NATHAN CUMMINGS

I declare only that it is a authentic work, which I have painted and signed. One time I have done a exception for you but i ~~ko~~ don't want repet it. —

I hope that finaly you have understood me.

Take care with the french dealers and the forgeries metaphysical paintings!!----

Isa and I send you our best regards,

Yours very truly
Giorgio de Chirico

May 30th 1955

Dear Mr. Cummings,

I had your letter from Paris. I am very much surprised that, after having several times explained to you every=thing about the metaphysical paintings and about the. french and american dealers and critics, you do continue to speak always and always in the same manner.

I have been repeating again and again to you that a painting is not a stamp.

It would be better for the french dealers (and also for the american dealers) to deal with the enormous quantity of the metaphy=

sical paintings forgeries that exist nowadays in Paris and in America and which ~~coming~~ offer from Paris are also sended in Italy.

The painting whose photograph you sent me seems to me authentic; but in order to declare it authentic is necessary for me to see the original.

As for the car, I thank you, but we have given up the idea of having a american car. –

I have many beautyful metaphysical paintings in my home = but it is a offense when somebody asks my about the date. When I sold a painting

iv

who otherwise will take measures! So as to not broke your confidence.

Now let us stop to speak business! And let us deal with more pleasant matters.

I hope that you are glad to be home but that it will not prevent you from coming soon again to Europe and to Italy, where I will be very pleast to meet you again. Why dont you come here in March or April, so that you will be able to go to the Scala opera house, where the performances are really wonderful. On the same occasion, you will be able to visit many small towns in Northern Italy where there are many beautiful places; palaces, churches

castles and other works of art.
Perhaps we could do the trip together
and thoroughly enjoy it.
Two years ago I bought a piece
of land on a Roman hill, that
now is becoming a fashionable
residential part of the city.
I am very glad of it. There are a few
more lots left. I will buy one of them
and, maybe, you could do the same,
as it is a very sound investment.
Besides, you could build a nice villa
on it. I intend to build there also
a villa for me. The site is very
beautiful and has a lovely view
on Rome.
Do you still plan to sell your
Cadillac? Perhaps I will be the
buyer.. We could arrange

that, if I take it I will leave it to you with my driver during your stay in Europe.

I also would remind you that you have promised to send me some peaches canned at your plant. I will appreciate it very much, as I adore canned peaches, and I am certain that yours will be particularly tasty.

I have received the letter from your daughter, announcing, among other things, the arrival in Rome of certain friends of her. I never heard from them.

who otherwise will
so as to not brea
confidence.
Now let us sto
And let us deal w
matters.
I hope that you are
but that it will
from coming so
Europe and to
will be very plea
again. Why dont
March or April
will be able to go
opera house, when
are really wonderfu
occasion, you will
many small towns
Italy where there
beautiful places;

Please return to Nathan Cummings

19/11 53

Rome

My dear Nat,

Thank you very much for the tea you kindly sent me. I particularly admired the boxes which are very pretty indeed.

Your friend who brought the parcel told me that you were in Paris buying "important" paintings. From your last letter, and owing to the fact that you took the plane to go to Paris, I clearly understand that you are under the influence of some art dealers! Clients like you are very rare nowadays for modern art and it is natural that they don't leave you alone and try to influence you all the time around the clock. Your son-in-law must be very helpful for this purpose.

As we have not met for a long

time, it is only too natural that you have forgotten my advices. I am awfully sorry that a friend of mine like you let people of that kind pull the strings and is caught by the nets of a trade, which underground activity is well known to me.

My brother who was here with me during the last month and who usually lives in France told me how the modern art trade is completely down in France at the present moment. I can see even from here, all the efforts the art-dealers try upon you. If you would apply the same ability and logic you use in your own trade to the art trade also, you certainly should act differently

I perfectly know that people don't listen to other peoples advice. I hope you will not tell me in a few years that I failed to put you on guard.

One thing more! If you actually are convinced of getting the pictures at a very convenient price, try at least to sell some of them! Of course to somebody else, not to a dealer who is a person belonging to the same circle. You must make this deal exactly as you would do in another business, without awaking the suspicion of the people you by from.

Please return to Nathan Cummings

My dear Net,

Thank you very mu
Kindly sent me. I
the boxes which a

Your friend who
told me that you
"important" paintin
last letter; and o
that you took the
Paris. I clearly u
are under the im
art dealers! Clien
very rare nowadays
and it is natural
here you alone a
you all the time
your son-in-law
ful for this pur
As we have not

Please, let me know what is the name and address of your English friend who live in Rome. I have forgotten them and, as I will soon open my house for my friends, I would like to ask them to call upon me.

This is a very long letter, to long I think!

Please, let me hear from you very soon. Jeanyes sends you his kindness regards, and I do the same. Yours sincerely

Isa de Chirico

To Mr. Lieberman

MC de Chirico
General

Mar. 30,1970

Dear Bill:

I have your note of Mar. 10 and the enclosed color plate of a de Chirico, supposedly of 1916, entitled Hector and Andromache, the property of Nathan Cummings of Chicago.

The story of the Cummings de Chiricos is a complicated and sad one. Mr. Cummings visitied de Chirico's studio in Rome around 1953, steadfastly refused to buy any of de Chirico's current works. The artist thereupon went to a room upstairs, came back with either four or five paintings bearing dates from around 1913 to 1917 and sold them to Mr. Cummings for cash plus a new American automobile. De Chirico swore that he had had the paintings ever since they were painted - an obvious lie, since I happen to know that de Chirico had retained none of his early, "metaphysical" works since the early 1920s. Moreover, the early dated on the pictures he sold Cummings disproved entirely de Chirico's repeated alaim that it had been corrupt dealers rather than himself who had put early dates on the pictures. The whole transaction was so crucial to a study of de Chirico's career and involvment in pre-dated early works that I have a long file on the case at home in New Canaan.

On his return to Chicaso Mr. Cummings for some reason became surpicious about the dated on the pictures he'd bought from the Master himself and sent all of them on to me at our Museum. I studied them carefully for several days and was than obliged to write Cummings that he'd been "had" - but good. He was very gracious about the whole matter and I assumed that he had withdrawn the picture from circulation. Now, it seems, he is offering them to the National Gallery in Washington. It's none of my business really, but if I were Miss Carol Cutler I would refuse to accept the Hector and Andromache and the Metaphysical Interior unless the National Gallery were given the right to list the pictures as "date unknown" or something of the sort. Also they should be carefuly about accepting tax falues for the pictures. If, for examle, the Hector and Andromache were really 1916, it would be worth between $150,000 and $200,000; as a late copy, which it is, it's value is about one-tenth of that amount. Or less, there being about seven or eight copirs of the original 1917 Hector and Andromache floating on and around the art market here and abroad. I can send you many further particu and when I get home; meanwhile, I think Miss Cutler should be warned.

