

# Emile Chambon (1905-1993)

## Between dream and reality

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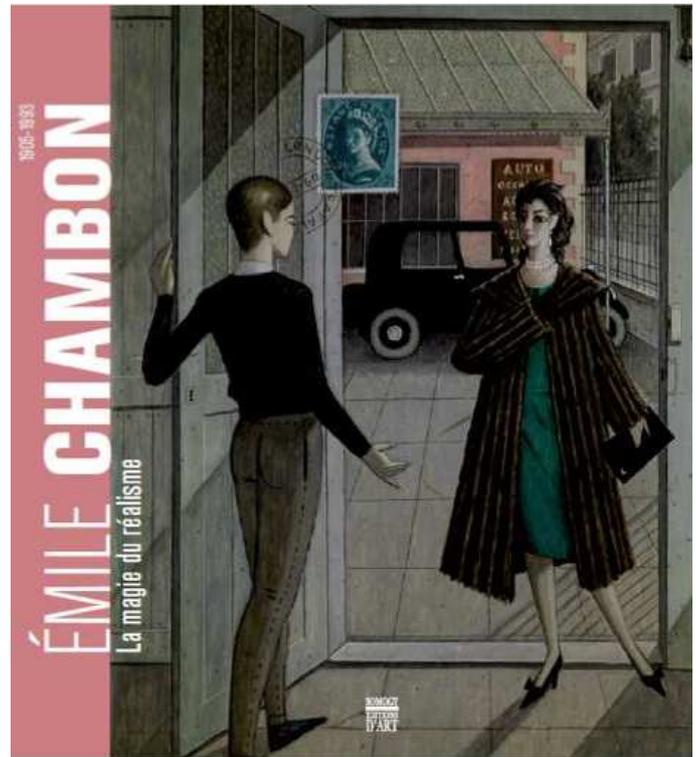
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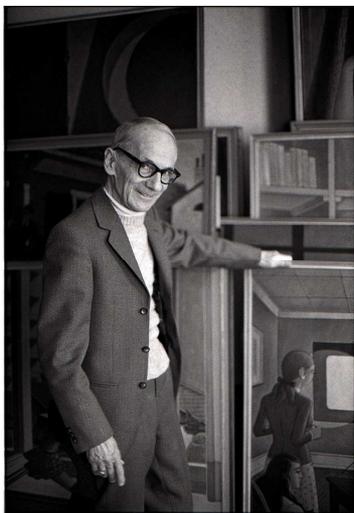
### THE BOOK

**First monography on the work of Emile Chambon,**

Author : **Philippe Clerc**, art historian

Co-publishing Emile Chambon Foundation, Geneva and Somogy Art Publishers, Paris.

### The painter



Emile Chambon is a XXth century Genevan artist, great admiror and defender of Courbet, Caravaggio and Valloton.

To abstraction he preferred figurative painting, and eventhough he practised his art independantly from any major artistic current, his work does show some similarities with cubism and surrealism.

Chambon was close friends with **Louise de Vilmorin** who was a true support for him. **Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan**, with whom he shared a passion for primitive arts, was also one of his friends and admirors.

### The iconography

The book retraces the career of the Genevan painter, concentrating mostly on his paintings but also showing some less known drawings and engravings. Chambon places the plastic quality of his subject matters at the center of his work, well above the technical aspects of his painting. For this reason he often changes subjects matters and paints variations on themes which he likes. His work is dominated by three main themes: **mythology, eroticism and**

**dreams.** Eventhough his compositions are meticulously elaborated, showing a great love for ornament and detail, Chambon's instinct, imagination and humour dominate his work.



The pieces reproduced in the book mostly come from the Emile Chambon Foundation. Some elements com from various Swiss museums (Geneva, Lausanne, Fribourg, Zurick, Aarau) and international art galleries such as the **Primavera Gallery** of New York which has loaned five major pieces. Prestigious private collectors, such as **HRH the Princess Marina of Savoy** have also loaned works by him.

### HRH the Princess Marina of Savoy's tribute to Chambon

HRH the Princess Marina of Savoy, a long time admiror of Chambon's work, has written the foreword to the book. The princess met Chambon when he lived in Carouge, she served as a model for several of his paintings. HRH the Princess Marina of Savoy is represented as a water ski champion, which she was, and also as Amphitrious in several mythological scenes.



## A great collector



Chambon was initiated to African art by his uncle who had worked in Africa as a Colonial Administrator and had become a great collector of primitive art. Chambon inherited his uncle's collection and completed it with high quality pieces he purchased from dealers and collectors such as Pierre and Suzanne Vérité and also Georges J. Kaspar.

Some of the most important pieces of his collection are reproduced in the book, among which **masks and statues** which now belong to the Geneva Ethnography museum.

The book also illustrates works by friends and contemporaries of Chambon, such as Jean-Louis Gampert et Albert Chavaz.

## THE EXHIBITION

The publishing of the Emile Chambon monography is simultaneous to the exhibition ***Emile Chambon, chosen pieces*** held **between march 31st and avril 30th 2011** at the MIMESIS gallery of Contemporary Art in the old city of Geneva. This retrospective will show major works which have never been exhibited before, along with drawings and paintings coming from the Emile Chambon Foundation and private collections. Personal archives (letters of Louise de Vilmorin, of the prince Aga Khan and photographs will also be exhibited).

MIMESIS Contemporary Art  
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tél. +41 22 310 74 14

Opening hours:  
Tuesday-saturday 11 am to 7 pm  
Or by appointment

## **THE AUTHOR**



**Philippe Clerc** is an art historian. After graduating from the Fribourg University, he worked for three years at Christie's in Geneva (Contemporary art department and Jewels department).

He now works on a free lance basis with numerous museums, cultural institutions and private collectors. He is a specialist of the art market and of Swiss painters, such as Corot and the Swiss aspect of his career.

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