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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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*Davis - de Chucwi  
New Orleans*

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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J. T. SOBY  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Conn.

June 22, 1963

Dear Mrs. Davis:

I found Sig. Genesi's letter of May 27 to you extremely interesting and I'm glad you sent me a copy. It is the only letter I have seen in which an Italian dealer admitted that one of de Chirico's "metaphysical" works was painted as recently as ten years ago rather than during de Chirico's early period (1911-19). Since Sig. Genesi has been so frank I think we must assume that his date for the picture is correct. But while it is true that de Chirico has said in interviews and articles that he never dates his pictures, this is a recent development to protect himself. Nearly every single one of the early pictures is dated; I can't think of one done before 1918 which does not bear a date on the front of the canvas, though I'd have to check my records to be sure. In any case, if you decide to sell one or both of your pictures, I think you'd do much better in Italy where there is a market for these later versions of early subjects, whereas in this country, France and England there is almost no such market.

The other day a most useful lamp to show changed in color, i.e. re-painting, arrived here from New Orleans. Since I know no one else in New Orleans who would have sent it, I assume it was you. If so, I'd like to thank you very much. It is an extremely useful thing to have.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

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OCTAVIA STREET  
#1819  
NEW ORLEANS  
LOUISIANA

GALLERIA FIORENTINA D'ARTE  
FLORENCE ART GALLERY  
VIA TORNABUONI  
FIRENZE

FIRENZE May 27, 1963  
TEL. 21-213

June 2, 1963

(Directed) Dr. U. GIANESI

Mr James Thrall Soby  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Connecticut

Dear Mr Soby :

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I received yesterday from  
Sr Umberto Gianesi of the Florence Art Gallery. As yet, I have  
heard nothing from the other Gallery in Rome.

I may I would appreciate any comments you might have to offer on suggestions.

With deep appreciation,  
Sincerely,  
Marjorie Davis

Your painting has gone up in price over 50% since last year and as far as I am hearing  
from the painter, another 50% will be applied by the end of this year.

I am very glad you met Mr. and Mrs. Robert Meyer. We are friends since many, many  
years. I have been in their wonderful home and I am looking forward to see them again  
in a new future. I am very glad to hear that you are expecting to be here in October and  
I will be delighted to spend some time in your company.

Please, let me know when you are sure to come so that I might arrange something nice  
for you.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Umberto Gianesi

UG: wp

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transcript of TLS Umberto Gianesi-Mr. Walter Davis  
[] difficult to read; word supplied by transcriber

GALLERIA FIORENTINA D'ARTE  
FLORENCE ART GALLERY  
VIA TORNABUONI  
FIRENZE

FIRENZE May 27, 1963  
TEL. 21-213

[Direttore] Dr. U. GIANESE

Mr. Walter Davis  
Octavia Street, 1819  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Mrs. Davis,

In prompt reply to your letter May 23rd I inform you that De Chirico never dates his paintings because, as he has declared in various interviews he doesn't think that there is any difference in his paintings, no matter when they have been painted.

I may tell you that yours is a picture which has been painted about 10 years ago and kept in his studio for several years, than, when your "Piazza d'Italia" left De Chirico's studio, a little before sending it here, he sent, as usual, the canvas to have the authentication by the notary M. Gandolfo - Rome, who has written it on the back stamping the canvas with his seal which is given to the notaries by our Government.

Your painting has gone up in price over 50% since last year and as far as I am hearing from the painter, another 50% will be applied by the end of this year.

I am very glad you met Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mayer. We are friends since many, many years. I have been in their wonderful home and I am looking forward to see them again in a near future. I am very glad to hear that you are expecting to be here in October and I will be delighted to spend some times in your company.

Please, let me know when you are sure to come so that I might arrange something nice for you.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Umberto Gianesi

UG: wp

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PIAZZA FIORENTINA D'ARTE  
FLORENCE ART GALLERY  
VIA TORRABUONI  
FIRENZE

MAY 17 1953

Mr. Walter Davis  
Octavia Street, 1519  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Mrs. Davis,

In prompt reply to your letter May 23rd I inform you that De Chirico never dates his paintings because, as he has declared in various interviews he doesn't think that there is any difference in his paintings, no matter when they have been painted.

