

ANDREW WEISS GALLERY



DE CHIRICO

Born: 1888

Died: 1978

Nationality: Italian

“Art is the fatal net which catches these strange moments on the wing like mysterious butterflies, fleeing the innocence and distraction of common men.”

- Giorgio De Chirico

Giorgio de Chirico was an influential pre-Surrealist and then Surrealist Greek-Italian painter born in Volos, Greece, to a Genovese mother and a Sicilian father. He received his first drawing lessons at the Polytechnic Institute in Athens in 1900. In 1906, the family moved to Munich, where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts, becoming acquainted with the magic realism of Swiss-German painter Arnold Böcklin and the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, who encouraged the artist to "refute reality." At various important junctures in his career De Chirico lived in Paris (1911–15, 1925–32), as well as the United States (1936–38), but he spent most of his life in Italy. In Ferrara in 1917 he met the artist Carlo Carrà, with whom he articulated a "metaphysical" style of painting in which an illogical reality seemed credible. Although the Metaphysical School was short-lived, its ramifications were felt in subsequent art movements, such as Dada and Surrealism.

De Chirico's paintings are characterized by a visionary, poetic use of imagery, in which themes such as nostalgia, enigma and myth are explored. He was an important source of inspiration for artists throughout Europe in the inter-war years and again for a new generation of painters in the 1980s. His abrupt stylistic changes, however, have obscured the continuity of his approach, which was rooted in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, and this has often led to controversy.