

THE CONSTANTS OF HISTORY: OLD AND RECENT FALSIFICATION OF GIORGIO DE CHIRICO'S ARTWORK

In the editor's note of this periodical's first issue, the Foundation announced that it intended to treat the issue of the forgery of Giorgio de Chirico's artwork. As the artist recalled, this phenomenon began in the mid-1920s.¹ Unfortunately, it has not ceased since then.

An article by Paolo Picozza published in that opening issue (2002) retraced the incredible story of a fake Italian Piazza that was object of a decade-long lawsuit. De Chirico spoke of this particular case in his *Memoirs*, with sad irony and a final consideration that unfortunately proved to be premonitory. In the same issue, the 1955 verdict of the Civil Court of Appeals of Rome (confirmed the following year by the Supreme Court) was published. At this point, it was logical to consider the controversy as definitively settled.² Indeed, this was not the case: fifty years later, in 2000, the same painting reappeared in an auction with a different signature (in the 1955 ruling the judge had ordered the original signature to be scraped off), and with an authoritative expertise signed by a renowned art historian declaring it authentic. As de Chirico recalled in his *Memoirs*: "I must say, however, that I was astonished that in the Judgement pronounced by the court it was decided [...] to remove the fake signature on the fake picture. I thought that the court would at least have ordered the destruction of the fake."³ Today, after the verdict and confirmatory judgement pronounced by the Court of Appeals of Milan (Fourth Criminal Section n. 4525, published 10 January 2009) of the criminal proceedings triggered by this attempt to rehabilitate the fake painting, the matter must be finally considered as over: at least one would hope so. Caution is advised however, since we believe there are some who, heedless of the fight against the conspicuous number of fakes recently introduced on the market, prefer to advocate the painting's authenticity with the hope of "winning the mother of all battles"⁴, in

¹ See G. de Chirico, *Fake Paintings (Report to the Head of Police)*: "It began in France between the years 1926 and 1930 when his work had already reached a significant market quotation due to the attention it received by merchants such as Paul Guillaume and Léonce Rosenberg. At this time a number of fakes, often fairly well executed, were fed onto the market, fakes which today, after many years, are imported from France and validated as authentic for having been part of one or another collection." Typewritten text with handwritten corrections by de Chirico, Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico Archives. Published for the first time in "Metafisica" n. 5/6, Le Lettere, Florence, Pictor O, Roma 2006, p. 585.

² See P. Picozza, *Origin and Persistence of a tópos about de Chirico*, in "Metafisica" n. 1/2, Techne Editore, Milan 2002, pp. 334-341 and the verdict issued in 1955 by Rome's Civil Court of Appeals relative to the civil judgment between Giorgio de Chirico - Dario Sabatello - Società "I due forni" (Galleria il Milione), *ibid.*, pp. 342-358.

³ See G. de Chirico, *Memorie della mia vita*, Astrolabio, Rome 1945; II ed. Rizzoli, Milan 1962; English translation *The Memoirs of Giorgio de Chirico*, Peter Owen, London 1971, p. 183.

⁴ On occasion of the trial of first instance, a rather unsettling circumstance occurred: a witness who advocated the authenticity of the painting attempted to influence the decision of the Judge who was appointed to the case, by writing to her directly at her home address. The letter, which is transcribed here, was immediately made public by the Judge, who deposited in the Court files at the hearing of 4 May 2007: "Milan, 2 May 2007: Judge

order to rehabilitate, not only all paintings dating prior to World War II declared fake by Giorgio de Chirico, but even the “new” paintings (of the same early period) which recently appeared on the market and were presented as indisputable recently-discovered masterpieces (as well as others that could still come).

In follow-up to the extensive documentation regarding the problem of forgery published in issue n. 5/6 (2006) of the periodical, the subject is afforded further attention in this issue, on occasion of a recent verdict emitted by the Ordinary Court of Milan (Seventh Criminal Section n. 2946 of 9 March 2009 – 3 June 2009), which has been appealed by all the defendants before the Milan Court of Appeals.

The Court of Milan's judgement, published here with reproductions of the paintings that were declared fake (figs. 1-7), is of great interest in that it has ascertained this latest, extremely serious case of forgery regarding Giorgio de Chirico's paintings, especially those of early dates (particularly of the 1920s), which were introduced on the market at the turn of the century.

The ruling of the Court of Milan was the result of an investigation initially undertaken concerning the sale of a fake Campigli painting. The investigation was extended to include de Chirico works, from which a disturbing phenomenon emerged, the full extent of which is not yet known. The Foundation, to whom the Judiciary turned, actively collaborated in the endeavour to uncover the fake paintings put on the market. The problem that needed tackling was not a simple one, as the paintings were furnished with the expertise of a renowned art historian and had been shown in important exhibitions, even international ones, alongside indisputable masterpieces by the *Pictor Optimus*. The extraordinary courage shown by the late lamented Professor Jole de Sanna (who is distained by a certain few) must be acknowledged here. Despite the notoriety of the those involved and the economic interests at play, de Sanna did not hesitate to argue and undersign a simple truth: that certain “extraordinary never-before-seen paintings” recently discovered and about which nothing was known, put into circulation in a limited period of time and furnished (as mentioned above) with authoritative expertise, were actually *authentic “crusts”*. De Sanna crucially contributed in this way to the sentencing of those who had introduced these fakes on the market and especially to the seizing of these works.

Anna Calabi, via [...], Milan. / Dear Judge, the long friendship that dates from before the war between my mother Luisa Baldacci Angeloni and your aunt [...] and your father [...], has encouraged me to write this letter to you in hope that it will not be misinterpreted. For years I have fought to re-establish, through rigorous scientific research, the objective truth regarding a significant part of Giorgio de Chirico's historical *œuvre* that the artist himself irresponsibly renegeed, as foremost historians have corroborated. I know that the attorney of the civil plaintiff tried to diminish the value of my testimony, but, if all that is required in order for thirty years of work, acknowledged world-wide, to be negated, one only has to find oneself involved in a penal procedure due to Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico's ever-opportunistic and changing 'truths', we really must say that we live in an upside-down world. The aim of this letter is not so much to defend myself, but rather, to urge you do everything within your power not to neglect the historical and critical problem that destiny has presented you. Because, the famous civil ruling of the Court of Appeals of Rome, confirmed by the Supreme Court, is, to use current language, indeed the “mother of all battles” that still allows today, in disdain of all evidence and contempt of the truth, to take the artist's word against documents, testimonies and blatant proof. Only if you take a clear stand in merit of this ruling and this painting, whatever this may be and according to your own conclusions, will we know if there is still hope to shed light on de Chirico through research or if we will forever be obliged to bow our heads in front of the Holy Office guardian of orthodoxy. Respectfully yours, Paolo Baldacci.” Apart from the gravity of the event itself, it seems that the author is not asking the Magistrate to ascertain the facts relative to the criminal procedure, but rather, is asking her to deal with historical-critical questions relative to the body of de Chirico's *œuvre*, thus substituting the historian's work with the authority of a judgement. It should be added that Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico's “*ever-opportunistic and changing truths*” were ascertained by another Judge, in a judgement of first instance, which has been appealed.

