

LETTERS BY GIORGIO DE CHIRICO TO JACQUES SELIGMANN & CO.,
1937-1939¹, PERTAINING TO THE TEXT:

MILAN – PARIS – NEW YORK, 1938
A MISSED EXHIBITION

Katherine Robinson

1. Handwritten letter (24 May 1937)

New York
24 May 37

Dear Sir²,

I was just about to pass by to see you today. –

I am infinitely sorry, but as almost an entire month has gone by since the last time we met, on which occasion you told me that I would receive a letter from you the next day, and not having received anything, I thought you had renounced the project of my exhibition, and not wanting to insist further, I have made arrangements with another gallery. –

I hope to see you in good health in the autumn and do something together in any case.

Happy holidays,
Cordially yours,
G. de Chirico

2. Handwritten letter (12 December 1937)

Letterhead paper: Hotel Salisbury, 123 West 57th Street, New York

New York 12 December 1937

Dear Mr. Seligmann,

I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you next Tuesday, 14 December, at the opening of my exhibition that will take place between 5 and 6 p.m. at Julien Levy's Gallery, 15 East 57th Str. –

¹ The Jacques Seligmann & Co. Records are conserved at Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington. The letters by de Chirico are handwritten in French with exception to those sent from 8-15 December 1938 that are typewritten in English.

² De Chirico's letters are addressed to the president of the gallery, Germain Seligmann, son of founder Jacques Seligmann (1858-1923).

Please, tell your cousin, to whom this invitation is also extended.

With my best greetings,

G. de Chirico

3. Handwritten letter (10 January 1938)

Letterhead paper: Rex

On the Rex

10 Jan. 38

Dear Mr. Seligmann,

The countess Pecci-Blunt, whom I met here on the boat, tells me that she has been negotiating the sale of one of the small paintings that I left with you, specifically *Blacksmith Ferrier*. For this reason, I have telegraphed her secretary to pick the painting up at your gallery; in the event of a sale, I told her that she will have to share the sale commission (33/00) with you.

In addition, I have charged Mrs. Wagner, a friend of mine, to deliver a number of other canvases to your gallery, as I believe I am not sufficiently represented by you. –

Please provide her with receipts for the paintings delivered. –

I thank you in advance, sincerely yours,

Giorgio de Chirico

4. Handwritten letter (27 April 1938)

Letterhead paper: Hotel Manin, Milano [cancelled]

Milan 27 April 38

Dear Mr. Seligmann,

I received a note a while ago with the list of my paintings on deposit at your gallery, but since then, as Mrs. Wagner delivered another two large canvases representing Bathers and another with young men and horses, could you please send me an exact list of my paintings that are at your gallery? – At the same time, would you please let me know if you still intend to hold an exhibition of my work in the autumn and also send me a contract-letter with the exact date, conditions, etc. –

I am in Milan at present, but next week I will be leaving for Paris where I will remain until 15 July; in June, my work will be exhibited in London. – I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in Paris. – If you have sold any of the paintings I left with you in New York, please send my part in a cheque in dollars payable at a bank in Paris. – Additionally, I ask you to write me in Paris at the address below. –

Sincerely,
Giorgio de Chirico

c/o Magnelli
20 Villa Seurat
(100 rue de la Tombe Issoire)
PARIS

5. Telegram (20 June 1938)
French Cable Company

PARIS 1220 JUN 20 1938
JACQUES SELIGMANN CO
3 EAST 51 ST NEW YORK

EXHIBITION DECEMBER OK CHIRICO

6. Handwritten letter (18 July 1938)

Milan 18 July 1938

Dear Sir,

Before the deadline set by you, I sent a telegram from Paris confirming my exposition for next December. Here is the signed contract. – I will stay in Milan until 30 October . If you have something to communicate to me, write to me at the address below.

Sincerely,
Giorgio de Chirico

Corso Porta Nuova 8 – 2
(Italy) Milan

7. Postcard (18 July 1938)

Mr. Germain Seligmann 9 rue de la Paix (France) Paris

Milan 18 July 38

Dear Mr. Seligmann,

I tried in vain to meet with you in Paris, which I truly regret. At the moment, at n. 133 Boulevard Montparnasse, there is an exhibition of recent gouaches of mine that is having a lot of success.

I hope you will have time to see it.

I sent the signed contract-letter for my exhibition next December to the gallery's New York address.

Before that, I telegraphed from Paris that I would do the exhibition.

If you come to Italy and pass by Milan, come and see me, and give me the pleasure of staying for lunch or for dinner.

As for me, I will stay in Milan until 30 October or so.

