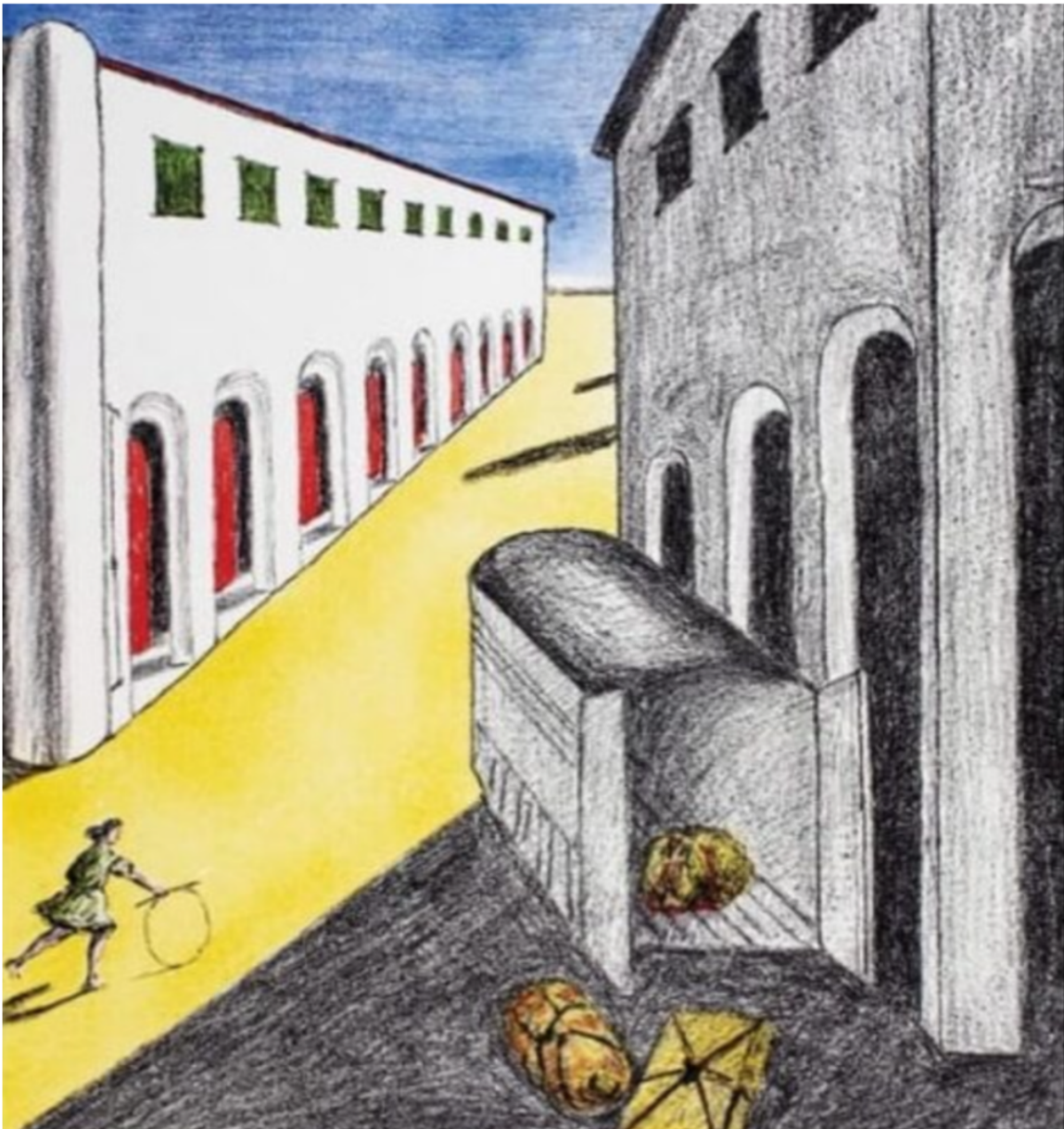


# Lo Sgombero

Giorgio de Chirico



The Italian artist treated urban landscapes and architecture through a metaphysical point of view.

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## **1.- HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.**

Mystery and Melancholy of a Street, oil on canvas was executed in 1914. This painting served as a model for the lithograph shown in this exhibition, Lo Sgombero, executed in 1970. This work illustrates the Italian artist's treatment of urban landscapes and architecture. After the Great War and during the 1920s, Giorgio de Chirico moved away from avant-garde trends, producing art that was described as academic and unoriginal. De Chirico's classical revival earned him the scorn of other artists, especially the Surrealists, who had been greatly influenced by his metaphysical works, but who saw a return to academic art as a loss of originality and artistic value. However, despite the views of modern art historiography, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, Chirico's work after the 1910s shows great artistic quality. Although it does not appear in many art history manuals, the return to the art of the interwar period produced works of great quality.

## **2.- GIORGIO DE CHIRICO'S ARTISTIC CAREER.**

Giorgio de Chirico was born in Greece into an Italian family and at the age of twelve began to study art at the Polytechnic School in Athens, where he pursued an academic education, placing great importance on perfecting his drawing by copying classical models. In 1906, after a brief stay in Florence, the family settled in Munich, where Giorgio de Chirico continued his artistic training at the School of Fine Arts. During this period the young artist came into contact with the work of German and Swiss artists such as Bocklin and Klinger. He also became interested in German philosophy, and the work of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche influenced his artistic style, leading to his metaphysical paintings.