The Judiciary's investigation was extended to include other paintings, which however, were impossible to take into custody, despite the relevant Court ruling. The reason for this is that these paintings could either not be found or were outside the country. Hence, we believe it useful to publish the images of the two paintings in question – *The Melancholy of Departure* (fig. 8) and *Pears and Oranges [and Clementines] on Drapery* (fig. 9) –, which, even without the Court's assessment, the Foundation considers fake.

Of particular interest is the first of these, a “metaphysical painting”: an Italian Piazza of “1913”, exhibited in 2001 in Dusseldorf at the exhibition *Die Andere Moderne – de Chirico-Savinio*, with the German title *Die Melancholie der Abreise*, n. 25 (fig. 8). The painting, an “extraordinary discovery” for the enrichment of the corpus of de Chirico's early metaphysical works, immediately raised serious doubts as to its authorship when examined in photograph. The later viewing of the painting on show at the exhibition transformed doubt into certainty. Gerd Roos, current vice-president of Archivi dell'Arte Metafisica, when asked about the painting during the Court investigation that resulted in the sentence emitted by the Court of Milan, said the following: “Painting number 12 was exhibited in the exhibition on de Chirico-Savinio in Dusseldorf: with regard to its colour, it differs from the group of works on show of the same genre; nevertheless it can be included in the context when put next to another work of the same period as the others: same tonality. It was a painting that was unknown to us curators prior to that exhibition. None of us had seen the original. Only Baldacci, who was also curator, had seen the original before the exhibition as he was the one who had proposed it for the exhibition. I repeat that concerning this work there is and will be a historical debate amongst us art historians. I don't remember who the owner of the work is. It may have come from Israel: I think it was then sold to a New York gallerist [who] by email made me understand that it is currently in Switzerland.”

In relation to this declaration, the hypothesis can be made that the “historical debate” mentioned by Roos (regarding which no publication exists, at least as of 7 May 2003), took place amongst the exhibition curators themselves. Additionally, one may also postulate (based on the above contradictory response) that Gerd Roos was somewhat perplexed about the painting, as he also was with regard to the other paintings the investigative authorities asked him about.⁵

In illustration of the recent phenomenon of “recently discovered works”, a subject to which the Foundation shall return in a future issue of this periodical, reproduced here are another two early period paintings the Foundation deemed unfit to be archived amongst works considered authentic, specifically: *Still Life with Vegetables* (fig. 10) and *Still Life with Pineapple* (fig. 11)⁶. With the objective of

⁵ Minutes of preliminary testimonial information of 7/5/2003 (proc. 02/008864 rgng. Procura della Repubblica di Verona, pp. 595-596). On the same occasion, when asked about a few of the seized paintings, Gerd Roos answered euphemistically that they were not paintings that he, as curator, would have included in a de Chirico exhibition. Textually: “I saw the works indicated at numbers 1-2-3-4-5 at the exhibitions in which they were shown (Arona-Arezzo-Turin): they are not paintings that I – as curator – would exhibit in a de Chirico exhibition. I have never seen work n. 6 and cannot judge if it is authentic. I have never seen work n. 7, although, merely by seeing it in photocopy I can say that I would never put it in exhibition I curated. I cannot judge the works at n. 8 from a photocopy: I don't know who the owner of the work is”.

⁶ The story of the painting is somewhat amusing and reveals to some extent the carelessness of who, at this time still unknown, put the painting into circulation. The work appeared for the first time reproduced, although not on show, in the catalogue of the interesting exhibition held in Acqui Terme, 19 July – 14 September 1997, *Vita silente. Giorgio de Chirico dalla Metafisica al Barocco*, curated by Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco (reproduced on p. 100 at letter c with caption n. 44). The Foundation's refusal to archive the painting in May 2004 was firmly contested by those who sustained that the painting was the second version of a painting published in Waldmar George's 1928 monograph and that it had appeared in an auction held on 20 December

demonstrating the continuity of the forgery phenomenon, another work attributed to Giorgio de Chirico is also reproduced, *Prometheus* (fig. 12), manifestly fake and recently seized. It was exhibited at the exhibition *De Chirico* at Munich's Haus de Kunst in 1982 and appeared in a voluminous monograph the same year.⁷ This painting, together with other paintings, sparked a harsh reaction by art historian Giuliano Briganti in an article entitled *I nuovi falsari* (The New Forgers)⁸, in which he observed that fakes such as these would only cause further confusion in the tangled mess regarding the Maestro's *œuvre*. In his article, Briganti illustrated the strategies used by forgers and the various systems aimed at furnishing forged works with a "pedigree".

An example of an earlier case of forgery is found in the slavish reproduction of a painting entitled *Female Portrait* (fig. 13). The painting, which has been recently seized, is a copy of a work exhibited at the Venice Biennial of 1942 and published in the *Catalogo Generale* (vol. I, tome 2, n. 53). Worthy of note is the reproduction of the labels and stamps on the back of the painting.

The Foundation will also take it upon itself to discover, once and for all, the real provenance of more than twenty "metaphysical" drawings published in a voluminous monograph in 1997, as well as ascertaining as to their authenticity. A number of these drawings have already been examined by the Foundation on occasion of the request for their archiving amongst Giorgio de Chirico's authentic works, and were not authenticated. Indeed, there is nothing "metaphysical" about them at all except for the fact that they were drawn on original "Valori Plastici" letterhead paper and supposedly came from Mario Broglio's archive. Reproduced here, as an example, are two of the drawings that were not authenticated by the Foundation, precisely *Study for Metaphysical Consolations* (fig. 14) and *Study for the Anxiety of Life* (fig. 15).

By producing paintings elaborated from de Chirico's iconographic corpus, forgers not only pollute the art market, causing serious economic damage to collectors, but also critically contaminate the artist's iconography and consequently the historiography regarding his *œuvre*. This can also transpire through the introduction of new subjects as in the case of the *Archaeologists on the Seashore* (fig. 3). An additional manipulation occurs when a theme or style of painting is attributed to a specific historical period foreign to de Chirico's production, as in the example provided by the two still

1926 at Hôtel Drouot (room 6) and was the painting reproduced in the catalogue listed at n. 27 as: "Chirico, 27. Nature Morte, Toile. - haut. 82 cm; larg. 65 cm, signée à droit et datée 1926". Verification of the original catalogue at Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA) in Paris undertaken by Jole de Sanna, a short time before her demise, showed that the painting *Nature morte* put to auction back in 1926 (and upon which judgement cannot be made) was different from the painting that had been presented to the Foundation. See documentation, pp. 401-416.

⁷ The painting in question was published in the monograph *Giorgio de Chirico. Parigi 1924-1929. Dalla nascita del Surrealismo al crollo di Wall Street*, edited by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco and P. Baldacci, ed. Philippe Daverio, Milan 1982, p. 379 (with information caption n. 19 on p. 484). It was shown in the exhibition *De Chirico*, 17 November 1982-30 January 1983, Haus der Kunst, Munich, and was reproduced in the catalogue at n. 69.

⁸ Giuliano Briganti's article was published on 6 September 1984 in the daily newspaper "La Repubblica".

