SIDNEY JANIS GALLERY
15 EAST 57TH STREET NEW YORK 22 CABLE: JANISGAL

January 13, 1965

Mr. William Copley
150 East 69th Street
New York, New York

Dear Bill:

Jean Aberbach who last November acquired from us a painting by deCHIRICO Mannequin Metaphysique, 1913-15 Oil on Canvas 25½ x 21¼" today returned the painting. He tells me that recently you and Mr. deMenil had seen this painting in his collection and expressed doubts as to its authenticity since, as they said, Jim Soby had said he did not recall seeing this painting in the Eluard Collection from whence it came.

To keep straight the record I feel I should tell you and Mr. deMenil how and when this painting came into my possession. As near as I can remember it was in 1952 when Louis Broder decided to discontinue his Libraire of fine rare art books at 70 rue de L'Universite (the premises together with Giacometti lighting fixtures were then taken over by Heinz Berggruen).

Before the Libraire demise, I had frequently visited Broder at both his Libraire and at home where he had a very personal collection of paintings and sculpture of all periods, in fact I purchased from Broder at this time a great number of paintings and drawings by Giacometti. Not much later and prior to Eluard's death Broder took me to Eluard's home just outside of Paris where we were cordially greeted by the poet who already was quite palsied. In the Eluard Collection were interesting works by Picasso, Leger, several surrealists and 2 works by deCHIRICO: one oil, Mannequin Metaphysique and a black and white drawing of Apollinaire which work I had the pleasure of seeing again, among other things at your home after our recent Arman opening. Immediately upon spotting it I mentioned, as you will recall, that it had been some years since I last saw this drawing at Eluard's, opposite to which was hung Mannequin Metaphysique which I was soon after to purchase and which I had only recently sold.

I recall Eluard saying he did not believe the date of 1913 as deCHIRICO had signed it, saying 1915 was nearer to it.

On this visit to Eluard, however, I purchased from him his Picasso Cubist oil of 1911 Torero which now reposes in the Nelson Rockefeller Collection. After returning to New York I decided to buy the deCHIRICO Mannequin Metaphysique (Broder suggested I consider acquiring both this oil and the drawing). Broder handled the transaction (as I recall this was just prior or subsequent to Eluard's death in 1952), and Maurice Lefebvre Foinet attended the details of packing, shipping and Office des Changes. All of these facts can be verified by both Lefebvre & Broder.

Later Broder, to his great regret, sold me his large 1918 MIRO Odalisque, as a result of which he has not felt kindly toward me since; still I'm certain he cannot help but acknowledge the facts as here stated. In any event Lefebvre Foinet records would show the source of each painting mentioned here.

Please forgive the detailed history but I feel it is necessary to state the facts and add that I have full confidence that the painting is authentic, unwittingly misdated by deCHIRICO and in the pressure of things I plan to do nothing further to justify my position. I hope you won't mind if I send copies of this letter to all living parties mentioned therein.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

SIDNEY JANIS

SJ:jh

cc: Mr. Jean Aberbach
Mr. J. T. Soby
Mr. Louis Broder
Mr. Maurice Lefebvre Foinet
Mr. John deMenil

J. T. SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn. 06840

May 27,1970

Dear Betsy:

Simplest matters first. I'm enclosing a letter sent me by the African Art Center which is self-explanatory. At least it must be self-explanatory to someone, though not to me, since I don't know anything about Mrs. Winnhhopp of New York, Azaria Mbatha, now in Sweden or J. Thorpe (Miss). I feel that my entire responsibility toward Africa was canceled when I bailed your ex-fiance, Odell, out of jail for the fifth time. He still turns up once in a while to pick up another of the ten or so guns he used to have but he is retiring to his farm in North Carolina, merci Dieu.

As to the de Chirico show, the situation is this. Bill Lieberman did ask me whether the Milan show could go on to Paris and I said yes. I don't think he asked me about the Hannover show but he did send me a copy of his letter to Lino Montagna, director of the Milan show, agreeing to lend to Paris and Hannover. He also sent me a copy of a letter he'd had from Franco Russoli, a member of the top committee for the Milan show, from which I quote: "The de Chirico exhibition has had a great success and I thank you again for everything you have done. The difficulties have been innumerable, and the de Chiricos - he and his wife - have done everything to make matters more difficult. We have managed, even so, to assemble a documentation for all the periods of his activity, quite convincing. His acknowledgement of our work was to say that we don't understand anything, and that we have tried to ruin him!!" I have nothing to add to all this except the old, sour words,"I told you so."

But the real point is that I was vastly relieved to see the catalog of the Milan show. There are only two small pictures (though I don't think size has much to do with the basic principle) which I doubt as to date. These are plates 23 and 24 in the catalog, both of them pictures dated 1915 and showing Italian squares. I saw one of these two pictures some thirty years ago when Betty Parsons had it at, I think, the old Wakefield Gallery. I told Betty I thought it was a copy or a a fake. But I told her I wasn't sure because if her picture was really done by de Chirico in 1915, it may well have been done just before the Italian Army called him back to Italy and he arrived in Ferrara in such a state of nervous collapse that he was put in the

J. T. SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn. 06840

psychiatric ward. It's impossible, of course, to get at Italian Army medical records but it seems, oddly enough, that the Army doctors were first made suspicious of all modern artists by the work of the Futurists, who glorified war and its attendant subject matter, but put Carlo Carrà in the same booby hatch at Ferrara when he arrived there later on. I used to try to pump Carrà about what really happened but got nowhere. Anyway, the rest of the Milan show seems O.K. as to the early works. They've got the right Disquieting Muses, for example and the right Hector and Andromache (both ex-Feroldi, now Mattioli) rather than any of the many later copies made by the Master himself and by forgers. They've even put in The Language of a Child (pl. 26) which I think Pierre Matisse still owns, which I've seen many times and thought was right but which de Chirico, who chose the Milan show with Montagna and Bruni had denounced in print as a fake. So on the whole I didn't think I could protest loans to Paris and Hannover, not having seen both of the two little Italian square pictures and not being sure that the one I saw at Wakefield thirty years ago was a copy or fake; they're both lousy, minor pidtures in any case and the latter section of the show is as bad as I thought it would be. I did cable both Roland Penrose and Peggy Guggenheim that, contrary to what the Italians were saying, I did not and would not belonw to any committee for the Milan show. They both seems to have kept off all committees and Roland sent me a copy of his angry called refusal to serve.

And now at last I come to the real subject of this over-long letter which I hope you'll show to Alfred and Dorothy after they get through their struggle with the collections catalog. I find the interview with John Hightowe, whom I've never met, utterly baffling. I didn't know that the Malevich had been taken down, presumably because it has no clenched fists in it. But what makes me really angry is that Hightower should have infer or really imply that "a lot of people haven't been doing their job properly in terms of acquisition policy..." I was chairman of that collections committee on and off but mostly on for some twenty-five years and I still believe implicity that Alfred, Dorothy, you and I built up the greatest collection of contemporary art in all history and left the job now owing money to anybody. I don't know what Hightower means by saying that there is a conspiracy among art historians, curators, etc. "to perpetuate their own life style." For Christ's sake (forgive me, no don't) what was our life style except the love of works of art and the desire to get them for the Museum? And at prices we could pay without going into hock for $400,000. As to the idea of a Martin

J. T. SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn. 06840

Luther King Study Center, I think it's absurd, just as I thought it a mistake a few years ago to hold a party or a show or whatever it was in King's honor or rather memory. Naturally we all admired King. I just don't think a museum should be in the obituary business and if you make one exception, you'll be forced to make many.

I really should take to the bottle again, I suppose, because my ill temper doesn't simmer down as it used to when I was a drinking man. I intend to protest to Hightower, though I know he's got a hard job ahead and I don't want to make things harder, as I deliberately did in the case of that goon, Lowry. I don't see much point in going on as honorary chairman of the collections committee and I'd like to resign as vice-president, which I never wanted to be, and become an honorary trustee. The trouble with the latter course of action is that I'd lose my last chance to vote against selling picture I don't think should be sold. I'll talk to Alfred about all this when he comes up for air. It's very strange. I've been thinking while writing that all my life I've worked better in tandem, for ten years with Austin in Hartford and for twenty-five or more with Alfred at MOMA. I assume I should be ashamed of this fact; I quite bluntly am not and can't be made to be, though the Elder Statesmen at the Atheneum in Hartford and Clark & Co. in New York tried over and over again. I think two horses can sometimes pull a wagon faster than one. At least I gues that's what I think; I've never bothered to ponder the question. An I'm God damned mad, if you want to know.

