

FORM OF THE WORK¹

Jole de Sanna

The *Comedy of Modern Art* is a twofold self-portrait: of Giorgio de Chirico and of Giorgio de Chirico as Isabella Far. Giorgio de Chirico's self-portrait consists of a collection of essays written by the artist in his role as art critic and is structured in two parts: as theoretician of his own oeuvre and of the work of artists his contemporaries, and as scholar of the Great Masters, whilst the self-portrait of de Chirico as Far unites texts published from 1942 to 1945, in addition to previously unpublished texts. In the volume, de Chirico delineates a treatise on art theory and on historical criticism, as the first half of the century comes to a close. The title of the essay *Considerations on Modern Painting* derives from a text published in "Il Primato Artistico Italiano" in the period following the First World War² and hinges the second part [of the *Comedy*] to the first. The extension of the "first book" is continuous, from 1918 to 1943. The essays in the first part were published in magazines to which de Chirico contributed as art critic, such as "Valori Plastici" and "La Ronda", etc. The "second book" consists of a group of articles that appeared mainly in "Stile" and "L'Illustrazione Italiana" from January to October 1942. The general form of the work is mirrored but not symmetrical. Time, dilated and then contracted as in a topological "saddle", fluctuates with regard to the present, the second part. The temporal horizon flows in elliptical curves like the metaphysical sky in an Italian Piazza. The book is in diachronic tension like the temporal "aggregates" found in its illustrious precedent in the novel *Hebdomeros* (1929). Thought defines itself in equilibrium with the history to which it turbulently belongs. Ideas pursue one another from one section to the other with a determined purpose: from a pessimistic judgment of the present (Nietzsche) to the reconstruction of the human being through the realignment of the hands to the intellect (he is an "active" nihilist).

Metaphysical painting theory coexists in the volume along with a trial on the 20th century art system, which is seen as nothing other than an intellectual support platform for modern social and political ideologies. The painter's task is to distribute and organise this material: the image before us is a metaphysical self-portrait of Giorgio de Chirico – a twofold portrait as we have said. On the one hand, essays on Metaphysical Art – signed de Chirico – appear on a backdrop of essays on technique and craft, whilst on the other, Great Master art unfolds on a grand perspective plane. The Far section outlines this architecture. The faculties indicated for the constitution and formation of the artist are set out in a constructive order, like the structure of a "temple" on which art soars "enclosed" (his word) within that which is sacred. The temple rises up on the ruins of the first essay *Considerations on Modern Painting*. De Chirico's part seems like an illustration of the structure *A Portrait by Tintoretto*, whereas the Far part is an ideal construction in the manner of Renaissance utopia. Paolo

¹ *Postfazione* (Afterword), *Commedia dell'arte moderna*, edited by J. de Sanna, Abscondita, Milan 2002, pp. 257-269.

² An article with the same title was published in two parts in 1920 in "Il Primato Artistico Italiano", n. 5, July, pp. 17-21; the second part is entitled *I neoclassici milanesi*.

Lomazzo's *L'idea del tempio della pittura* [Idea of the Temple of Painting]³, one of the treatises on painting avidly consulted by de Chirico in this period, might be a credible model for the Far section.

The *Comedy* is designed with metaphysical geometry. The Far essays would later be included in part in the novel *Il Signor Dudron*⁴ in the form of paintings framed by Isabella Far's apparition. The same year, the autobiography *Memorie della mia vita* [The Memoirs of Giorgio de Chirico]⁵ observed a chronological order. In 1945, the artist's publications were visibly superabundant. The liberation of Italy, exactly like the end of the previous world war, was a highpoint of intensity in de Chirico's writing. Both works, autobiographies in their own right, were published, followed by *1918-1925. Ricordi di Roma* [Memories of Rome],⁶ which is an extract from his *Memoirs* dedicated to a leitmotif of the *Comedy*: intellectuals. Additionally, the French edition of the first part of *Il Signor Dudron* was released.⁷ Printing of the *Comedy* was completed on 3 July 1945. On 15 July de Chirico finished his *Memoirs*. In Milan, Giovanni Scheiwiller reprinted Lo Duca's monograph⁸ and *Piccola trattato di tecnica pittorica* [Brief Treatise on Painting Technique].⁹

