

press release

de Chirico

curated by Luca Massimo Barbero
Milan, Palazzo Reale
25 September 2019 - 19 January 2020

*We live in a phantasmic world
and gradually gain acquaintance with it*
(G. de Chirico, 1918)

*De Chirico, a careful painter, borrows from dreams the accuracy of
inaccuracy, the use of truth to promote the false*
(J. Cocteau, *Le mystère laïc*, 1928)

Opening on 25 September is the great exhibition devoted to **George de Chirico** (Volos, 1888 - Rome, 1978), which through **some 100 masterpieces** reconstructs the unrepeatable career of the *Pictor Optimus*.

The rooms in Palazzo Reale in Milan, almost 50 years since the solo exhibition of 1970, again host de Chirico's work in an extraordinary **retrospective** curated by **Luca Massimo Barbero**, promoted and produced by the City of Milan-Culture, Palazzo Reale, Marsilio and Electa, in collaboration with the Giorgio and Isa de Chirico Foundation.

An exhibition layout made up of original comparisons and unrepeatable juxtapositions that reveal the *phantasmic* world of one of the 20th century's most complex artistic figures. The exhibition offers the key to a hermetic art with its roots in the Greece of de Chirico's childhood, that matured in the Paris of the avant-gardes, gave rise to the Metaphysical art that bewitched the Surrealists, captivated Andy Warhol and finally spread confusion with its irreverent and ironic reinterpretations of the Baroque.

The substantial body of works on display comes from major international museums including the **Tate Modern** in London, the **Metropolitan Museum** in New York, the **Centre Pompidou** and the **Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris**, the **Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea (GNAM)** in Rome, the **Peggy Guggenheim Collection** in Venice, **The Menil Collection** in Huston and the **MAC USP** in São Paulo, Brazil. Numerous Milanese institutions are also taking part: the **Museo del Novecento**, the **Casa Museo Boschi di Stefano**, the **Pinacoteca di Brera** and **Villa Necchi Campiglio**.

Subdivided into eight rooms, the exhibition is organized by themes devised in keeping with unprecedented juxtapositions and original comparisons to create a chain of visual reactions that, as de Chirico wrote in 1918, pursue "the demon in all things [...] the eye in all things [because] / We are explorers ready to set out again."



biography

Giorgio de Chirico (Volos, 1888 - Rome, 1978) grew up in Greece, spent his formative years in the Munich of the Secession and matured in avant-garde Paris. Here he developed the theme of *melancholy* and the first paintings of the *piazas of Italy*: visually electrifying, his works anticipated the avant-gardes and Surrealism.

Returning to Italy on the outbreak of the war, in 1915 he settled with his brother, Alberto Savinio, in Ferrara, where Filippo de Pisis and Carlo Carrà were also living, leading to the development of the complex phase of Ferrarese interiors and the Disquieting Muses: paintings with an originally figurative character but in which each subject becomes a vision with dreamlike and mysterious overtones.

In 1918 he moved between Rome, Florence and Milan while maintaining his international contacts and, since 1924, again settled in Paris.

In these years his provocative and radical imagination made him one of the protagonists of international art. His fruitful New York experience (1935-37) was notable for a solo show at the Pierre Matisse Gallery (1935), with 8 metaphysical masterpieces chosen by Alfred Barr for the exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (MoMA, 1936-37), and his decorative work for the Decorators Pictures Gallery – together with Picasso and Matisse – as well as the cover of *Vogue* in 1938.

In the same year he returned to Italy, and after a further stay in Paris, in 1944 the artist moved permanently to Rome, in his magnificent apartment in Piazza di Spagna.

Renewing his metaphysical inventions, de Chirico developed a new and sumptuous quality of painting that invested every subject and projected into the present the technical and inventive richness of painting that he provocatively termed that of the “Old Masters”. With a capacity that drew on Baroque impetuosity and a totally fantastic imagery made up of riders, landscapes and exuberant still lifes (he used the term “vite silenti” in preference to the usual Italian “nature morte”), de Chirico's painting entered into full contrast with contemporary art in the post-war period, confirming him again once, against all paradoxes, one of the masters of the mid-twentieth century.

Convinced that the road taken was the only plausible one, in 1948 he engaged in polemics directed against the Venice Biennale, which he accused of championing a modernist current. He organized a series of “anti-Biennali” in the spaces of the Bucintoro, not far from Piazza San Marco.

De Chirico, idolized and criticized, without slowing the flow of his painting, invented enchanted landscapes, irreverent self-portraits, with some in costume that anticipated today's themes of performance, to the point of claiming the right to reinvent the world of his Metaphysical paintings from early in the century. New fantastic inventions such as the sun on the easel, shadowy riders and weary troubadours were fatefully combined in the last years of his always vitalistic career with the Metaphysical rooms, the disquieting mannequins and the unique vision of this traveler in time and images.

Giorgio de Chirico died in Rome in November 1978.

datasheet**de Chirico**

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opening hours

Monday 2:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday 9:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Thursday and Saturday 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m.
The ticket office closes one hour before the closing times

admission charges

(audio-guide included / presales not included)
Full ticket to be used on any date: € 16
Full price € 14
Reduced price € 12
Special concessions: season ticket Musei Lombardia e Soci Orticola € 10
Special reduced price € 6
Families: 1 or 2 adults € 10 / children aged 6-14 € 6.00 / free for children under age of 5

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