Sulkily yrs,

Jim

Josten

870 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

January 14, 1956.

Mr. James Thrall Soby
The Museum of Modern Art
13 West 53rd Street
New York 19, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Soby:

Last week Mr. Alfred Barr came to our home and saw a painting by Kanoldt (Munich) representing a cloister court in S. Giminiano, painted in 1913. Since one can't help being reminded of Chirico, Mr. Barr thought you might be interested in having a photo of this picture. I take great pleasure in enclosing one and would be very pleased to show you the original any time that would suit you. I give you my phone number: TRafalgar 9-4826, perhaps we can make it around cocktail time.

Sincerely yours

Werner Josten

Werner Josten

Collection: Mr. & Mrs. Warren E. Tooze
New York

Kouwaldt (1913)

Sent by Barr - Feb - 24 - '65

Alexander Kanoldt 1913 (signed + dated)
formerly in the collection of Werner Jaster, New York

Kanoldt, a Munich? painter was later one of the soft wing of the Neue Sachlichkeit in Munich along with Mense Schrimpf and Dorringhausen.

They have been in Munich

Clement Knorr
Little Neck, New York

bought a de Chirico from Raymond French, grandson-in-law of Walter P. Chrysler

c. 1916

8 x 5½"

Lefevre

to be trans into French & sent by
Dorothy Miller

Sept. xx, 1957

M. Andre Lefevre,
4, rue Percier,
Paris 8, France.

Dear M. Lefevre:

I have just given to the Museum of Modern Art a painting of 1915 by Giorgio de Chirico, entitled The Double Dream of Spring (Le Reve Double du Printemps).

According to my records, as supplied by Pierre Matisse in New York and the late Pierre Colle in Paris, this picture was acquired by you in 1919 from M. Level of the Gallery Percier, who had bought the picture from Paul Guillaume. In 1939, according to M. Colle's letter of October 2, 1946, the picture was bought by Renou & Colle from M. Mendes-France, who had acquired the picture from you. I therefore assume that the picture was owned by you from 1919 until around 1939.

Would you have the very great kindness to verify this account of the picture's provenance? The reason I ask you to do so is that I want the Museum's records of the picture to be entirely clear. On August 26, 1946 Time Magazine, with my permission , reproduced the picture with the comment that de Chirico, who had just# received a copy of my book, The Early Chirico (New York, 1941), had denounced the picture as a forgery to one of Time's reporters. But since I was absolutely convinced of the picture's authenticity and correct date of 1915, I assembled a great deal of evidence to prove that de Chirico was wrong or had been misquoted. Confronted with this evidence, de Chirico told a mutual friend that he had indeed been misquoted, and on Dec. 5th, 1949, I received from this mutual friend a photograph of the picture which de Chirico had signed.

There is therefore no longer any question of the picture's authenticity, but I would be grateful for your confirmation of the above provenance to complete the Museum's records. I'm enclosing a photograph of the picture which you need not return.

My many thanks. And we are all overjoyed with your generous help to the Museum Juan Gris exhibition, which I am directing.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Julien Levy

[Levy]

April 11,1960

Dear Julien:

As you know, of course, it's impossible to give a completely positive opinion about a picture from a color slide, without seeing the work itself. Nevertheless, I feel positive that the Copley picture was not painted by de Chirico during his "metaphysical" period (1911-19). It has a number of those Baroque, curlicued armatured which don't exist in that form in the early works, the color is quite different and far less interesting than in the real "metaphysical" still lifes and in general it seems to me a feeble picture such as de Chirico would never have done during his golden period.

Whether the picture is a much later copy by the Master himself or an outright forgery, I can't possibly tell without seeing the canvas, and sometimes it's very difficult even then. Why doesn't Copley send the color slide to de Chirico - Piazza di Spagna 31, Rome - and see what he says. As I think I wrote you de C. is not to be trusted when he defends his later copies and their dates, but I've usually found him justified when he denounces fakes by other hands. And it's always interesting to hear what he says; I hope Copley will let me know if he does write de C and gets an answer, as I think he will.

I missed the Tinguely performance, alas, since I was in Florida. I was completely for having the display, as were all the members of the Museum staff and most of the Trustees, though none of us could foresee the explosion which was unfortunate but I gather not serious. I was amazed, considering your part in so many surrealist activities of a comparable nature, to hear by the grapevine that you were opposed. But maybe that isn't true; I hope not. And Tinguely seems to me one of the most interesting young artists to have come along in some time.

Very best; let's meet this spring.

Sincerely,

F. Lee photo

La Politique 1916

13 7/8 x 10 5/16

coll Julien Levy

cc; Mr. Soby

Telegraph 4-2646
Enquiry 9-0982

October 22, 1958

Mrs. Robert Levy
842 Muirfield Road
Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Dear Mrs. Levy:

I have your snapshot showing the de Chirico painting which was recently stolen from your house. As you know, this photograph is extremely difficult to read. However, I feel quite certain that the de Chirico in question represents a cluster of classical gladiators and if so it dates from roughly the mid-nineteen twenties.

The de Chirico paintings of this period are well documented in a 1928 monograph called "Chirico" published by Cronique du Jour in Paris. If you will look through this book, which the library of the Philadelphia Museum would almost certainly have, I think you will find comparable pictures by the artist. On the basis of your snapshot I am relatively positive that the picture does not date from de Chirico's early period, i. e. from 1911-1919. The pictures he did in 1907-09 are almost directly copied from the Swiss-German artist Arnold Böcklin and have little to do with your image.

As to tracing your picture, I would suggest that you try to discover the name of the dealer who sold it, see if he has a photograph and if so send the photograph both to Art News and Arts reporting it as having been stolen and asking their help in tracing it. Stolen contemporary pictures by artists of de Chirico's stature are extremely hard to dispose of if there is some way of identifying them by a photograph. If there is further information I can get for you, please let me know. Meanwhile, if you could possibly find a better snapshot that would be an enormous help.

Very sincerely yours,

James Thrall Soby

JTS:ks

enclosure - one color photograph

Llorens

JEAN. LLARENS
PARIS ART GALLERY
1204 Lexington Avenue
NEW YORK.

a Monsieur James Thrall Soby
Museum of Modern Art
New York

[See 5/28/63 letter from ARNSON in Hector & Andromache file]

New York le 7 mai 1963,

Orrin Reilly
restorer of bronzes

Cher Monsieur,

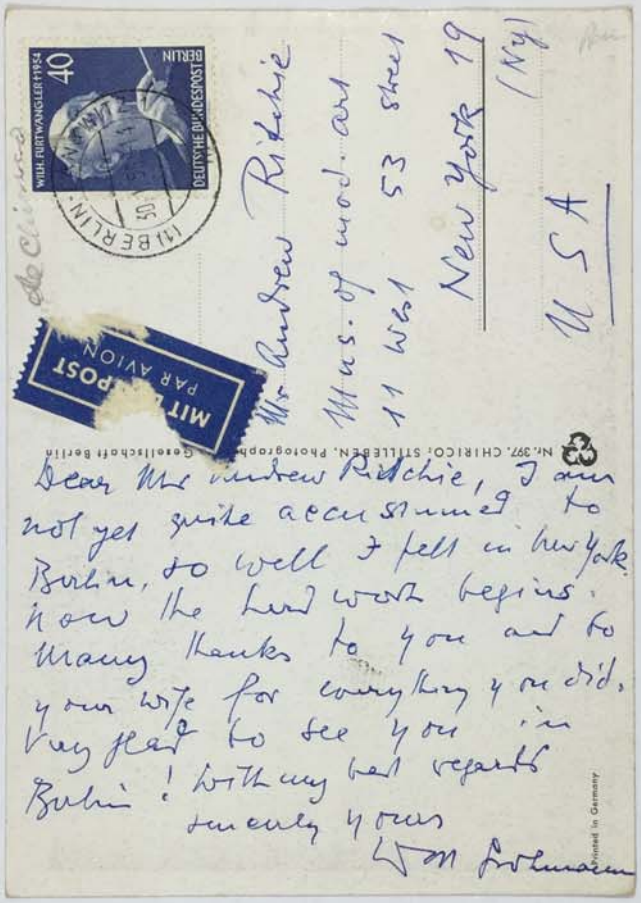
Je me permets de faire appel à votre haute connaissance sur l'Art Moderne et en particulier sur les oeuvres de G. de Chirico pour vous demander d'avoir l'amabilité d'expertiser cette peinture –