Isabella Far

The 1945 *Memoirs* end on the uproar caused by the essay *Considerations on Modern Painting* published in "Stile" in January 1942. In de Chirico's retaliation, impressionism and surrealist painting precede other tendencies. With few exceptions (Raffaele Carrieri), Italian critics rose up against the artist, obliging "Stile" editor Giò Ponti to give him a wide berth.¹⁰ They were devoured by envy, de Chirico commented, winding up with: "I console myself by painting and by reading the writings of Isabella Far".¹¹ In fact the *Comedy* had just appeared and Isabella was twelve days old. He need do no other than shift the polemics against him onto Isabella Far. He hinted, this is true, at the critics' "hysterical muteness", and indeed it occurred to no-one to say that the writings were previously read as being written by de Chirico. This silence "amused" him; he enjoyed his literary fiction. Far, a genius of new art criticism, comes from *phare* (lighthouse) and from far (distant), as he explains in *Dudron*.¹² And, I should also add, from the "spotlight" enlightening the show staged by the *Comedy*. And I should not avoid considering André Breton's *Phare de la mariée* in which he commented on Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass*. The *Comedy's* scandal essay, *Considerations on Modern Painting*, is transferred to Isabella Far and from this moment on the presuppositions of the anti-modern polemic are her prerogative: loss of material, loss of craft, loss of reality and, in juxtaposition, rigour, severity of precepts and elevation of the spirit. Isabella impersonates art as *revelation*, places intelligence and intellectualism at its antipodes: modern art originating from intellectualism – a problem from which Duchamp was not exempt – falls from

3 G.P. Lomazzo, *L'idea del tempio della pittura*, Paolo Gottardo Pontio, Milan 1590.

4 G. de Chirico, *Il Signor Dudron*, Le Lettere, Florence, 1998.

5 G. de Chirico, *Memorie della mia vita*, Astrolabio, Rome, 1945; II ed. Rizzoli, Milan 1962.

6 G. de Chirico, *1918-1925. Ricordi di Roma*, Editrice Cultura Moderna (Officine Grafiche Italiane), Rome, 1945; Ed. La Cometa, Rome, 1988.

7 G. de Chirico, *Une aventure de Monsieur Dudron*, "L'Age d'or", Fontaine, Paris 1945.

8 G. Lo Duca, *Giorgio de Chirico*, Hoepli, Milan 1936, 1945.

9 G. de Chirico, *Piccolo trattato di tecnica pittorica*, Scheiwiller, Milan 1928, 1945, 1983, 2001, Abscondita, Milan 2013.

10 See the offensive launched by Carlo Belli in "Il Popolo di Brescia" on 27 March 1942, reprised in May by Massimo Bontempelli in "Il Gazzettino di Venezia", and Giò Ponti's letter cited by Belli.

11 G. de Chirico, *The Memoirs of Giorgio de Chirico*, English translation, Peter Owen, London 1971, p. 158.

12 G. de Chirico, *Il Signor Dudron*, cit., p. 49.

the ranks of intellectual aristocracy. With all that follows: market nefariousness, corrupted and enslaved critics. The essays attributed to Far are also a personal tribute to his companion, who was exposed at the time to the threat of racial persecution. Appearing chiefly in “L’Illustrazione Italiana” in 1942, the texts were written during de Chirico’s stay in Milan, which was interrupted by the bombing of the city. Composition of the essays continued at the home of their antiquarian friend Luigi Bellini, with Isabella Pakszwer hidden in the basement of his villa in Impruneta.¹³