I can tell you that yours is a picture which has been painted about 10 years ago and kept in his studio for several years, then, when your "Piazza d'Italia" left De Chirico's studio, a little before sending it here, he sent, as usual, the canvas to have the authentication by the notary N. Gandolfo - Bone, who has written it on the back stamping the canvas with his seal which is given to the notaries by our Government.

Your painting has gone up in price over 50% since last year and as far as I am hearing from the painter, another 50% will be applied by the end of this year.

I am very glad you met Mr. and Mrs. Robert Mayer. We are friends since many, many years. I have been in their wonderful home and I am looking forward to see them again in a near future.

I am very glad to hear that you are expecting to be here in October and I will be delighted to spend some time in your company.

Please, let us know when you are sure to come so that I might arrange something nice for you.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Umberto Giacomini

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
NEW YORK 19

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

June 3, 1963

Mrs. Walter Davis  
1819 Octavia Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana

May 20, 1963

Dear Mrs. Davis:

Miss Dudley has asked me to reply to your letter of May 20. I am sorry our condition report alarmed you. I have looked at the paintings again and I want to assure you that the conditions are actually rather mild. The rubs in particular are what we call "frame rubs," that is the kind that appears at the edges of many pictures where the paint surface has come into direct contact with the rabbet of a frame. The "tear" in El Trompore No. 2 is about 1/8" long at the extreme right edge where the canvas bends around the stretcher.

As you requested, I have had the paintings examined by a Railway Express Agency inspector. His report is enclosed together with the form on which you may submit your claim if you still wish to do so. I suggest you wait until you can examine the paintings yourself. They will be returned as soon as I receive Mr. Soby's instructions to release them.

They both left here in perfect condition and I just called REA Express here to notify them in case of any damage. They, on the other hand, asked me to request that the New York office be contacted so that a man from the New York office could come inspect the paintings.

Yours very truly,

David Vance  
Associate Registrar

Is this possible? I hate to bother you but quite a bit of money is involved in the value of these paintings.

cc: Mr. Soby

Thank you again. I am still looking forward to someday making a visit to New York which will coincide with the Spring Visits to Private Collections.

Sincerely,

*Walter Davis*  
(Mrs. Walter Davis)

*inspected to  
Comm 5.29*

*REA Receipt  
# 211174  
950 in.  
Rec'd May 14  
M.U. 6-7900*

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OCTAVIA STREET  
#1819  
NEW ORLEANS  
LOUISIANA

TR 398 de Chirico

May 20, 1963

Miss Dorothy H. Dudley, Registrar  
Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53rd Street  
New York, New York

Dear Miss Dudley:

Thank you for your acknowledgement of the two paintings I shipped to Mr Soby, care of the Museum.

In reading over "Condition when received" in your letter, I noticed that you said there was a tear in "El Tromtore" No. 2 and that both paintings were rubbed .

They both left here in perfect condition and I just called REA Exrpess here to notify them in case of real damage . They, on the other hand, asked me to request that the New York office be contacted so that a man from the New York office cou d come inspect the paintings .

Is this possible? I hate to bother you but quite a bit of money is involved in the value of these paintings.

Thank you again. I am still looking forward to someday making a visit to New York which will coincide with the Spring Visits to Private Collections .

Sincerely,

*Margie Davis*  
(Mrs Walter Davis)

*inspected to  
come 5.24*

*REA Receipt  
# 21-1374 New Orleans  
\$550 ins.  
Recd. May 14.  
11 U-6-7900*

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Make this report in duplicate. Original to be retained by consignee and attached to claim for loss or damage, if made. Duplicate to be retained.



679 (7-62) Ptd. in U.S.A.

JOINT INSPECTION REPORT

Supt's. Division No. \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK BY (X)	IF CONCEALED LOSS OR DAMAGE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	IF OFFERED FOR DELIVERY IN APPARENT BAD ORDER	<input type="checkbox"/>

Office 541 11th Ave (City & State) Supt. No. 31-284 (Code No.)

Date of Inspection 5-7-64 Hour 10 M.

Consignee J. T. S. The Museum of Modern Art Street 11th St City and State NY  
 Shipper Spone Street Address M City and State New Orleans, LA

D/S 211374 Date 5-7-64 No. Pieces 2 Description 1/2 doz Value \$550  
 Prepaid  Collect  Weight 10 Date delivered 5-7-64 Hour 10 M.  
 Date consignee gave notice or requested inspection 5-24 Hour 10A M.