Sincerely,

Giorgio de Chirico

Corso di Porta Nouva 8 – 2

Milan

8. Telegram (17 November 1938)

French Cable Company

PARIS NOV 17 1938

JACQUES SELIGMANN AND CO

3 EAST 51 ST NEW YORK

TWENTY RECENT PAINTINGS SENT VARIOUS SUBJECTS ARRIVE DECEMBER ASK FRAMER LOVY
LEND TWO NICE FRAMES BIG PAINTINGS ON DEPOSIT GREETINGS LETTER FOLLOWING
CHIRICO

9. Handwritten letter (25 November 1938)

Letterhead paper: Victoria Palace, 6, rue Blaise Desgoffe, Paris VI^e

Paris 25 Nov. 38

Dear Mr. Seligmann,

I had two cases containing 20 paintings sent from Genoa. Additionally, a lady who will be in New

York around 15 December, will deliver some other paintings of mine to you. – Here is the list of the paintings with the number of each work, the dimensions, title and price in dollars. – I had to declare the price for each painting in Italian lira to the Italian customs; in the event of sales you will have to pay the price declared in lira to the clearing (I think the shipping company takes care of this) and the rest in dollars, to me. Here is the list of the paintings:

	<u>Title</u>	<u>technique</u>	<u>dimensions</u>	<u>price</u>
N° 315	<i>Wandering Horseman</i>	(gouache)	40x32	Dollars: 175
26	<i>Landscape on the Seine</i>	(oil)	46x37½	350
283	<i>Phrygian Horseman</i>	(gouache)	48x35	350
316	<i>Man Watering his Horse</i>	(gouache)	24x34	150
312	<i>Summer Evening</i>	(gouache)	35x24	175
111	<i>Horses with Green and Red Covers</i>	(oil)	60x40	600
98	<i>Two Horses on a Beach</i>	(oil)	48x35	350
101	<i>Summer Evening</i>	(oil)	54x46	600
324	<i>Antique Horse</i>	(oil)	55x46	600
242	<i>Chevaux antiques</i>	(oil)	60½x73	900
89	<i>Horses and Men with Yellow Drape</i>	(gouache)	63x48	350
325	<i>Horses and Temple in Flames</i>	(oil)	42x33	400
309	<i>Phrygian playing a Horn</i>	(oil)	35x27	300
N° 310	<i>Man Watering his Horse</i>	(oil)	45x35	Dollars: 400
311	<i>Italian Convent</i>	(oil)	39x61	500
317	<i>Marina in Livorno</i>	(oil)	27x23	200
327	<i>Ligurian Landscape</i>	(oil)	45x56	600
83	<i>Phrygian on a Horse</i>	(oil)	51x41	350
332	<i>Roses</i>	(oil)	22x28	150
76	<i>Laocoon and his Sons</i>	(oil)	31x23	200

The number of each painting is written on the back, either directly on the wooden stretcher or on a small piece of paper glued to the stretcher. The measurements are in centimetres. –

I would very much like it if the two large paintings I left on deposit at your gallery could be included in the exhibition; one of these could be placed on the wall at the back of the room, facing the door (centred, of course) and the other in the entrance. As well, if there is enough room, the small paintings that are already at the gallery could be exhibited; for the unframed paintings, you could ask the framer Lovy on 5th Avenue, to lend some; he has always done this for me; in the event of sale, we shall pay him for the frame; although, for very expensive frames, antique frames, then naturally it will be necessary to sell the painting unframed, or have the purchaser pay for the frame separately; by the way, Lovy makes very perfect copies of antique frames. –

I thought I would come to New York for the exhibition but I think I will postpone the trip to time of the international exhibition. I will probably come around the beginning of April. –

I answered the letter the gallery sent me by telegram. –

I would like to make the following declarations for the critics: almost all the paintings I am showing are recent works (except two: n. 324 *Antique Horse* and n. 242 *Antiques Horses*, which are from 1928). – The principal aim that I am following today, and have been for a number of years, is the quality of the paint (beautiful substance, fineness and flexibility of the modelling, firmness of touch, transparency of the colours), that is, all the qualities in which modern painting, whatever one might say or think, is completely lacking in. – Today, I am almost the only artist doing this kind of research (Derain, too, is somewhat on this path). – Last July, I had an exhibition in London where these paintings had a lot of success and almost all the critics focused on the quality aspect of my recent painting. – I am telling you all of this because the person who wrote to me asked for information regarding the paintings I would be exhibiting, due to the critics who come and enquire. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in New York in April.

Give my best regards to your cousin,

Cordially yours,

Giorgio de Chirico

Letters numbered 10 to 15, originally written in English, are found on pp. 361-365 with the group of transcribed original documents.

16. Handwritten letter (18 January 1939)

M.M. Jacques Seligmann et Co. Inc. 3 E. 51 S. New York

Letterhead paper: Victoria Palace, 6, Rue Blaise Desgoffe, Paris VI^e

Paris 18 January 1939

Sirs,

Please hand over the papers pertaining to the two cases containing n. 20 paintings on mine sent by the Manigli company of Milan (Italy) to Mr. Julien Levy (Julien Levy Gallery, 15 East 57th Street New York). –

Cordially yours,

Giorgio de Chirico