

NAHMAD CONTEMPORARY
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Giorgio de Chirico: *Gladiators* 1927-1930

Independent 20th Century
The Battery Maritime Building at Cipriani South Street
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“Gladiators! This word contains an enigma.”
- Giorgio de Chirico, 1929

NEW YORK—Nahmad Contemporary is pleased to present a selection of works from Giorgio de Chirico’s *Gladiator* series created between 1927-1930 in Paris.

Nearly a decade after creating his famed *Metaphysical* paintings, Giorgio de Chirico (b. 1888, Volos, Greece; d. 1978 Rome, Italy) embarked on a new series of works that summon the gladiatorial tradition from ancient Rome. Infused with the philosophical underpinnings for which he is celebrated, the *Gladiator* paintings capture an intimate expression of the artist’s existence at this pivotal moment in his career. For de Chirico, the 1920s were marked by an onslaught of critical backlash by both the Italian and French artistic communities, particularly for his departure from the *Metaphysical* paintings that were venerated by Europe’s reigning avant-gardists. It was also notably the decade during which the Fascist regime rose to power in Italy, espousing extreme Italian nationalism by invoking the glory of Classical antiquity.

It is within these contexts that de Chirico created his *Gladiator* series, presenting an enigmatic and deeply personal portrayal of the ancient Italian combatants. Rendering the gladiators with elusive expressions and gawky bodies, or in cacophonous frays of fumbling action that defy associations of combative dexterity, de Chirico simultaneously invoked his Classical heritage, reflected his fraught sense of artistic belonging, and challenged what Walter Benjamin called the contemporary “aestheticization of politics.”