⁹ See G. Briganti: "They often have the menacing look of a serious book. Or rather, a weighty, well thought out volume that may even benefit from serious contributions. A book of which everyone says 'what a stupendous book, what wonderful colour reproductions, what thorough notes, what knowledge of the artworks! Ordered, coloured and fragrant like a beautiful garden.' But be aware that under the roses, snakes hide. A forged work, or forged works lie in wait. And if it's not a book, it's a general catalogue, if it's not a general catalogue, it's an exhibition. It is well known that the weak point of fakes is their lack of pedigree, or rather, bibliographic references that document their provenance and history, so it is necessary to get busy and provide these. Of course, these references will be recent, without any pretence for ancient nobility, references that do not fool the experts, but will serve, at least, as a shred to add to the caption of a future information card, or to a photograph to show a client. And of course there is the authority of the event in which one has managed to introduce the work: a book, catalogue or exhibition".

lives (figs. 1 and 2), executed in garish colours and harshly defined detail. The two, dated respectively "c. 1922" and "1922", are thus ascribed to the period in which de Chirico endeavoured upon his first, important technical research. A period, indeed, in which he only executed a limited number of extraordinary, delicate still lifes in tempera. It is also worth noting how a "recently discovered" painting is at times assigned an approximate date with "c." in front of the year in the title caption (if the year is not already directly marked beside the forged signature on the painting). This "c." falls by the weigh side in successive publications and exhibitions, and the painting's date is definitively acknowledged as such.

As one reads in the information captions of the two still lifes in question (see p. 402), the endorsement of the works is carried out with true pompier-style art criticism, praising the importance of the painting with revelations regarding the painter's intentions, as he "skillfully" placed the fruit and vegetables on the table, or "skillfully animated" the drapery. Even the provenance of the painting is celebrated: "The canvas has a noble provenance (a branch of the Visconti family of Lombardy)" to be understood, rather, as the branch of the noble tree from which the stretcher derives. There is an expenditure of cultural and historical references that spares no one: "An almost sacred banquet. A Dionysiac symposium on the threshold of the Apollonian city". To this rich and convivial feast, only the forgers are invited, whilst artist, collector and historiography foot the bill.

With regard to other methods implemented by forgers to introduce forged works onto the market, the Foundation would like to make known the existence of an increasing number of falsified authentication certificates, with the forged signatures of Claudio Bruni Sakraischik and, recently, also that of Paolo Picozza, president of the Foundation. Collectors and buyers are therefore recommended, in addition to verifying that the authentication certificate indeed corresponds to the work by de Chirico in question, to also verify the authenticity of the certificate itself. This can be done by contacting the Foundation.

Additionally, to those interested, the Foundation suggests presenting paintings from the 1920s and 1930s that have no previous history and/or documentation, to the authentication committee for examination.

Following this article's publication, Paolo Baldacci wrote and posted an "open letter" on the *Archivio dell'Arte Metafisica's* website (March 2012) in which he acknowledged that a number of paintings that he has been concerned with in some way, such as *Prometheus* (fig. 12) and *The Melancholy of Departure, 1913* (fig. 8), were, in fact, forgeries. The former, which was recently seized, was reproduced in a volume he published in 1982. The latter, (for which a Court order has instructed its seizure), was selected by him for the exhibition *Die Andere Moderne – De Chirico und Savinio in Düsseldorf* (2001). With regard to this exhibition, he now states that he had had doubts about the painting's authenticity when he saw it "alongside works of the same period" at the time. He chose, nevertheless, to keep the painting in the show and today admits he made a "grave mistake". Such action is inconceivable for someone who had put together an extensive monograph of the artist's early *Metaphysical* period just five years prior to that. Furthermore, Baldacci also acknowledged that the two still lifes (figs. 1-2) involved in the Milan Court case (works that he says he bought and sold in 2000) are also fakes, as declared by the Court's Judgement. He stated the same with regard to the twenty-odd so-called "Valori Plastici" drawings that he published in his 1997 monograph. Today, he justifies their inclusion in the publication by specifying that he considered these drawings "probably authentic" at the time. With regard to such drawings, he also specified that, in reality, up to forty in number exist.

It is worth noting that this partial acknowledgment occurred only after reproductions of these works were published in the periodical's Italian edition (n. 9/10).

Well executed fakes are generally made by putting together various elements characteristic to an artist's style and imaginary world. At times the execution is purely manual, other times the forger projects parts of an authentic work of art onto the canvas and then traces the image and paints it faithfully. If the painting is meant to be from an early date, the fake is executed on an old canvas, possibly relined, and the old canvas is then stretched on an old frame. Labels of well known or less known galleries are then applied to the frame; labels which can be authentic or forgeries in themselves. The artist's signature and the name of the work are often written on the back. But it does not stop here. A higher level of falsification provides for the manufacturing of a pedigree for the artwork: by presenting it at a public auction where it is bought back at the mere cost of the auction house's percentage, in exchange for the work being published in the catalogue and being accredited a price, in other words, its legalization within the market. Or it is arranged for the work to be exhibited alongside other authentic works of the artist and of other artists in a gallery and published in the catalogue. Or it is arranged that the painting is published in a monograph on the artist or, as has recently occurred with Giorgio de Chirico's work, a piece is placed in an international level exhibition (Strasbourg) and in public museums.

Giorgio de Chirico, *Fake paintings (Report to the Head of Police)*¹

¹ Typewritten text with handwritten corrections by de Chirico, Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico Archives. Published for the first time in "Metafisica" n. 5/6, Le Lettere, Florence, Pictor O, Rome 2006, p. 582-587, along with extensive documentation regarding the issue of the forgery of artworks.

PAINTINGS DECLARED FAKE BY THE JUDGEMENT OF THE COURT OF MILAN*



*fig. 1 Still Life with Fruit on a Table, c. 1922, oil on canvas, 47.5 x 65 cm, signed on right "g. de Chirico", published at n. 4a in the addendum to the catalogue *De Chirico. La Metafisica del paesaggio 1909-1970*, exhibition curated by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, 18.11.2000-14.01.2001, Arezzo, Renografica, Bologna, 2000 and in the catalogue *Giorgio de Chirico. Capolavori scelti nelle collezioni piemontesi e lombarde*, with the title *Still Life in Landscape* ("Silent Life in Landscape"), 1922, Arona, Villa Ponti, 14.07-14.10.2001, ed. Città di Arona, 2001, p. 38.*



*fig. 2 Still Life with Fruit and Vegetables against the Sky, 1922, tempera and oil on cardboard, 29.2 x 39.5 cm, signed and dated on right "g. de Chirico 1922", published in the catalogue *La Metafisica del paesaggio 1909-1970*, cit., p. 47, n. 4.*

*7^a Criminal section, n. 2946 of 9 March 2009 – 3 June 2009

4a. *Still Life with Fruit on a Table* - c. 1922

Tempera on canvas, 47.5 x 65 cm

On ledge at right: *G. de Chirico*On back, at top of canvas: *Still Life – Florence*. On back, at bottom of stretcher: *G. de Chirico – Still life*. On back, on canvas: Customs stamp

Private Collection [courtesy of Paolo Baldacci]

History

This painting reappeared in Italy while the catalogue of our exhibition was at the printers; we thank the collector for his kindness in depriving himself, just after having bought the painting, to allow it to enrich "La Metafisica del paesaggio".