I must add, Bill, that I am utterly astonished that you didn't ask me before becoming a member of the Consultative Commission for the forthcoming de Chirico show at Milan. I have refused some six or seven times to lend to this show or to serve on any committee for it. I have advised Peggy Guggenheim and Roland Penrose of my stand in the matter. I am still worried about American collectors like Florine Schoenbrun, having bought for Sam Marx one of the four known large de Chirico paintings of 1913 and 1914. I'm afraid that she and others will assume that I approve of the show. I most emphstically do not and I think it will be filled out with copies which Claudio Bruni and de Chirico have said are authentic early works. It may be silly to make such a fuss about true dates. But the fect remains that de Chirico's extraordinary talent

left him high and dry late in 1917, revived briefly when he started painting in artificial light in 1919 (The Sacred Fish, etc.,) and then left him for good. There's no real point in de Chirico's defending himself by saying that Renaissance masters often painted several versions of the same subject. Of course they did. But they didn't put false dates on later versions so as to increase the value of their pictures. The melancholy fact is that some artists - Rimbaud in poetry, Marcel Duchamp in painting - knew that had nothing more of value to say and stopped working. Others like de Chirico went on trading on their brilliant, lost youth. I just can't understand your not asking me about the Milan show, since you must have known that I've been working on the de Chirico problem for exactly thirty years. I naturally would have advised you not to lend anything from our Museum and not to serve on any committee for the show.

Sincerely,

Jim

ART DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
575 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK 22

RALPH F. COLIN
ADMINISTRATIVE
VICE PRESIDENT
AND COUNSEL

MURRAY HILL 8-7800
AREA CODE 212
CABLE ADDRESS
"ARTDEALAS, NEWYORK"

October 21, 1965

REGISTERED - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

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

Dear Jim:

I have just learned that the Cummings case has been settled by the Government. I do not yet know what the terms are but the Government people are extravagant in their praise of our Association and in saying that it could not have been done unless Cummings knew that we were prepared to act on behalf of the Government.

Accordingly, I am returning herewith the de Chirico file which you lent to me. It would have been of considerable help if the case had gone forward and Cummings had taken the witness stand.

With best regards and thanks again, I am,

Sincerely,

Ralph F. Colin
Administrative Vice President

RFC:jl A735
Encl.

ART DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
575 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK 22

RALPH F. COLIN
ADMINISTRATIVE
VICE PRESIDENT
AND COUNSEL

MURRAY HILL 8-7800
AREA CODE 212
CABLE ADDRESS
"ARTDEALAS, NEWYORK"

October 20, 1965

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

Dear Jim:

Thank you for sending me the Cummings - de Chirico material. It is fascinating and might prove most helpful.

I shall see to it that it is returned to you after we have finished with it.

With many thanks again, I am,

Sincerely,

Ralph F. Colin
Administrative Vice President

RFC:jl A735

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

Oct. 18,1965

Mr. Ralph F. Colin
575 Madison Ave.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Ralph:

As I told you on the 'phone this morning, I've found my file on the Nathan Cummings- de Chirico case, and I'm enclosing it herewith. This is an immense relief, since it disproves completely de Chirico's repeated claims that corrupt dealers rather than he have pre-dated his pictures of the "metaphysical" (1911-17) period. I mean put early dates on works completed by de Chirico or by forgers in recent years, the true works of his inspired youth being worth at a minimum ten times as much on the market as anything he paints today. If the Cummings and other replicas were pre-dated by dealers, how could they have come straight from the Master's own studio? You will see by the file that de Chirico first told Cummings that he had no early pictures left and then, under pressure, produced the pictures Cummings bought from him.

I'd assume that there are serious legal difficulties involved. We must accept, I suppose, the fact that the Cummings "Metaphysical Interior with Biscuits" was painted by de Chirico himself. The artist will give as his excuse for making later versions of works done in youth that many great artists in the past have done the same thing. But they did not, so far as I know, pre-date such pictures in order to raise their value.

As you will see from the file, Cummings sent me only two of his purchases from de Chirico to look at. One of the two was the Metaphysical Interior with Biscuits, a fact made clear by the contents of the enclosed file on the case. I looked at it long and hard, found it hopelessly dead and hard compared to the true early works. I so informed Cummings in my letter to him of Mar. 28, 1955, as you will see, and also so informed Katharine Kuh at the Art Institute of Chicago (her reply is dated in the file April 4, 1955). Cummings had apparently offered the Art Institute one or more of his de Chiricos and I had advised Miss Kuh and Dan Rich not to accept them. But I'm not sure that my correspondence with the Art Institute should be mentioned, since it was done in the strictest confidence.

There is one discrepancy between your photo of the Interior and the one Cummings sent me. On the left wall of your photo there are some curious hooks which do not appear in the Cummings photo; They may be scars on the negative from which the photos were made; otherwise the two images seem identical.

I would appreciate your not mentioning the Museum of Modern Art in the legal procedings, since my long research on the de Chirico problem was done on my own.

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

Oct. 18,1965

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

You must be prepared for a violent outburst in Cummings behalf from de Chirico himself, who invariably calls everyone who questions him either a corrupt dealer or an American pederast and who denounced an early picture by him (which I later gave to the Museum of Modern Art) and then later authenticated it in writing. I need not assure you that I have never been a dealer and that while I am proudly an American, all of my three wives have been emphatically female.

One final note. You'll see that Cummings refers in one of his letters to the de Chiricos in the collection of the late Dr. Barnes. None of the Barnes pictures, to the best of my knowledge, is an authentic early work by de Chirico, and I reproduced ~~none~~ none of them in either of my two books on the Master. Barnes became the champion of de Chirico at precisely the moment when the latter's extraordinary talent had taken leave of him. I've never seen the actual Barnes pictures because in those days the good Doctor was alive and wouldn't let me into his Museum at Merion. But they look completely wrong in photos and I have copies of letters de Chirico wrote Paul Eluard, at just about the moment when Dr. Barnes became interested in the painter, offering to paint replicas since the originals were not available. These letters are in my book, Giorgio de Chirico (1955).

I hope the file will be of help to you and do please return it when you've through with it.

My best regards,

Sincerely,

Jim

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

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I hope the file will be of help to you and do please return it when you've through with it.

