

## GIORGIO DE CHIRICO (PUBLISHED IN «LA VRAIE ITALIE»)

### *Giorgio de Chirico*<sup>1</sup>

Giorgio de Chirico is among the most remarkable painters of the artistic renaissance movement taking place in Europe.

This artist is better known in France than in his own country, as he lived for a long time in Paris where he worked until the day of the Italian mobilization.

The elite of the French capital noticed his strange and mysterious paintings at the *Salon d'Automne* and at the *Indépendants*. A few months before the war, *Galerie Paul Guillaume* acquired his work on an exclusive basis and this is where all of his pictorial production of the 1910-1915 period is now found. Poet Apollinaire considered him the most surprising painter of the young generation. He is a solid builder, an enemy of all intentional gaucherie and any kind of trick that serves to hide mediocrity. The avant-garde schools of thought had little influence on him. For this, his work can be called classic, especially if one uses this adjective in its original Latin meaning *classicus* – belonging to the first order –.

The war did not stop Giorgio de Chirico from continuing his work and in the barracks, military hospitals, improvised camps, everywhere, he continued to draw and paint without stop and it is this production of the war years that he exhibited last month at the *Galerie Bragaglia* in Rome.

Since the impetus of the Futurists, Italian painting had not found an expression powerful enough to equal the new French painting. In Giorgio de Chirico's work such expression affirms itself in the blossoming of a new lyricism, in a solid frame of Dantesque seriousness, in the weight of a coloured substance in which solitude, fatality and balance link Giorgio de Chirico's painting to the great Italian tradition.

During the first years he lived in Paris, Giorgio de Chirico worked solitarily, exhibiting little and avoiding contact with the avant-garde intellectual milieu.

To this period belong all of the paintings in which the artist's genial inspiration is found in a recurring motif: a certain aspect of surprise and fatality, of the solitariness and lyricism of the cities of Italy. It is an aspect that one can observe in certain compositions of primitive art where biblical or pagan scenes rise firmly framed between architectural masses. But, although a man of a refined intel-

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ligence can find this strange and lyric aspect in the work of primitive artists, it is a coincidence and almost always has nothing to do with the aim of the artists who created them. In the work of this new painter, the consciousness of the artist reaches the highest degree of clairvoyance, giving his paintings a profound spiritual value which, in line with the word adopted by the artist himself, we can call without fear of being misunderstood: *metaphysic*.

Since 1914 de Chirico has discovered other, vaster horizons in his art. The terrible mystery that he has perceived in the cities of the peninsula, fixed itself on corners that one must turn in order *to see that which lies behind*.

A true Theseus, de Chirico adventured into the disquieting labyrinth of new values, following the thread held by his strange muse. He arrived thus to unknown places scattered in the very places in which our foolish life takes place.

The houses, the rooms, the great halls, the hallways, the open or closed doors, the windows, appeared to him under a new light.

He ceaselessly discovers new aspects and new solitudes, and a feeling of meditation even in the everyday objects that our daily habits have made familiar to a point of concealing them, like a surprise box, like the famous *demon* Heraclitus of Ephesus saw in every thing. This is how biscuits, buttons, matchboxes, geographical maps, pieces of metal or painted wood, framed in a certain way and seen from a certain side, raise themselves to the sublime of a new religion. In the latitude and longitude of a floor or a ceiling, the painter reveals a strange infinity peopled with mechanical and geometric ghosts.

There is fatality in the work of this artist and that which is the most fantastic and the most disquieting fuses in him with the most profound human meaning.