J'ai acheté ce Chirico chez une famille de New Jersey qui possedait cette peinture depuis tres longtemps – D'apres le Musée Guggenheim de New York, qui expertisa la toile aux rayons ultra violets, la peinture serait agée de 37 ou 39 ans –

Je vous serai tres reconnaissant si vous pouviez me donner votre opinion d'expert sur cette toile –

Je vous en remercie bien sincerement d'avance et vous prie d'agreer, Cher Monsieur, l'expression de mes sentiments tres distingues

Jean Llorens



Dear Mr Andrew Ritchie, I am not yet quite accustomed to Berlin, so well I fell in New York. Now the hard work begins. Many thanks to you and to your wife for everything you did. Very glad to see you in Berlin! With my best regards

sincerely yours

Von Erdmann

COLL. JEAN LARENS
PARIS ART GALLERY
1204 LEX NYC

(Aug, 1963)

#6348

Gianni Mattioli

Milan, 18th November 1955.

Dear Mr. Soby:

I have received your telegram and I thank you.

I have taken the liberty of cabling you and request the return of the paintings I loaned for the De Chirico exposition because the permit for the temporary export issued by our Authorities when the works were sent - that is on July 14th 1955 - was valid four months and it therefore expired on the 14th November. As a result, I was summoned by the Italian Exchange Office to produce documents proving that the paintings had returned into Italy, otherwise I would have been fined.

By producing your telegram I could obtain an extension, and I was happy to hear that my paintings will shortly arrive on the ss. "Independence".

Some New York friends of mine have sent me the beautiful volume "Giorgio De Chirico" with the text you wrote, recently published by the Museum of Modern Art.

I wish to send you my warm congratulations for this new publication which adds a very valuable volume to the collection of works you have written. Also the edition itself and the color reproductions seem really very fine to me.

However, I wish to draw your attention, for the sake of accuracy, on some particulars regarding the paintings belonging to me and reproduced in this volume, also because you may take them into account for the second edition of this book which I think will soon be published on the assumption that this first edition will certainly have had much success.

I remarked that for all the works belonging to my collection you have indicated: "The Gianni Mattioli Foundation - Milano - Feroldi Collection".

I believe that some misunderstanding may have occurred at the time italian paintings were sent first to New York for the "XXth Century Italian Art Exposition". Actually, I have purchased these paintings from Mr. Feroldi in 1949 to include them in my own collection. This was done by an absolute and definite transfer of ownership.

./.

mattioli

./.

As my collection is open to the public, it had at first been decided to indicate it as a "foundation", but this was afterwards not maintained because of the particular difficulties that would have arisen under the italian legislation; as a matter of fact, this could deprive me of a certain liberty of action.

I shall therefore be grateful to you if from now on you will indicate my paintings simply as "Gianni Mattioli Collection - Milano".

In addition, please note that the work reproduced at page N°228 under the title "Metaphysical Interior with Small Building" 1916, 18.1/8" x 14.1/8", also belongs to my collection, as I bought it time ago from Mr. Carlo Frua De Angeli.

Furthermore, always regarding the early De Chirico, I wish to inform you that I have bought time ago a painting - of which I am enclosing a photograph - that is signed and dated 1916.

This painting comes from the Collection Donatien Roy, of Nantes, France, and it was known under the title "La Magìa della Notte". But De Chirico, in a letter from Paris dated 15th February 1928 - a photograph of which is also enclosed - addressed to the owner of the said collection, states, as you will see for yourself, that such title was arbitrarily chosen by Paul Guillaume, and that instead he desired to call it "I biscotti di Ferrara". The latter is in fact the denomination under which the painting is indicated in my collection.

What is your program for this year? It may be that I shall have to take a short trip to the United States. Do you not plan to come to Italy?

With all good wishes and kindest regards, I beg to remain, dear Mr. Soby,

Yours sincerely,

Gianni Mattioli

Mr. James Thrall Soby
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn. U.S.A.

Lettre adressée
Donatien Roy

Paris 15 Fevr. 1928

Cher Monsieur,

J'ai reçu votre aimable lettre et les trois photos qui sont vraiment très bien. Votre fils Pierre m'avait découragé en me disant qu'à Nantes il n'y a pas de photographe pour tableaux et que sûrement vous ne auriez pu repondre à mon desir. –

Ces photos sont destinées à une importante monographie sur moi qui doit paraître au mois d'avril prochain; il va sans dire que la reproduction de vos tableaux sera accompagnée par la mention: "Collection Donatien Roy - Nantes." –

– Serai-je indiscret si je vous prierai de m'envoyer encore les photos de ces deux personnages à têtes ovoïdales (dont le

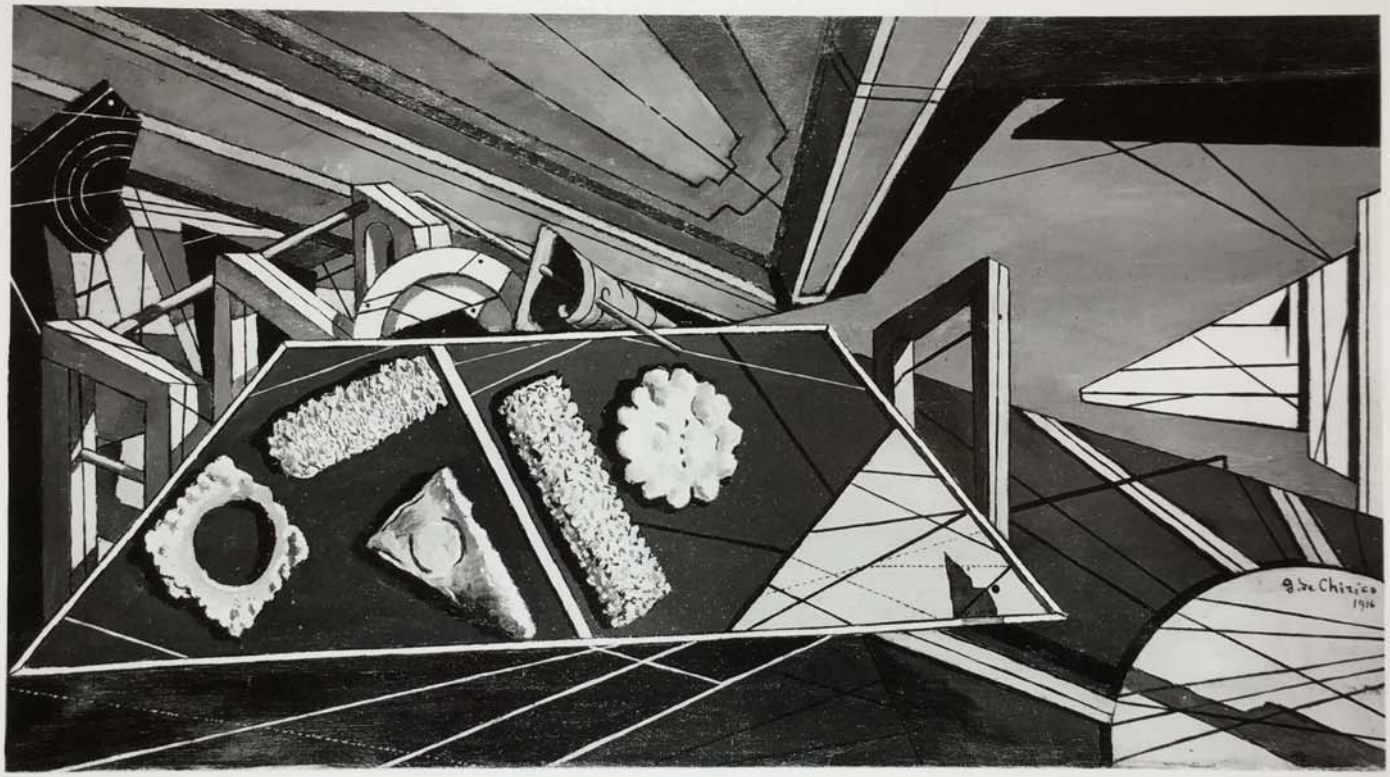
titre est : mannequins au bord de la mer ;
et de cette nature-morte avec fruit?
Je regrette beaucoup d'abuser ainsi
de votre amabilité mais comme on
desirait que dans cette ouvrage ne paraissent
que des oeuvres inédites mon éditeur et
moi cherchons de toute parts des photos pas
encore parues sur les ~~ce~~ revues et brochures
d'art. –