Kind of container or wrapper, etc. Check by (X)	
Corrugated Fibre Box	Was It New
Solid Fibre Box	Reused <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wooden Box, Ordinary	Taped <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wooden Box, Veneer	Glued
Wooden Box, Wirebound	Stapled
Paper Wrapped	Corded
Burlap Covering	Nailed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Crate	Wire bound
Barrel	Steel banded
Bale	Ventilated
Hamper	Labeled? Yes No
Metal Box	Glass <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Metal Can	Fragile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	With Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Otherwise <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Were goods unpacked before this inspection was made?   
 If SHORTAGE is claimed, state whether it was concealed from outward appearance and any evidence indicating the cause thereof.  
 Was there sufficient space in package to contain the missing goods?  Did comparison of check with invoice or weighing packages verify loss?  
 Were all damaged articles and packing available at time of inspection?  Were broken pieces of article found in shipping container?  
 Was this a factory packed container? YES  NO  CANNOT SAY   
 Does factory packed container carry original factory seals?   
 Is box maker's certificate shown?  Container test pounds \_\_\_\_\_ weight limit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Was shipment marked to indicate contents?

DESCRIPTION OF GOODS AND NATURE OR EXTENT OF LOSS OR DAMAGE

ONE OIL PAINTING "ITALY" BY DE CHIRICO  
 ON RIGHT SIDE ON LEUCE "4" DENT ON WOOD AND CANVAS TANG  
 NO FRAME  
 (WHEN PLACED IN FRAME DENT WENT AWAY) 1 Box of 2

DETAILS OF INNER PACKING

Liners  Partitions \_\_\_\_\_ Exo. Pads \_\_\_\_\_ Other Cushioning \_\_\_\_\_  
 State how otherwise packed or protected BETWEEN CORRUGATED LINERS  
WOODEN BRACE IN CENTER

DAMAGE COULD NOT HAPPEN IN TRANSIT

Was damage of such nature that it could have been noticed at time of delivery?  if improperly boxed, crated, wrapped or packed, how should it have been prepared for shipment to avoid damage?

Can damaged articles be repaired? YES Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Have damaged articles any salvage value? YES  
 What disposition will be made if same? CLAIM

Inspector or Deliveryman C. Bell  
 REA EXPRESS  
 Consignee THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

This Inspection Report does not constitute a notice of claim. Any claim on this shipment must be presented, in writing, within 9 months from date of delivery, as per conditions of the Express Receipt, otherwise claim will be declined.

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

May 31, 1963

Mrs. Walter Davis,  
1819 Octavia Street,  
New Orleans, Louisiana.

Dear Mrs. Davis:

I have looked carefully at your two paintings again and I am more and more convinced that they were painted in very recent years rather than during de Chirico's early (1911-19) "metaphysical" period. They seem to me extremely similar in color and technique to the paintings Mr. Nate Cummins bought from de Chirico himself a few years ago and had sent to me at the Museum to look at. I had the painful duty of telling him that they were late and not early paintings. De Chirico had brought them down from upstairs when Mr. Cummins refused to buy any of de Chirico's current work. De Chirico insisted that he had kept these paintings all these years since his early period. This is absurd. To my certain knowledge - at least so far as anyone can be certain of anything in dealing with an artist's like this - de Chirico has not had in his own possession any "metaphysical" period work since the late 1920s.

I think there can be no question that your pictures were done by de Chirico himself, but their value is very, very much less than if they had been painted during his great early years. I took the liberty of having the inscription on the back of one of the pictures photographed in our Museum's laboratories. The inscription is an affidavit by a Notary Public guaranteeing de Chirico's signature. I am enclosing a print of this photograph, together with two excellent photos of the actual pictures. You may keep the photos with my compliments.

I am sorry to be so discouraging as to the cash value of the two pictures. If they were works of 1914 (the Italian square) and 1917 (the mannequin picture) they would be worth somewhere between \$20,000 and \$30,000 each. In my opinion they are worth far, far less than that - perhaps a tenth of the figures I've given. If there is further information I can give you, don't hesitate to write. I've spent almost thirty years studying the problem of de Chirico's early pictures, but I may be wrong, of course, in my opinion of your pictures; I frankly don't think I am.

