

Giorgio de Chirico

The Nostalgia of the Poet, 1914

Oil and charcoal on canvas, 90 x 41 cm

The painting, part of a series on the theme of the poet, features various objects which, grouped together, appear unusual and out of context and allude to the theme of absence. They are compressed into a narrow, vertical format, creating an enigmatic and claustrophobic space. In the foreground, on the bottom left, is the sculpted bust of a man in profile wearing round glasses. In the background, on the right, is a black cloth mannequin traced in white, shown in three-quarters. It symbolizes an erased identity and is the artist's trademark. Behind it is a column, interrupted by the picture frame, on which there is a stylized outline of a fish—perhaps a carp, defined by Apollinaire as “the fish of melancholy.”