Quand aux titres dont vous me demandez
l'explication il faut que je vous dise que la
plus part des titres abracadabrants dont mes
tableaux (surtout les anciens) sont affublés, ne
m'appartiennent pas ; ils ont été appliqué par mon
marchand Paul Guillaume et par le groupe des
Surréalistes ; le titre que je desirais donner à cette
toile, arbitrairement nommée "Magie de la Nuit", est
"les biscuits de Ferrare". –

Bien merci, cher Monsieur et croyez-moi votre bien
dévoué

Giorgio de Chirico

Mattioli



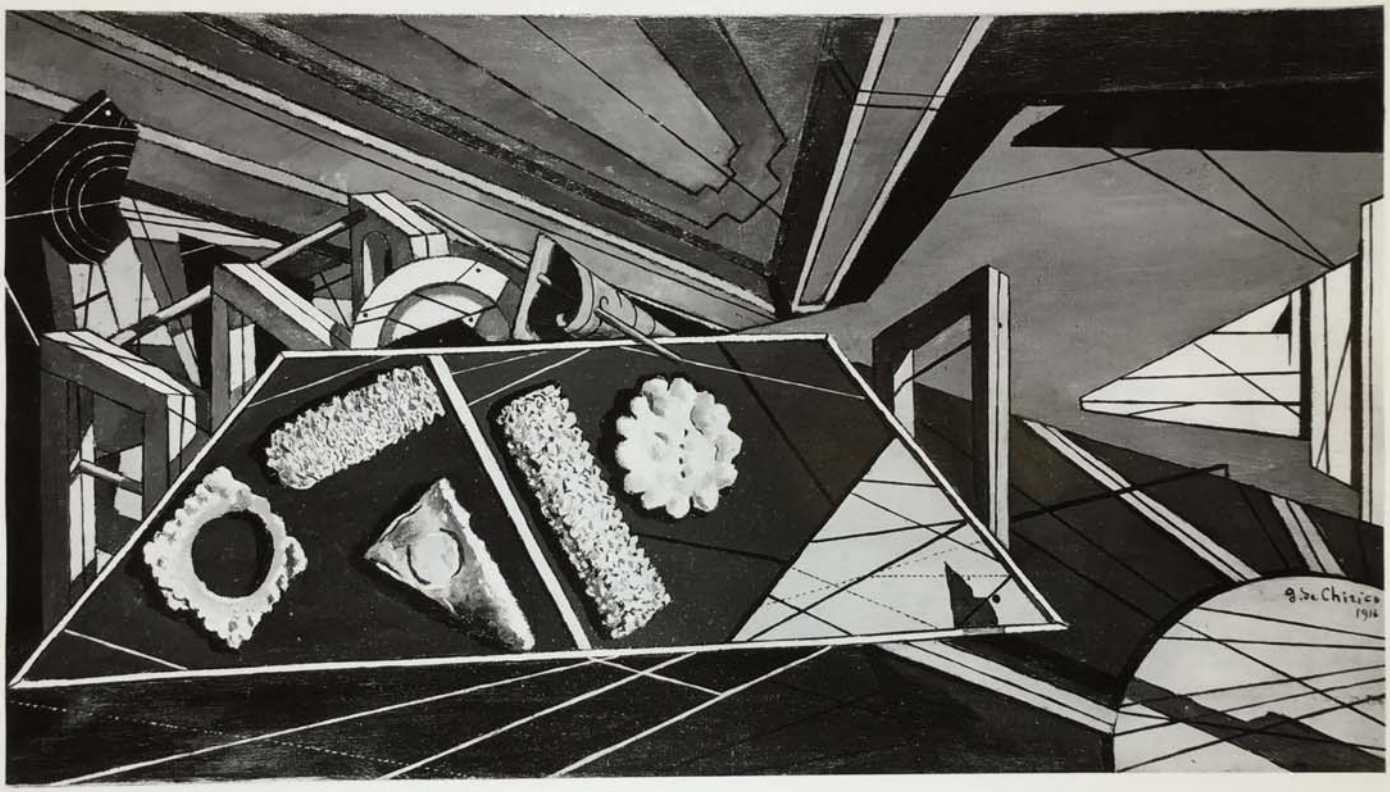
89

I biscotti di Ferrara

DE CHIRICO - (La magia della notte) - 1916 -

(olio su tela cm/ 59,5 x 33)

RACCOLTA GIANNI MATTIOLI = MILANO



I biscotti di Ferrara

DE CHIRICO -(La magia della notte)- 1916 -

(olio su tela cm/ 59,5 x 33)

RACCOLTA GIANNI MATTIOLI = MILANO

Richard miller

5317

March 19, 1958

Mr. James T. Soby
The Admiral Benbow
Nokomis, Florida

Dear Mr. Soby:

Thank you so much for your two letters regarding the expertise on the de Chirico picture. I was most gratified by the interest and attention you had obviously given an informal request from a person unknown to you.

Your informed and intelligent criticism of the picture which is presented as a de Chirico has convinced me that this is not a genuine painting. I have checked your later de Chirico book and noticed any number of deviations between the Frua picture and the one offered to me. I did not locate the Frua painting in your earlier edition.

Another factor which makes me doubly suspicious is that this painting is offered well below the market values volunteered in your letter.

Again, thank you for your kind assistance in this matter. I would look forward to the opportunity of meeting you personally and discussing some of the contemporary Italian painters with whom we may be mutually cognizant.

Sincerely,

N Richard Miller

N. Richard Miller

cc: c/o The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19, New York

Richard Miller

March 4, 1958

Dear Jim,

I hope you and Melissa are having good weather and a chance to relax. As for the latter, you will soon have some interruption as we are sending out today a copy of the letter to Arp with lists of sculpture and reliefs for his consideration. Also photostats of these works, and a batch of Museum stationery.

By now you will probably have received a letter and de Chirico photograph from Mr. N. Richard Miller of R. C. A. in New York. We called his office saying you were on vacation and asked if he could wait until you returned. He preferred, though, to have the letter forwarded. In the meantime, I checked your de Chirico book and found the picture is reproduced on p. 237, credited to Frua de Angeli. I also found the enclosed postcard in the files.

All best to you both,

Mr. James Thrall Soby
The Admiral Benbow
Treasure Island
Route 1
Nokomis, Florida

N. RICHARD MILLER
5317 RCA BUILDING
30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK 20

March 19, 1958

Mr. James T. Soby
The Admiral Benbow
Nokomis, Florida

Dear Mr. Soby:

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Sincerely,

N Richard Miller

N. Richard Miller

cc: c/o The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19, New York

N. RICHARD MILLER
5317 RCA BUILDING
30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
NEW YORK 20

February 26, 1958

Mr. James T. Soby
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Soby:

Enclosed you will find a black and white photograph of a De Chirico painting of the metaphysical period. Through a close friend in Milan I am being offered this painting at what I consider to be an extremely attractive price. At the same time I am cognizant of the shenanigans which have been attached to Signor De Chirico's recent behavior and would be most anxious to ascertain the authenticity of this painting prior to its purchase.

Is there anything which you can tell me positively or negatively on the basis of this black and white photograph? I would appreciate any suggestions you would have to make.

