Morandi
Master of Modern Still Life
MORANDI
MASTER OF MODERN STILL LIFE

FLAVIO FERONZI AND
ELISABETTA BARISONI
THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MART’s president, Franco Bernabè, and I are privileged to present Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life, organized in collaboration with The Phillips Collection. Since opening its new site in 2002, MART has committed to developing relationships with cultural institutions worldwide. Our first collaboration with the Phillips was in 2005, when we hosted its masterpieces, opening the door to further joint projects. In September 2009, To See as Artists See: American Masterworks from The Phillips Collection will open at MART, bringing to Rovereto American works not otherwise seen in Italy.

After the successful 2008 Morandi retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, placing Morandi in historical and artistic perspective, Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life, including forty works from MART and selected private Italian collections, speaks in a quieter, less official voice about one of the most important Italian masters of the twentieth century. In this way, it is entirely in keeping with the intimate atmosphere of Duncan Phillips’s museum. Phillips purchased two paintings by the Bolognese master in the 1950s, and this exhibition sets them in a larger context.

Both MART and the Phillips are expressions of a strong artistic vision on the part of great collectors, and many of the works in this exhibition have been lent from private collections. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the collectors who have made long term loans of their Morandis to MART, especially Paola Giovanardi and Cristiana Aspesi Curti Giovanardi, whose support of this museum is greatly appreciated. Augusto Giovanardi’s heirs are to be commended for preserving his strong cultural vision and honoring his wish to share his lifelong artistic interests. The Giovanardi Morandis are the core of this exhibition. I would also like to thank the other collectors who have anonymously loaned their precious works to this exhibition.

At the Phillips, I would like to thank Director Dr. Dorothy Kosinski, who shares my love for Morandi’s silent poetry; Chief Curator Eliza Rathbone, who has managed the project with great passion; and Chief Registrar Joseph Holbach, who has enthusiastically promoted this collaboration since 2005. In Italy, I am deeply grateful to all the people who have helped to shape and organize this exhibition, especially Enrico Vitali, Lorenza Selleri and the staff of Museo Morandi in Bologna, and Massimo Di Carlo and Laura Lorenzoni of Galleria dello Scudo in Verona.

Gabriella Belli
Director, MART

FORWARD
In 1957, The Phillips Collection was the first American museum to hold a one-person exhibition of work by Giorgio Morandi. It seems particularly fitting and exciting, therefore, that this museum is the only venue in this country for Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life, an exhibition born of our reciprocal relationship with MART, the Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto. Many of the paintings in this exhibition have never before been seen in the United States and greatly enrich our understanding of Morandi’s stylistic evolution and achievement.

We treasure our blossoming association with MART and with our Italian colleagues, our collaborators on this exhibition. I am grateful to MART’s director, Gabriella Belli, for making it possible for us to present these exquisite examples of Morandi’s work in our galleries, and to Elisabetta Bansoni, MART’s exhibition curator, for all her efforts to bring this exhibition into being. We are grateful to Flavio Fargoni for the depth of knowledge of Morandi’s work that he brings to his essay in this publication. Closer to home, I extend my deepest thanks to the lenders in this country for sharing their beautiful paintings and etchings by Morandi with us: the National Gallery of Art, the Smith College Museum of Art, the St. Louis Art Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Robert and Aimee Lehrman, and Susan Paine. I am particularly grateful to Eliza Rathbone, chief curator at the Phillips, for her hard work on the exhibition, and to Joseph Holbach and Sarah Anderson in our registrar’s office for their attention to every detail required to make these loans possible. I would also like to thank Johanna Halford-MacLeod, editor in chief, and to recognize Jelena Cuca, Elizabeth Nicholson, Sandra Schlachtmeyer, and Daniel Yett for their work on this book. No exhibition is possible without financial support and we are exceedingly grateful to Fenner and Ina Milton for their generous gift to this project and for their enthusiasm for returning Morandi’s unique work to a Washington audience. We are also deeply indebted to Lockheed Martin for supporting this exhibition and for its sustained support of The Phillips Collection.

Dorothy Kosinski
Director, The Phillips Collection
GIORGIO MORANDI: CRITICISM, CITIES, SOURCES, SERIES

FLAVIO FERGONZI
Giorgio Morandi died in June 1964 at the age of seventy-four, universally regarded as the greatest Italian painter of his time. The surviving masters of Italian modernism had been in decline for some time: Giorgio de Chirico had abandoned any dialogue with modern art and was painting neo-baroque pictures; Carlo Carrà had devoted himself for decades to a lightweight postimpressionism, as though regressing to the consolation of some private nineteenth century. By contrast, in the 1960s, Morandi’s paintings appeared to be extraordinarily topical.

The sharpest critics, the most refined collectors, and younger artists considered the aging Bolognese master an exponent of the most advanced painting. His invariably spare, spatially ambiguous, monochrome still lifes as well as his landscapes, with their endless variations, were part of the Italian debate on modern art. Significantly, Morandi’s glorification by the critics and his greatest market success took place in the last fifteen years of his life, and not posthumously, as is frequently the case with long-lived artists of repute.1 The steps in this process occurred in the postwar years: in 1948, Morandi won first prize for an Italian painter at the Venice Biennale, the first held in post-Fascist Italy; in 1957, he received first prize at the São Paulo Biennale, in a close contest with international abstract art; and in 1959, the presence of his work at Documenta 2 in Kassel facilitated comparisons with art informel and abstract expressionism.

A summary of the most important critical appraisals published in Italy in the year of Morandi’s death makes a good starting point for an assessment of his reputation. The views of Lamberto Vitali, Francesco Arcangeli, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, and Roberto Longhi reflect the accumulation of decades of ideas that place him clearly in twentieth-century Italian cultural history.

The first major book about Morandi appeared in January 1964, published by Edizioni del Milione.2 Morandi, who lived to see it, had chosen the reproductions himself, checked the quality of the color plates, and determined what was included in the critical anthology. Vitali, the author of the introduction, was a key figure in Milan’s art world.3 A sophisticated collector of old masters and modern art and a writer on art, he made Morandi’s acquaintance in the late 1920s and followed his work, as a critic and, above all, as a collector, buying many crucial works, sometimes directly from the artist. In 1957, Vitali published a splendid edition of Morandi’s printed works.4 In Vitali’s interpretation, Morandi the painter is a solid, quiet, middle-class hero, able to understand the major artistic revolutions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and to draw fundamental lessons
from them through study of their represen-
tative works: from cubism, a radical analysis
of space; from metaphysical art, geometric
formal rigor; from abstract art, the tension in
framing a composition and imposing geometry
on it. But Morandi, according to Vitali, was
adept at keeping hold of the two tenets that
made him a great artist: first, the need for a
plastic style that could convey the volumetric
fullness and richness of light and shadow in
depicted objects; second, a stubborn faith-
fulness to the object under scrutiny. In the
context of Italian twentieth-century painting,
marked all too often by vague proclamations
and forays into literature and ideology (for ex-
ample, the futurists’ provocations, the dreary
return to tradition during the Fascist period,
the sterile controversy between social real-
ism and abstraction in the postwar years), Mo-
randi, according to Vitali, understood that “the
subject may be a mere figurative pretext,” and
his “deep exploration is a way – indeed may
be the only way – to achieve the result.”5

Vitali was not the first choice to write
the introduction to the 1964 publication.
Gino Ghiringhelli, director of the Galleria del
Milione, the artist’s exclusive agent in Italy,
and Morandi had picked Arcangeli. A young
art historian from Bologna, Arcangeli was a
pupil of Longhi, author of a 1961 monograph
on Morandi’s paintings and prints. Morandi ex-
pressed dissatisfaction with Arcangeli’s text,
especially where he argued against the criti-
ical ideas of Cesare Brandi and of Giulio Carlo
Argan, and he persuaded Milione to replace it
with one by Vitali.6 When Giulio Einaudi, Italy’s
most important cultural publisher, expressed
interest in Arcangeli’s essay, Morandi, know-
ing that its publication by Einaudi would mean
widespread distribution, blocked the effort by
insisting that Ghiringelli stick to the original
contract. Arcangeli’s essay, in a smaller edi-
tion, was published by Milione in July 1964, a
few months after the artist’s death.7 The text
immediately became a point of reference in
Italy, not only as regards a critical interpreta-
tion of Morandi, but also for the entire history
of twentieth-century art.