The canvas has a noble provenance (a branch of the Visconti family of Lombardy). Paolo Baldacci advises me that, in the acquisition ledger of the Trissino collection of Vicenza, under 1942, a "Still Life – Florence" is noted that could be identified as the painting on exhibit here. The Royal Customs stamp on the back indicates that the painting was shown at an early date at an exhibition outside of Italy. At the present state of research, we can think of two exhibitions. The solo show held at Jacques Bonjean's in Paris (February-March 1930) in which all paintings came from Giorgio Castelfranco (who did, in fact, own paintings such as this one on show here). The exhibition in New York at the Balzac Galleries (May-June 1932), which also comprised mainly of works that came from the Florentine collection of Giorgio Castelfranco.

Analysis

The painting is set up similarly to another painting on show here (n.4), as a sumptuous banquet. The fruit are collocated on a tablecloth in the foreground with Tuscan hills in the background, with a villa and a group of cypresses (the prevailing colour is light blue), just like a primitive work studied at the Uffizi or at Palazzo Pitti. The clouds entering the sky on the right, under the curtain, create a dynamic element. The yellow curtain lends the still life in landscape a theatrical feeling, although very discreet, almost like a curtain revealing a vision.

As for the sampling of fruit, it ranges from bananas to a quince (present in paintings from the early metaphysical period, between Paris and Ferrara /a,b/), to white and red grapes, a pomegranate and figs, pears and lemons. An almost sacred banquet. A Dionysiac symposium on the threshold of the Apollonian city.

painted with large brushstrokes of colour, which, alongside the wavy hills, make the sky look like a sea in motion. The table, on which the fruit and vegetables are placed, is skillfully positioned diagonally as in the few still lifes painted during the metaphysical period in Paris. The drapery on which the "models" are placed is skillfully animated and will be the source for the "soft" drapery that so enchanted Dali.

Now, let us consider the "models". A bunch of grapes rests at the centre dividing itself in two, with individual grapes to the left and right. Three lemons with their branches. A pear and a quince on the right. An uncut pomegranate on the left. To the side, a pear and an apple.

Regarding its meaning, it must be noted that the season is established (end of summer) and various meanings are combined. A predominately sacred suggestion, with the grapes alluding to Christ whilst the pomegranate speaks of abundance. The two red peppers are only found in a painting conserved at the Palazzo Pitti Museum: they guarantee a true touch of colour in this animated theatre in a tipped-up position. The painting aspires to be defined as antique (it is a museum-vision): it is almost the ostentation of a sacred meal. The still life is set alongside true Nature with the hills and the sky. When a painting of this kind is dated (fairly rare in those years), it usually means that it was shown in an important exhibition. It is impossible to match it with paintings exhibited due to the fact that it has no stickers or inscriptions and that documentary research on the 1920s is not yet complete. The hypothesis can be made that it was one of the two *Still lifes* shown at *La Quadriennale* (promoted by Belle Arti, Turin, 14 April-31 July 1923, n. 315 or 319).

Information caption for the painting *Still Life with Fruit on a Table*, c. 1922, published at n. 4a in the addendum to the catalogue *De Chirico. La Metafisica del paesaggio 1909-1970*, cit.

4. *Still Life with Fruit and Vegetables against the Sky* - 1922

Tempera and oil on cardboard, 29.2 x 39.5 cm

At bottom right, on edge of table: *G. de Chirico 1922*

Private collection

History

The painting became part of a Milanese collection early on (the same collection that conserves *The Departure of the Argonauts*, information caption 1), through a Milanese dealer, Vittorio E. Barbaroux. I thank Paolo Baldacci for having shown me the documentation: a ledger in the previous owner's archive indicates that 29,000 lire were paid for it in January 1930. The painting has been in a private collection since 1999.

Analysis

This still life dated 1922, painted with tempera on cardboard with some finishing touches in oil, is an addition to an important group of paintings that I catalogued in *L'opera completa di De Chirico 1908-1924*, Rizzoli, Milan, 1984; as well as in *Vita silente. Giorgio de Chirico, dalla Metafisica al Barocco*, Skira, Milan 1997. /a,b/ The iconography is both simple and complex. The intense light-blue sky is

Information caption for the painting *Still Life with Fruit and Vegetables against the Sky*, 1922, published in the catalogue *De Chirico. La Metafisica del paesaggio 1909-1970*, cit., p. 47, n. 4.

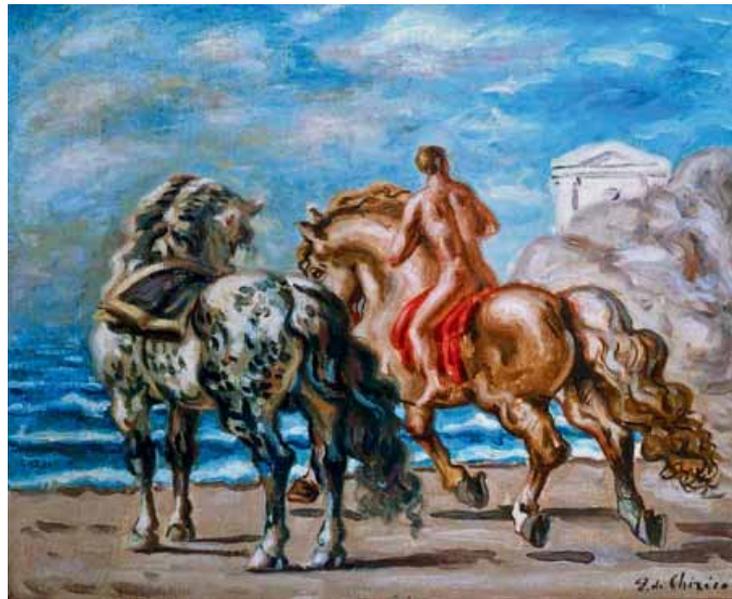


fig. 3 *Archaeologists on the Seashore*, 1926, oil on canvas, 46 x 37 cm, signed on right "g. de Chirico 1926", published in *Giorgio de Chirico. Capolavori scelti nelle collezioni piemontesi e lombarde*, cit., p. 40 and on the cover of the catalogue; also reproduced as an illustration in the catalogue *De Chirico. La Metafisica del paesaggio 1909-1970*, cit., p. 58.

fig. 4 *Horses, Horsemen, and Small Temple (Dioscuro)*, 1932, oil on canvas, 31.8 x 39.3 cm, signed at bottom right "g. de Chirico", published in the catalogue *Giorgio de Chirico. Miti enigma e inquietudini*, Palermo, 25 October 2002-6 January 2003, Edizioni ADA, p. 71.



Authentic painting: Giorgio de Chirico, *Horses and Horseman by the Seashore*, 1933-1934, oil on canvas, 45.5 x 55 cm.