I address this request to you because I understand that you are the leading American authority on De Chirico. I also like very much the De Chirico metaphysical painting which you presented to the Museum.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation, I am

Very truly yours,

N. Richard Miller

N. Richard Miller

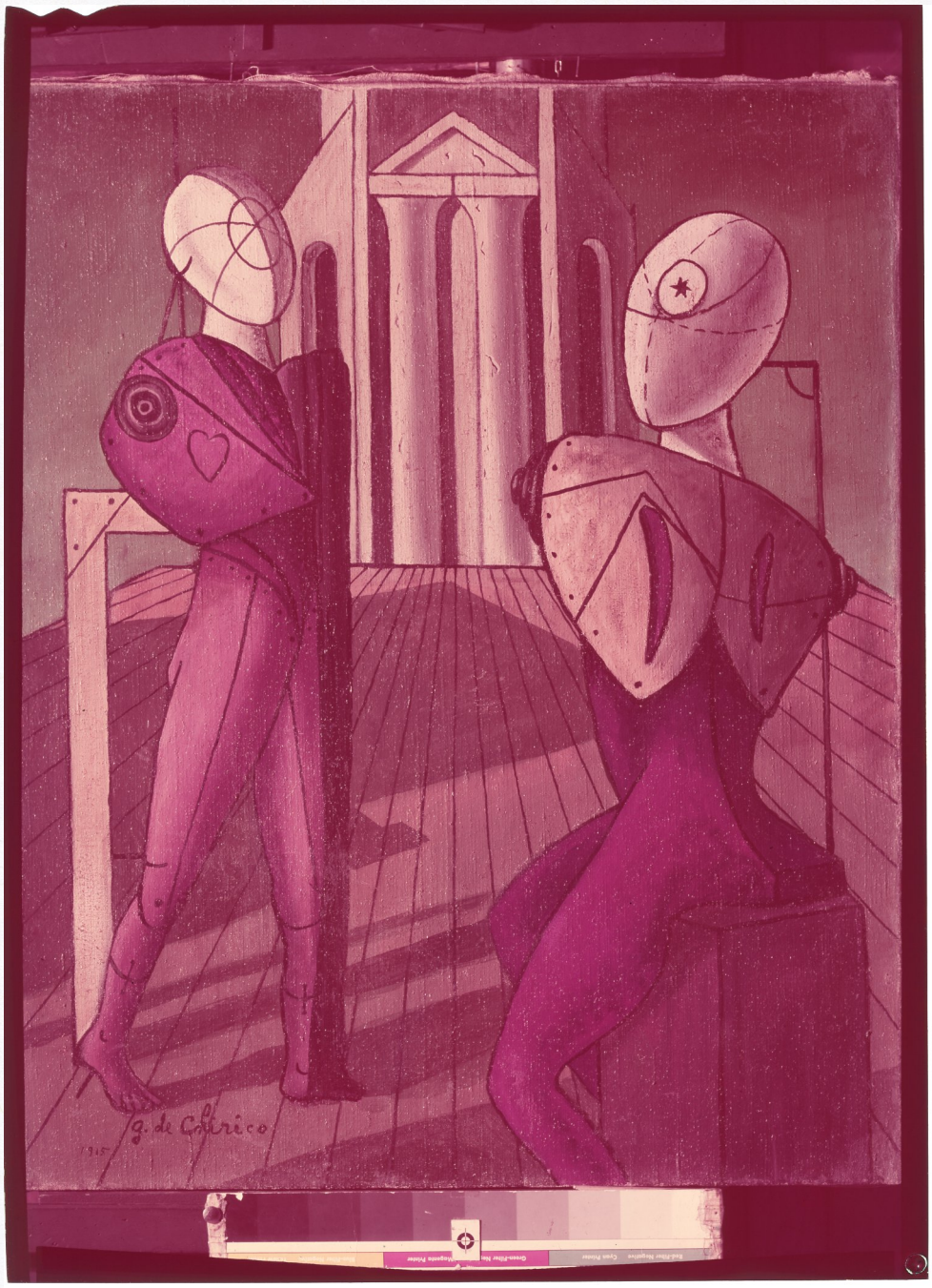
NRM:dch

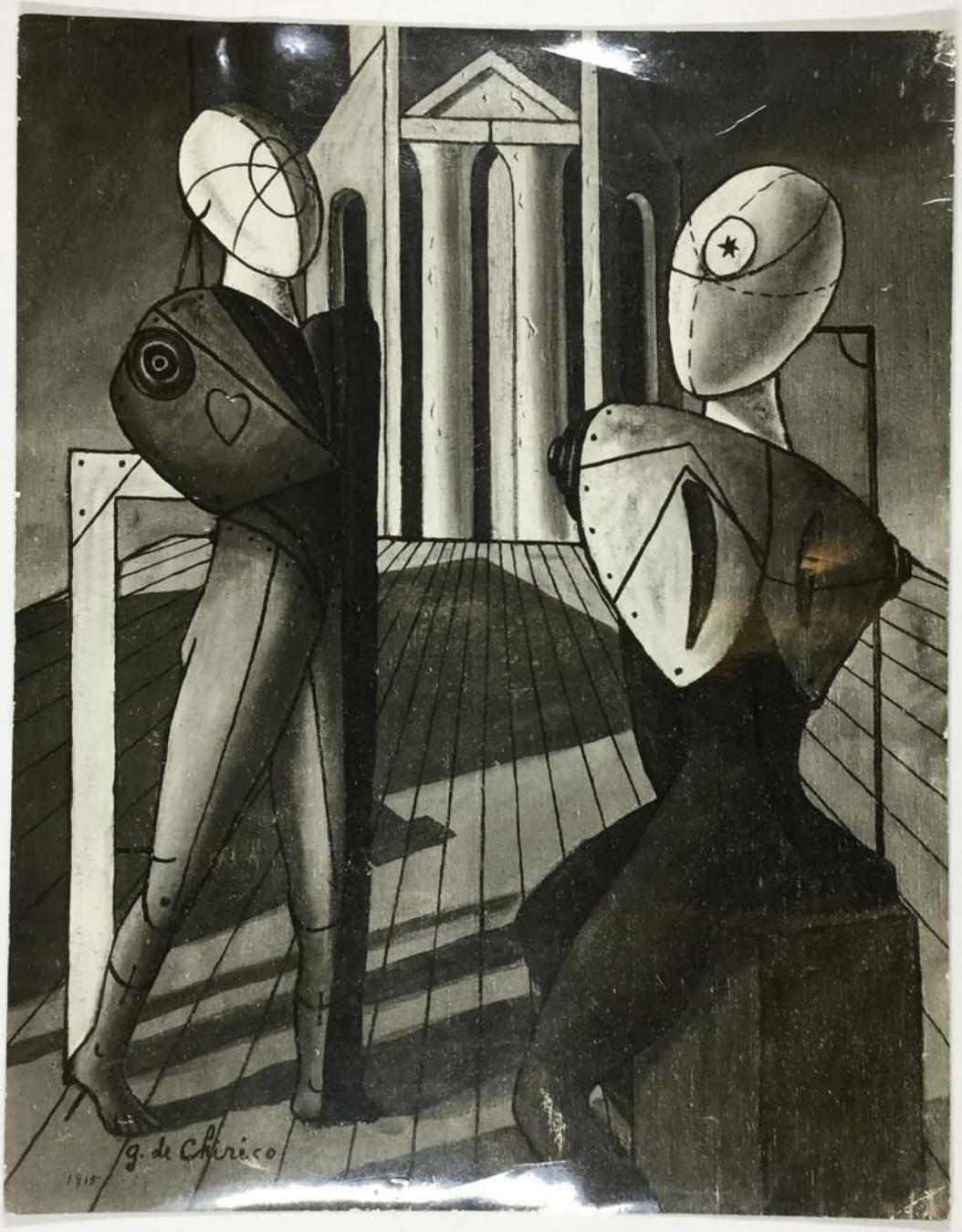
Enclosure

Chirico "Hector et Andromac"

1917 - height 81 cm
width 65 cm

late collection Corbellini, Milan and Paris.





81 x 65 1915 Minneapolis

81 x 65

115.

THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

201 East 24th Street, Minneapolis 4, Minnesota Telephone: FEderal 5-4256 Cable address: Minnart

Richard S. Davis, Director

Sam Hunter, Chief Curator

April 20, 1959

Mr. J. T. Soby
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Jim:

I am returning the de Chirico photograph, with a black and white in addition, for your file. I have written to Maurice d'Arquian that we are unable to take any action on the painting, and in my next letter I shall ask him to let us keep the photograph for our future reference. I am sure he will not object. We are really extremely grateful for your candid advice on the painting, which we shall, of course, respect as strictly confidential.