My best regards,

Sincerely,

JAMES THRALL SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

July 23,1955

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I am enclosing the letter from de Chirico which you kindly let me see.

It's an extremely interesting letter in that here, for the first time so far as I know, he disclaims responsibility for dating his pictures. He is, of course, in error in claiming that he has made an exception only for you. I know of a great number of pictures about which he has written lettersconcerning the dates.

With repeated thanks and the hope that you'll let me see any subsequent letters from de Chirico,

Sincerely,

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135 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Temporary Address:
HOTEL PLAZA ATHENEE
25 Avenue Montaigne
PARIS VIII

27 June 1955

Mr. JamesThrall Soby
Museum of Modern Art
West 53rd Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Soby:

Enclosed herewith is another letter from de Chirico. Thought you would be interested to see it.

Will you kindly return the letter to my Chicago office. - Is there anything further that would be of interest regarding my de Chirico.

Yours sincerely,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
s

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135 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Randolph 6-6414

April 27, 1955

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

Dear Mr. Soby:

Thanks for your letter of March 28, which awaited my return from an extended trip. I presume you have issued instructions to return the two pictures, and I would be very grateful to you if you would send me your detailed account of the technical and stylistic differences on them.

I note that you are taking a quick trip to Paris. I am leaving for Europe on May 4 and will send you the other de Chiricos sometime in the early fall. In the meantime, however, will you please return the other two to me?

Thanking you again,

Yours sincerely,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
mh

P. S. I am taking up with de Chirico the fact that he is dating pictures later than the actual date they were made, because I think he should be stopped from such practice, don't you?

N. C.

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO 3 ILLINOIS TELEPHONE CENTRAL 6-7080

April 4, 1955

Dear Mr. Soby:

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me the letter about Nathan Cummings' de Chiricos and also the carbon of the letter you sent to him. I am herewith returning to you the carbon. I have shown both these letters to Dan Rich and we are extremely grateful for the information. Naturally, we will not indicate to Mr. Cummings that you have so written us.

Sincerely,

Katharine Kuh

Katharine Kuh
Curator of Modern Painting and Sculpture

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

JAMES THRALL SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

PLEASE RETURN TO SOBY

Mar. 28,1955

Mr. Nathan Cummings,
Consolidated Foods Corp.,
135 South La Salle St.,
Chicago 3, Ill.

Dear Mr. Cummings:

It was good of you to send the two de Chiricos to the Museum, where I studied them at length last week. They will be returned to you promptly.

There is, of course, no question that they were painted by de Chirico, since you bought them from his studio in Rome. But I have very grave doubts about the inscribed dated on the pictures. They are very different in technical handling from the known authentic works of 1915 and 1916, and I rather doubt that de Chirico has had any works of his early period on hand for a number of years. I might, of course, be wrong. But I have seen so many early de Chiricos during the past fifteen years of intensive research on the problem of correct dating, that I tend to feel I'm right in saying that these two pictures were done quite recently.

If you like I can send you a detailed account of the technical and stylistic differences between your Metaphysical Still Life with Biscuits and your Hector and Andromache and the pictures of which they seem to me to be later copies. But I won't be able to do so until I return from a quick trip to Paris, at which time I hope you'll let me see your other de Chiricos of this type at the Museum of Modern Art.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

JAMES THRALL SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

Mar. 28,1955

Miss Katharine Kuh,
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Michigan Ave. & East Adams St.,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Miss Kuh:

Some months ago I promised to let you know my opinion of the paintings by de Chirico bought from the artist by Mr. Nathan Cummings a year or so ago.

I have now studied carefully two of these paintings - the Still Life with Biscuits and the Hector and Andromache. As you will see by the enclosed letter (which I would appreciate having back), I feel strongly that both paintings are recent copies by de Chirico of his own early works. They are extremely different in handling from the authentic works of 1915 and 1915 and, as I've had to tell Mr. Cummings, I don't believe that de Chirico has had on hand any works of his early period for a number of years. Between ourselves, it is also possible that de Chirico had an assistant paint the pictures, at least in part, since he feels himself the logical heir to the "studio" tradition of Rubens & Co.

Perhaps you would be kind enough to relay this information on to Dan Rich, who also once asked me about the Cummings de Chiricos.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

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135 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

February 21, 1955

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

Dear Mr. Soby:

I am indeed grateful for your letter of February 8. Two of the pictures are being shipped to you by express and I would appreciate your frank and positive opinion of them. After you return these two, I will ship the others, but I do not want to denude our walls of all of them at one time.

My collection of Peruvian ceramics had its opening at the Los Angeles County Museum on February 3 and it was a great success. From Los Angeles it will go to San Francisco, then up to Canada, and from there to the Louvre in Paris.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
mh

JAMES THRALL SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

Feb. 8,1955

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I'm sorry to say that it won't be possible for me to get to Chicago this winter to see the pictures you bought from de Chirico; I am jammed with work. So if you don't mind the expense involved, the best thing would be for you to send the pictures to me, c/o The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd St., New York 19, N.Y. I could then have a look at them there and have them re-packed and returned to you within a few days of their arrival. The Museum would be much better than here, since no good packers are available in this small town.

There is, of course, no question that de Chirico painted the pictures, since you bought them directly from him. But when were they painted? I am quite positive that de Chirico has had no early works in his possession for many years. Still, I should see the actual pictures before giving you a positive opinion. I'll be glad to do so, if you don't mind the express charges and insurance to New York and back to Chicago. Just let me know, and I'll tell the Museum to be on the lookout for them; I am naturally eager to see the paintings.

Glad to hear you saw the Barnes pictures. I have never been allowed in because of my connection with the Museum, etc.

Regards,

James Soby

P.S. I am sending a copy to your office, in case you've left California.

JAMES THRALL SOBY
Brushy Ridge Road
New Canaan, Conn.

Feb. 8,1955

Dear Mr. Cummings:

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Regards,

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BUSINESS FOUNDED 1842

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135 SOUTH LA SALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

January 31, 1955

Temporary Address:
Beverly Hills Hotel
Beverly Hills, California

Mr. James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, New York

My dear Mr. Soby:

It is quite a long time since I have been in touch with you. Last week I was in Philadelphia and was given the opportunity of seeing the Barnes collection. It was really a thrilling experience.