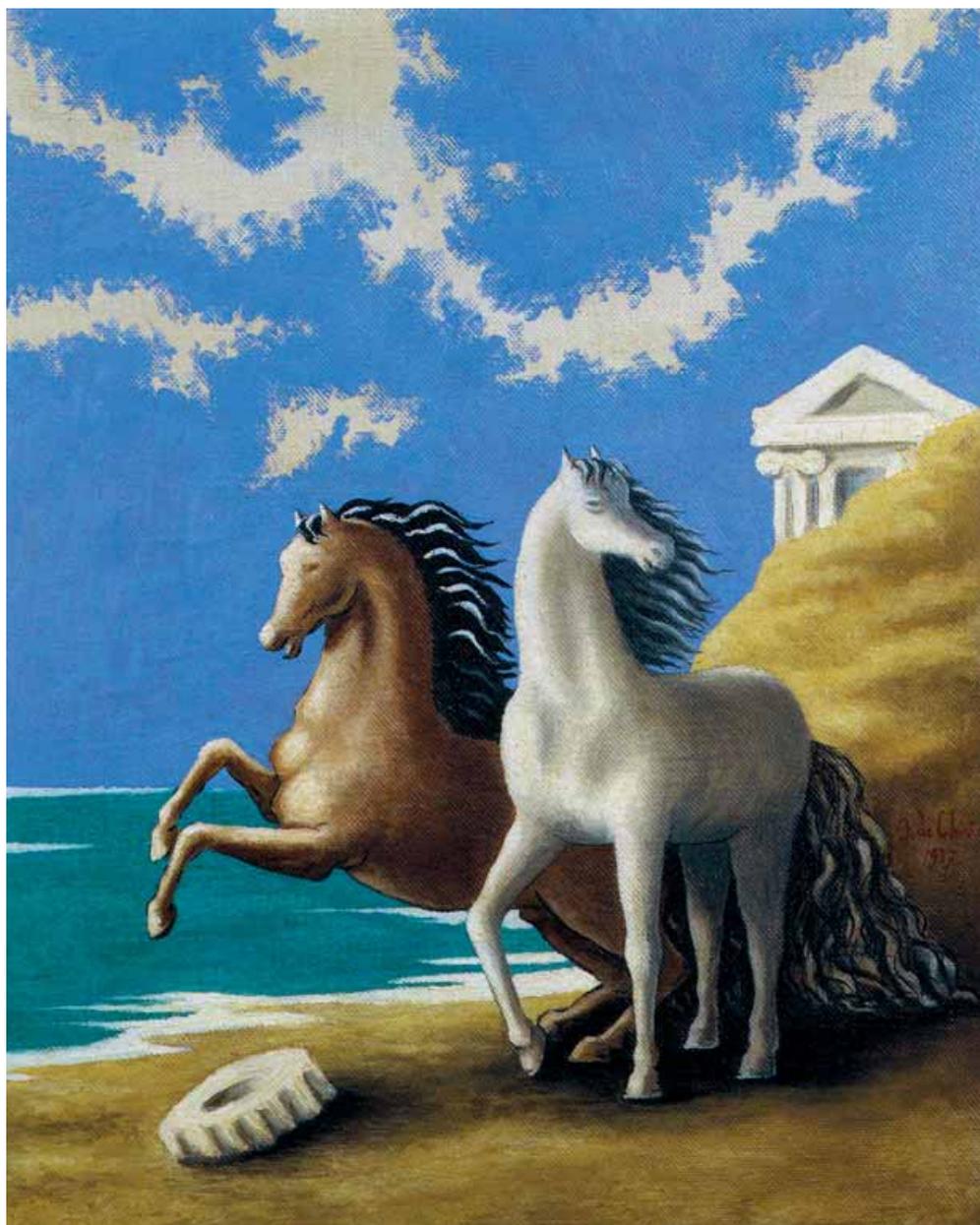


fig. 5 *The Horses*, 1927, oil on canvas, 62.4 x 50.3 cm, signed and dated on right "g. de Chirico 1927", published in *Giorgio de Chirico – Alberto Savinio. Fratelli in Grecia*, 10 November 2000-31 January 2001, Turin 2000, n. 2.

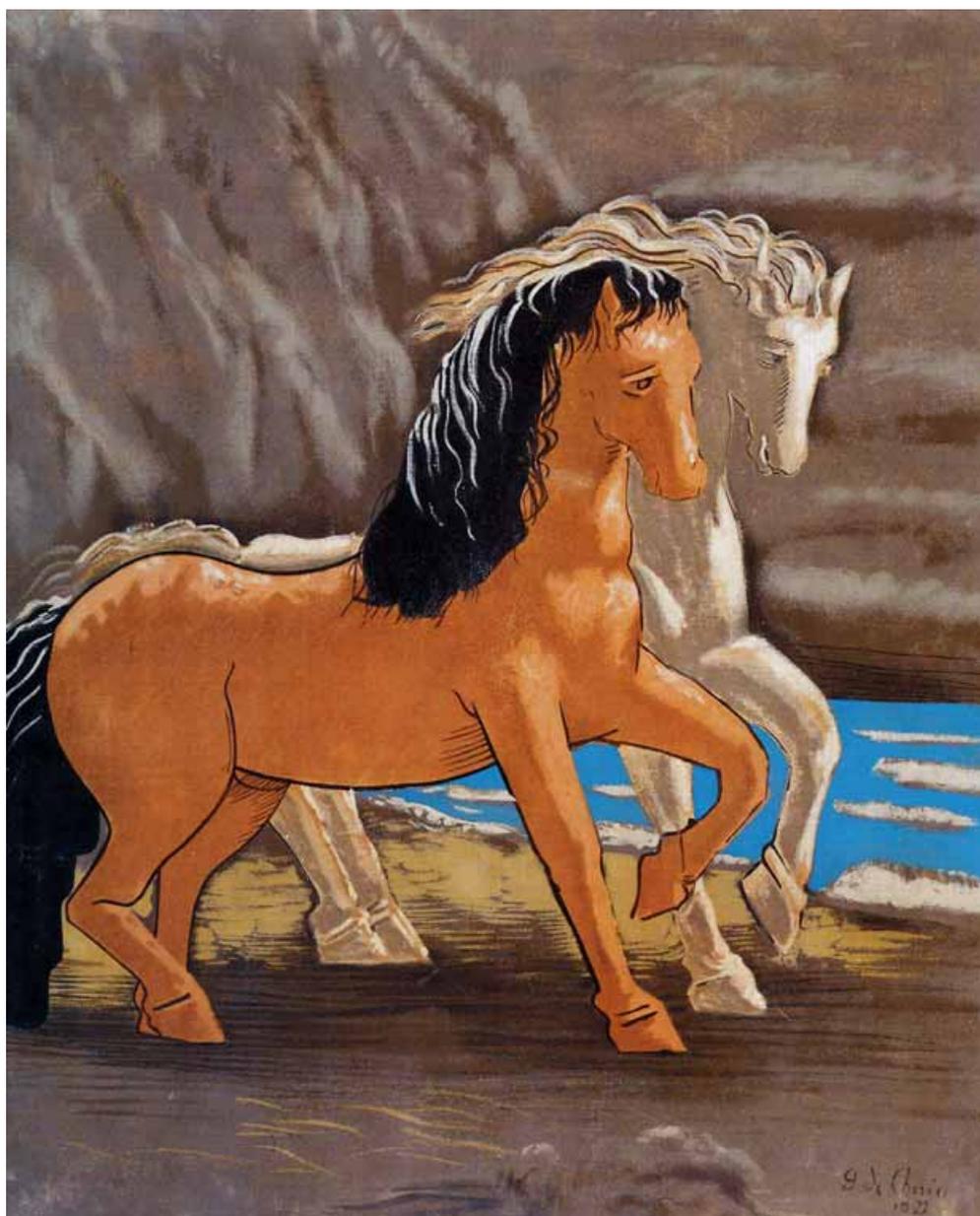


fig. 6 *Horses by the Seashore*, 1927, tempera on printed paper (poster) 57.8 x 46.9 cm, signed and dated at bottom right "g. de Chirico 1927", exhibited in *Giorgio de Chirico. Immagini di un viaggio mediterraneo*, 30 December 1999-30 January 2000, Museo Man, Nuoro.