Arcangeli’s Morandi is a leading exponent
of his century’s European culture. Like the
poets T. S. Eliot and Eugenio Montale, he was
able to find in existential solitude an emotional
harmony in the humble artifacts of human
civilization. Like Paul Klee or Chaim Soutine,
he transformed his isolation into an active
dialectic with the rapid artistic and poetic de-
velopments in avant-garde art. His fifty years
as a painter entailed a descent into the deep-
est, unplumbed levels of consciousness. The
periods preferred by Arcangeli were those
(around 1922, 1930, and the years of World
War II) during which the solidity of Morandi’s
vision begins to crack, the colors become
duller, the drawing more uncertain, the chiar-
oscuoro more exaggerated. In a series of well-
known pages by Arcangeli, the fracture of
Morandi’s pictorial unity and his expression
of a world of solitude and anxiety are associ-
ated with events that were distant, formally
and geographically, from the artist’s Bolo-
gna, where the artist had always worked.
His companions on the journey, according to
Arcangeli, were Wols and Jean Fautrier, Mark
Rothko and Nicolas de Staël. Morandi indig-
nantly rejected Arcangeli’s comparisons.
The most important comments on Vitali’s
book were made by Ragghianti, professor of
aesthetics and art history at the University of
Pisa, a political leader during Italy’s liberation
from Fascism, and Italian art criticism’s great-
est postwar champion of the philosophical
ideas of Benedetto Croce.8 In Critica d’arte,
the magazine he relaunched in 1954, Ragghi-
anti began a review of Vitali’s book by quoting
Morandi. In a 1957 radio interview intended
for Italians living in America, Morandi main-
tained, like Galileo, that: “The great book of
nature is written in mathematical language.
Its characters are triangles, circles and other
geometrical figures,” concluding, “Nothing is
more abstract than reality.”9 Reprising an idea
that he had expressed previously, Ragghianti
found geometric inspiration at Morandi’s po-
etic core10 and invited the reader to a “basic
architectural” analysis “of his paintings, with
plans and sections.”11 According to Ragghi-
anti’s interpretation, Morandi started from
“metric and syntactic intuitions” from which
the selection of the model, the spatial rela-
tionship between it and the composition on
the canvas, the control of the chiaroscuro, the chromatic relationships, and even the form of the brushstrokes followed logically. In other words, Morandi tended toward geometric abstraction and was related, in the twentieth century, only to Piet Mondrian.

Morandi’s death was marked by a moving obituary, broadcast on television by Longhi, his contemporary and the most illustrious living Italian art historian.12 (Morandi’s sisters, with whom the artist lived all his life, later wrote Longhi, saying that television was admitted into their home only so that they could watch the broadcast.)13 Thirty years earlier, concluding a memorable opening lecture of the academic year at Bologna University, Longhi set Morandi in historical perspective, placing him in the lineage of naturalistic Bolognese painting extending from Vitale da Bologna in the fourteenth century to Giuseppe Maria Crespi in the eighteenth.14 In 1945, Longhi interpreted Morandi’s painting as a long inquiry into natural appearance to the point of “stratifying tonal memories.” According to Longhi, the subject per se did not matter much to Morandi; what counted for him, as for Proust in A la recherche du temps perdu, was the “degree of penetration of the visual impression,” arising from the subject at a purely spiritual level.15 Longhi titled the obituary, Exit Morandi, alluding to the passing of not only an artist, but also of the last generation of artists in the full sense of the term. The key word in Longhi’s text was “human”: the heights of Morandi’s poetic achievements would be fully recognized only when “a history that could be called civilized, namely, one able to comprehend the human dimension always expressed in an artist’s work,”16 began to take the measure of the arts of the past fifty years (from the avant-garde onward). Moreover, Longhi observed that a “capricious nemesis” had caused Morandi to die on the same day that pop art was exhibited in Italy for the first time, at the Venice Biennale, pop art being regarded by Longhi as “inhuman” art par excellence.

To Vitali, Morandi was a champion of fidelity to painting’s immutable rites, following the gossamer thread of linguistic revolutions; to Arcangeli, he was a witness to the tragic condition of contemporary man; to Ragghianti, a lucid spatial architect; to Longhi, the last representative of an age in which painting was still profoundly human. What did such different interpretations have in common? In celebrating Morandi, all of them evoked an Italy that had never existed, or that had been personified by only a tiny minority of Italians: an Italy of consistent, thoughtful, cultivated people, standing apart from, yet aware of, the best contemporary culture, obsessively focused on the quality of their own work, able to look at themselves and their age with that attitude that Longhi had magisterially defined as “civil sadness.”

BOLOGNA, FLORENCE, FRIENDS

Morandi’s fame as a painter spread in Italy beyond a small circle of enthusiasts only in 1939, when he was assigned his own room in the third Rome Quadriennale, an exhibition of national importance. He chose to arrange it as a thirty-year retrospective. A generation of cultured Italians, accustomed to looking at painting for the most part with tools derived from Croce’s idealism, sprinkled, in the case of the younger ones, with existentialism, found in Morandi’s spare still lifes and uncompromising Apennine landscapes a sort of mute protest against the rhetorical humanism professed by the Fascist regime.17 Before that date, Morandi was appreciated by a few artists, literati, and art critics. His paintings were bought by them and by the occasional shrewd collector who sensed the quality of his work and the possibility that it might appreciate in value. Few of his admirers were from Bologna, the city where Morandi was born and lived. The majority were from Florence, the city Morandi liked best for its artistic tradition and its intellectual debate that had renewed an assertive Italian culture in the years of La Voce magazine (1909–1916). To Morandi, who hated travel and being away from home, Florence offered the advantage of being just a day trip from Bologna. Although Longhi’s opening lecture of 1934 had identified Morandi as the last in an illustrious lineage of Bolognese painters, the twenty-year-old who emerged from the Accademia,
founded in 1584 by Ludovico Carracci, began
determinedly to look at Paul Cézanne, Henri
Rousseau, André Derain, and Pablo Picasso.
In a visit with Arcangeli to an exhibition of
the Baroque painter Guido Reni, Morandi ex-
pressed impatience and exasperation with the
pictorial mechanics of the Carracci tradition,
finding fault with its rhetoric and composi-
tional vagueness. By contrast, he appreciated
isolated segments of Reni’s work, such as
the depiction of Bologna at the base of the
Madonna of the Rosary and some of the rapid
work of the late, unfinished figure paintings.
Morandi’s pictorial research, indeed, ran coun-
ter to that developed by the Carracci school.
The balance between naturalistic observation
and compositional re-invention typical of the
Bolognese tradition was far removed from
Morandi’s approach to painting, in which de-
sign, in its purer, architectural expression and
in its relationship to the proportions of the
canvas, always determines the poetic qual-
ity of the work. He opted for a severe, cold,
and intellectual form of painting, an ascetic
palette, painting that was the opposite of the
richer and more modulated recent Bolognese
tradition, represented by Luigi Bertelli’s land-
scapes and the refined postimpressionism of
Carlo Corsi.
Almost unconsciously and by osmosis,
however, Morandi absorbed a crucial aspect
of Bologna’s pictorial tradition: recognition of
the primary importance of technique. Inferior
to the Florentines in drawing, to the Venetians
in color, and to the Romans in composition,
artists of the Bolognese school concentrated
on the techniques of painting and printmak-
ing and on the possibility of codifying these in
 teachable form. Morandi, studying apparently
insignificant details of famous old masters and
modern works for lessons on chiaroscuro, or
the use of color, or composition, certainly
did not believe in the possibility of large-
scale figure paintings, believing instead in
the need for moderns to concentrate on the
lesser genres of still life and landscape. He
was above all a painter who, through thor-
ough technical investigation of a painting, re-
duced it to its purest elements, to the point
where he could then use it for his own work.
Morandi amassed a wealth of knowledge by scrutinizing the technique of the great masters. The knowledge was technical, not stylistic: in other words, his approach ran counter to the "return to the craft" espoused by Carrà and de Chirico who, between 1919 and 1920, quoted visually and stylistically from Giotto or late fifteenth-century artists, and – in the case of de Chirico – began copying the originals of the great masters in museums.

Bologna was perfect for Morandi’s way of working. The cultural and major visual sources were elsewhere. His studio on via Fondazza allowed him to decant them and adapt them to the tempo of a tranquil life, without the shocks and scandals of modernity. It was a place where he could study modern painting, passionately and skeptically, in black-and-white reproductions, question its deepest purpose, and judge it with needed detachment.