Sincerely,

P.S. I will ask the Museum to return the pictures to you soon, express collect.

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

May 1, 1963

Mrs. Walter Davis,  
1819 Octavia Street,  
New Orleans, Louisiana.

Dear Mrs. Davis:

I have your letter of April 25 regarding the two de Chirico paintings you bought in Italy. I must tell you in all frankness that it is impossible to give you an accurate opinion without seeing the original, though 8 x 10 black-and-white would tell me more than these little Polaroid shots. However I have seen literally endless versions of the Piazza d'Italia picture and your may have been among them.

As you probably know, the value of de Chirico's paintings on the Piazza and mannequin themes depend almost entirely ~~on~~ on their dates, that is, if they were really painted during his brilliant early period (1911-19) they are worth a very great deal and if not, not. The art market is flooded with later copies of these pictures, some made by forgers and some, I'm afraid, by the artist himself. Most of the latter copies are not dated. Are yours? I must also tell you in all frankness that I am always especially dubious about early de Chiricos coming from Italian sources. Most Italian critics and collectors know astonishingly little about de Chirico's early, "metaphysical" period because he worked in Paris and sold there from 1911 to 1915 and during the years immediately following only a handful of his pictures were sold and remained there.

Since your pictures are authenticated on the back by de Chirico himself, I think we must assume that he painted them. But when? He has done a number of replicas over the years since roughly 1925 and the difficult is, in my opinion, that he could never recapture the strange and haunting intensity of his early style. If you could send or bring the actual pictures to me at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, I could give you a much more detailed opinion. I have never accepted a fee for looking at heaven knows how many de Chiricos each year, but of course the costs of shipping would have to be assumed by you. Meanwhile 8 x 10 photos would help. You could also send photos to de Chirico himself; his address is 31 Piazza di Spagna, Rome, Italy. If they are outright forgeries he will yell bloody murder. But if he himself painted them his answer as to their dates will almost certainly be evasive. . I advise you not to use my name. He loathes me because, as his first dealer in Italy (1919) told me, "you have taken away his liberty to copy himself."

I hope this information will be of use to you, and I'm sorry to be so dubious.

Sincerely,

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BRUSHY RIDGE ROAD  
NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

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

Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Connecticut  
20 May 1963

Mrs. Marjorie Davis  
1819 Octavia Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Dear Mrs. Davis:

Both your paintings have arrived safely and I have been studying them this afternoon.

I must tell you in all frankness that I don't think either picture was painted by de Chirico during his early, "metaphysical", period. I would like however to study both pictures more carefully next week if you are in no hurry to have them back.

As to value, this depends primarily on whether they were painted during de Chirico's brilliant early period or later on by himself or someone else.

Both pictures seem to have been authenticated on the backs of their canvases by de Chirico. In this case I think it relatively safe to assume that he painted them. But, when?

It would be a great help to know the precise wordings of authentication on the backs of the canvases by persons other than de Chirico himself. I cannot read either signature.

You will hear from me again when I have had a chance to make a further study. I doubt exceedingly that I will change my opinion.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

James Thrall Soby

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OCTAVIA STREET  
# 1919  
NEW ORLEANS  
LOUISIANA

Mr James Thrall Soby  
Brushy Ridge Road  
New Canaan, Connecticut

Thank you, Mr Soby,

for your letter of May 1 regarding the two de Chiricho paintings.

I am going to follow your suggestion and have them shipped to you at the Museum of Modern Art this coming week, as I consider my investment too substantial and also because I, myself, want to know just what I own.

I deeply appreciate your looking into this matter for me, for I consider your opinion on de Chiricho the most valued. I am aware that irrespective of anything what I will receive from you will be an honest and sincere expression.