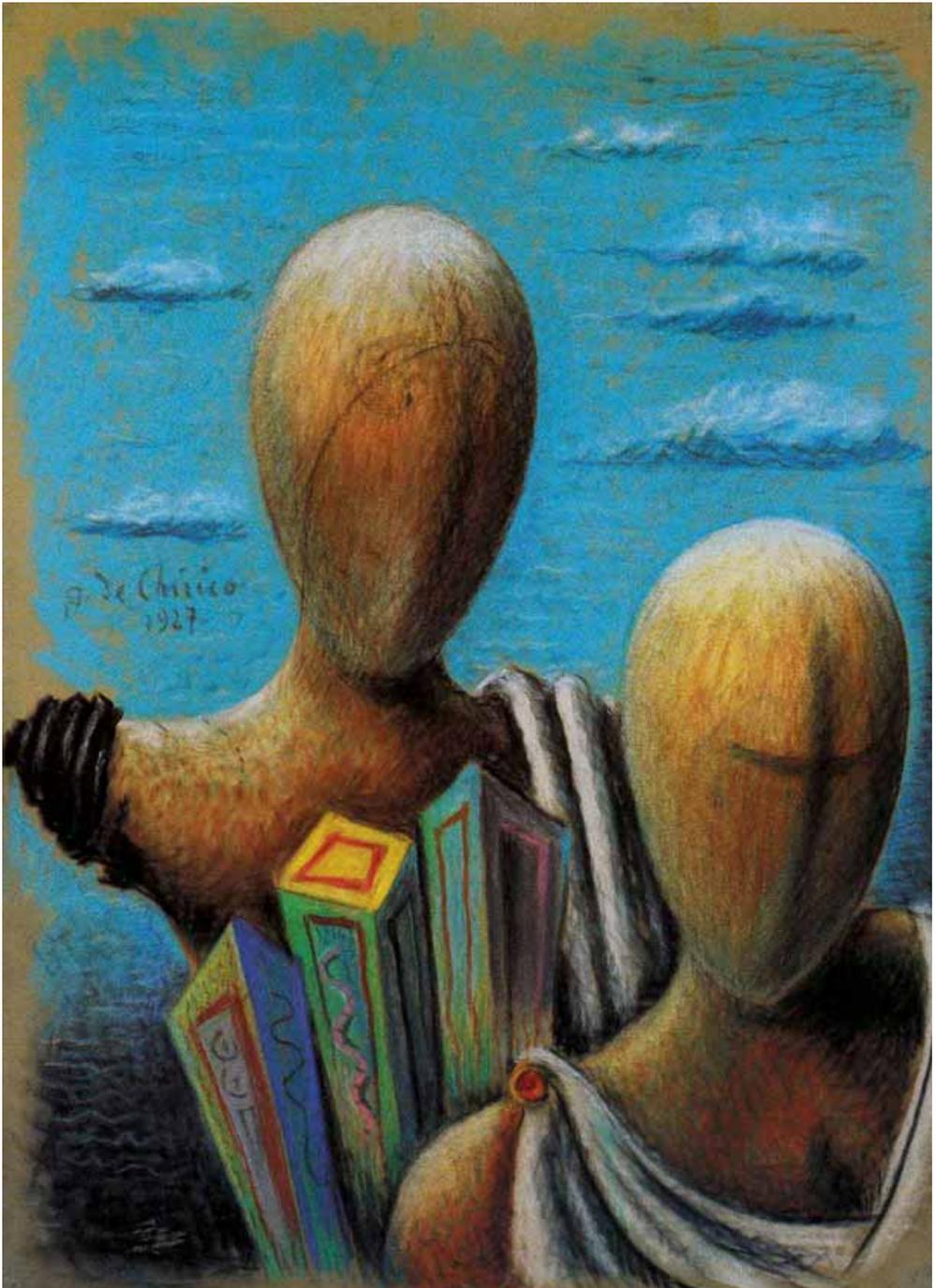


fig. 7 *Archaeologists*, mixed media on pasteboard, 64.8 x 47.8 cm, signed and dated on left "g. de Chirico 1927", published in the catalogue *Giorgio de Chirico. Capolavori scelti nelle collezioni piemontesi e lombarde*, cit., p. 41.

TWO OF THE NON-AUTHENTIC PAINTINGS
FOR WHICH THE COURT ORDERED THE SEIZURE



fig. 8 Non-authentic painting: *Die Melancholie der Abreise* (The Melancholy of Departure), 1913, oil on canvas, 81 x 60 cm, signed and dated at bottom right "g. de Chirico 1913" exhibited and reproduced in the catalogue of the exhibition *Die Andere Moderne - De Chirico-Savinio*, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf, 15 September-2 December 2001, n. 25, p. 214.



fig. 9 Non-authentic painting: *Pears and Oranges [and Clementines] on Drapery*, c. 1933, oil on cardboard, 37 x 48 cm, signed at bottom right "g. de Chirico".

TWO PAINTINGS NOT ARCHIVED BY THE FOUNDATION



fig. 10 Non-authentic painting: *Still Life with Vegetables*, 1931, oil on canvas, 80 x 140.5 cm, signed at top right "g. de Chirico", published in the catalogue *Giorgio de Chirico. Capolavori scelti nelle collezioni piemontesi e lombarde*, cit., p. 45.

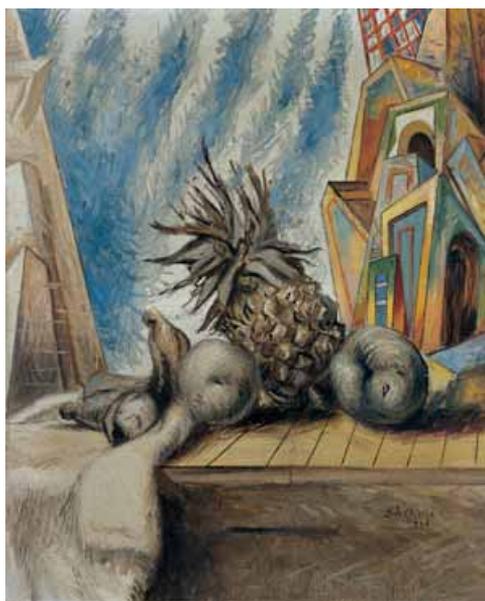


fig. 11 Non-authentic painting: *Still Life with Pineapple*, oil on canvas, 82 x 65 cm, signed and dated at lower right "g. de Chirico 1926".



fig. a Giorgio de Chirico, *Still Life [with Pineapple]*, 1926, 73 x 60 cm, oil on canvas. Authentic painting published in Waldemar George, *Chirico avec des fragments littéraires de l'artiste*, Éditions Chroniques du jour, Paris 1928, "Nature morte" n. III.