Isabella Far is the imitation of a Muse from Apollonian Greece. The metaphysical artifice of doubling – of which de Chirico is the leading 20th century exponent – was brought to perfection: the character plays itself and at the same time is external to itself. Isabella Far is the definitive version of the Double that appeared in the first metaphysical painting, *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* (1910). The new version is suited to a context of theatre and masks, on which there are two essays in the *Comedy*. De Chirico dresses up as a woman. In the self-portraits of this period, after the *Nude Self-Portrait* (1942), the artist depicts himself in theatrical costumes. Moreover he began to repeat, thenceforth and persistently, a grotesque and pseudo-realistic mask of his own. The Dechirichian mask has a corrugated face, prominent lip and a threatening yet gentle glance: his typical self-portrait. With a mask on his face he disappears behind himself, celebrating the aristocratic sacrifice: renunciation of the ego. The distinction between aristocrats and snobs in which the *Comedy* is steeped, consolidates a train of thought that begun in 1934 with the painting *Bourgeois and Gentlemen*. The creation of a twofold muse in Salvador Dalí’s *Diary of a Genius* (1952-1963)¹⁴ may be helpful in deciphering certain keys of meaning in the *Comedy*. With the artifice of the diary, Dalí poses as an actor with his wife Gala in the role of Muse and avenges the incomprehension elicited in the 1930s by his outbursts against Lenin-Hitler ideologies and against Breton’s role in surrealism, crowned by the suicide of René Crevel. After the *Comedy* came out, the person to extend a hand to de Chirico was precisely the emblem of surrealism, championed by Breton and by Gala almost like a laboratory-produced de Chirico.¹⁵ Prior to the Second World War, the two artists shared a stance against totalitarian State and (Breton’s) specific abuses of art.¹⁶ In 1942-1945, de Chirico’s sentencing touches modernism in a moment of destruction. The judgement is passed down by his double, by the Muse Far; whilst in the first part Giorgio de Chirico, as witness of the modern period, removes his mask – the script has this truly fine quality – like a defendant.

Modern: a Definition

In everyday lexicon, modern, by definition, means new. The concept “stretches” perpetually forward towards us from the late antique age, intact. De Chirico declares the contrary, modern is a brake, immobility. The perfection achieved by civilisation in the 16th century passed away at the end of the 19th. The sense of world was then lost and reality thwarted. The passing of ages in seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter, belongs to a concept that fundamentally dates back to Ptolemy. Oswald Spengler shared de Chirico’s conviction in a parallel order of time, but at the heart there is still Nietzsche. The second *Untimely Meditation* (1874) focuses on the corrosive effect of modernity in which human life infected by an impersonal mechanism of division of labour. Flight from

13 G. de Chirico, *The Memoirs...*, cit., p. 156.

14 S. Dalí, *Diario di un genio* [Diary of a Genius], It. trans. by F. Gianfranceschi, SE, Milan 1996.

15 Gala Éluard had been a collector and dealer of de Chirico’s work since the early 1920s, like André Breton. Dalí’s triumphal entry into the surrealist group coincided with the break between Breton and de Chirico. Subsequently Gala, Éluard’s wife, married Dalí.

16 See V. Mucci, *Commedia dell’arte moderna di Giorgio de Chirico (1945)*, in V. Mucci, *Amico dei Pittori*, La nuova Pesa, pp. 37-38.

civilisation, barbarisation, do not depend on science but on the modern way of practising it. The ordering motif in this context is the periodization of civilisation consigned to the West by Albumasar¹⁷ and which presents the history of humanity in harmony with the celestial clock. Giambattista Vico's *ricorso* [recurrence] in *The New Science* (1744) precedes Nietzsche. The succession of phases in a civilisation requires a prognosis of history: the foretelling of a new civil cycle authorises action. After Nietzsche, the coincidence of decline and reawakening is de Chirico's specific operational territory. In this context modern means expired: it is not the new but the old. Old, and also the cause of human faculties becoming backward as a result of working conditions. Spengler's *The Decline of the West*¹⁸ came out the same year in which de Chirico decided to return to painterly values and published the related texts in his exhibition catalogues and in "Valori Plastici". Attributes which, both in his early theoretical production and in the *Comedy*, appear connected and are therefore not to be understood as a periodization of his painting. Central to the paintings of this phase is the Return:¹⁹ *The Disquieting Muses* (1917) and *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (1919). The reawakening of art is aimed at the renewal of civilisation through art. Utopia? Yes, utopia. Utopia lies at the heart of all Metaphysical Art, that which the learned call "true".²⁰