Again my humble gratitude,

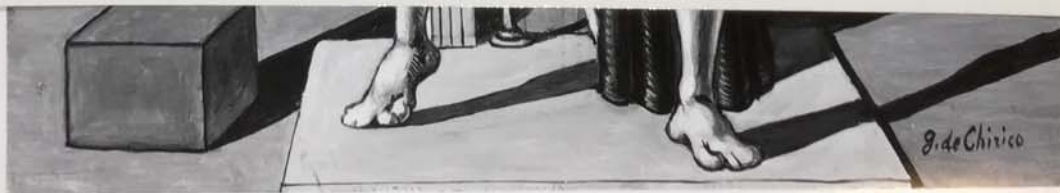
Sincerely yours,

Marjorie Davis

P S Please be kind enough to see that they are returned Express Collect when you have completed your scrutiny.

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*Thank you very much once more.*

*Sincerely*

*Marionie Davis*

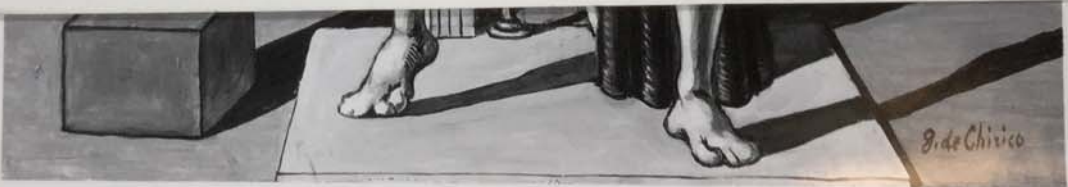
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S-18.454



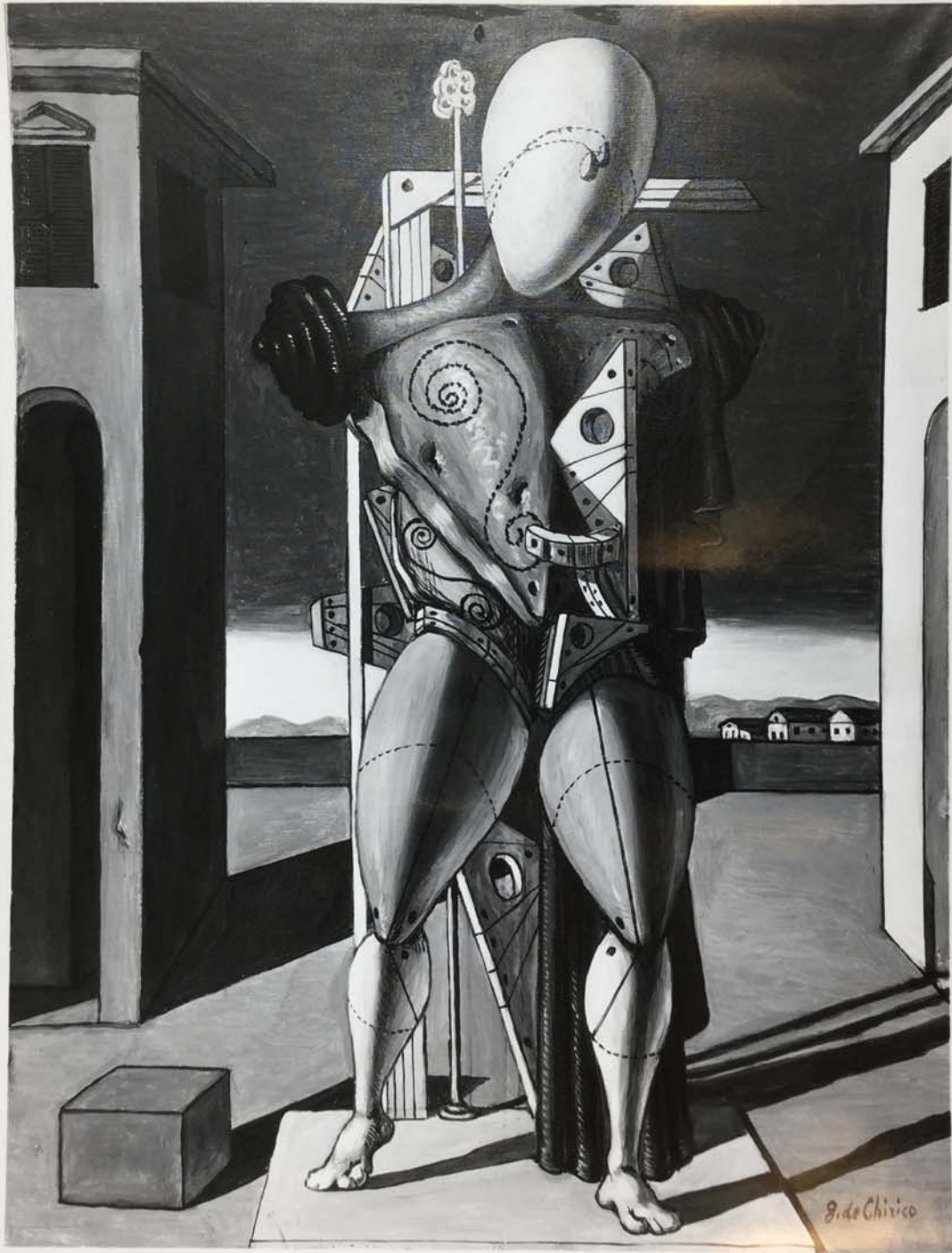
Thank you very much once more.