I was trying to compare some of the DeChiricos which were on exhibition in the Barnes collection with my own DeChiricos, and I wonder if you would permit me the opportunity of expressing to you the DeChirico metaphysical pictures which I acquired from the artist, so that you might please give me your frank opinion as to their quality. I intend to make a gift to one of the museums, but before doing so I would like to be more fully informed as to just how you feel about the paintings which he sold me.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
rw

BUSINESS FOUNDED 1842

CONSOLIDATED GROCERS CORPORATION

DISTRIBUTORS · MANUFACTURERS · IMPORTERS · EXPORTERS · CANNERS OF FOODS

135 SOUTH LASALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

December 22, 1953

Mr. James Thral Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr.Soby:

Knowing of your continued interest in the de Chiricos, I think you will find the enclosed letter rather interesting. Naturally you will not quote from it, but it does give you an idea of their thinking.

Have written her, indicating that in spite of what she thinks about her husband's current paintings, it's his older works that are of really fine quality which are in demand by museums and collectors. She may get angry and refuse to communicate with me any more, but at least I must tell her what we believe.

Am still looking forward to your visit to Chicago.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
mh

Roney Plaza Hotel

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

Permanent Address:
135 South LaSalle St.
Chicago 3, Illinois

November 28, 1953

Mr. James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Soby,

Did not reply to yours of October 16th before this because somehow I thought you might be coming through Chicago. But hearing from you, decided that I would again check up and find out when you think you will be visiting the windy city.

I travel a great deal and in the event that I am not home when you do come through please talk to my Administrative Assistant, Mr. E. S. Steinmetz, and he will take you to my apartment to see the paintings.

Am happy to report to you that many of our friends who have looked at the recently acquired De Chiricos all seem very thrilled with them.

I too, was surprised when De Chirico brought the pictures down from his garret or studio. They were rather dirty, but yet, there they were.

Very sincerely yours,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
ag

JAMES THRALL SOBY
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, N. Y.

Oct. 16,1953

Mr. Nathan Cummings,
Consolidated Grocers Corp.,
135 South LaSalle Street,
Chicago 3, Ill.

Dear Mr. Cummings:

Please forgive me for having been so long answering your kind letter and acknowledging receipt of the De Chirico photographs. I have been on the move constantly these past few weeks.

It is, as you know, impossible to judge pictures with any finality from photographs, and I am eager to see the originals which you purchased from De Chirico in Rome. Frankly, I am amazed that he would have so many "metaphysical" works of 1915 and 1916 left in his studio after all these years. But I hope to be in Chicago before too long and perhaps then you will let me have a look at the pictures themselves. Meanwhile I am most grateful to you for your interest and help. Mme. de Chirico's letter is fascinating and a most welcome addition to my files.

With thanks and kindest regards,

Sincerely,

BUSINESS FOUNDED 1842

CONSOLIDATED GROCERS CORPORATION

DISTRIBUTORS · MANUFACTURERS · IMPORTERS · EXPORTERS · CANNERS OF FOODS

135 SOUTH LASALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

October 5, 1953

Mr. James T. Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Soby:

I think you will be interested in the enclosed letter from Mme. de Chirico. Naturally, I send it to you in confidence.

As one of our officers is going to be in Rome in about three weeks, am having him take two pounds of tea to the lady.

What's your reaction to what she says?

I did finally locate one of your books entitled, "The Early Chirico."

What's your opinion of the photographs I recently sent you?

Yours sincerely,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
mh

Piazza di Spagna 31

Return to Nathan Cummings

Rome, September 18, 1953

My dear Net:

I have received your letters and although a bit late here are all the answers.

The lost sculpture has the value of 400,000 Lire.

With regard to the gossips I will tell you that they refer to matters we know about since many years.

America is full of fake pictures among which many "metaphysic" paintings which bear George's counterfeit signature. You must understand that merchants and their surrounding circles are very upset when they find out that paintings have been bought in Europe especially if directly from George and autentified by him. We have drawers full of photographs of false paintings circulating in America!

As good friends we advise you , in the event somebody should offer you some painting with George's signature, to send us a photograph in order that its autenticity can be guaranteed before you decide to buy it.

As for the date, George has already told you in Rome that a painting is not a stamp and that all this business of dates and periods has been invented by Paris merchants and their American partners in order to take revenge of the campaign which George is carrying on since many years against their activity lacking completely of artistic ideals and tending only to commercial achievements. He has made an exception for you declaring the dates of those paintings while he usually only certifies the execution of the painting and his signature.

here in Italy

It would be a good idea if also Mr. Soby would send George the photographs which he is going to use in his new book since in the old one there are reproductions also of some fakes.

Anyway all this bluff organized by Paris merchants in America is rapidly declining and we have a proof of this in Italy where now they try in every way possible to sell modern French paintings.

We hope that you will remember the sermon I gave you.

Many thanks for the stockings. They are really beautiful and strong. Your mascara is also quite good. I think you should also make it in cubes.

And now I have something to ask you. Do you think you could let me have two pounds of <u>good</u> tea? The types they sell here are simply awful nowadays!

I will write you again soon.

Have our best regards.

Sincerely,

Isa de Chirico

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135 SOUTH LASALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

September 9, 1953

Mr. James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd St.
New York 21, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Soby:

Mr. Cummings has asked me to forward to you the enclosed photographs of his six DeChirico paintings. The sizes and anems of the paintings are given on the backs of the photographs.

I hope the enclosed will be helpful to you in your new book.

Very truly yours,

Administrative Assistant to the
Chairman of the Board

E. S.Steinmetz
it
enc.

HOTEL Adolphus DALLAS.. LEO F. CORRIGAN, PRESIDENT · RANDALL DAVIS, MANAGING DIRECTOR

September 6, 1953

Mr. James Soby
Water Mill
Long Island, New York

Dear Mr. Soby:

I am presently traveling across the country and will be in Dallas for a couple of days. I am spending Sunday afternoon trying to catch up on my correspondence.

You should receive the photographs from my Administrative Assistant, who is sending them to you from Chicago in the course of the next day or so.

In answer to your questions - I don't recall seeing any Metaphysicals on the walls of the De Chirico apartment. I think the five Metaphysicals and the one of the horses which we purchased, were out of a total of about ten paintings that he brought from his studio, the studio being on the floor above the apartment. I cannot recall any other observations which I think would be helpful.

Will you please order a copy of your 1941 edition on De Chirico from Weyhe, even if the price is $7.50.

Yes, I do want the list of the key publications on the works of our friend.

I forgot to tell you that Madame De Chirico wrote me recently saying that her husband was very busy preparing for an exhibition next year in Venice. Do you know

HOTEL Adolphus
DALLAS · LEO F. CORRIGAN, PRESIDENT · RANDALL DAVIS, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Mr. James Soby
Page 2
September 6, 1953

that she writes articles in an atmosphere of belligerance and she is very critical of most of the artists who are currently considered our best.