A declaration of intent is found in the first text of the *Comedy*, *We Metaphysicians*: the art of the troglodyte "holds more interest for us than a landscape by Pissarro". Read: the troglodyte induces the birth of myth and translates the first metaphysical vision of the world into language of forms, whereas impressionism translates a positivist conception of the world into a crumbling of form. In the first case a nascent culture, in the second case civilisation, which are the contrary of what they seem and are mutually exclusive. De Chirico's dialectic is taken up with criticism of impressionism. Manet, the impressionists, Cézanne, late 19th century art, *Pompieri* included: carriers of positivist civilisation, reduction of painterly means and cult of sensation ("impression"). An affinity emerges with Spengler's thesis on the spring, summer, autumn and winter of the West. In Spengler's scheme the 19th century is divided in two halves: in the first (autumn) the extreme perfection of forms corresponds to the apogee of mathematical thought and the perfect form of the State; in the second half of the century the end of form corresponds to a material conception of the world and of civilisation (winter). In the *Comedy* an analogous bipartition of the 19th century results in the adoration of J. L. David, J. Dominique Ingres and Eugène Delacroix, and contrarily, the demonization of the impressionists with the exception of P. Auguste Renoir and Gustave Courbet, situated however in a risk zone. Arnold Böcklin bears the brunt of the rift that divides the 19th century in two: the essay on Böcklin was excluded from the *Comedy*. That said, de Chirico is not a Spenglerian. Or better: he is and is also the opposite. If this dual concept seems to strain logic, this is precisely Metaphysical logic. The plan of the *Comedy* has a structural layout that one might venture to call neo-positivist and which has nothing to do with those who cultivate *Dekadenzidee* and *Kulturpessimismus* that was so much in vogue in the 1930s. De Chirico applied himself to the reconstruction of art with the same determination as the logicians of the Vienna Circle, enemies of the pessimists. On this subject the diachronic formal structure of the book carries some weight. The very definition of the work did

17 *De magnis coniunctionibus et annorum revolutionibus ac eorum perfectionibus*, around the middle of the 9th century.

18 O. Spengler, *Il Tramonto dell'Occidente. Lineamenti di una morfologia della storia mondiale* (1918), It. trans. by J. Evola, edited by F. Jesi, Longanesi, Milan 1981; edited by S. Zecchi, Guanda, Parma 1991.

19 See J. de Sanna, *Analisi della forma III*, in *De Chirico. Metafisica del tempo*, exhibition catalogue edited by J. de Sanna, Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires 2002, pp. 23-52.

20 *Ibidem*.

not exist prior to the book: a manual? treatise? breviary? comedy? autobiography? None of these things and all of these things.

Unique among literary genres, the book has a new form. On the one hand we have de Chirico's judgements as a critic, whilst on the other, the material and spiritual aspects that enter into an artist's formation bear out the plan with care although not without pedantry. Art's future operators are a target that must not be missed. The theory of art becomes an exact science. Moreover, the first part of *Il Signor Dudron* flanks the *Comedy* with the portrait of a pedagogue. And again, the *Brief Treatise on Painting Technique* is newly published, supplying formulas and recommendations. De Chirico as engineer of art can boast a neo-positivist discipline, like Otto Neurath who opposed Spengler.²¹ The final model of the artist drawn by de Chirico is a tracing of himself. With the nexus of causality established between mechanical civilisation and modern decline, Spengler's periodization is shifted to the calculation of possibilities and forms clusters of parallelisms within de Chirico and with regard to classical painting, which explains the mysterious links of time and space within the book.