From the outset, Morandi’s Bolognese friends devotedly cultivated his myth: that of a silent, irritable, often sarcastic artist, with old-fashioned passions and reserve; an artist whose qualities the non-Bolognese (Carrà, de Chirico, Ardengo Soffici, Cipriano Eufisio Oppo, Luigi Bartolini) discovered only over time, associating them closely with the antimodern climate permeating the city: fourteenth-century churches, low porticos, brick houses, quiet workshops, at a time when modern architecture and the rhythms of industrial and commercial life were starting to overwhelm city centers elsewhere in Italy. When the Bolognese, including those best informed about international modern art, wrote about him, they too stressed Morandi’s "Bolognese-ness." His closest friend, Leo Longanesi, a restless literary man and cultural promoter, who published Morandi’s paintings in 1928 in a Bolognese periodical, L’Italiano, established an interpretation that took hold: “To see one of his pictures is to know his character, his family, his home, his street, his town. His colors, lightly veiled in dust, are those of a modest Bologna, a Bologna of quiet streets and earth-toned shops, bakeries, groceries, and objects discarded by people who live in the center of town. His is the delicate, weightless light that filters into his street.”

This cliché, which soon spread in Bologna and beyond, had obvious limits: it aimed to drag Morandi into the antimodern, anti-French debate that was fashionable at the time in Italian cultural and political circles. Morandi was not put out by this, however, because he felt protected in his role of painter anchored to the reality of things, in tune with a certain indolent and conservative character typical of the Bolognese. He knew that the quality of his painting sufficed to make him exceptional.

In contrast to Bologna, at least until the end of the 1930s, Florence was Morandi’s main link with the mediators of modernity. There, he could study the frescoes of Giotto, Masaccio, and Paolo Uccello in the original and try to find a link between them and the wide-eyed, felt vision of Rousseau. At the Uffizi, he could compare his own work with the great masterpieces of the Renaissance and study the self-portraits he loved in the Vasari Corridor. At the Seeber and Ferrante Gonnelli bookstores, he could find the latest publications on French art. Florence was also the place where, from 1908, Soffici’s critical message had emerged, imparting to Italian artists the lessons of French impressionism, of Cézanne and Rousseau, of Georges Braque and Picasso, as the leading shapers of modernity, contrasted with the babel of historical and symbolist revivals of the Venice Biennials. In addition, Florence was home to the Alinari photographic studio, where Morandi could order the photographs of works of art that were his principal school of painting over the years. Starting in the mid-1920s, it was to Florence that artists and critics associated with Il Selvaggio gravitated. In this elitist periodical, with its anti-bourgeois tone and its promulgation of antiurban and antiauthoritarian “original” Fascism, Morandi found his first true supporters: Mino Maccari, Achille Lega, Sandro Volta, and Soffici promoted his painted work, but were especially keen on his prints, at a time when he was isolated, without contacts and without sales.

In Morandi, the Florentines saw an example of “peasant” adherence to painting the real. They recognized his contact with the great Italian artistic tradition and his ability to sublime realism into classicism.
Soffici’s words of 1932, were typical: “Equilibrium is finally achieved. The substantial truth, the absolute sincerity, the normal and thus human vision of poetic reality work together to animate the schema devised by will and science. The result is a perfect artistic organism, full and vital, and therefore of an exemplary and classical nature. By this I mean classical in the Italian manner: that is, simultaneously real and ideal, objective and subjective, traditional.”

Soffici as critic, declared Fascist, promoter – after 1920 – of a return to a proudly antimodernist Italian tradition, was one thing; Soffici as connoisseur of painting was quite another. In 1931, at the first Rome Quadriennale, he bought two of three paintings exhibited by Morandi. This purchase marked a decisive step in Morandi’s critical fortune. In the few pages devoted to Morandi in the Quadriennale, it is worth recalling the words of Nino Bertocchi, a Bolognese painter and later a winner of the sought-after critics’ prize, describing his fellow townsman as a petit maître with a modernist mania who painted with a “greasy, oily, messy painterly matter” and who, to please the snobs of the moment, had “smothered emotion and created the imbalances that prevent a work of art from acquiring the magic of unique creations.” In this context, Soffici’s purchase was a clear and far-reaching statement. The most respected judge of modern painting, here he was buying work with visionary and expressionist stylistic connotations that ran counter to his own ideas. What is more, Soffici did not buy directly from the artist at a discount; he paid the official exhibition prices (Lit 3,500 each, for the two works, the price of his own works at the same exhibition).

Soffici’s purchase of the two Morandis marked the start of the race for Florence’s cultured men to buy Morandi’s paintings and to write about him as the artist who came closest to the anxiety of modern Italian poetry, Montale and the hermetic poets. The real shift in the perception of Morandi’s greatness in Italy, from technically impeccable petit maître to universal artist, the standard for contemporary Italian painting, took place with the support of the Florentine literati. In September 1937 a whole issue of Il Frontespizio was devoted to Morandi, indicating the painless shift that had taken place, as refined Catholics replaced the peasant-like Fascists of Il Selvaggio as his supporters. At the end of the decade, in 1939, another Tuscan writer and art historian, Cesare Brandi, wrote the first essay in which Morandi’s painting was studied in terms of its formal values.

VISUAL SOURCES

At the age of little more than twenty, Morandi understood that painting – old master painting, but above all modern painting – was to be looked at by concentrating on the formal grammar of the picture, those mysterious laws that constituted its most profound essence, from the unusual detail (the bond between one brushstroke and another, between a light-filled field and a darker one) to the overall balance of the composition. This approach was unusual in Italy in 1910. For decades, the question of the subject and particularly the mood it was to evoke in the viewer had been the dominant question. The divisionists had placed the depiction of light split into its components at the service of the social or spiritual content of the picture. The futurists concentrated on painting’s linguistic aspects only after noticing, in 1912, their backwardness in relation to cubist modernity; prior to this, between 1910 and 1911, their main preoccupation had been the provocatively anti-academic depiction of visual mythologies arising out of Marinetti’s writings.

From the time he began painting in 1911, Morandi, by contrast, canceled out the question of the subject, reducing it to still life, landscape and, occasionally, self-portraiture. It is important to bear in mind that the works he studied were almost always black-and-white reproductions, often of modest quality: the slender volumes from Libreria della Voce, a few illustrations from Biennale catalogues, occasional plates from art periodicals were his access to what was going on internationally. For a long time, these remained his preferred sources. The print resolution of photographs in magazines, with their screen, grain, and
uncertain focus, and Morandi’s capacity to concentrate on an insignificant detail in order to isolate its chiaroscuro rhythm or graphic themes should always be considered when thinking about his approach to these sources. In the silence of his studio, book illustrations allowed Morandi a more intense and personal reading of the work than was possible in an exhibition or museum. Absence of color did not strip visual information from the original, but instead gave him greater autonomy and freedom of observation.

The 1914 still life with bottle, box, book, jug, two-panel mirror, and chest of drawers in the background (page XX) is an anthology of motifs from the tradition of modernist or cubist still life. The jug and bottle, in fact, appear in one of the rare sources of visual information on modern French painting then available in Italy: an illustration of a Still Life of 1912 by Derain in Du cubisme by Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger. The jug placed next to an open book appears in a 1908 painting by Braque, Still Life with Coffee Pot (page 22, fig. 1), and the compositional device of a book or musical score framing the picture at the top was used by Braque often in the early cubist years. Even the language of perspectival “mistakes” and spatial discontinuity in the picture can be traced to cubist sources, including works by Picasso that Morandi would have known from reproductions.

What is it that insures that Morandi’s painting of 1914 is not simply a medley of cubist motifs but is instead a powerfully expressive work? His still life does not share the impassivity of those of Braque and Picasso. Through strong foreshortening from above, Morandi has emphasized the dramatic rush of objects toward the spectator. The corner of the furniture projects forward, the diptych leans toward the jug, the horizontal base on which the objects rest tilts toward the foreground, making a strong visual wedge of the box and book. The brushstrokes are deliberate: rapid, thick strokes of luminous paint suggest the emergence of the corner of the furniture, the reflecting surfaces of the diptych and the bottle. This process recalls some theoretical principles of futurism: here, the artist seems to put into practice a suggestion from Soffici to the futurists: “deforming an object in accordance with its individual lighting and the influence of the surrounding objects” to depict “a movement of volumes and surfaces in vital synthetic competition.”

Cubist painting (or, rather, duotone reproductions of cubist paintings) served Morandi as a basic language; having acquired it, he tried to work independently on problems then being debated in Italy.