Whatever the reputation of the Corbellini collection, d'Arquian does not seem to be aware of it, since he admits buying four paintings from it, some of which, he states, are now in museums!

I think the Douglas Cooper review of your Gris Book is really quite malicious and irresponsible. The quotations certainly do you no damage or discredit, however, and they do not help Cooper's argument either. What I cannot abide is the priggish, school-mistressy tone -- the same sort of thing emerged in his review of my Miró print book, where there was a similar discussion of "errors of interpretation", as if Cooper represented some sort of Party line.

I am winding up the New European exhibition, and now commence the horrors of the catalogue, but I do think we

will have a path-finding show. I have offered it to René for the summer of 1960; however, I know how infrequently the Museum of Modern Art takes exhibitions of outside origin, and how overscheduled everything is, anyway. There is a good chance of getting the show to New York in any case, since French and Company, amazingly enough, seems quite interested in taking it.

All best wishes to Melissa,

Cordially,

Sam

Sam Hunter
Chief Curator

SH:mm
encls.

Minneapolis

J. T. SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

April 11, 1959

[Hunter]

Dear Sam:

Is my face red? I've been staring at de Chirico's mannequin picture, The Duo of 1915, for more than twenty-five years in my own living room, and I've never before concentrated on the fact that some of the armatures supporting the figures are metal and not wood, contrary to what I wrote you on April 4. This doesn't change my opinion that the picture of which you sent me a transparency is wrong, but it was a stupid mistake and I apologize. I guess I've been so close to this problem of the early de Chirico for so many years that I was bound to slip up at some point; I'm sorry.

I sent the transparency back to you from here, but if you don't have to send it back to the dealer I'd love to have it back again for my files. When the Master has died, I would like to do something about the long file I have on fakes and later, misdated copies.

Very best to you, remorsefully,

THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

201 East 24th Street, Minneapolis 4, Minnesota Telephone: FEderal 5-4256 Cable address: Minnart

Richard S. Davis, Director Sam Hunter, Chief Curator

April 6, 1959

Mr. James T. Soby
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Jim:

I am fascinated by your letter on the de Chirico (?) Hector and Andromache. We shall forget about the picture on the basis of your very thorough analysis of it. I had never seen it, and was rather worried, particularly when I did not find it in your book and when it seemed so close -- and yet so awkwardly different from your magnificent painting of The Seer. I also had some reservations about the dealer, whose reputation is not of the highest, I understand. On the other hand, he does occasionally find wonderful things, and we recently bought a very fine Severini of 1912, rather like your Bal Tabarin, for our Vice President, Sam Maslon -- the chap who owns the de Chirico metaphysical still life, formerly Soby collection. Anyway, I really do appreciate the trouble you have taken to go into this matter. Your letter is so interesting that you really should consider doing an appendix on the next de Chirico monograph edition devoted to false works. Why don't you keep the transparency for your records; I am sure the dealer won't ask for its return. If he does, however, I can let you know, and we can return it after making a copy for you.

I did not see Douglas Cooper's blast at the Gris (he never has approved of any monograph by an American author -- and the more distinguished the book and the author, the more splenetic the review). I would like to see it if you can get a photostat of it. By the way, the Times' Library Supplement recently had a review of my Miro print book -- not entirely unfavorable, but not enthusiastic. Rather chiding for my apparently excessive claims -- to which my reaction is "nuts"! I assume Douglas Cooper is responsible, since he seems to be the dictator of the review section of that otherwise very fine and distinguished Supplement. I console myself that he at least did write a review, which is more than can be said for any American magazine or newspaper to date.

I shall be in New York Thursday and Friday, and would love to tell you more about the European show if you happen to be around. Did you notice the little squib on Tangel in the last Time? I don't know why I am so obsessed with Tangel except that he was such a relief from the solemn European tachists and welded sculptors. Also, I had a delightful time in his studio

Minniapolis

and then saw an exhibition in Düsseldorf almost immediately after.

All best to you and Melissa,

Cordially,

Sam Hunter

Sam Hunter
Chief Curator

SH:bf

P.S. I would love to review your forthcoming Miro almost anywhere, including the Williams' Alumni Review, if anyone asks. I hope I am not out-of-line in putting myself forward this way.

Sam: I'LL have Alicia return the transparency, but can you manage to hold on to it for future reference?

J. T. SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

April 4,1959

Mr. Sam Hunter, Chief Curator,
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts,
201 East 24th St.,
Minneapolis 4, Minnesota.

Dear Sam:

As I wired you last night when I got home from Long Island, I have the gravest doubts about the authenticity of the de Chirico (?) Hector and Andromache which has been offered you by a Belgian dealer. This is the third early de Chirico I've been shown in the past month from the collection of the widow of the Italian painter, Corbellini. All, I think, are fakes and, in the strictest confidence, Corbellini was involved at the end of the war in a scandal involving the production of false early de Chiricos. I have a file of Italian newspaper clippings on this affair, but I can't for the life of me put my hands on it at the moment, though I'm sure it'll turn up. As I remember it de Chirico himself denounced Corbellini at the time. And though the Master himself is hopelessly corrupt, I generally believe him when he yells bloody murder when someone else copies his pictures. Apart from this story, which I don't want repeated until I can find the file, there are several things wrong with the ex-Corbellini picture.

The architecture in the background is copied from that in The Seer of 1915. So with veristions is the seated mannequin at the left. But I have never seen an authentic picture of this type in which the mannequin is supported by then, metal armatures; they are always of wood and much heavier. As to the mannequin at the right, its legs are impossibly lumpy and crude, with none of the grace and precision of the true mannequin works of 1915 or even 1917. And finally I don't believe in this picture's color in many sections. Of course, it's hard to judge from a color transparency, but I do know that one of the several de Chirico forgers, maybe Corbellini, often changed de C's wonderfully subtle dark rose into a rather lurid purple. I had a chance to study one of these purple jobs at length five or six years ago and found it an out and out fake, though it had a long trumped-up history, as these things often do. It was said, for example, to have belonged to Paul Eluard which I happened to know was not true.

In brief, I wouldn't touch the picture, and my hunch is that the Corbellini widow is planting these works throughout Europe to see where they can be sold. But that is a pretty serious charge, which is why I ask you not to repeat it .

Very best to you, your contemporary European show sounds fascinating,and I wish I could see it. Love to Edys,

P.S. Have you seen Douglas Cooper's unsigned blast in the London Literary Supplement at our Gris book? It must be by Cooper, since no one else could be that vitriolic. What makes me sore is that he blasts Tanguy's works in the same review for no good reason at all except camouflage for his sour grapes on Gris.

THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

201 East 24th Street, Minneapolis 4, Minnesota Telephone: FEderal 5-4256 Cable address: Minnart

Richard S. Davis, Director *Sam Hunter, Chief Curator*

March 30, 1959

Mr. James Thrall Soby
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Jim:

I am enclosing a color transparency of a de Chirico which came to my attention in Europe, through the Belgian dealer d'Arquian. I do not find it in your book, and wonder if you could take the trouble to let me know whether you are familiar with the picture--and if it is authentic, in your opinion. I did not have a chance to see the painting itself, but it looks fascinating in reproduction. Anyway, I have reserved it and we would like to consider it either for the museum or one of our Trustees, in the hope of acquiring it by gift at a later date. I hate to be a nuisance, but feel quite at sea in this treacherous area of true and false de Chiricos. Perhaps Alicia would be kind and return the photograph when you have had a look.

Let me congratulate you, and Bill, on the splendid Miró show, although I confess, having just come in from Madrid at the opening, I wasn't quite sure just where I was, or what I was looking at. However, I shall be back for more careful looking very soon.

You may be interested in our list for the contemporary European show, which I enclose. We have decided, since there is so much new work of interest in Europe, that the show would be more coherent and impressive if limited to Europeans alone. I wish I could show Tanguely, but don't dare because of the technical problems of transporting and installing his intricate sculpture--and getting them to work!

I hope on one of these frantic sorties into New York I may catch you for a drink.