As early as his *Brief Treatise on Painting Technique* (1928), de Chirico had thrown down his challenge to the ancients by saying that they had been useful to him but he had surpassed them inasmuch as he was modern (in the sense of *laudator temporis acti*). In the *Comedy* he at last introduces the final model in accordance with the axis of *revelation* and of the correct conceptual order in the human being (*A Discourse on the Mechanism of Thought*). De Chirico's ease, both with sapiential culture and higher mathematics, is the secret of Metaphysical Art. The *Comedy* is a reflection on the new, which of course means integration of the old into the new. *Dekadenzidee* was the launching pad for the avant-garde based on *tabula rasa*. Whereas neo-positivism did not even admit the enunciation of one single proposition without utilising the previous conceptual structure. ("We can transform the conceptual heritage that we find available, but we cannot eliminate it. Any effort to renew it from its foundations is in its very intention the child of existing concepts."²²). The key text of the *Comedy*, *Desecrated Reality*, contains both the critique of positivism, devourer of humanity, and the positive rejoinder to the pernicious effects of positivism, such as conceptual impoverishment. The text calls for appropriate action. The loss of reality spurs de Chirico to political attack on the tyrants of the fascist period, which he classifies as the specific product of lost reality. The war is on: "Now reality, repudiated in the name of the modern spirit, is concealed from the eyes of men". In 1941 the artist illustrated *Apocalisse*²³ and now passes his judgement on the tyrants: "Today people are feeling their way amid chaos, incapable of changing anything or accomplishing anything, subject as they are, to the just revenge of repudiated reality". The invective against an age led astray by pseudo reality unmasks the utility of pseudo reality to political propaganda: "giving the name reality to the things they invented [...] without fearing either the ridiculous or the absurd". He accuses abstractionism and surrealism, modern movements that enacted a subtraction of reality from reality. The rhetoric of dictators and the evasions of abstractionists and surrealists correspond. It would appear that even Savinio agreed with Breton, the former having just published, among other things, a piece on surrealism in "Prospettive" in 1940.²⁴ Immediately after this article, de Chirico published *Il Signor Dudron* in the same

21 O. Neurath *Anti-Spengler* (1921), edited by F. Fistetti, Palomar, Bari 1993.

22 *Ibidem*, p. 129.

23 *L'Apocalisse*, edited by R. Carrieri, introduction M. Bontempelli, with 20 lithographs by Giorgio de Chirico, Edizioni della Chimera, Milan 1941.

24 A. Savinio, *Della pittura surrealista*, in "Prospettive", Rome January 1940.

magazine: a random occurrence?²⁵ Mention of the surrealists' "doubtful metaphysics" in the text on reality makes one think of the deteriorated relationship between the brothers at the time. In 1942 the publication of *International Planning for Freedom* by Neurath,²⁶ who since 1919 had followed the line of a concrete utopia, like de Chirico, provided a figure symmetrical to the latter's. Utopia contra utopia, de Chirico sets the *Geist* of an artistic conception of the world against the *Geist* of a scientific conception thereof. With regard to the latter he points out the need for method and the absolute necessity of a convergence of languages. The establishment of a history bound to cultural values, *sub specie artis*, involves the building of the Comedy-Cathedral. The walls of the building are the 1942-1945 essays, the temple is consecrated to art as sacred manifestation of the Universal, or Universal Talent. The predicate *universal* calls for a language common to all men. A problem today so distant and faded as that which saw anthropology and the logic of language in the middle of the last century occupied with Universal Jargon and other hypotheses of linguistic adaptation among peoples, was one which accompanied de Chirico throughout his creative span. As a condition preliminary to the plan, art must demonstrate its excellence in founding a universal communication. The temple of Universal Talent, built on the principal expectations and neuroses of the 20th century, is a kind of mirror focused on the questions of cultural anthropology, psychology and epistemology, the new society's heirs to classical philosophies. Moreover, as a painter, de Chirico intersects these languages directly on the canvas, from primitive to Great Art, to the popular communication of comics and Disney animation, with formal, mathematical logic and the theory of matter. The second part of the *Comedy* consists wholly of definitions, like the work conceived by Paolo Lomazzo in the 16th century under somewhat analogous circumstances, *L'idea del tempio della pittura*. The barycentre of the definitions is the reconstruction of reality. De Chirico is unequivocal in describing its content when he explains how to paint a portrait: there is no material reality, reality is intuited and spiritual. The unity and universality of language is what allows humanity to recognise itself in reality penetrated by art. Such clarity however would not be enough to avoid this whole period of the artist's painting being classified as "realist". De Chirico's "system" is the stairway from sensation to pure idea, with matter as a basis for verification of each sense and for the response of the mind: *The Mechanism of Thought* draws to a close with a strikingly vivid picture of the thinking body. It is the most harmonious and transparent image of the mind ever offered in a century that was continuously uncertain between positivism and idealism.