Sincerely

Marionie Davis

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*Thank you very much once more.*

*Sincerely*

*Marionie Davis*

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ANS

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S-18.455

Thank you very much once more.

Sincerely

Marionie Davis

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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OCTAVIA STREET  
# 1819  
NEW ORLEANS  
LOUISIANA

May 23, 1963

Dear Mr. Soby :

I just received your letter of May 20, and I am sitting right down to answer your questions. First, please keep the paintings as long as you deem necessary to study them.

I am sorry that I did not give you enough information in my previous letters about the galleries where we purchased them.

"Piazza Italia" was purchased from the Florence Art Gallery 3 Via Tornabuoni, Florence, and its director is Sr Umberto Gianesi. He told us that this painting came from the collection of a very old gentleman in Florence, and it did come out of an old mahogany frame before it was shipped to us. I had spoken to Mr Robert Mayer of Chicago and Winnetka, about Sr Gianesi, and it seems that he met him during World War II. Mrs Mayer is the daughter of Nate Cummins whom you may be acquainted with. But I noticed that the signature on both paintings under de Chirico's is that of the man who owns the gallery in Rome where we purchased the other, "El Trombone". His name is Sr Antonio Russo, Piazza di Spagna 9, Roma. Sr Russo told us that he had the exclusive distributorship of di Chirico's paintings in Italy, and apparently he sold the Piazza to Sr Gianesi. I do know also that he called Sr de Chirico in our presence so that we could meet him, and unfortunately we had to leave early and didn't accomplish this.

I wrote to Sr Russo at the same time I wrote to you asking for dates of both paintings, and to date I have not received an answer. I do know that I had waited to hear from him on another occasion and he was extremely dilatory about answering. If necessary, I can cable Sr Russo or even call him as I am anxious to know everything possible about the paintings at this point.

Both paintings have the stamp of the notary who witnessed de Chirico's signature also, and I will attempt also to find out their names in further communication. I shall write once more to Russo immediately.

Thank you very much once more.

Sincerely

Marionie Davis

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OUTAVIA STREET  
#1919  
NEW ORLEANS  
LOUISIANA

April 25, 1963

Dear Mr. Soby :

I purchased two Giogio de Chiricho's, both oils when my husband and I were in Europe over a year ago. I own a copy of your book on de Chiricho and have enjoyed reading it very much, and I also understand that since you are the foremost authority on this artist that perhaps you will tell me your opinion on my two paintings.

We purchased "Piazza Italia" from the Florence Art Gallery and this painting is reproduced in a book called "Giogio de Chiricho" by Fortunato Bellonzi and published by La Baccassia, Piazza di Spagna 9, Rome. We then purchased "El Trombone" from Senor Antonio Russo of Rome in his gallery which is in the same location. (31" x 23 1/2")

The size of the "Piazza" in centimeters is 60 x 80. I had both paintings notantized as to authenticity but I would still like your opinion as we have quite a bit invested in them. I am enclosing coloroids of both and if you wish any further information, I would be happy to send it to you. If there is any charge for this, naturally, I will be happy to mail you a check.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Davis

(Mrs Walter Davis)