Just before I left Chicago I was informed that Dan Rich was in the hospital with an attack of yellow jaundice.

Sincerely yours,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
jp

CC: Mr. E. S. Steinmetz

Water Mill, Long Island, N.Y.

Aug. 29,1953

Mr. Nathan Cummings, Chairman of the Board,
Consolidated Grocers Corporation,
135 South La Salle Street,
Chicago 3, Ill.

Dear Mr. Cummings:

Thank you very much for your kind and extremely interesting letter about your visit to De Chirico's studio. I will look forward eagerly to receiving the photographs of the six early paintings you bought and I would, of course, be delighted to pay for them; the costs would be charged against my forthcoming publication. Would you mind sending them to me here at Water Mill, Long Island, New York, where I am on vacation? Many thanks.

Your description of the De Chirico apartment and studio is of extreme interest to me and I'd be greatly obliged for further details. For example, how many "metaphysical" pictures did there seem to be in all? And did De Chirico have any comments to make on them, other than his oft-repeated statement that they are inferior to his present works? Any recollections of this kind you can send me will be most welcome, believe me.

I am sure that De Chirico, and ever more especially his wife, is annoyed with you for not buying some of his current pictures. He is bitter about the art world's rejection of his recent paintings, but personally I think you're absolutely right in not liking them. I don't like any of the works of which you so kindly sent me photographs, but I was delighted to see the photographs which I am returning to you under separate cover, as you requested.

I'm sorry to say that I can't send you a copy of the original edition of my book on De Chirico. It was published by Dodd, Mead & Co., in 1941 and has long been out of print. I myself have only one copy left, but I think E. Weyhe, 794 Lexington Avenue, New York City, may have a few copies in his bookshop; I don't know what price he would ask - the last quotation I heard was $7.50 (the price at publication was $3). If you like, I'd be glad to send you a list of the key publications relating to De Chirico. Some are foreign publications and out of print, others are almost impossible to find, but a few are still available at modest cost. Just let me know if the list would interest you. Best regards and thanks; I look forward immensely to seeing the six photographs of the pictures you bought.

Sincerely,

(James Soby)

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135 SOUTH LASALLE STREET

CHICAGO 3, ILLINOIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

August 24, 1953

Mr. James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, New York

Dear Mr. Soby:

I did not hear from you when I was in New York enroute to Chicago and presume that you did not receive my letter of August 4 written from Paris, a copy of which is herewith attached.

The photographs of the six De Chiricos will be taken next week and forwarded to you. It's not a question of the cost of the extra prints, because I am happy to send them to you; it's just that my regular photographer is on vacation and won't be back until next week.

I think you will be interested in our experience with De Chirico and his wife. The first time my daughter, son-in-law and myself called on him, after climbing four flights of stairs, we were not permitted entry to his apartment but were told to come back the next day. On returning the next afternoon, we were greeted by Mr. De Chirico, who was well dressed, and by Mme. De Chirico, who was waiting for us in the sitting-room.

The apartment was old and messed up because there were some repairs going on, with several workmen about the place. I asked for some of his metaphysical works and his answer was that he did not have any - nor were there any hanging on the walls. However, a little later we went up to his studio and brought some down. After a little more coaxing, he brought down some more and we selected five, as well as one of his horses done in the 1930's.

After purchasing the paintings, Mr. and Mrs. De Chirico very kindly invited us to have dinner with them. They took us to one of the best restaurants in Rome and ordered a very delicious dinner. Then the professor made a drawing of a horse on the back of a

menu and presented it to my daughter, who is selecting one of the six paintings that we purchased from them. Enclosed is a photostat of a letter which he wrote to me and which is self-explanatory.

I was rather amused by a comment that De Chirico made after writing the letter, that I could probably sell the letter for a million lira because it had some historic art significance. My answer was that it was not for sale and he further said that if I could sell it for a million, he would gladly make another one for me.

Subsequently, I again saw the De Chiricos in Florence. They came up there so that he could paint a portrait of the wife of the Brazilian consul, and I must say that from what I saw of the preliminary work, it looked as though the portrait was going to turn out very good.

Mme. De Chirico seems to be fighting a war with the art world, it being her contention that the things that De Chirico is now doing are great art. However, I do not agree with her, nor with him. They wanted me to buy some current things, but I did not feel so disposed. Because of this, I think De Chirico is somewhat annoyed at me.

I had them bring me photographs of some of his modern work, a few samples of which are herewith enclosed. I would like your opinion of them - and by the way, I have to return these photographs. He has quoted the price on the back of each one, and likewise the size, so that you can get an idea of his current thinking.

I gained the impression that De Chirico is quite a good business man and resents the fact that the art world is not accepting his current productions, stubbornly trying to prove that he is right. I told Dan Rich of my purchase of the paintings and after he returns from his vacation the first of September, he is coming to see them.

Would you please have the Museum of Modern Art of New York send me a copy of the first De Chirico book, which was published in 1941, and bill me for it

because I should like to build up my library on anything pertaining to De Chirico.

Thanking you,

Sincerely ~~yours~~,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
mh

July 21, 1953

HOTEL PLAZA-ATHÉNÉE
23 à 27, AVENUE MONTAIGNE
PARIS
Teleph. ÉLYSÉES 85-23 (Lignes groupées)
BALZAC 43-30 (Lignes groupées)
Adresse Télégraphique: PLAZATENE-PARIS

August 4, 1953

Mr. James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, N.Y.
U. S. A.

Dear Mr. Soby:

I should very much like to oblige you with the photographs of my De Chiricos. But unfortunately at the moment this is impossible. The paintings are on the steamer being shipped to America and I have no way of having them photographed.

However, I shall be at the Hotel Pierre, New York, on August 12th. If you will telephone me, I shall be glad to tell you all I can.

Sincerely,

NC:lk dictated by Nathan Cummings

James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, N.Y.

P.S. Any notes you can send me as to De Chirico's conversation, state of mind, comments on his pictures, etc., will be gratefully received, I can assure you.

July 21, 1953

Mr. Nathan Cummings,
Hotel Plaza Athenee,
Avenue Montaigne,
Paris, France.

Dear Mr. Cummings:

I have your letter of July 9th which was forwarded to me from my New York apartment.

I would indeed like very much to have photographs, if possible with dimensions written on the backs, of the six De Chiricos you have acquired, and I am grateful to you - and to Mr. Ustorik - for calling them to my attention.