Let us return to the question of the Universal. De Chirico developed the need for a universal language the same way the "social engineers" of "concrete utopia" had. On the latter weighs [the risk] of a side-slipping into an area of absolutism and totalitarianism (note the dangerous relationship between universal language and propaganda in the 1930s) of which they themselves were aware and which in any case the regimes willingly bore out. To the question by an empiricist logician of the day – "What would happen if a philosopher, a native of Australia and I were to lunch together in New York?" – de Chirico, who was on his way back from New York (1938), responded by adding an American version to the Mysterious Baths theme: *Mysterious Baths in Manhattan*. In New York he was chiefly involved with patron of the arts Albert Coombs Barnes, founder with John Dewey of a teaching method and therefore of a utopia anchored to art (*Art as experience*). De Chirico was close to the founders of American museums and public structures aimed at the construction of the future

25 G. de Chirico, *Il Signor Dudron*, ibidem, May, p. 129.

26 O. Neurath, *International Planning for Freedom*, in "The New Commonwealth Quarterly", 1942, pp. 23-28; O. Neurath, *Empiricism and Sociology*, edited by M. Neurath and R.S. Cohen, in "The Vienna Circle Collection", D. Reidel, Dordrecht-Boston 1973, p. 436.

artist. He had experience behind him that would subsequently turn out to be precious for American artists: he united the biscuit and the kitchen glove together with high forms of culture and to higher mathematics (the American hard-cast theme uniting high and low culture). Thus *Calligrammes* (1930) inspired by comics and the Mysterious Baths inspired by an office worker's Sunday outings. This is universal language. De Chirico's haste, with everything that was happening around him, was to use language to reorganise the human [musical] score. Regarding the pseudonym with which he signed the review of German artists in 1942, Coluccio Buonafede,²⁷ he says: "Coluccio is the name of a great 14th century humanist, and I too should like to have that kind of role: moreover, precisely with regard to Germany, place of the cul-de-sac that annulled the notion of the human with the like of racial persecution, I raise the stake on the creators of the Renaissance closest to us, the Romanticism of Jena and of Weimar, that gave birth to the concept of modern genius". The *Comedy* has a protagonist, the genius. The genius is the artist. He plays his role just as conditions oblige him to. In "those" conditions of reality de Chirico acknowledges himself "condemned to comedy". Let us resume from Nietzsche.

Tragedy and Comedy

Tragedy and Comedy is the title of a 1945 painting. Two women with billowing hair raise up a bloodstained cloth. Reality is what it is: "I write these lines to warn future generations that will follow our present one", he writes in *Torment in Art*. "Reality must never be forgotten and the disfigurement of its significance must never be allowed", he added in *Desecrated Reality*. In Aphorism 272 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche dictates the signs of nobility: "never to think of lowering our duties to the rank of duties for everybody; to be unwilling to renounce or to share our responsibilities".²⁸ In the next, once more under the heading of "What is aristocratic", he continues: "Impatience and his consciousness of having always been condemned to comedy up to that time – for even strife is a comedy, and conceals the end, as every means does – spoil all intercourse for him; this kind of man is acquainted with solitude, and what is most poisonous in it".²⁹ De Chirico, "condemned to comedy", takes on his responsibility. In January 1942, *Considerations on Modern Painting* came out in "Stile", a magazine representative of fascism's architecture and decorative arts. As things were in Italy and Europe, the attack was equivalent to that of a suicide bomber. The artist was a perfect target for both the right and the left. As early as his "Comœdia" interview in Paris (December 1927) de Chirico had taken punishment from the Italian right which with time, especially after he abandoned Italy in 1938 following the racial laws, had been formalised into accusations of pro-Jewish and Bolshevik sympathies. Whilst on the left there was a strengthening of Breton's anti-de Chirico programme with the former discrediting de Chirico's second period as being an inspirer of the "return to craft". The artist, who perhaps best represented artistic research in its entirety after 1910, was ideal for highlighting opposed ideologies. He offered himself up. In 1942 Stalinist censorship became harsher; Zhdanov imposed Soviet Realism. Goebbels' propaganda took its first defeats yet without undermining the rhetoric of the Italian media. De Chirico's position with regard to history is calculable in his offensive capability at that moment. The text on desecrated reality is the key to the *Comedy*, also due to the fact that "realism" was the keyword in the art of the regimes; soviet realism and national-socialist realism were the same thing. De Chirico sought an emblematic position. The moment had arrived to