Morandi was isolated in the Italian art world when, in 1918, he began painting pictures that manifest a rarified, mysterious atmosphere, akin to the metaphysics of de Chirico and Carrà. Morandi did not know these artists personally, but two illustrations of their works published in the Bolognese periodical La Raccolta, edited by Giuseppe Raimondi, gave him the opportunity to appreciate their perspectival ambiguities and their simultaneously solid suggestion of space. He immediately incorpo-rated these in his new work. However, what revolutionized this period of Morandi’s work was the attention he paid to the mixed-media works by Picasso, illustrated in 1913 in an issue of Les Soirées de Paris. One of these reliefs, known today as Bottle and Guitar (page 23, fig. 2) (but illustrated in Apollinaire’s periodical with the title of Nature morte), seems to have
fascinated Morandi. In his paintings of 1918, he placed Picasso’s box with its mixed-media wooden frame directly in front of the viewer. Borrowing again from Picasso, Morandi depicted an ambiguous space, (page 24, fig. 3) in which it is hard to establish the exact position of the objects shown. Using the cold, precise fields gleaned from reproductions of the work of de Chirico or Carrà, Morandi sought to neutralize their narrative, using Picasso’s provocative realism. The metaphysical paintings of 1918–1919 offer another bold example of Morandi’s deliberate use of very different sources. In the series of still lifes dating from late 1919, Morandi evidently studied Cézanne’s large still lifes of the 1880s (page 24, fig. 4), in books by Ambroise Vollard and Bernheim-Jeune published in 1914. He chose to depict Cézanne’s motif in a contrasting style, influenced by the dominant gray of Giotto’s frescoes which he had seen in Florence, and by the alienating, dramatic chiaroscuro of Caravaggio and his followers, whom Longhi was publishing at the time.3 Reaching maturity, in Morandi’s case, meant becoming stylistically independent of his sources, even those he loved and respected most.

For Morandi, the salient feature of the 1920s was his discovery of the still lifes of Jean-Siméon Chardin. Morandi’s golden still life of 1923 with an overturned funnel at the center (page 25, fig. 5) displays some characteristics of Chardin’s still-life paintings: the intimacy between painter and object resulting from its intense contemplation and the artist’s attraction to everyday objects as evidence of honest, precise work. Morandi observed Chardin closely, again using black-and-white reproductions, but rarely quoted literally from the French master’s work. Instead, he looked for poetry in closed spaces, dark corners animated by flashes of light and reflections, in echoes of Chardin’s compositional motifs and chiaroscuro devices. In the Still Life of 1923 the close cropping of the round table repeats that in Chardin’s Table d’office (page 25, fig. 5), a painting reproduced in Edmond Pilon’s 1909 monograph on Chardin.30 Morandi’s shift from a passion for Cézanne to one for Chardin in the 1920s represents more than a formal choice. Passing from Cézanne’s sharp focus, theatrical arrangement of objects, and artificial spatial layout, to Chardin’s more modulated approach to chiaroscuro and space reveals a desire for a more active, emotional response to the objects and the atmosphere surrounding them.

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot became Morandi’s favorite source for landscape during the 1920s and 1930s. The critical re-appraisal of Corot in Italy and France at the time presented him not as a Romantic landscapist but as a sort of nineteenth-century Nicolas Poussin, a classicist who based his work on principles of compositional and structural logic.36 As is quite evident from a 1941 landscape (page 25, fig. 6) – seen in reproduction and, occasionally, in the original – was his revolutionary ability to animate motifs from nature that were inexpressive in themselves, highlighting the pure relationship between tones, particularly in his small-scale works. From Corot, Morandi acquired technical information, learning about brushstrokes and impasto and their relationship to space.
He deduced the compositional themes (the link to the background of the houses, reduced to geometric solids) and chromatic ones (the dominant gray tone), and, above all, he echoed Corot’s impassive vision, conferring an unexpected solemnity on his own work.

From the period of his full stylistic maturity, between the end of the 1930s and the early 1940s, Morandi began to use pictorial sources in a different way. The compositional skills he had gained and his undiminished concentration on the techniques of the masters of the past led him to study their smallest motifs and include them in his own work. Perhaps the most interesting example arises from his relationship with Piero della Francesca. Longhi’s essential monograph, published in 1927, placed Piero at the center of Italian Renaissance studies. According to Longhi, the artist had invented the perspectival synthesis of form and color, and the book’s illustrations provided a rich series of details of Piero’s panels and frescoes, cropped from a modernist point of view. For this reason they were of particular interest to artists of the 1920s and 1930s. If the black-and-white plates in Longhi’s book did not provide Morandi with direct models, they certainly supplied him with suggestions for design and chiaroscuro. By the 1950s, many critics stressed the parallel between the luminous and plastic quality of recent Morandis and that of Piero, once again fashionable among modern artists. In a telling example, two long bottles from a still life of 1939 (V. 245) (page 26, fig. 7) evoke the folds of the mantle of the Madonna della Misericordia (page 27, fig. 8 and detail), shown as a detail in Longhi’s monograph. This and other comparisons speak to Morandi’s constant interrogation of the plates in art books, and his ability to isolate apparently insignificant details.

PAINTINGS IN SERIES
Anyone leafing through Vitali’s 1977 catalogue raisonné of Morandi’s paintings must be struck by the succession of pages of still lifes and landscapes in which the differences between one painting and the next are minimal. In the still lifes, an object may be added or removed, or shown at a different size, or lit differently. In the landscapes, the same motif may be cropped differently or observed from a slightly different angle. Only by comparing works in the original is it possible to understand this process fully. Tone and execution change noticeably with each variant. These slight variations were not made to assure the uniqueness of the pictures for the market. As Longhi stated, in varying the motif, Morandi was involved in “rendering noticeably different timbres,” in harmonizing “his severe luminous elegy.”

Recent exhibitions of Morandi have assembled works in series. Obsessive repetition of a motif made him seem an unexpectedly modern painter, almost a conceptual artist avant le mot, inviting the observer to concentrate on the painterly quality of individual paintings. We know little about Morandi’s series. In his rare state-
ments, the artist provided no explanation for his progression by means of tiny variations, and there are no eyewitness reports that offer any information on the sequence of these series. In his catalogue, Vitali, who visited Morandi over a long period, tends to place the sparest still lifes last in a series, suggesting a progression by subtraction. Morandi scholars in Italy have explored the cultural precedents of this practice more than they have the painterly reasons behind it. In 1941, Massimo Bontempelli, a fashionable writer, evoked as precedents Johann Sebastian Bach’s suites for cello and Petrarch’s sonnets from his Canzoniere.41 The comparison with Petrarch took hold, and Arcangeli pointed to the more intellectual sestinas.42

In arranging the illustrations for the 1964 monograph, Morandi placed the 1914 Still Life [page XX] first and, five illustrations later, a painting that is today at the Musée national d’art moderne, Paris (V. 18). It is clear how, in the latter, he picked up the central motif again, presenting it in an unusual vertical format. The variations progress toward more abstract painting, in which the empty spaces have the same weight as the objects and the brushwork is lighter and more airy. This process of abstraction from the initial motif did not stop here. In a work of 1915 (V. 23), Morandi made a significant break: noticeably lowering the point of view, he concentrated on the objects in the foreground, adding a strange, domestic object, a mantel clock seen from the rear. The background was thus changed into a series of wings, and the result was a new and alienating immobility, without the plastic tensions that animated the two preceding pictures. An etching of the same year provides a mirror image of some of the elements in the painting: some objects have been eliminated (the two-panel mirror); others re-introduced from earlier paintings (the bottle with bulging neck) or from a contemporary drawing (the compartments of the crockery cupboard shown in mirror image); others added (to the right, an unidentifiable vegetable, perhaps a tuft of cardoon or celery). Here Morandi stopped: for the first time all objects in one of his still lifes are aligned against the backdrop, absorbing the forceful advance of the central elements common to all the pictures in the series. In terms of spatial control and abstract capability, the print was considered a milestone worthy of publication, and it was delivered to Raimondi for reproduction in the April 15, 1918, issue of La Raccolta.

An interesting example of two paintings in series is that of the 1916 still lifes catalogued by Vitali as numbers 28 and 29. Morandi kept the first of these [page 28, fig. 9] for a long time before selling it to a Brescian collector, Pietro Feroldi, around 1938. The second [page 28, fig. 10] by contrast, entered a collection early. Sold in 1919 to a publisher, Marco Brogli, it toured Germany in 1921 in a series of exhibitions on recent Italian art. Currently, it is impossible to be certain which of the two still lifes was realized first. In June and July 1916, Morandi was working on flattening objects and on reducing them to outlines. The radical reduction of space and objects to an inlay of flat notations in V. 29 might suggest a later execution than for the more elaborated, chiaroscuro of V. 28. However, the fact that Morandi reworked some paintings of 1916 before exhibiting them in Germany, giving them the dense ground of his later metaphysical paintings, perhaps explains the difference in style between the two paintings. A recent reflectographic examination of V. 28 provides two important pieces of information. The first is that Morandi planned to include a fourth object, a bottle placed behind the fruit bowl. The bottle was never painted, although the artist reserved a space for it in the background before unifying the whole space with a layer of gray-blue paint. The second is that Morandi arrived at the solution of the four bands of
the background only while the work was in progress; initially, he had wanted to suggest the surface of the table in a more realistic manner via a vertical break on the right, just beyond the base of the fruit bowl. As he prepared to paint this picture, therefore, Morandi started with an idea of a more crowded composition, with somewhat more voluminous objects. Only while working on it did he arrive at a more unusual, two-dimensional solution. This hypothetical progression, in which the artist began working on a canvas based on solutions perfected in the preceding picture, only to change them as the work proceeded, might indicate that V. 28 comes after V. 29. His attempt at innovation in V. 28 may have been less popular with the first buyer, who chose V. 29.