The story of the painting (fig. 11) is somewhat amusing and reveals to some extent the carelessness of who, at this time still unknown, put the painting into circulation. The Foundation's refusal to archive the painting in May 2004 was firmly contested by those who sustained that the painting was the second version of the painting *Still Life [with Pineapple]*, published in Waldemar George's 1928 monograph¹ (fig. a), and that it was put to auction on 20 December 1926 at Hôtel Drouot (room 6) and reproduced in the auction catalogue listed as: "Chirico, 27. *Nature morte*".

Documentation in support of the authenticity of the painting was sent to Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico, following its refusal to archive the painting in May 2004, which comprised of three photocopied pages of the 1926 Hôtel Drouot catalogue: the cover of the catalogue stamped Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA), Paris, with the indication "Copie conforme à l'original" (copy conforms to the original) (fig. b); the page with the information caption regarding the painting "Chirico, 27. *Nature Morte*, Toile. - haut. 82 cent.; larg. 65 cm, signée à droite et datée 1926" (fig. c); the page on which the painting is reproduced (the image is difficult to decipher due to the poor quality photocopy)(fig. d). Verification of the original catalogue at INHA in Paris undertaken by Jole de Sanna, a short time before her demise, showed that the painting *Nature morte* put to auction back in 1926 was different from the painting that had been presented to the Foundation. (See fig. e: scan of the page with image of *Nature morte*, Hôtel Drouot catalogue).

The non-authentic painting *Still Life with Pineapple* (fig. 11) appeared for the first time cited and illustrated in the catalogue of the exhibition *Giorgio de Chirico dalla Metafisica al Barocco*, (curated by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, Acqui Terme, 19 July-14 September 1997, Skira, Milan 1997), where it is reproduced on p. 100 (letter c with information caption n. 44), beside the authentic work by Giorgio de Chirico *Still Life [with Pineapple]*, 1926 (letter d) (fig. f). The relative information captions are on p. 44 of the catalogue (fig. g).

¹ W. George, *Chirico avec des fragments littéraires de l'artiste*, Éditions Chroniques du jour, Paris 1928, "Nature morte" n. III.

1926
850

CATALOGUE
DE
Tableaux Modernes
Aquarelles, Pastels, Dessins, Gouaches

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Département de la Bibliographie et de la Documentation
Collection Jacques Doucet
2, rue Vivienne - 75002 PARIS
Tél. 01.47.03.76.23 - Fax 01.47.03.89.25

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62110712009

dont la Vente aux enchères publiques aura lieu à Paris,
HOTEL DROUOT, SALLE n° 6
les **Lundi 30 et Mardi 31 Décembre 1926**,
A DEUX HEURES TRÈS PRÉCISES

M. Alph. BELLIER M. Jos. HRSSEL.
Commissaire-Président Expert près la Cour d'Appel
4, Place Vendôme, Paris (2^e) 14, Rue de Beetho, Paris (9^e)

Expédition publique le **Dimanche 19 Décembre 1926, de 2 à 6 heures.**

fig. b

copie conforme à l'original

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Département de la Bibliographie et de la Documentation
Collection Jacques Doucet
2, rue Vivienne - 75002 PARIS
Tél. 01.47.03.76.23 - Fax 01.47.03.89.25

DARAGNES



N° 29. — *Le Village d'Espies.*

CHIRICO
1911

27. *Nature morte.*
Huile — Haut. 89 cent.; Larg. 92 cent.
Signé à droite et daté 1916.

COROT

28. *Intérieur de bois le soir.*
Huile — Haut. 23 cent.; Larg. 35 cent.
Signé à gauche.
Bibliothèque Vivienne n° 27-2.

fig. c

copie conforme à l'original

INSTITUT NATIONAL D'HISTOIRE DE L'ART
Département de la Bibliographie et de la Documentation
Collection Jacques Doucet
2, rue Vivienne - 75002 PARIS
Tél. 01.47.03.76.23 - Fax 01.47.03.89.25

CHIRICO (G. de)



N° 27. — *Nature morte.*

CHARBONNIER
1911

25. *Le chemin de la ferme.*
Huile — Haut. 18 cent.; Larg. 33 cent.
Signé à gauche.

CHARMY

26. *Le repos.*
Huile — Haut. 88 cent.; Larg. 73 cent.
Signé à gauche.

fig. d

CHIRICO (G. de)



N° 27. — *Nature morte.*

CHARBONNIER
1911

25. *Le chemin de la ferme.*
Huile — Haut. 18 cent.; Larg. 33 cent.
Signé à gauche.

CHARMY

26. *Le repos.*
Huile — Haut. 88 cent.; Larg. 73 cent.
Signé à gauche.

fig. e

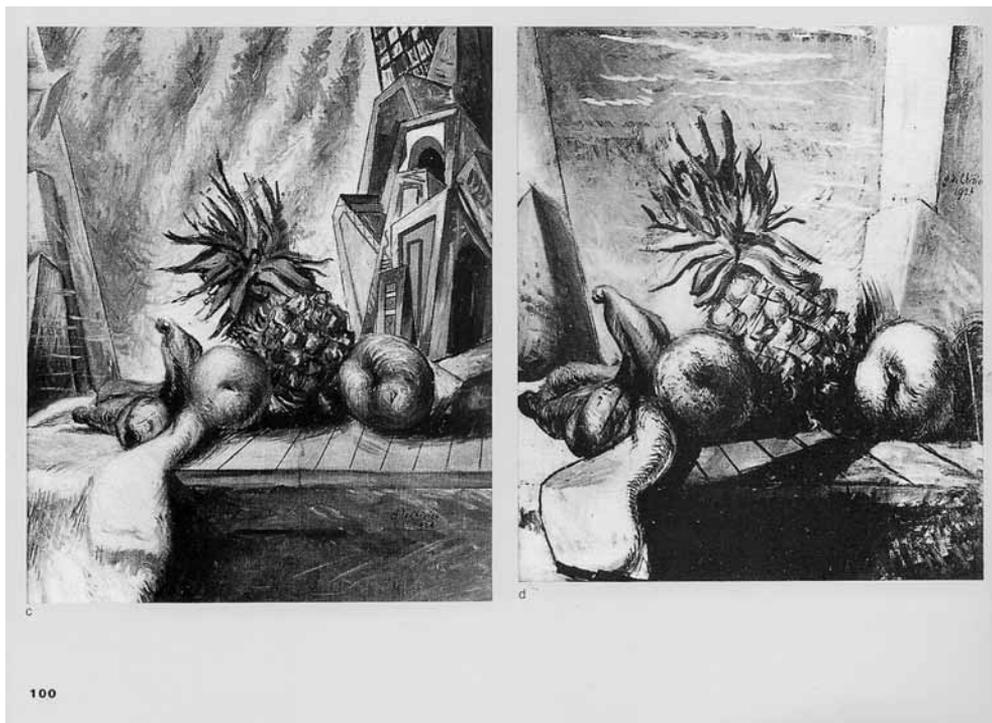


fig. f In the exhibition catalogue *Vita silente. Giorgio de Chirico dalla Metafisica al Barocco*, cit., the two paintings are reproduced on p. 100 without captions; the non-authentic painting *Still Life with Pineapple* is on the left and is referred to as “c”, and the authentic painting, Giorgio de Chirico *Still Life [with Pineapple]*, 1926, is on the right and referred to as “d”.