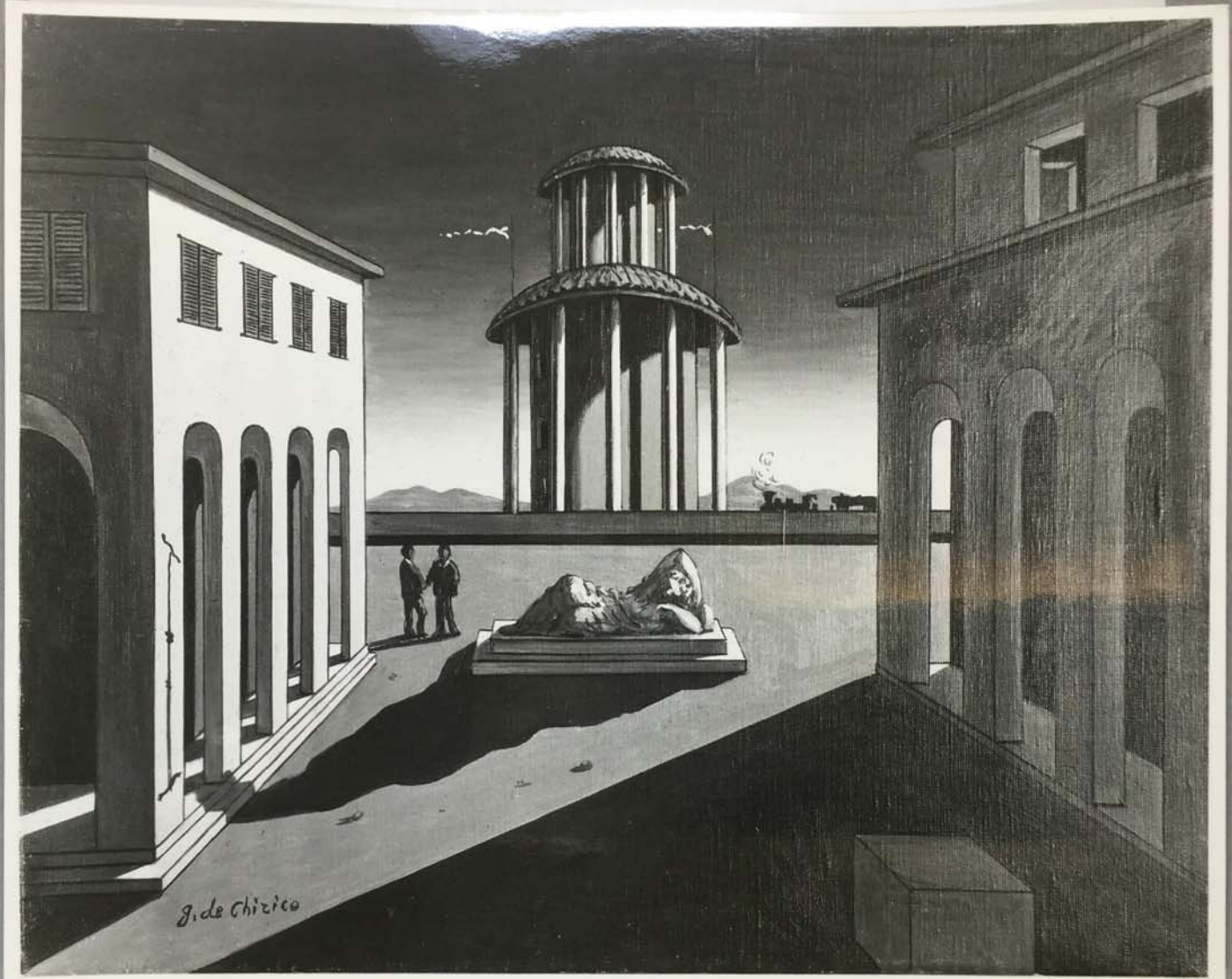
P S I have been a member of the Museum of Modern art for many years as a contributing member and am trying my best to get to New York this May to see one of the home tours.

P S S In taking the snapshots, noticed that both are signed in back by the artist.

P s 3 As there are no page numbers in the book, "Piazza" is the sixth illustration in the book.