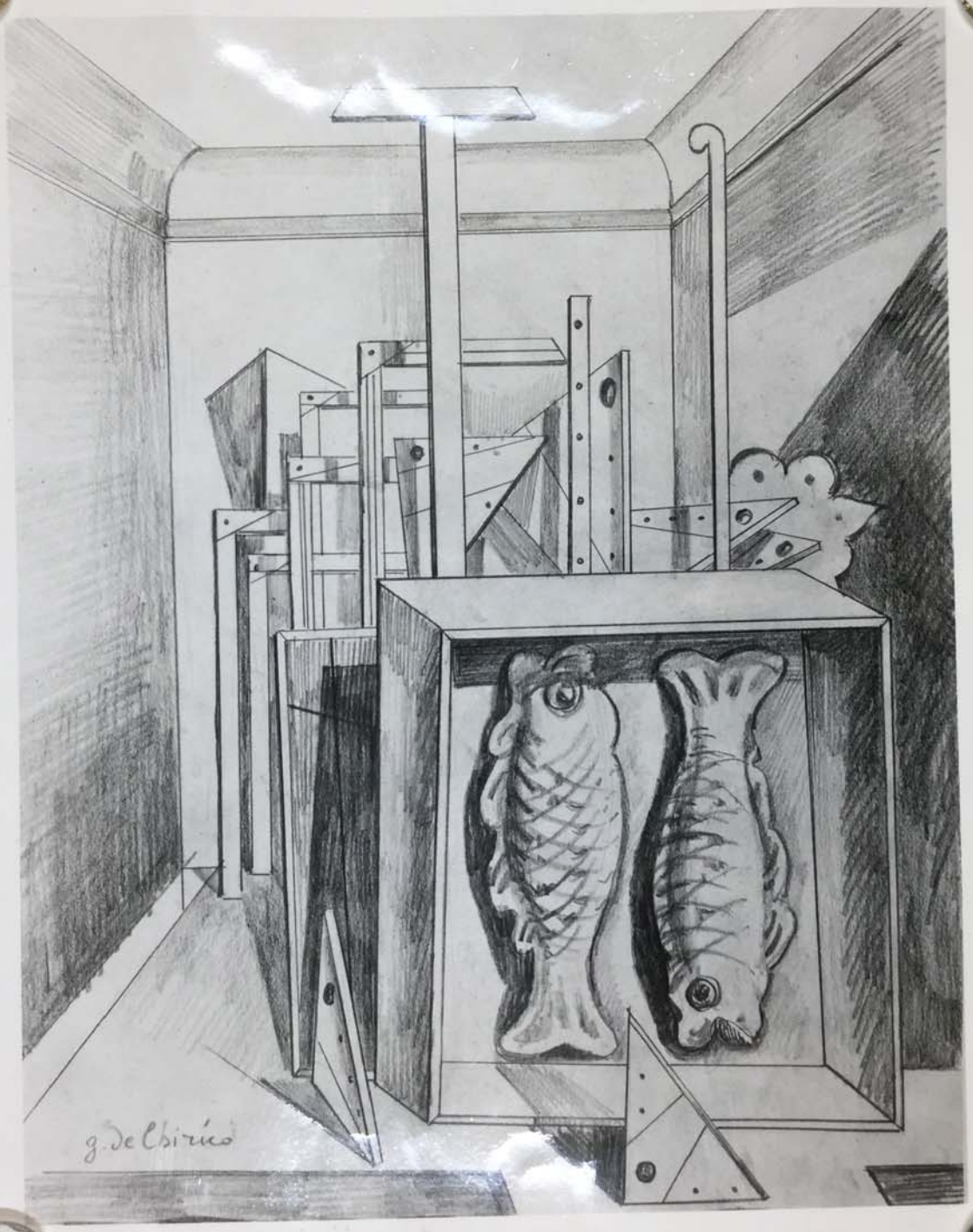
All best wishes to you and Melissa,

Cordially,

Sam Hunter
Chief Curator

SH:bf
enc.

munich



munich

THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Class Drawing (Pencil on ivory paper) Country Italy

Century 20th Size 12 3/8" x 9 3/4"

Artist de Chirico

Title STILL LIFE WITH FISH or THE SACRED FISH

(C. 1916)

Acc. No. Source

Property of Mr. & Mrs. Richard S. Davis,
Wayzata, Minnesota

B Eyenlow

munich

NEW EUROPEAN PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Painting	Sculpture
BELGIUM	
1. Pierre Alechinsky (b. 1927)	3. Roel d'Haese (b. 1921)
2. Corneille (b. 1922)	
DENMARK	
4. Asger Jorn (b. 1914)	
ENGLAND	
5. Alan Davie (b. 1920)	8. Eduardo Paolozzi (b. 1924)
6. Peter Lanyon (b. 1918)	9. William Turnbull
7. Frank Avray Wilson (b. 1914)	
FRANCE	
10. Horia Damian (b. 1922)	14. Jacques Delahaye (b. 1928)
11. Jaroslav Serpan (b. 1922)	15. César (b. 1921)
12. Jean Degottex (b. 1918)	
13. André Marfaing	
GERMANY	
16. Emil Schumacher (b. 1912)	20. Emil Cimiotti (b. 1927)
17. Hans Platschek (b. 1923)	21. Otto Hajek (b. 1927)
18. Fred Thieler (b. 1916)	
19. Winifred Gaul (b. 1928)	
ITALY	
22. Emilio Vedova (b. 1919)	26. Pietro Consagra (b. 1920)
23. Mattia Moreni (b. 1920)	27. Gio Pomodoro (b. 1930)
24. Emilio Scanavino (b. 1922)	
25. Franco Assetto (b. 1911)	
SPAIN	
28. Antoni Tapies (b. 1923)	32. Eduardo Chilida (b. 1924)
29. Antonio Saura (b. 1930)	
30. Raphael Canogar (b. 1934)	
31. Manuel Millares (b. 1926)	
SWITZERLAND	
33. Vera Haller	34. Robert Müller (b. 1920)
	35. Zoltan Kemeny (b. 1907)

munich
munich

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK 19

11 WEST 53rd STREET
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

July 31, 1959

Mr. James T. Soby
POB 830
Southampton, L.I.
New York

Dear Mr. Soby:

In Alicia's absence Mr. Selz and I enjoyed your letter, and, both being of German origin, jointly translated your German letter. As if there isn't enough trouble in the world, without owning a de Chirico!

Hoping you and your family are having a lovely summer, and that the fog clears soon,

Sincerely,

Karen Bokert

encl.

[illegible] des Museums gehörte oder dort nur ausgestellt und daher mit jenem Stempel versehen war, lässt sich heute, da das Museum sich in der Ostzone befindet, nicht mehr feststellen.

Jedenfalls schliesst dieses pedigree bis in die 20er Jahre, das ein ganz sicheres ist, eine spätere Entstehung aus und die Details des Bildes, die ja durch die in Ihrem Buch gegebenen Vergleichs-Details sehr schön zu kontrollieren sind, deuten auch auf die früheste Zeit dieser Komposition.

Natürlich sollten Sie es im Original sehen, sei es jetzt in Kassel auf der Ausstellung "Documenta" oder später in München in der Pinakothek. Ihr Urteil interessiert uns natürlich sehr.—

Ich habe veranlasst, dass Ihnen vom Verlag direkt ein Band meiner "Italienischen Zeichner der Gegenwart" zugeht und danke Ihnen jetzt schon für Ihren "de Chirico", den ich erwarten darf, bestens.

Mit den besten Grüssen verbleibe ich

Ihr ergebener

B Degenhart

Munich

STAATLICHE
GRAPHISCHE SAMMLUNG
MÜNCHEN 2, Meiserstr. 10, Fernruf 55 82 51

MÜNCHEN, den 22. Juli 1959.

Tag.Nr.1959/1323

Mr.
I.T. S o b y
P.O. Box 830
S o u t h a m p t o n , L.I.,
New York

37 x 24½"

Sehr geehrter Herr Soby!

Nach Rücksprache und mit Grüssen von Herrn Martin, der als Leiter der Bayer.Staatsgemäldesammlungen den "de Chirico" ankaufte, lasse ich Ihnen in den nächsten Tagen eine Photographie der "Muse inquietanti" zugehen.

Zu dem Bild ist folgendes zu sagen: es ist auf Pappe gemalt; Masse: 94 x 62 cm. Die Farben sind lockerer (Tempera) als bei de Chiricos Ölbildern üblich, dabei aber leuchtend glühender, sozusagen koloristischer als dort, als ob er gerade hier einen Seitenblick auf die klassischen venezianischen Koloristen getan hätte. Signatur abgekürzt (sozusagen für Privatzwecke)" links unten.