There is a certain urgency about all this. I am finishing this summer a completely revised edition of a book about De Chirico which was published in 1941. The new edition will be published by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and my hope is that it will appear within a year. The book is primarily concerned with De Chiricos of the early period (1911-1919) but will also have illustrations of later works. I should be deeply obliged if you could send me the photographs soon; I should be more than glad to pay for making the extra prints.

With repeated thanks and the hope of hearing from you soon,

Sincerely,

James Thrall Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York 21, N.Y.

P.S. Any notes you can send me as to De Chirico's conversation, state of mind, comments on his pictures, etc., will be gratefully received, I can assure you.

Excelsior Palace Hotel
Lido Venezia

July 9, 1953

Mr. James Thral Soby
36 East 72nd Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Soby:

About ten days ago I visited Eric Estorik in London and I told him about the recent purchase made of six de Chiricos. He told me I should send you photographs of them because he indicated that you were comtemplating an exhibition of de Chirico's work.

I expect to return home during the early fall and look forward to the pleasure of communicating with you at that time in the event that you are interested in seeing the photographs and hearing about my negotiations with him.

My permanent home is in Chicago where I reside at 179 Lake Shore Drive. However, if you should be interested in replying to this letter my address is Hotel Plaza Athenee, Avenue Montaigne, Paris.

Yours sincerely,

Nathan Cummings

Nathan Cummings
md

Rome 21 May 1953

Dear Mr. Cummings,

I have sold you the following paintings:

1. Metaphysical interior with biscuits (1916) -
2. Plan of Italy - .. (1915)
3. Plan of Italy ..... (1915)
4. metaphysical interior with biscuits - (1916)
5. Hector and Andromache ..... (1916)
6. Eight Frightened horses .... (1934)

I am pleased that you are taking my paintings in America.

Very truly yours

Giorgio de Chirico

G. de Chirico

Horses

Lire 700.000

(50 cm x 60)

(sent JTS by Nathan Cummings 1953

LABORATORIO FOTOGRAFICO
INDUSTRIALE
MICHELE COMO
ROMA - VIA MARGUTTA N. 85
TELEF. 681.409

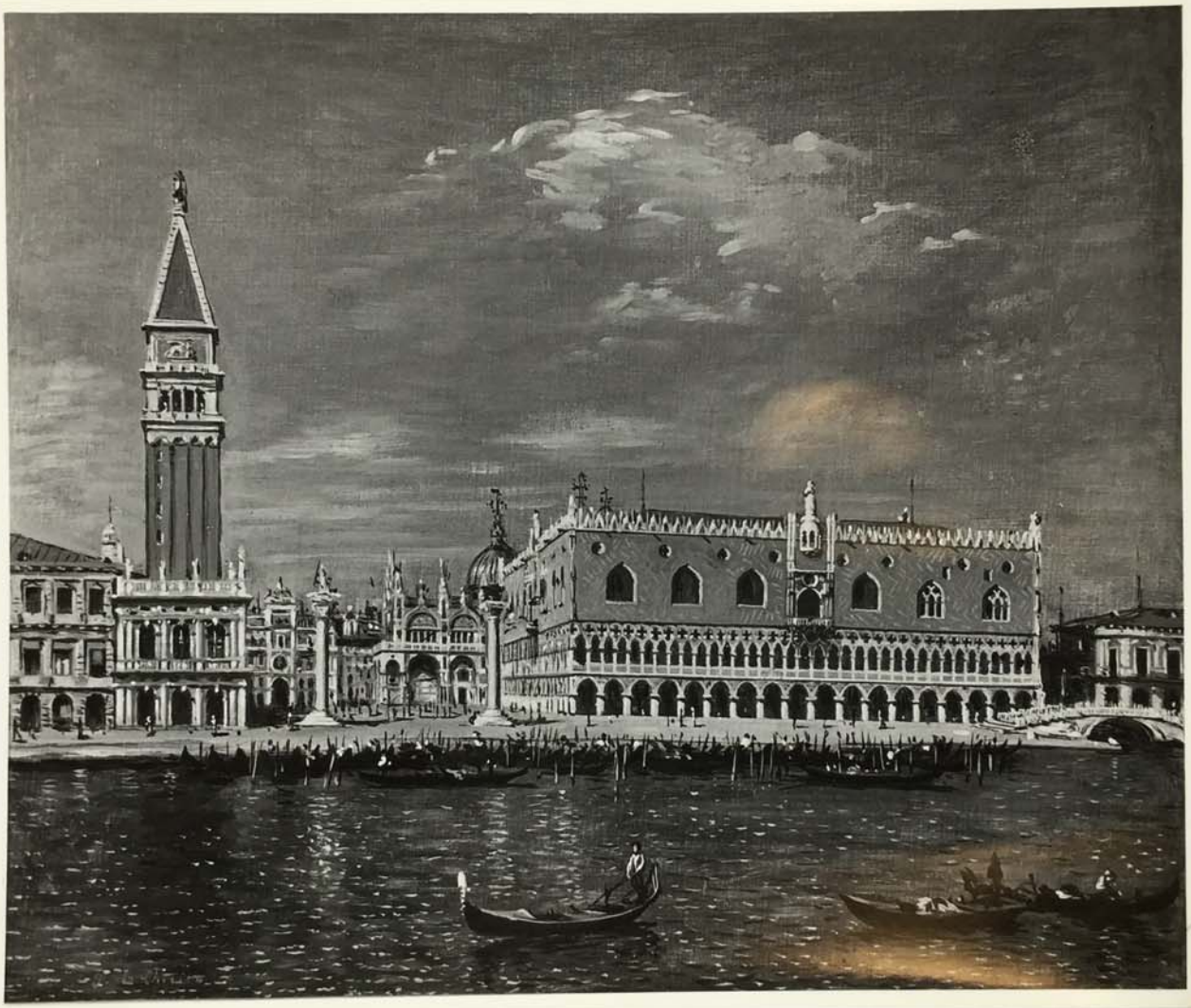
TITOLO DELL'OPERA _____
AUTORE _____

Giorgio de Chirico
Selfportrait.

£ 600,00

(140 cm x 50)

(sent 1st by
Nathan Cummings
1953 or 1955)



Giorgio de Chirico

Venezia – Pale 220 Ducale

lire: 700,000 ..

(50 c.m – 60 c.m)

(sent JTS by Nathan Cummings 1953 or 1955)

G. de Chirico

Hyppolytus with his friends.

Lire 1,500.000

100 x 70 cm.