43. *Natura morta (con ananas)*, 1926, olio su tela, 73 × 60 cm. Collezione privata.

L'opera (una natura morta in un interno sullo sfondo del cielo) è stata pubblicata nella monografia di Waldemar George (1928, fig. III). Il quadro è riapparso in una vendita pubblica (Loudmer, Parigi), indicato come proveniente da Julien Levy (ringrazio Paolo Baldacci per la segnalazione).

44. *Natura morta con ananas*, 1926, olio su tela, 82 × 65 cm, firmato e datato in fondo a destra. Collezione privata.

Il quadro, molto simile al precedente, è apparso in una vendita pubblica nella stessa sede, indicato come proveniente da Julien Levy (ringrazio Paolo Baldacci per la segnalazione). È apparso per la prima volta in una vendita all'Hôtel Drouot, 20 dicembre 1926, n. 27.

Riferimento: *Anni Venti*, n. 45.

fig. g² The information captions of the two paintings are found on p. 44 in the catalogue. The reference letters “c” and “d” are not indicated; instead, the paintings are indicated with numbers 43 and 44. Number 43 refers to painting “d”, reproduced on p. 100, whilst n. 44 refers to painting “c”, reproduced on p. 100.

The bibliographic indication in information caption 44 “Reference: *Anni Venti*, n. 45” indicates the book *Giorgio de Chirico Parigi 1924-1929. Dalla nascita del Surrealismo al crollo di Wall Street* (edited by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco and P. Baldacci, ed. P. Daverio, Milan 1982) although the painting reproduced in that publication is not painting “c” (n. 44) but rather, the authentic painting by Giorgio de Chirico “d” (n. 43). Regarding the indication that both paintings were handled by Julien Levy, research has shown that Levy did not handle paintings such as these, nor are the paintings registered in the Julien Levy Gallery ledgers.

² Translation of the information captions: “43. *Still Life [with Pineapple]*, 1926, oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm. Private collection. The work (a still life in an interior with the sky as backdrop) was published in Waldemar George's monograph (1928, fig. III). The painting reappeared in a public sale (Loudmer, Paris), the provenance indicated as Julien Levy (I thank Paolo Baldacci for this information).”; “44. *Still Life with Pineapple*, 1926, oil on canvas, 82 x 65 cm, signed and dated at bottom right. Private collection. The painting, very similar to the one above, appeared in public sale at the same venue, the provenance indicated as Julien Levy (I thank Paolo Baldacci for this information). It originally appeared at a Hôtel Drouot auction on 20 December 1926, n. 27. Reference: *Anni Venti*, n. 45.”

TWO NON-AUTHENTIC PAINTINGS THAT WERE RECENTLY SEIZED



fig. 12 Non-authentic painting: *Prometheus*, oil on canvas, 55 x 45 cm, signed and dated above right "g. de Chirico 925", published in *Giorgio de Chirico Parigi 1924-1929. Dalla nascita del Surrealismo al crollo di Wall Street*, edited by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco and P. Baldacci, *cit.*, p. 379 with information caption n. 19 on p. 484. Exhibited in *De Chirico*, Haus der Kunst, Munich (17 November 1982-30 January 1983).



fig. 13 Non-authentic painting: *Female Portrait*, oil on pasteboard pasted on canvas, 82 x 68 cm, signed at right "g. de Chirico".



Giorgio de Chirico, *Female Portrait*, 1940, oil on pasteboard applied to canvas, 83 x 70 cm. Authentic painting published in *Catalogo Generale - Giorgio de Chirico*, edited by C. Bruni Sakraichik Vol. I, Tomo 2, n. 53, and exhibited at the XXIII Venice Biennale of 1942, catalogue 1043.



Back of non-authentic painting.



Back of authentic painting.

On the back of the non-authentic painting (left) one notes the reproduction of the labels, stamps and annotations as seen on the authentic painting (right), including the Venice Biennale label with n. "1043".

TWO NON-AUTHENTIC DRAWINGS FROM “MARIO BROGLIO” - “VALORI PLASTICI”

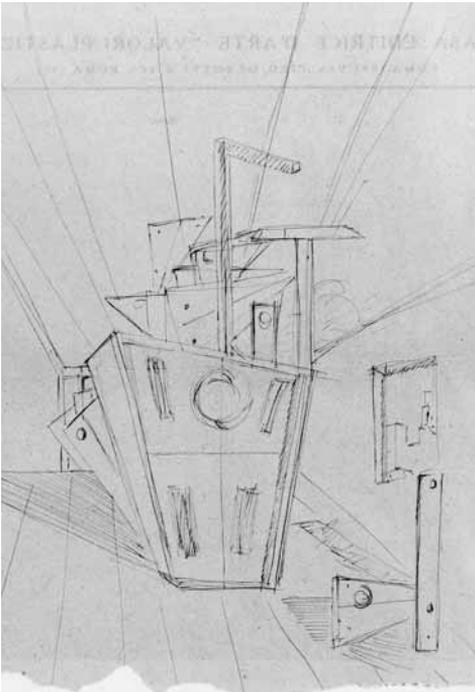


fig. 14 Non-authentic drawing: *Study for Metaphysical Consolations*, 1918, pen on “Valori Plastici” letterhead paper, 26 x 22 cm, published in P. Baldacci, *De Chirico – The Metaphysical Period 1888-1919*, Bulfinch, New York 1997, D 114, p. 400, information caption p. 429.

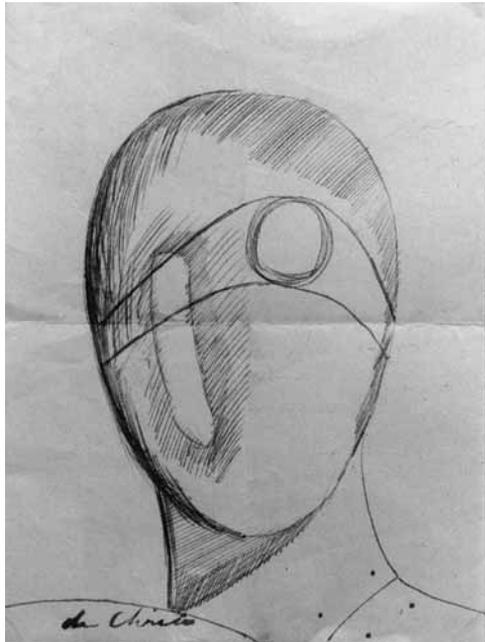


fig. 15 Non-authentic drawing: *Study for the Anxiety of Life*, spring 1915, pen on paper, 18 x 13.5 cm, signed at bottom left, published in *De Chirico – The Metaphysical Period 1888-1919*, cit., D 66 p. 288, information caption p. 428.