Later, after a brief stay in Turin, he moved with his brother to Paris, where he came into contact with the leading figures of the avant-garde. He exhibited at numerous salons, such as the Salon d'Automne, among others. It was during this period that Chirico produced most of his metaphysical paintings, which later influenced the Surrealist movement.

Chirico's work during this period is characterized by the depiction of classically inspired urban spaces. The arcades, squares and architectural constructions, built with illogical perspectives, are treated in a dreamlike manner, exuding mysticism and mystery. De Chirico integrates the heritage of classical art into his works, but the artist transforms it according to his own intimate universe.

### 3.- ICONOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION.

The Italian artist treated urban landscapes and architecture through a metaphysical point of view. At this stage<sup>1</sup>, Chirico creates dreamlike <sup>2</sup>atmospheres characterized by surrealism, as can be seen in the unreal lighting and impossible architectural perspectives of this creation.

The lithograph shows a deserted street where a profound silence dominates the scene, conveying a feeling of melancholy and mystery. It also shows a little girl running around playing with a hoop among the dark streets that create two classically inspired buildings whose vanishing point shows the lack of a mathematical construction of perspective<sup>3</sup>. The girl, oblivious to everything around her, heads towards the end of the street where a dark, unidentified shadow is stalking her, foreshadowing a bad future.

Throughout de Chirico's career, unidentifiable shadows and stains appear in many of his works. According to many specialists, this is believed to be due to the painter's migraine headaches with visual symptoms. The Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico suffered from repetitive abdominal symptoms and headaches, which he used as the main source of inspiration for his unique style of metaphysical painting.

According to a study by Fisher published in the British Medical Journal in 1988, there are several recurring features in de Chirico's paintings and drawings, with more than 100 paintings of migraine <sup>4</sup>sufferers.

On the right there is a removal wagon and several lumps on the ground. This refers to Chirico's youth, when he made many changes of residence imposed by his father's work, something that left its mark on his childhood imagination.

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1909 and 1914 Giorgio de Chirico created the most famous works of his career, including "Mystery and Melancholy of a Street", in which he depicts a metaphysical art influenced by philosophers such as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

<sup>2</sup> At this stage of his life, Giorgio was very influenced by Schopenhauer's philosophy in which he compared consciousness to "deep waters" where dreams are the deepest part of our consciousness and where all thoughts are related. Chirico captured his dreams in his works, which is why he has such a surrealistic setting.

<sup>3</sup> Schopenhauer's philosophy, which inspired the author, is also characterized by being pessimistic and dark, and this can be reflected in the gloomy setting of this work.

<sup>4</sup> The curator of this report, Mario Martínez Lis, also suffers from visual migraines and confirms that many of the shadows and spots in the paintings coincide with the symptoms experienced during visual migraines: unconnected figures, spots in the landscape, shadows, and so on.



Figure n°1, Photo of the painting "*Lo Sgombero*"



Figure n°2, Photo of the painting "*Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*"

#### 4.- PHOTOS DETAILS OF THE WORK.



Figure n°3, Photo of the artist's handwritten signature

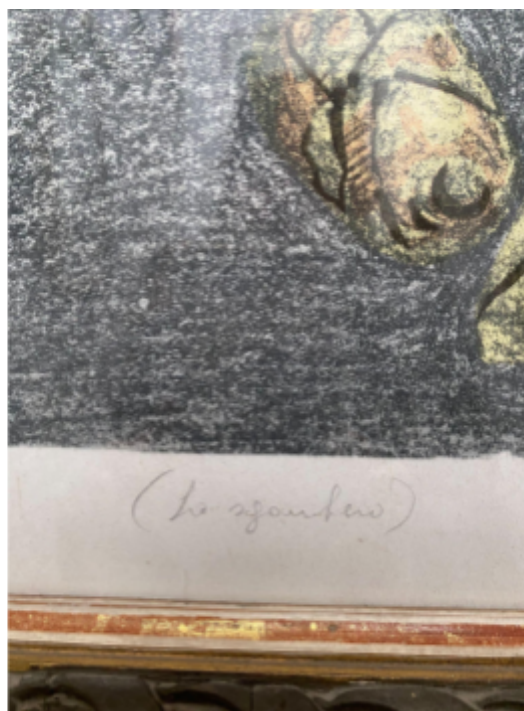


Figure n°4, Photo of the title "*Lo Sgombero*".





*Figure n°5, Photo of the gallery stamp*



*Figure 6, Photo of lithographic numbering*

## 5.- REFERENCES

Dottori, R., “The Metaphysical Parable In Giorgio de Chirico’s Painting”, in *Metafisica*, 2006, n° 5-6, pp. 203-220.

Merijan, A., “*‘Il faut méditerranéiser la peinture’*: Giorgio de Chirico’s Metaphysical Painting, Nietzsche, and the Obscurity of Light” in *California Italian Studies Journal*, 2010, n°1/1, pp. 1-26.