(sent JTS by Nathan Cummings 1953 or 1955)

G. de Chirico
Battle
Lire 500.000 N. 2
40 x 50

LABORATORIO FOTOGRAFICO
INDUSTRIALE
MICHELE COMO
ROMA - VIA MARGUTTA N. 85
TELEF. 681.409

TITOLO DELL'OPERA _____
AUTORE _____

(sent 9/55 by
Nathan Cummings
1953 or 1955)

G. de Chirico

—

Roman Landscape

—

L 500.000

(40 cm x 50 cm)

(sent to JTS by Nathan Cummings 1953 or 1955)

TITOLO DELL'OPERA _____

AUTORE _____

G. de Chirico

— Stillife —

— Lire 500 000

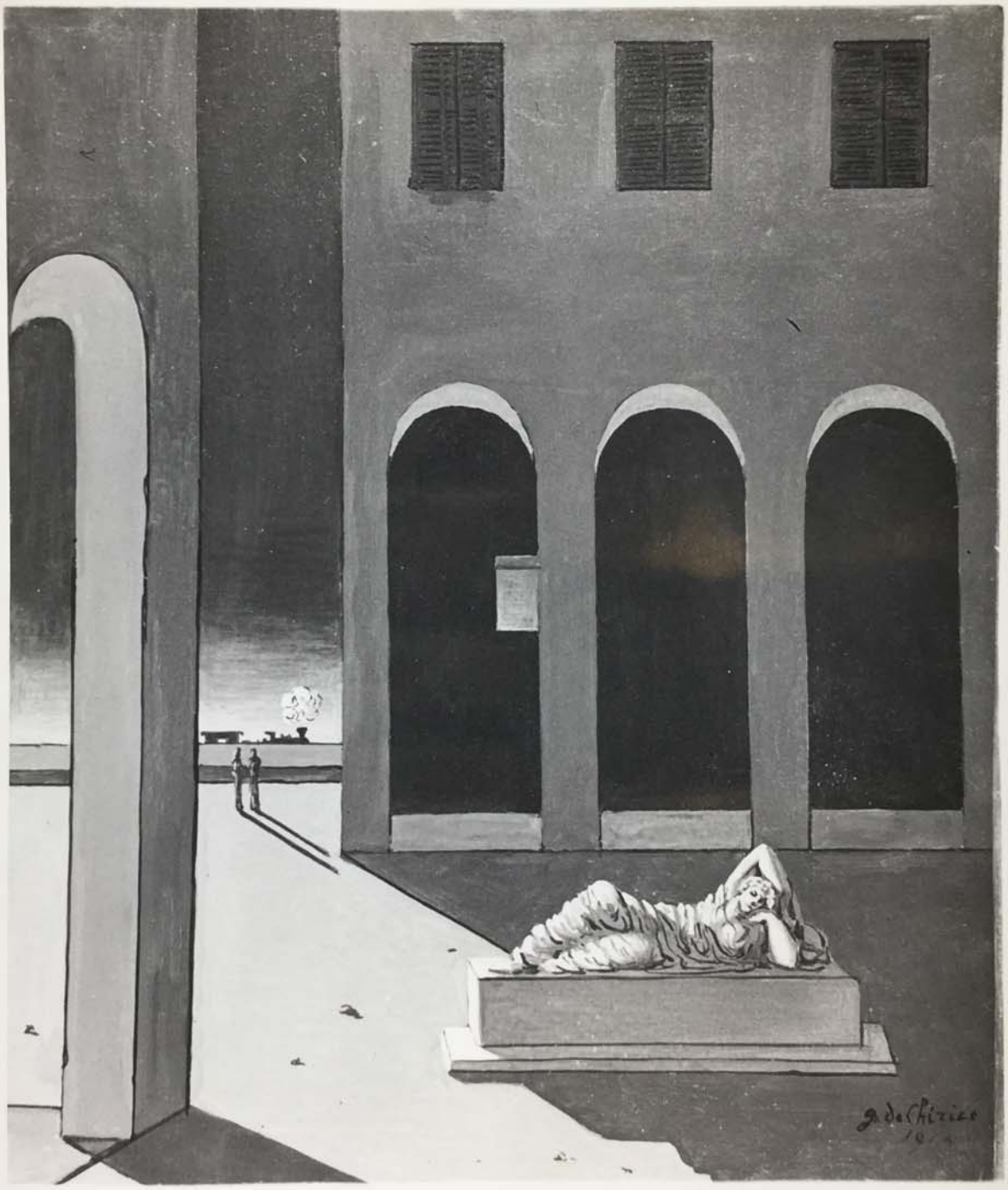
50 cm x 40 cm

(sent JTS by Nathan Cummings 1953)

