

INSTITUT DE FRANCE  
 ACADEMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS  
 SPEECH BY GIORGIO DE CHIRICO  
 READ ON OCCASION OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS A FOREIGN ASSOCIATE

Meeting of Wednesday November 6, 1974

Mr. President,  
Gentlemen,

Firstly, I must evoke the memory of a great artist who has left us, in place of whom you have elected me an academician.

I tell you therefore, the noble artist no longer with us is the sculptor Lipchitz, whose very individual and powerful oeuvre is known in France and around the world.

With regard to myself, I must say that I feel very honoured to belong to this illustrious company, which was founded in the XVII century and became the Académie des Beaux-Arts de l'Institute de France in 1803 and since that time has given the world illustrious painters, sculptures, architects, engravers, and composers who have bestowed honour upon it through their ideas and their work.

I will do everything in my power to be worthy of this nomination. I will endeavour to perfect my art by deepening and making perfect its form, which is what all real painting is founded on.

It is important for me to add that I have never belonged to any artistic movement, that I have always been independent, and that my principal concern has always been to paint well.

It was here, in Paris, in 1912 that I was consecrated as a painter. This is when I exhibited for the first time in an official manifestation: "Le Salon d'Automne". This is where art critics became interested in my work for the first time and this is where I sold my first painting.

Today, in 1974, after sixty-two years of work, it is in Paris that the Académie des Beaux-Arts is officially consecrating my career as a painter.

I believe that the artist's role in society consists above all in the execution of the work of art; in carrying out this concept the artist must do all he can to allow his oeuvre, as painters and sculptors of the past have shown, in order to come ever closer to reaching perfection, an event which, from a philosophical point of view is a utopia, but striving for such a goal is what makes the creator continuously improve his work.

I have remained faithful to these principles throughout my career as an artist and at the same time, have remained separate from all schools of painting, following my path against opposing currents without worrying about fashion, while remaining faithful to the great virtue *Delacroix* magnified for us by writing in his diary:

"To be bold when one has a past to jeopardise is the greatest sign of strength."

*Translated by Katherine Robinson*