The large Still Life (V. 114) with two white bottles and a lamp with its intense blue base standing out against the warm, brownish tones of the canvas (page 31, fig. 11), was painted in 1923, and was the most important work in a year that was one of desperate isolation for Morandi. For this picture, he chose an ambitious square format and unusually large dimensions (60 x 60 cm), compared to the other still lifes of the same period. He constructed an arrangement of stable objects like a piece of architecture. By contrast, he painted it with tremulous brushwork and suffused chiaroscuro. Six years separate this picture from another, equally large still life, V. 143, with a few variations that barely alter the general composition (page 31, fig. 12): objects rising in a curve toward the center and echoing the opposing curve of the table’s outline. What changes radically, however, is the application of the paint (thicker and more worked), the chiaroscuro (dominated by cruder flashes of light) and, above all, the chromatic balance. More acid contrasts replace the refined tonal impasto of the earlier work. Here, Morandi inserted strong luminous reflections from the bottles and added pink to the teapot, creating a tonal break in addition to the one caused by the blue of the lamp. In this case, the return to an earlier composition appears to have been driven by the desire to try new possibilities of execution. Starting from an established compositional scheme that could be modified with just a few changes, Morandi was able to operate confidently in his effort to produce a completely different work with a rougher impastoed surface.

In the late 1920s, Morandi’s returns to earlier compositions were often associated with his work as a printmaker. Stimulated by translating a painting into a dense thicket of etched lines, it was natural for him to attempt a parallel revision of it in paint. As is known from a series of letters from Morandi to Soffici,43 in early 1929 Morandi acquired some photographs of his own works that had been sold to Broglio. Seeing a photograph of a crucial, long-forgotten painting evidently caused him to review and reinterpret it in a new chiaroscuro and chromatic key.

At times, Morandi’s return to an earlier composition took place with a stylistic innovation and also through the repetition of a motif, an isolated detail taking on its own identity. In 1940, Morandi chose a motif of houses on the hills of Grizzana, and began a series of views in a style like Corot’s. He probably started with the widest view (V. 270) (page 32, fig. 13) and then narrowed the compositional frame, tackling the landscape with a more rapid, feathered brushstroke, and then zoomed in, locking in a composition dominated by the faceted planes of the houses, which stand out more sharply against the hillside. Working like an abstract artist, seeking the most stable and harmonious composition, Morandi had found the essence of the view. In the summer of 1941, he returned to the motif, eliminating many of the tonal and chiaroscuro complexities of the 1940 pictures (V.332) (page 32, fig. 14). Now, the houses were reduced to solids, their facades becoming marquetry in the surface of the painting.
The variants might now incorporate the wide view and the disposition of the paint on the canvas, but in all cases the dominant stylistic feature, simplified houses reduced to pure volumes, was retained. Morandi’s next step was to narrow his focus, eliminating the horizon line, turning the landscape into an arabesque of simple zones of color. At this point, he was able to make his final move, completely transfiguring the motif (V. 343) (page 32, fig. 15) by changing the viewpoint and ensuring a contrast between the facades of the houses and the blinding white of the sunlit earth.

The 1940s and 1950s saw the creation of the largest series with the fewest variants. The 1952 series with the yellow cloth (page XX) has become legendary for its refined tones and balanced compositions and these ten paintings were immediately much sought after by collectors. As drawings for this series show, Morandi’s final innovation came when he drastically raised the viewpoint, giving the cloth significant three-dimensionality and making it the key element in the painting. The pictorial series then developed without the usual variations in the cropping of the image and arrangement of the elements. Indeed, the frontal presentation of the objects never changes, and neither, generally, does the artist’s viewpoint or his distance from the setup. Moreover, there are few variations on the combination of items present. Morandi substituted a green cylindrical box (V. 831) (page 33, fig. 16) for a basket lined in paper (V. 824) (page 33, fig. 17), adding or removing a white ceramic container on the right. Given the largely fixed nature of the composition, the proportions of Morandi’s canvases, ranging from distinctly horizontal to square, are particularly important. Light falling from the front reveals to close inspection slight differences that prove to be the most significant motif for investigation in the entire series: the light source seems to vary from right, to center, to left. Morandi adopted two dominant tones: a cool one, with pearl gray and greens, when the object behind is the green box, and a warm one, with straw yellow, ocher, and amber tones, when the lined basket is used. But these two elements do not seem to be determined or otherwise influenced by changes in the light source. In the subsequent series, Morandi eliminated the cloth,
while retaining the other objects and creating a glaring void between the cylindrical vase on the left and the decorated jug on the right. He then balanced the composition by the addition of a paper box on the far right (V. 904) or by the inclusion of a conical vase on the left, or by shifting the cup in the foreground.

In the series with the yellow cloth, it is not possible to offer a credible hypothesis for the order in which the pictures were painted. For another, no less important, series of still lifes, an answer emerges from a study of the documents. In 1954, Morandi worked on crowded compositions of boxes, bowls, and small bottles set in a horizontal rectangle (V. 895–899) (page XX and page 35, fig. 19). Almost all these still lifes are emphatically horizontal in format, echoing the arrangement of the objects, and they are painted with thin paint and rapid brushstrokes. Only one (fig. 19) is almost square and its medium is more compact, almost lacquered.

On July 26, 1953, Morandi wrote to Curt Valentin that he had “almost finished the extended-format picture similar to those by Braque and [Joan] Miró in your possession. It measures 40 x 20 cm.” The painting (page XX) is now in the Phillips Collection in Washington. On November 18, he added that he had “four paintings (still lifes) ready for you,” and that he was, “already working on the still life measuring 70 x 25 cm you asked for in your letter.” This painting (V. 904), dated to 1954 in Vitali’s catalogue raisonné, should therefore be attributed to the previous year. Its liquid paint, acid yellow, and composition are also to be found in paintings that certainly date from 1953. A label from the Galería del Milione on V. 874 provides a firm terminus ante quem. Starting with V. 904, one need only vary the components slightly, substituting the cigar box for the two boxes on the left, a soup bowl for the central cup, and double the motif on the right of the small bottle and soup bowl, to see the coherent development of the horizontal paintings (page XX). The square painting (V. 895) is thus the last in the series. Starting with the horizontals of 1953, Morandi decided in a single case to widen the view to include the ample portions of the outline of the table and of the background. The preparatory drawings for two of these paintings are dated: 1954 on the drawing in which the artist studied the square still life, 1953 on the pencil study for the horizontal painting commissioned by Curt Valentin.

Morandi’s series offer clues to his way of working. He always seems to have started from a perfectly balanced and harmonious composition, produced through lengthy study and rearrangement of objects as well as from his own drawings. Continuing from the first painting in a series, he researched new harmonies. The paintings that followed were produced in reference to, and in the presence of, the earlier ones. Photographs of Morandi’s studio show the rearranged objects on the table and some paintings from the same series on the wall. In this set of relationships lies the significance of Morandi’s series. The last painting in a series is often the most radical experiment: objects may become difficult to recognize, landscapes may become fields of color, spatial relationships may only be suggested; or, by contrast, the rendering may be precise and spatial definition may sharpen, so that the composition achieves maximum clarity. With each subsequent variation in a series, Morandi pursued a specific line of pictorial inquiry to its ultimate conclusion.
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Color: giorgio Morandi and Piero della

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Chardin


39.
MORANDI IN THE UNITED STATES: EXHIBITIONS, GALLERIES, MEMORIES

ELISABETTA BARISONI
Giorgio Morandi applied for his first passport at the age of sixty-eight. No globe-trotter, he never visited America, unlike his work, which crossed the Atlantic in the late-1920s. By the 1950s, it was coveted by discerning American collectors, including Duncan Phillips, and the attraction exerted by Morandi’s art and persona had seeped beyond the world of museums and art criticism and had begun to resonate quietly in popular culture.