"

Die Herkunft des Bildes schliesst eine spätere Wiederholung oder Fälschung aus: es ist nachweislich erworben aus den in den 30er Jahren von den Nazis beschlagnahmten Werken der sogenannten "entarteten Kunst".(Sogenannte Devisenausländer konnten, wenn sie die richtigen Schritte taten und wagten,aus diesem Bestand vor den ominösen Versteigerungen und der Vernichtung der Werke noch Dinge kaufen.) Durch den Stempel, den das Bild auf der Rückseite trägt, lässt es sich in eine kleinere deutsche Galerie, die von einem sehr modern orientierten und bereits um 1930 herum abgesetzten Direktor geleitet war, verfolgen und zwar bis in die 20er Jahre hinein. Ob es zum Bestand jenes Museums gehörte oder dort nur ausgestellt und daher mit jenem Stempel versehen war, lässt sich heute, da das Museum sich in der Ostzone befindet, nicht mehr feststellen.

Jedenfalls schliesst dieses pedigree bis in die 20er Jahre, das ein ganz sicheres ist, eine spätere Entstehung aus und die Details des Bildes, die ja durch die in Ihrem Buch gegebenen Vergleichs-Details sehr schön zu kontrollieren sind, deuten auch auf die früheste Zeit dieser Komposition.

Natürlich sollten Sie es im Original sehen, sei es jetzt in Kassel auf der Ausstellung "Documenta" oder später in München in der Pinakothek. Ihr Urteil interessiert uns natürlich sehr.—

Ich habe veranlasst, dass Ihnen vom Verlag direkt ein Band meiner "Italienischen Zeichner der Gegenwart" zugeht und danke Ihnen jetzt schon für Ihren "de Chirico", den ich erwarten darf, bestens.

Mit den besten Grüssen verbleibe ich

Ihr ergebener

B Degenhart

munich

COPY

STAATLICHE
GRAPHISCHE SAMMLUNG
Munich 2, Meiserstr. 10

July 22, 1959

Mr. J. T. Soby
P.O. Box 830
Southampton, L.I.
New York

Dear Mr Soby:

After consultation and with greetings from Mr. Martin, who, as Director of the Bayer. Staatsgemäldesammlungen, bought the de Chirico, I am sending you a photograph of the Disquiet Muse within the next few days.

The following can be said about the painting: it is painted on cardboard; measures 37 x 24 1/2". The colors are looser (tempera) than those generally used by de Chirico in his oil paintings, but with that they are more glowing, that is to say, more colorful than was usual for him at that time, as if he had just glanced sideways at the classical Venetian colorists. Signature is abbreviated (as for private use), bottom left.

The history of the painting rules out the possibility of it being a later copy or forgery: We have documents to show that it was bought from the work confiscated by the Nazis, as so-called "degenerate art" in the '30s. (People with foreign voluta could, if they took the right steps and had the courage, purchase items prior to these ominous auctions and the annihilation of works of art). Through a stamp that is on the back of the painting, we know it was in a small German gallery in the '20s, which was directed by a very modern-oriented and aware director, who was persecuted around 1930. Whether it belonged to the collection of that museum or was only exhibited there, and the stamp was applied, we cannot tell for sure, since the museum is in the East zone.

In any case, this pedigree into the '20s, which is a very sure one, rules out the possibility of a later origin and the details of the painting, which can easily be compared to comparable ones in your book, and speak of the early origin of the composition.

Naturally, you should see this work in the original, whether it is in Kassel at the Document or later in Munich at the Pinakothek. Your jugdgment naturally interests us very much.

I have ordered directly from the publishers a copy of my "Italienischer Zeichner der Gegenwart" for you and thank you now for your de Chirico, which I am awaiting.

With best regards, etc.

munich

Chirico
Die beunruhigenden Musen

12 717 19/272

Translation from the Italian

I am informing you that Mr. Romeo Toninelli, representative in Italy of the Museum of Modern Art of New York, has told you that Mr. James Thrall Soby is at the moment traveling in Europe. Therefore it is not possible for us to forward your letter to him.

Our office will take.care of returning any photographic material.

s/ dott. Mario Cavalli

Con distinti saluti.

Il Segretario Generale

dott.Mario Cavalli

ENTE MANIFESTAZIONI MILANESI

Milano, 13 luglio 1960

Ch.mo Prof. Vinicio NAZZI
corso Peschiera 39/bis
T O R I N O

Chiarissimo Professore,

mi faccio premura d'informarLa che il signor Romeo Toninelli, rappresentante in Italia del Museo d'Arte Moderna di New York, ci ha comunicato che il signor James Thrall Soby è attualmente in viaggio in Europa. Non ci è pertanto possibile fargli pervenire la Sua lettera.
I nostri uffici provvedono a rinviarLe il materiale fotografico trasmessoci.

Con distinti saluti.

Il Segretario Generale

dott. Mario Cavalli

MILANO - PALAZZO REALE - TELEFONO 898.716

Nazzi

PROF. DOTT. VINICIO NAZZI
DOCENTE IN CLINICA MEDICA E TERAPIA MEDICA
DOCENTE IN SEMEIOTICA MEDICA
ASSISTENTE DELLA PATOLOGIA MEDICA
DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO
SPECIALISTA IN CARDIOLOGIA E MALATTIE POLMONARI
TORINO - CORSO PESCHIERA, 39 BIS - TEL. 584.098

Torino 19/6/60

Preg.mo Signor JAMES THRALL SOBY,

mi permetto disturbarla per chiederLe il suo esimio parere sul dipinto di DE CHIRICO di cui Le unisco la fotografia.
E'una tela di mia proprietà dipinta dall'Autore nel 1932. Conoscendo la Sua profonda competenza a questo riguardo, gradirei sapere se a Lei sono note altre opere simili aventi il medesimo sog= getto. Non occorre che mi restituisca la fotogra= fia. La ringrazio per le informazioni che mi potrà dare e le porgo distinti saluti

Nazzi

P.S. Mi è stato riferito che il dipinto era stato pubblicato su di una rivista o su un catalogo americano che purtroppo non riesco a rintraccia= re.

Nazzi

THE NEW GALLERY

Rough translation from the Italian

May I ask your opinion of the de Chirico painting of which I enclose a photograph. The canvas belonging to me was painted by the author about 1932. Knowing of your deep knowledge of this field, I would appreciate it if you would tell me of other works of the same subject. You need not return the photograph to me. Thanking you in advance,

s/ Nazzi

P.S. I have been told that this painting had been published either in an American magazine or catalogue, but unfortunately I have not been able to find it.

[a "hold-aside" 1.no notes or letters relevant to this have yet been found. - 8/31 - RR]

from JTS 10/11

Rec'd → Alexia
cc: JTS 6/11

THE NEW GALLERY

601 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK 22, N. Y. PLAZA 8-2294

July 16, 1958

Mr. James Thrall Soby
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York 19

Dear Mr. Soby,

We know that you have had several conversations with Mr. Hunter at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts about our Chirico, "The Scholar's Playthings", which was formerly in your collection.

We appreciate whatever you might have said to encourage the purchase of this painting by their local collector, Mr. Maslon, for the sale has indeed gone through.

We would further appreciate it if you could supply us with any information about the owners of the painting prior to yourself. Was this by any chance a Paul Guillaume painting?

With many thanks for your attention and kindness, we remain,

Sincerely yours,

THE NEW GALLERY
Eugene Victor Thaw

NEW YORK GRAPHIC SOCIETY

NEW YORK GRAPHIC SOCIETY

BOOK AND ART PUBLISHERS

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SHOWROOMS – NEW YORK CHICAGO LOS ANGELES MILAN
95 EAST PUTNAM AVENUE, GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT

March 7, 1956

Mr. James Thrall Soby
Brushy Ridge
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Jim,

The enclosed clipping was sent to us recently by one of our friends in Italy and I am sure it has more of a permanent place in your files than in ours.

Thus I pass it on to you for your interest, and reference, in this continuing dispute over the split personality of De Chirico.

With best regards.

Sincerely,

B.

Burton Cumming
Director of Publications

BC:ss
encl