

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist: Paul Delvaux
Title: *Chrysis*
Medium: limited edition poster

b. 1897, Antheit d. 1994, Veurne

Born in Antheit in 1897, Paul Delvaux was one of the major exponents of Surrealism in Belgium. He began his training in 1920 at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, initially as an architect, but he soon changed to decorative painting. His earliest works were strongly influenced by the Flemish Expressionism of painters such as Constant Permeke and Gustav De Smet. In the mid-1930s, however, he turned decisively to Surrealism, not as an orthodox member of the movement but to a large extent under the influence of Giorgio De Chirico's *Pittura Metafisica*, or metaphysical art.

Delvaux's dream-like vision eschewed the shocking and disconcerting juxtapositions sought by other Surrealists. He chose familiar scenes that he activated with figures placed in odd or unexpected situations. The hallucinatory quality of the imagery was emphasized by precise draughtsmanship and recognizable, everyday colouring.

Preferring nocturnal scenes because of their mysteriousness and their associations with childhood fears, Delvaux's works often feature nude or semi-nude females. These figures are usually presented as placid and almost innocent nudes totally lacking in sensuality. As impassive and static as sculptural monuments, such figures are of an almost unvarying type: blonde, with large dark eyes, rather heavy breasts and black pubic hair.

Delvaux's work is striking in its unity; apart from in the very early works before he had found his way, he was one of those rare artists who found his style almost at the outset and remained faithful to it throughout his career. His work is held in many international collections, including the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Tate Modern in London.

Information contained in this article is from *The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin* (David Scott, 1989)

This information has been compiled by Art Collections assistants, interns, and volunteers
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