In 1960, sophisticated American moviegoers could see a 1941 Morandi still life (V. 305) discussed in Federico Fellini’s La dolce vita (page 42, fig. 20). Forty years later, the opening pages of Don DeLillo’s Falling Man (2007) invoke Morandi as the civilized human antidote to the aftermath of September 11, 2001, in New York. Detailing his protagonist’s response to an exhibition of Morandi’s work, DeLillo writes: “What she loved most were the two still lifes on the north wall, by GIORGIO MORANDI, a painter her mother had studied and written about. These were groupings of bottles, jugs, biscuits tins, that was all, but there was something in the brushstrokes that held a mystery she could not name, or in the irregular edge of vases and jars, some reconnoiter inward, human and obscure, away from the color of the paintings. Natura morta. The Italian term for still life seemed stronger than it had to be, somewhat ominous, even, but these were matters she hadn’t talked about with her mother.”

The stages by which Morandi’s name grew in America were gradual, and they can be traced in the history of his exhibitions there and in critics’ responses to them.2

THE GROUNDBREAKING 1930s: The Carnegie Prize, the Cometa Art Gallery of New York, and the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco

Morandi’s work was first exhibited in America in 1929, when he competed for Pittsburgh’s prestigious Carnegie Prize, as he did again in 1930, 1936, and 1939. His participation in the Carnegie Prize competitions is often cited in his letters to Italian friends and supporters, among them Cesare Brandi, who was active in promoting the export of Morandi’s art. Correspondence between the two reveals the extent of the artist’s network in the Italian art world. Brandi, working in Bologna in a ministerial position, met Morandi in 1933 and became a passionate supporter, representing him at important international events. In their correspondence references to Morandi’s American activity include a letter dated March 8, 1939, in which the artist tells Brandi that he is preparing two still lifes for Pittsburgh. Key to the growing importance of Pittsburgh’s annual international
exhibition was Homer Saint-Gaudens, director of the Carnegie Institute’s Department of Fine Arts and organizer of the competition from 1922 to 1950.7 In 1927, Saint-Gaudens traveled to Italy, where Mussolini expressed support for the spirit of the Pittsburgh competition. Its Italian agent from 1922 to 1950 was one of Morandi’s earliest collectors, the Venetian Ilario Neri. Identified as “Secretario del Cerclo Artistico” (Secretary of the Artistic Circle), Neri’s name appears on the advisory board for Italy in the Carnegie Prize archives up to 1957, and his role, as yet little discussed, was certainly critical in promoting Morandi in Pittsburgh.8

During the 1930s, Morandi formed connections with the art scene around the Galleria La Cometa, in Rome.9 The gallery’s director, Libero De Libero,10 rapidly became a supporter of Morandi’s work and introduced him to Roman collectors, including Contessa Mimi Pecci-Blunt, the gallery’s owner. De Libero promoted Morandi’s work in Rome and New York, including three of his works in a 1937 exhibition at the gallery’s American branch (Cometa Art Gallery of New York, at 10 East 52nd Street).

The Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco provided an important showcase for recent developments in Italian art.12 From February 19 through October 29, 1939, the two steel and concrete hangars of the fair’s Court of Honor were devoted to a display of international art. The choice of modern Italian art was made by the Italian Ministry of National Education. The high-ranking selection committee included Brandi, ministry official Antonino Santangelo, Roberto Longhi13 and Giuseppe Bottai.14 On December 6, 1938, Morandi was presented by Brandi with the list of works that he and Longhi had selected for the Italian display in San Francisco. The exhibition included Italian old masters, but as far as modern art was concerned, it was, as Brandi put it, “highly selective.” The list of forty-two works included pieces by artists such as Scipione, Mario Mafai, Carlo Carrà, Afro Basaldella, and Filippo de Pisis. Morandi was represented by eight canvases.15 Atypical for its time, the selection was not of the kind preferred by the Fascist regime, painters of the old school and Novecento painters having been excluded in favor of artists whose color tended toward tonalism and realism.

The immediate postwar period saw a significant increase in interest in Italian modern art. The trend was exemplified by Twentieth-century Italian Art, an exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1949. On view June 28–September 18, 1949, the exhibition was a landmark in American appreciation of Italian art and contributed to a wider awareness of Morandi’s work, about which American critics had continued to write during the 1940s.16 It was long in the making. Organizers Alfred Barr and James Thrall Soby spent time in Italy visiting artists’ studios and meeting collectors and critics. Morandi was represented in two sections of the exhibition. As a member of the Metaphysical school, he was shown with Giorgio de Chirico and Carrà, and his work also appeared in the section devoted to Italian art after the 1920s. Of his thirteen paintings, only one was from a collection in the United States: the Still Life of 1916 (V. 27) from the Museum of Modern Art, as were five Morandi etchings.17 The catalogue presented Morandi as isolated in his Bolognese studio, influenced by Paul Cézanne, in touch with recent trends, and marginally part of the futurist movement and the Metaphysical school.18 The second part of the catalogue associated Morandi with Piet Mondrian’s abstraction, in his creative devotion to the subject and its lyrical
intensity. Soby noted that Morandi’s lyricism cannot be conveyed in reproduction, thanks to the artist’s soft outlines and use of color, a point picked up by later American writers. Only in the original do the paintings reveal their qualities, dispelling any sense of monotony brought on by reproductions.

The critical discourse on Morandi initiated by the 1949 exhibition influenced the exhibitions of the 1950s and American collectors. Reviews included an article by Raffaele Carrieri in the August issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*, with others describing Morandi as the best living Italian painter, an opinion also expressed by Soby in the catalogue. The February 1955 issue of *Art News*, featuring a photograph of the artist’s studio in Bologna, reflected a growing interest in the artist. Two articles in it proved key to his reputation in the United States. John Berger’s, entitled “Morandi the Metaphysician of Bologna,” opened with an illustration of the *Still Life* of 1939 (V. 239), exhibited in the 1949 exhibition and reproduced in its catalogue, as a significant example of the artist’s creative devotion to seeking effective three-dimensional solutions. Berger’s caption related Morandi’s painting to the delicate light illuminating the Italian landscape: “Giorgio Morandi’s ‘frayed, muted’ bottles stand in warm brown space infused with the same palpable light that floods the Italian landscape.” As Berger’s title indicated, Morandi was still associated with Metaphysical painting. However, Berger identified some distinctive aspects of his work, its peculiarly Italian qualities: “Only in the Mediterranean and particularly in Italy is one made visually aware of the gradual, impersonal, open passing of time – the days falling like single grains of sand in an hourglass.” Berger stressed the painter’s limited range of subjects and referred to his “quiet, parochial humility,” in keeping with an image of Morandi as isolated. He interpreted Morandi’s method not so much as a return to order, but as a rejection of the outside world, a monastic retreat. Although isolation, specialization, and an excessive sense of the artist’s individuality lay at the root of a general crisis in Western art, the true significance of Morandi’s art and solitude was different, indicating an intellectual’s voluntary, dignified seclusion, in keeping with the long cultural tradition of humanism.

The second article, by Bolognese art historian Francesco Arcangeli, describing his visit with Morandi to the Guido Reni exhibition in Bologna. Significantly, this article was subtitled “The Seventeenth-century Baroque Master’s Retrospective Exhibition Is Discussed with Italy’s Leading Modern Painter.” By this time Morandi was represented in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, an indication of an artist’s quality and modernity. Phillips’s association with the Museum of Modern Art suggests a correspondence between the curatorial choices made by Barr and Soby and those of Phillips for his own museum. The provenances of the three works in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art are of interest in this connection. The *Still Life* of 1916 (V. 27) was acquired through the bequest of Lillie P. Bliss, who purchased it at the 1948 Venice Biennale directly from the artist’s collection; it was shown in the 1949 exhibition. The *Still Life* of 1938 (V. 225) entered the Museum of Modern Art’s collection in 1949, acquired from the Galleria d’Arte del
The third Morandi to enter the collection was the Still Life of 1949 (V. 692). This painting was acquired by Soby directly from the artist, in Italy, a few months after the 1949 exhibition closed. In 1950 the work was ready to be sent to Pittsburgh for the Carnegie Prize, and Soby bequeathed it to the Museum of Modern Art in 1979.

**THE 1950s:**

Curt Valentin, the Delius Gallery and the World House Galleries

During the 1950s, Morandi’s presence in America, marked by exhibitions and sales to collectors, built gradually, but steadily. His was by now among the most sought-after Italian work on the New York art market. As early as 1946, Alexander Jolas tried to obtain two paintings by Morandi to show with work by Picasso, Georges Braque, and Georges Rouault at his Hugo Gallery. Morandi’s etchings, acquired in 1947 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, were being promoted around this time by painter Mario Bacchelli. Phillips acquired two paintings by Morandi in the 1950s. His first purchase, a 1953 still life (page XX), was made from the Curt Valentin Gallery in 1954, probably shortly before Valentin’s death.

