



Yet what lingers in the artist's works is not the history itself, but the materials and forms that populate today's public and private spaces. While individual elements of Bielawska's sculptures may seem basic and straightforward, on closer inspection, they reveal an intriguing two-fold nature. In *Blue*, the thick layers of linoeum imitate wooden flooring, their pattern mirroring that of the squeaky gallery floor. The veneer board in *Ball*, with a soft pinkish toy trapped inside a tent-like structure, imitates genuine timber; while the clay-covered metal poles of *Yellow*, *Blue*, *Green*, deceive the viewer, leading us to believe we are facing a soft, plastic object. As this game of mimicry unfolds, so does the interplay of recalling and forgetting. What we are dealing with here are 'impossible objects' – not just pieced together from actual real-life items, but purposefully elusive, and difficult to grasp.

In a third room, framed by two sculptures, was a set of drawings. While the artist's sculptures are bound by the constraints imposed by their materials, Bielawska's sketches are not subject to limitations of any kind. Rather than models for future works, they give a glimpse into another realm of the impossible. Done in pencil or ink, the two-dimensional works present imaginary constructions sprawling across the page – subtle, free-floating, often defying the laws of physics.

In *Adopted Shapes*, Bielawska took her visitors into a world inhabited by poetic structures – 'adopted' both in the sense of 'taking up' as well as of 'claiming as one's own'. Silent, precarious, watching: Bielawska's objects lie in wait to ensnare her viewers in a web of associations – until they realize, much as with music, though the tune sounds familiar, the song itself is brand new.

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ITALY

D'APRÈS GIORGIO Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico, Rome

Visiting a dead artist's home is often as macabre as it is enthralling. The masterpieces, relics and tools are frequently arranged as if they were recently touched by the master's hand, so that entire rooms morph into still lives – or 'silent lives', as Giorgio de Chirico called them. De Chirico's own house-museum, at 31 Piazza di Spagna in the heart of Rome, is no exception. The artist lived and worked here for three decades until 1978, when he died at the age of 90. His wife, Isa, survived him until 1990; she had created the foundation in 1986 with Claudio Bruni Sakraischik, curator of the artist's *catalogue raisonné*. One of the extraordinary aspects of the museum is De Chirico's relationship to chronology: acclaimed for the so-called metaphysical paintings he created when he was young, but criticized for his subsequent classicist turn, he often intentionally dated his works incorrectly, as if he had created them much earlier, thus creating 'authentic fakes'. Since the paintings permanently on display in the house belong to de Chirico's second phase, you find yourself lost in a maze of cross-references.

Curated by Luca Lo Pinto, the group show 'D'après Giorgio' (After Giorgio) includes the work of 23 artists: pieces by Marcello Maloberti, Alexandre Singh, John Stezaker and Izet Sheshivary will be added over the next few months (the exhibition runs until January 2013). Momus contributed an audio work, *Hebdomeros* (2012), in which he reads excerpts from De Chirico's eponymous Surrealist novel, written in 1929. The show reflects the artist's passion for staging his subjects like spectacles, as well as for playing with costumes, masks and enigma (Julia Frommel designed costumes for the guides). The title, 'D'après Giorgio' alludes to De Chirico's creed, which he expressed in his *Memoires* (1945), that a real artist should never work after nature, but only after art,

by copying the masters. As if to reinforce his point, the studio boasts a huge, unfinished copy by De Chirico of Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo* (c.1507). Luigi Ontani has put himself centre-stage, with his photographic self-portrait *SenilSeminodo* (SenileSeminode, 2012), installed against the backdrop of an empty canvas. It's a double *d'après*: it mimics both De Chirico's anti-heroic *Autoritratto nudo* (Naked Self-Portrait, 1942) – in which the painter depicted himself with greying hair and flaccid muscles – and a 1978 self-portrait by Ontani in the same pose. Alek O. also activates a time warp: in the dining room, she exhibits the small still life painting of a glass of water, *La Tempesta* (The Tempest, 1996), which she made when she was a teenager. The ghostly presence of the ageing De Chirico is evoked by Luca Vitone, who pays him a tongue-in-cheek homage with *Natura morta con Punt e Mes* (Still life with Punt e Mes, 2012), a replica of the artist's favourite food and vermouth, set on a modest kitchen cloth on the dining-room table, while the paintings of Benny Chirico (*Cavalli in riva al mare 1924*, Horses on the Beach 1924, 2012) and Giulio Frigo (*Soliloquio in un interno metafisico*, Soliloquio in a Metaphysical Suite, 2012) play hide and seek with De Chirico's originals. Nina Beier focuses on the mistress of the house, Isa, by placing a leopard-print scarf (similar to the one Isa wears in a painting at the entrance of the museum) on the corner of her bed. The young Swiss duo, Tobias Madison and Kaspar Müller, contributed an ironic series of brightly painted stones, 'Hospitality (Doorstopper)' (2012).

As the house can only be visited as part of a guided tour, 'D'après Giorgio' is experienced like a story starring its main character De Chirico, and shaped by the interpretations, interests and possible misunderstandings of the members of staff – or occasionally art critics, as Lo Pinto invites friends and colleagues to act as guides – in charge of the visit. The exhibition is like a subtle litmus test for our ways of seeing, understanding or accepting what constitutes the history of art – or perhaps, more accurately, the stories of art.

BARBARA CASAVECCHIA



1
Alicja Bielawska
Ball, 2012, veneer board,
metal and ball, 76×116×71 cm

2
Luca Trevisani
Placet Experiri con Giorgio #1,
2012, installation view

3 & 4
Daniela Ortiz
each: *Untitled*, 2012,
c-type print, 55×39 cm

5
Adrian Piper
LSD Self-Portrait with Tamiko, 1966,
oil on canvas, 102×76 cm