for your kindness – but as my brother wrote to you yesterday, I will be in Munich on Sunday January 15th. I think 8 days are sufficient for the publicity, Munich is not a big city – and in any case we will have an extraordinary publicity campaign. –

Please, if you find an inn, make a reservation for two rooms for Sunday – even if it is not very close to the Tonhalle – for example, I think Pensione Norden in Schellingstrasse is a nice inn. – My mother doesn't want to spend more than 4,50 marks a day per person, dinner included of course, but as you have kindly invited us to have dinner at your house, the price should be less. I don't think I will choose to have photographs taken.

Thank you once again for the care you have been giving. –

My most cordial greetings,

Alberto de Chirico

Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 20.

12. Italian postal card written by Giorgio de Chirico (January 28, 1911)

Italian postcard, two stamps: Florence 28 I-II Ferrovia
To Mr. Fritz Gartz Siegfriedstr. – 8 III Bavaria. Munich

Florence Friday / Via Lorenzo il Magnifico 20

Dear friend!

My mother and my brother wrote to tell me how kind you and your wife have been and I want to thank you very much for this.

I read a very stupid review about my brother in M Neustn [sic!] Nachrichten.

That man has understood absolutely nothing! But as a philosopher said: Veniet melior aetas!

I hope to come to Munich mid-March to see about the exhibition. Please give your wife my regards.

Take care.

Giorgio de Chirico

Translated from the Italian by Katherine Robinson