

DEFINITION OF A FAKE PAINTING¹

Executed with the objective of fraud, a fake painting is a painting that imitates the subject or style of a painter (usually a well-known painter), has the painter's signature forged on it, and often carries even a forged declaration of authenticity.

Today one tries, especially in my regard, to maliciously create equivocal definitions concerning the exact meaning of a fake painting, by confusedly speaking about copies, repetitions, etc.

I am today, the painter whose work is the most falsified. Those who attempt to market fake de Chiricos have created various legends about me, one more absurd than the other, but that serve a purpose for these people. For example, they have spread the word that I have reneged, to the point of repudiation, my Metaphysical Painting and that I systematically call paintings fake which are attributed to me that are shown to me in photograph or even the original. They have created the legend that I have a mania for scandals and court cases. All are full-out lies; I have never reneged any manner of my painting; I have defended myself, and have come out victorious in cases in which I have been taken to court, as for example the court case that Galleria "Il Milione" of Milan promoted, and which they lost despite the ardent zeal with which many people at the time, including well-know art critics, tempted to trip me up.

The strange mentality of certain collectors in Italy as well as abroad, is noteworthy. These collectors, when I declare a painting in their collection attributed to me as fake, instead of being upset with the person who sold it to them and demand their money back and eventually even denounce the vendor, they blame me. This depends on the fact that, besides the embarrassment they feel as a collector, they feel materially hurt, since fakes are always sold under priced. Although such collectors, from a moral point of view, aren't any better than those who market the fakes because by paying much less than the normal price, they must certainly understand that they are buying a fake. It is the same situation that happens between a thief and a fence, in fact one couldn't exist without the other.

Fake de Chiricos are reproduced in many volumes on Modern Art published in Italy and abroad. Just recently I was leafing through a large volume entitled *Pittori Italiani dal Futurismo ad Oggi* (Italian painters from Futurism to today) Edizioni Mediterranee. The book was compiled by a man named Guido Ballo, whom I don't know and contains a colour reproduction of a mannequin, entitled *Hector*

¹ Manuscript by Giorgio de Chirico. The Giorgio and Isa de Chirico Foundation Archives.

dated 1916 and a fake *Italian Piazza*.

Both of these paintings have my signature forged on them.

Even a volume published by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, compiled by a certain James Soby, contains a fake sculpture.

The multiplication of fakes in Italy is also due to the fact that the laws are not strict enough to block this form of delinquency here. One asks oneself why it is that a poor person is arrested for stealing a bit of fruit and bread in a store and then individuals who pocket millions dealing in fake paintings go unpunished.

Our authorities should act with more energy in order to safeguard the interests, the rights and also the dignity of Italian artists. In Paris, when the scandal about the fake de Chirico at the Museum of Modern Art occurred, despite the hostile and offensive attitude afforded me by the French press, I was not defended by any of our authorities. Even the Italian Ambassador in Paris feigned ignorance.

Today, Art is one of the fields in which dishonesty and fraud occur the most.

Giorgio de Chirico