

ROME

"D'après Giorgio"

FONDAZIONE GIORGIO E ISA DE CHIRICO

Artists' houses are always intriguing, for there the dichotomy between person and artist, private and public, vision and banality emerges in all its contingency. The Roman apartment where Giorgio de Chirico lived with his wife Isabella from the period following World War II until his death, in 1978, is no exception: The innovative and original charge of his work clashes with the cozy, bourgeois environment of his home. With this in mind, curator/critic Luca Lo Pinto has invited artists from around the world to install work throughout the apartment, provoking once again the subtle and evergreen question of the relationship between art and life.

Some of the works evoke de Chirico's life and character. After a long and troubled relationship, de Chirico reconciled with his brother Alberto Savinio shortly before the latter's death in 1952. At the funeral, he took three laurel leaves from the crown placed on the tomb and placed them under glass along with a photo of himself and his brother. Thinking of this anecdote, Dan Rees arranged some dry leaves on the glass of a window in the house (*O Brother*, 2012). Since it is well known that de Chirico often declared many of his works to be forgeries (and many fakes still make their way around the secondary market), Benny Chirico decided to make a faithful copy of de Chirico's *Cavalli in riva al mare* (Horses on the Seashore), 1924, and to exhibit it with its frame disassembled, as if by an expert attempting to establish the work's authenticity. Tobias Madison and Kaspar Müller imagined the house itself as a de Chirico painting. They scattered various stones wrapped in preprinted images throughout the apartment, where they were used as doorstops, creating an enigma within that "painting" and evoking a certain idea of movement. Olaf Nicolai must imagine de Chirico as a dreamer: He placed a typewriter, which visitors could use to write on sheets of letter paper bearing the logo of an imaginary dream cooperative, in the artist's bedroom.

Others took their cue from specific de Chirico paintings. Martino Gamper placed a footstool of his design in front of an armchair in the house. Its colors match those in de Chirico's *Bagni Misteriosi* (Mysterious Bathers), 1973, exhibited in the same room. Nina Beier's contribution is *Dead Drop*, 2012, a leopard-print scarf placed on Isabella's bed, bringing to mind the leopard-skin cape she wore in a 1940 portrait in the apartment—as if, having finished posing, she had thrown it onto the bed. Luigi Ontani created a *d'après* of himself, or rather, a work in the style of his own 1978 *Autoritratto nudo d'après Chirico*, which, in turn, quoted de Chirico's famous nude self-portrait of 1945. In Ontani's new photograph, *SenilSeminodo*, 2012, he resembles de Chirico in his self-portrait in a way he couldn't have at the age of thirty.

Giulio Frigo painted two oils on canvas meticulously following the instructions in a manual on pictorial methods that de Chirico wrote in



Luca Vitone, *Natura morta con "Punt e Mes"* (Still Life with Punt e Mes), 2012, plastic food, cloth, glasses, plates, Punt e Mes, water. Installation view. From "D'après Giorgio."

the 1920s, while Luca Trevisani made scans of various motifs from de Chirico's work, such as horses or still-life objects. During the scanning process, the artist moved the different elements around, to produce completely abstract compositions, in contrast to de Chirico's careful figuration. Finally, perhaps one of the most interesting works in the exhibition is by Luca Vitone, inspired by de Chirico's many still lifes—specifically by the fact that he painted them from plastic-fruit models. Vitone set the dining-room table with a sandwich and a slice of cake, all made of plastic, accompanied by the maestro's preferred drink, Punt e Mes, thus remixing the relationship between art and life and paraphrasing the deliberate ambiguity of de Chirico's work.

—Mario Codognato

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.