Valentin’s importance in developing American interest in Morandi’s oeuvre in the United States can be seen in the correspondence between the Bolognese artist and the gallery owner. A letter dated May 21, 1950, indicates advanced plans for an exhibition in New York. Morandi undertakes to find as many paintings as possible held by Italian collectors, including Pietro Rollino in Rome, whom Valentin is planning to visit. Plans for a retrospective at Valentin’s gallery are discussed again in a letter dated November 18, 1953. Morandi expresses doubt that it could be ready by May 1954, since it would overlap with an exhibition in The Hague being organized by Vitale Bloch for April 1954. In a letter dated July 26, 1953, Morandi writes of Gino Ghiringhelli as intermediary for the shipping of the works to Valentin and, as noted by Flavio Fergoni, refers in a postscript to a still life near completion, with the dimensions of Morandi’s studio, Bologna.
the painting now in The Phillips Collection.

In a letter to Valentin on April 8, 1954, Morandi confirms the date of the exhibition in The Hague and informs him that the exhibition includes no paintings owned by him or by the Galleria del Milione. Plans for a retrospective may still have been in the works when Valentin died suddenly of a heart attack in August 1954.

A sign of the increased interest in his work, Morandi’s first solo exhibitions in the United States were held in New York at the Delius Gallery, in 1955, and at the World House Galleries in 1957 and 1960. The Delius Gallery, directed by Delius Giese,35 at 470 Park Avenue at 58th Street, held a small show of eleven paintings and some drawings and prints, from October 5 to November 5, 1955. Among the paintings were two works owned by the Museum of Modern Art, still lifes of 1916 and 1938. The others came from private American collections. The catalogue presented Morandi as a solitary artist in an ivory tower “The delicate and precise creations of this humble recluse of Bologna have long been considered among the best in twentieth-century Italian art. Almost of legendary stature in his native country as an ‘ivory tower’ of purist strength, of Latin lucidity and lyric grace, Giorgio Morandi is a dedicated, monastic artist who has never joined in the verbal battles and experimental sprees of his articulate contemporaries.” It also credited him with a purist approach to art, specifically Italian art, and noted his special lyricism.36

In the meantime, a rapid series of events promoted the “rediscovery” of modern Italian art in the wake of the pioneering 1949 exhibition. Contemporary Italian Art: Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, an exhibition at the Saint Louis City Art Museum held October 13–November 14, 1955, presented eight oils and three drawings by Morandi, alongside the works of the most advanced exponents of Italian abstract art and art informel: Afro Basaldella, Renato Birolli, Alberto Burri, Ennio Morlotti, Emilio Vedova, Guiseppe Capogrossi, Pietro Consagra, together with Giacomo Manzù, Renato Guttuso, Marino Marin, and others. Significantly, the Morandis in the exhibition came from American collections. As recently noted by Lorenza Selleri,37 the growing interest on the part of galleries during the 1950s stimulated an increase in the number of Morandi’s American collectors, including Theo Harnann and William Adair Bernoudy in Saint Louis, Ralph Colin, Kurt Berger, Harold Franklin, Donald B. Straus, Franck Pappa, and Herman Goldsmith in New York, as well as others in Boston, Los Angeles, Albany, and Washington.38

In 1956, Morandi was included in an exhibition at the Newark Museum, New Jersey, entitled XIXth-century Italian Art: An Exhibition. This was followed in 1957 by An Exhibition of Painting in Postwar Italy 1945–1957 at the Italian House of Columbia University, New York, curated by a high ranking committee that included Lionello Venturi,39 Palma Bucarelli,40 and Meyer Shapiro.41 In his introduction to the catalogue, Venturi stressed aspects of Morandi that subsequently proved important in the debate about American abstract art: “He calls attention to form, color and space, as though he were an abstract painter. But he is not an abstract painter since his taste is traditional.” The attention shown to Morandi by the Hugo, Valentin, and Delius galleries in New York was fundamental to a deeper discussion of his art and culminated in two solo exhibitions at the World House Galleries in 1957 and 1960.42 Giorgio Morandi Retrospective, held November 5–December 7, 1957, in the galleries on Madison Avenue at 77th Street, New York, was the most wide-ranging of Morandi’s solo shows in the United States in the 1950s. The exhibition presented a total of 60 works: thirty-five oil paintings, thirteen etchings, two watercolors and ten drawings.43 Venturi’s introduction to the catalogue was of major importance to Morandi’s reputation in the United States. On his lack of fame outside Italy, Venturi wrote: “It is difficult to classify him within one of the trends which dominate the artistic scene of the world.” His work needed to be displayed and interpreted on its own terms, because this artist, “who seemed to be the most provincial of all was in fact one of the most international among the Italian artists.” In 1957, Morandi won first prize for painting at the São Paulo Biennale in Brazil; he had already won first prize for prints in 1953.
Venturi attributed Morandi’s limited subject matter to a desire to concentrate on form, line, and color, in accordance with a strong attachment to tradition. “Abstract art always implies a severance from tradition, and Morandi is a traditional man. His way of life is thoroughly traditional.” Venturi’s second consideration, which found a ready echo in American writing, was the silent classicism of Morandi’s intellectual position between the two wars: “Between the two wars, when Italy made a great clamor over its classic tradition and its monumental power, painting small bottles assumed an unsurpassed irony which was a warning against illusions, and advice to follow a better road.”

Venturi’s text provided some new insights for an analysis of Morandi’s landscapes, an aspect of his work overlooked by American critics, stressing a monumentality in it akin to that of the still lifes. He ended by reflecting on the relationship between Morandi and abstract art. Morandi’s abstraction was almost innate and involuntary, firmly a part of tradition, as already stressed, and yet modern: “It is perhaps worthwhile to emphasize that Morandi, by devaluing his subject matter, is much more of an abstractionist than he believes himself to be, and therefore he belongs to the art of today much more than people believe.”

The New York press responded favorably to the exhibition. An article in *Art News* in November 1957 presented Morandi as a pure painter, almost a protagonist of an artistic renaissance and an interpreter of the artist’s true role: “Art is not life, is not religion, nor the artist, but that it has had and still has its own place; and Morandi’s respect for art is all the deeper since he knows its limitations.”

The *Saturday Review* published an article by Soby on Morandi. Discussing the exhibition he had organized with Barr in 1949, Soby recalled their views in 1948. At the time, they had felt that Italian critics were too enthusiastic about the work of Morandi, whose production seemed repetitive, provincial, and less important than that of internationally known figures such as Amedeo Modigliani, Umberto Boccioni and Giorgio de Chirico. But Morandi, once discovered, continued Soby, allowed...
for no half measures: either one did not understand him or one loved him. This comment was confirmed by the reaction of the public at the World House Galleries, as Soby noted: “There seemed to be no middle ground of appreciation. I doubt that with Morandi’s art there ever will be.”

The first World House Galleries exhibition traveled to the Phillips Gallery in Washington, D.C., and was on display there December 15, 1957–January 8, 1958. From it, Phillips bought the 1950 Still Life.<ref>page XX</ref> His role was significant, not only because he bought a second Morandi, but also because of his willingness to host a solo exhibition of the artist. Noted as the first American museum of modern art, the Phillips Gallery often collaborated with private galleries, especially in the case of contemporary artists. The exhibition at the World House Galleries gave Phillips the chance to present an artist he loved, whose work was already in his collection. For his second Morandi, Phillips paid more than seven times the price of his first one, a mere three years later, a measure of Morandi’s new place in the market.

An article by Leslie Judd Portner in the Washington Post and Times Herald on December 22, 1957, entitled Dynamic Knaths, Poetic Morandi noted that the artist’s fortune had grown internationally only since the war and found that Morandi’s uniqueness derived from the poetry with which he infused the objects he depicted. “What gives Morandi his international reputation is the feeling that he is able to inject into his paintings. Absolutely quiet and reposeful they nevertheless have a magic and lyrical quality which grows on you the longer you look at them. In their absence of motion, dynamics or vibrancy, they have a classical re-pose and balance which is poetically satisfying, despite the limitation of subject.”