²⁷ The manuscript, signed "Coluccio Buonafede" is conserved in the Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico Archives, Rome.

²⁸ F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

take the notion of *modern* once more in hand. The national-socialism of the Reich made the struggle against modern art one of the principles of its propaganda. A book dedicated to modern art, Carl Einstein's *Art of the 20th Century*, was taken as the demarcation line of the art to be combated. Not only was de Chirico included in this book but since the 1920s Einstein had been among the most refined interpreters of his art.³⁰ So de Chirico's anti-modernist campaign not only did not correspond to Hitler's anti-modernism but was actually its opposite. With his habitual dignity in dealing with these matters de Chirico spoke of the sacrifice of his work in his text on the exhibition of German art, signed Coluccio Buonafede. He refers to "one of his works going up in flames" at the Glaspalast.³¹ With similar dignity, in his *Memoirs*, he puts down to "the effect of envy", the persecution he suffered at the hands of the regime's media on publication of *Considerations*. In response to his treatment by Italian critics, de Chirico, with a resigned smile, offered *1918-1925. Ricordi di Roma* [Memories of Rome]: a brief and entertaining portrait of the narrow-minded Roman milieu. Whereas on the left, André Breton continued to declare him practically dead since 1919. The art prior to his "decease", de Chirico's "Early Metaphysical Art", was under Breton's control from all viewpoints, commercial and philosophical. He was accused of fascism in these quarters. The artist's funeral was held at the Galerie surréaliste in 1928, after which he was treated as a survivor. The year 1941 also saw the publication of J. T. Soby's *The Early Chirico*.³² An exhibition of fakes commissioned by the surrealists at Galerie Allard in 1946³³ and the Metaphysical Art exhibition at the 1948 Venice Biennale put the seal on an accusation reaffirmed to date: de Chirico is a forger if he takes up his earlier painting once again; if de Chirico declares that a painting is fake he is stating a falsehood; the new de Chirico is a realist. A twofold censure like this was constantly in force. Everything turns around the idea of reality: the vocation for the reality internal to art, the profanation of reality implemented by the Reich or the Soviets, or their Italian and international offshoots. De Chirico is not an aligned artist. But he is quite other than an uncommitted artist.

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Translated by David Smith

30 C. Einstein, *Die Kunst des 20 Jahrhunderts, Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte* vol. XXI, Berlin 1931, third edition. [Einstein wrote the introduction to the exhibition *Giorgio de Chirico*, Galerie A. Flechtheim, Berlin in 1930. His text is published in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico", n. 3/4 (2004); original German (pp. 477-480); Italian translation (pp. 481-484); English translation (pp. 485-488).

31 The Mücher Glasspalast of Munich (designed by A. Voigt) was destroyed by arson in 1931. In the fire, which de Chirico speaks of in *Osservazioni su una mostra d'arte tedesca*, one of his paintings was destroyed, *Das Mannequin kit de Ruinen* (Collection, Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin), that was on show in Münchner Kunstausstellung. With "Le grandi esposizioni di arte tedesca" held at Haus de Deutsche Kunst (designed by P. Ludwig Troost to replace Glasspalast), temporary exhibitions resumed.

32 J. T. Soby, *The Early Chirico*, Dodd, Mead & C., New York, 1941.

33 G. de Chirico, Galerie Allard, Parigi, June 1946.