LABORATORIO FOTOGRAFICO
INDUSTRIALE
MICHELE COMO
ROMA - VIA MARGUTTA N. 85
TELEF. 681.409

TITOLO DELL'OPERA _____

AUTORE _____



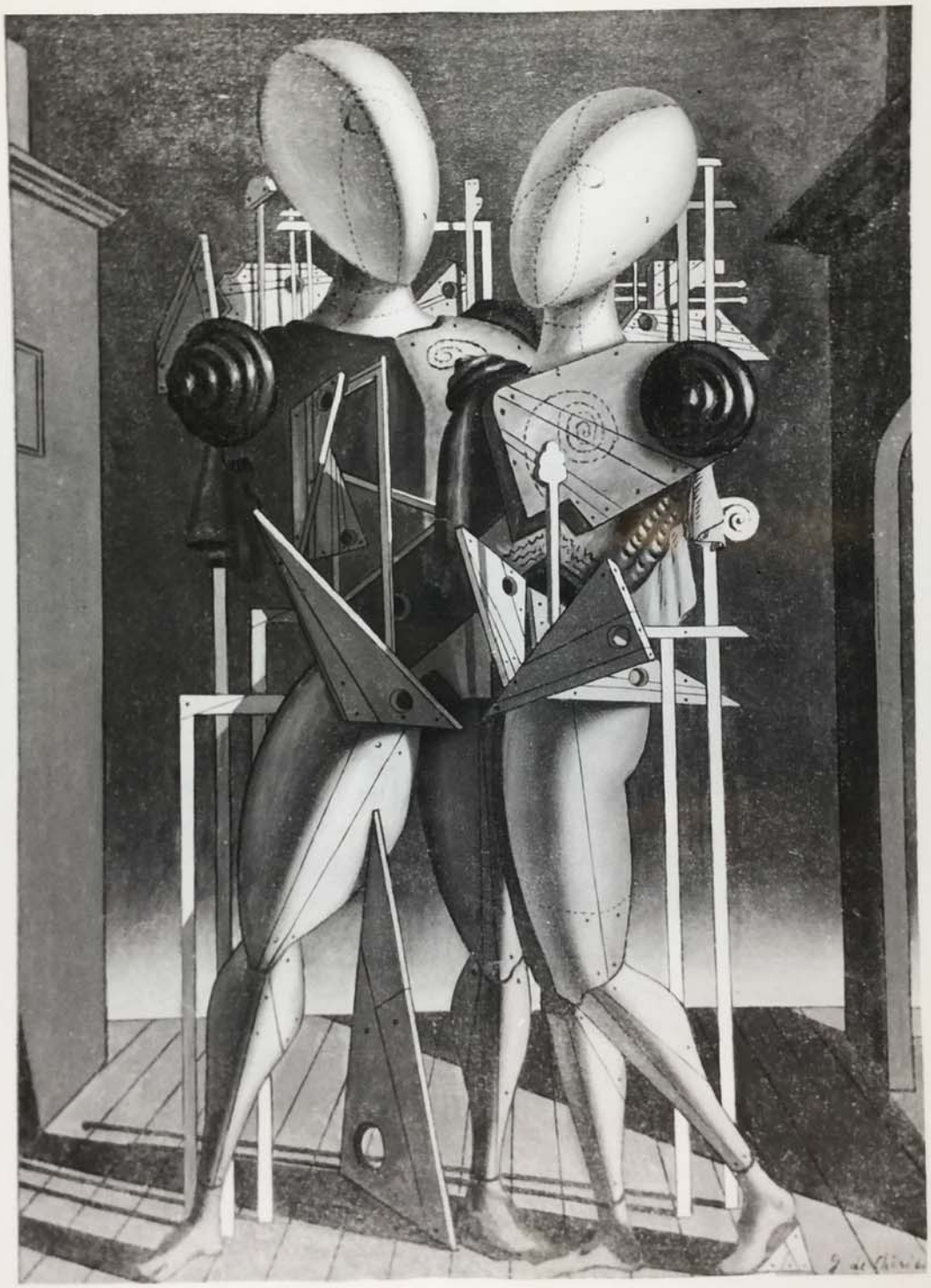
PIAZZA d' ITALIA - 1915 (Piccolo)
Place of Italy

mt. 0,60 x 0,50

Metaphysical Interior With Biscuits

Photo given J.T.S October 14th, 1965
by Ralph Colin -

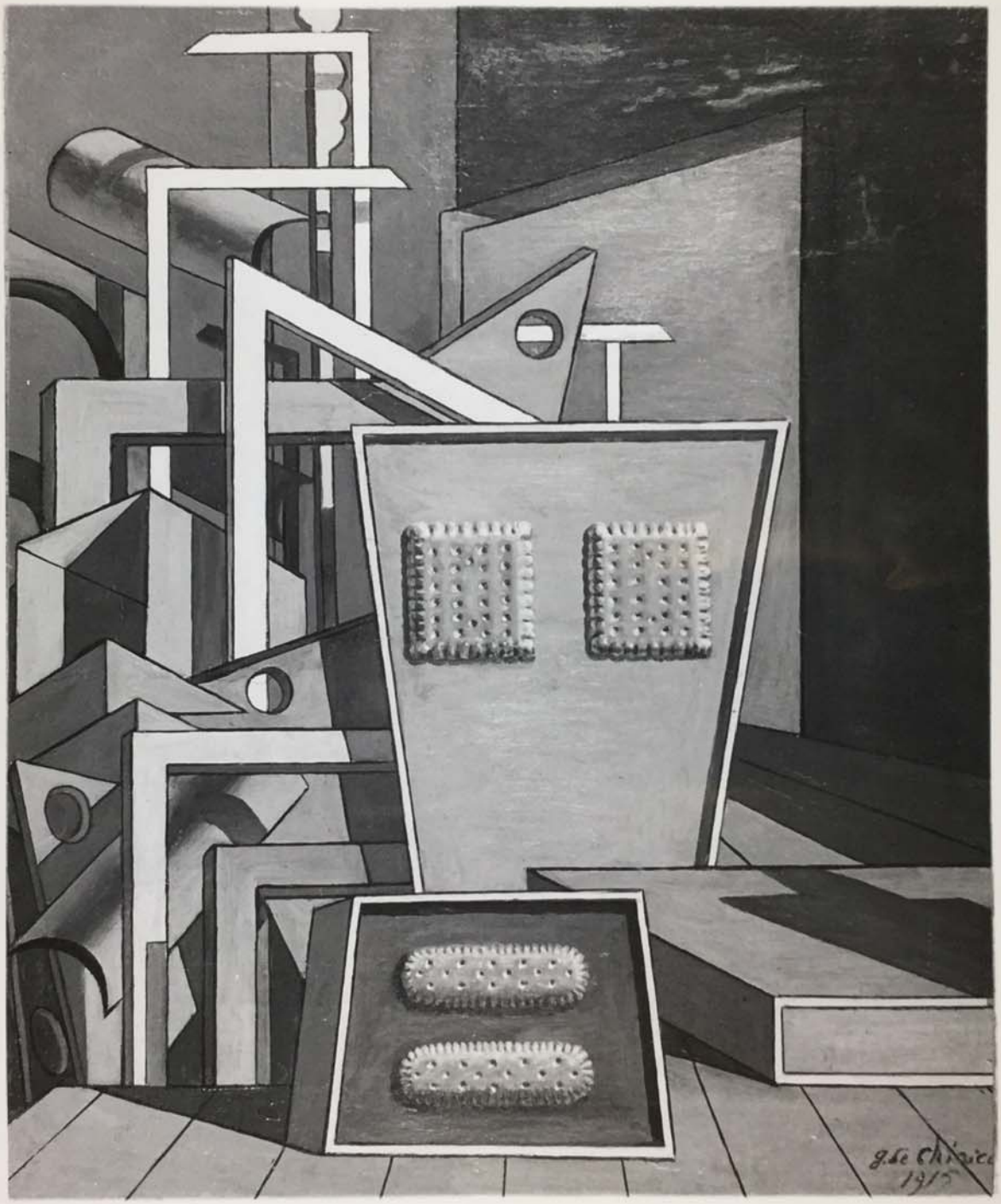
CAVALLI SPAVENTATI 1934
Four Freightened Horses
mt. 0,74 x 0,56



ETTORE Ed ANDROMACA 1916

Hector and Andromache

mt 1,00 x 0,70



The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	JTS	II.B.4

INTERNO METAFISICO CON BISCOTTI (Piccolo) 1916
Metaphysical Interior with Biscuits

mt. 0,62 × 0,49