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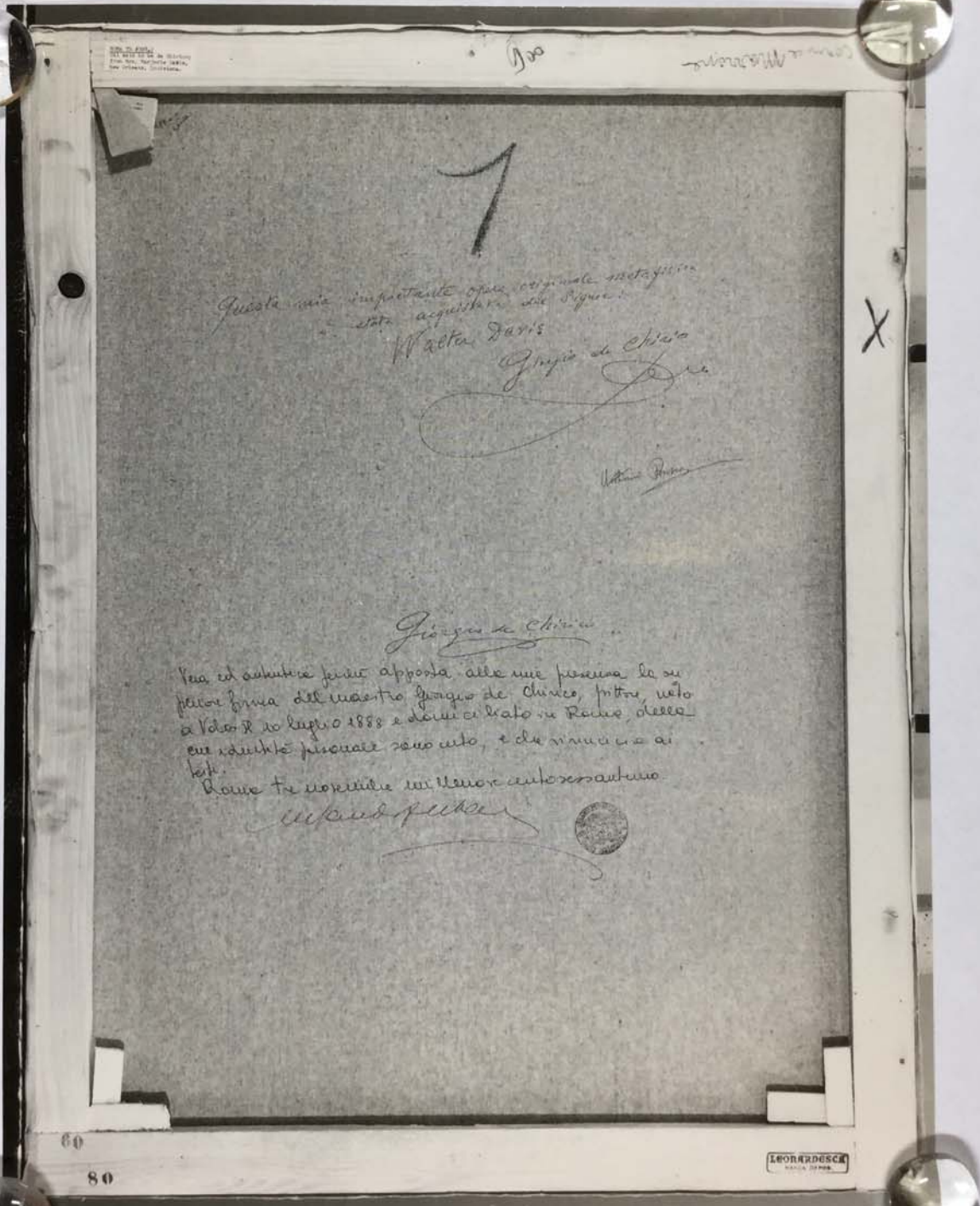
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
111 WEST 53RD STREET  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

100

Walter Davis

7

Questa mia importante opera originale metafisica  
è stata acquistata dal signor  
Walter Davis  
Giorgio de Chirico

*Giorgio de Chirico*

*Walter Davis*

X

*Giorgio de Chirico*

Una ed autentica firma apposta alle mie persone la su  
fetta firma del maestro Giorgio de Chirico, fatta nel  
la volta il 20 luglio 1888 e da lui ci liato in Roma della  
cui autentica personale suo auto, e da rinviare ai  
bati.

Quasi tre monete in milioni autografo.

*Walter Davis*



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LEONARDESCI  
ITALIA 1908

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