A second solo show of Morandi organized by the World House Galleries included seventy-nine works – oils, watercolors, drawings and prints – and was held December 6, 1960–January 14, 1961. Art News devoted a major article to it, with two reproductions from the catalogue. The Lonely Intellectual was the title the Nation gave to its article on the exhibition in its January 21, 1961, issue. After the 1950s:

Personal Encounters

Among the exhibitions dedicated to Morandi after the 1950s, the 1967 show at the Albert Loeb and Krugier Gallery was particularly important. On display in the gallery’s rooms in New York were thirty-seven oils, twelve watercolors and nine prints. The catalogue included a memoir by art historian and critic John Rewald dated February 1967, three years after Morandi’s death. In what has subsequently become a classic in the literature on Morandi, Rewald recalled his first visit to Morandi’s studio on March 25, 1964, describing his experience of its mystery with intense feeling: “…an ordinary room of a middle-class apartment lit by two ordinary windows. But the rest was extraordinary: on the floor, on shelves, on a table, everywhere, boxes, bottles, vases, all kinds of containers in all kinds of shapes. They cluttered any available space, except for the two simple easels.” He continued: “They must have been there for a long time, on the surfaces of the shelves or tables, as well as on the flat tops of boxes, cans or similar receptacles, there was a thick layer of dust. It was a dense, gray, velvety dust...not the result of negligence and untidiness but of patience, a witness to complete peace.” When he asked Morandi if he would take the bottles to his summer residence, the artist replied, smiling, “I have other bottles there,” he said, ’no need to disturb these.”

Rewald repeated the legend of Morandi the monk, isolated and immobile in a place where the signs of the passage of time are a mark of nobility and resistance, or better, persistence of memory and passion for the object. His text is less important from an art-historical perspective than for its interest as a personal memory, rich in the magical atmosphere of the studio of one of the last great masters. Its impact on the reputation and perception of Morandi in the United States is evident in the comparison of two articles by American artist and critic Sidney Tillim.

Tillim wrote a long review of the second exhibition at the World House Galleries that appeared in Arts Magazine in December 1960. In it, he defined Morandi as “one of
the few great living masters of modern art.”

Tillim, well-informed on the critical discourse on Morandi in the United States, cited Venturi’s introduction to the 1957 catalogue. Like Venturi, Tillim included Morandi’s work in the discussion of figurative versus abstract art. Whereas in 1957 Venturi could affirm that the “task of the bottles in Morandi’s paintings is to assure him that tradition is safe,” Tillim was now able to add that Morandi’s bottles also had the task of restoring “nobil-ity to subject matter, to enable the painter to concentrate on the values of form.” In this way, wrote Tillim, the bottles “symbolize the potential re-humanization of art.”

In 1967, Tillim again reviewed Morandi’s work, this time in connection with the exhibition at the Loeb and Kruger Gallery, in Art Forum. This time, Tillim mentioned Rewald’s vivid memories of meeting the artist and added one of his own, more ironic and less poetic than Rewald’s, illustrating the text with photographs taken during a visit to Morandi at his Grizzana studio in the summer of 1960. The accounts of Rewald and Tillim, their freedom in “narrating” the artist, marked a new and more intimate approach to Morandi and a familiarity with his work on the part of American critics and public. It was no longer necessary to place him within the context of modern Italian art, because his oeuvre had by now been absorbed by the public. Tillim’s article opened the way for future American commentators to follow parallel lines of investigation. On the one hand, with the artist and his work well known, it was interesting to look at it in relation to the contemporary scene, and to establish parallels between Morandi and the aesthetic debate on American abstract art. On the other hand, having ascertained his stature within the Italian modern art scene, Morandi the man could now emerge, a great master, symbol of the true artist, enveloped in the magical and dignified solitude of his Bolognese studio, bearer of a hermetic and alienating yet poetic message.

In the 1980s, Morandi’s reputation in America received a boost with the 1981 exhibition, shown at the Des Moines Art Center, as well as in San Francisco and New York. It received major reviews. Among these was a long article in the March 1983 issue of Art in America by Janet Abramovicz, who had been Morandi’s student and assistant at the Accademia di Bologna in the 1950s. Illustrating her article with interesting photographs of the artist’s studio, Abramovicz rejected the view of Morandi as isolated and solitary, a classicist within an academic tradition, “an academic provincial, a recluse living in an ivory tower.” Instead, she stressed his difficult position during the Fascist period, his break with the academic world, his knowledge of French art through the Venice Biennale, and his interest in Georges Seurat, Giotto, Piero della Francesca, Paul Cézanne, and Henri Rousseau. Although written from a critic’s point of view, Abramovicz’s text assumes greater value thanks to her memories of Morandi the man. Although Morandi’s exhibition history reflects a movement from Italy to the United States, traffic also flowed in the opposite direction. Abramovicz, Rewald, Soby, and Tillim traveled to Italy and visited Morandi. Their memories of the man who seemed to personify the artist’s highest expression of simplicity, rigor, and inexhaustible scrutiny, accompanied by photographs of the studio, mantled in a thin layer of dust that seemed to endow the objects with nobility, were just as important as the exhibitions and retrospectives in fostering admiration for Morandi’s work in the United States.

The appeal of Morandi’s art seems to spring from the essential intimacy of his life and study and leads constantly to the solitary, silent reflection at the root of poetry. “Aspirants to the role of painter-as-poet are many. Giorgio Morandi was the real thing,” wrote critic Holland Cotter or, as Abramovicz wrote, quoting Proust at the end of her article: “Proust could have been describing Morandi when he wrote, ‘This work of the artist is to seek, to discern something different under the material…for art will undo and make us retrace our steps and return to the depths of ourselves, where what really existed lies unknown to us.’” Duncan Philips would have agreed, as he looked at the two pale yet powerful still lifes hanging in the galleries of his museum in Washington.
Table in Morandi’s Grizzana studio

1. D. DeLillo, Falling Man (London: Pica-

2. The Carnegie Prize was established in 1896 by Pittsburgh industrialist Andrew Carnegie. The annual competition for the prize was known as the Carnegie Interna-
tional Exhibition, which showcased international art. During and after World War II, it was limited to American art, becoming international again in 1960.

3. Cesare Brandi (1906–1988) was a critic, aesthetician, historian of Italian art, expert on restoration, and belletrist. He held important posts in the state administration of antiquities and fine arts. He was co-founder, with Giulio Carlo Argan, of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro (Central Institute for Restora-
tion), which he directed from its incep-
tion in 1941 to 1959. From 1960 onward, he taught at the universities of Palermo and Rome.

4. Carlo Argan, of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro (Central Institute for RESTORATION), which he directed from its inception in 1941 to 1959. From 1960 onward, he taught at the universities of Palermo and Rome.

5. Cesare Brandi-Morandi: 1938–

6. Morandi participated in four Carnegie International Exhibitions before World War II, and after the war he competed in three. Generally, the awards to Italian artists in the pre-war competitions were for figurative, occasionally traditional, and colorist work. In the exhibitions in which Morandi participated, the first prize went to Felice Carena in 1939; the third honorable mention went to Giuseppe Morupani in 1939 and Alberto Salselli in 1939, and the Italian-born American painter Luigi Lucioni received the Aesthetic Waters Popular Prize in 1939.

7. See V. A. Clark, International Encoun-
ters: The Carnegie International and Contemporary Art, 1896–1996 (Pitts-
burgh: Carnegie Museum of Art, 1996), especially pages 73–91 for the Saint-
Gaudens years.


10. Libero De Libero (1906–1981), a poet and writer, was part of the Roman art scene. Close to artists Scipione and Maia, he was a mainstay of Galleria La Corneta.

11. See letter from Libero De Libero to Morandi, 25 November 1938, in Giorgio Morandi nelle raccolte romane, 45–6. “Dear Morandi, Your pictures have returned from America. Because the contexta has itself bought two of the little still lifes for her collection…”

12. See A. Sciarone, “Golden Gate Exhibition di San Francisco 1939: Una mostra dimenticata,” Arte in Follia, Arte a Trieste 24 (2005): 83–94. Celebrating the recent completion of the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge, the exhibition pro-
mo¬ted unity among Pacific Rim nations. It presented the latest in architecture, design, and the visual arts and provided one of the last occasions for internation-
al exchanges before World War II.

13. Roberto Longhi (1890–1970), a key figure in Italian art history, taught me-
diaeval and modern art at the University of Bologna and later at the University of Florence. His influence on Longhi’s contributions to Morandi criti-
see F. Fergonzi, “Giorgio Morandi: Criticism, Cities, Sources, Series” in this publication.

14. Giuseppe Bottai (1897–1959) was an Italian politician and mayor of Rome, then minister for national education dur-
ing the Fascist regime.

15. The exhibition catalogue lists works by: Afro Basaldella (one), Carlo Carrà (ten), Giorgio de Chirico (three), Filippo de Pisis (two), Renato Guttuso (one), Mario Mafai (one), Scipione (Gino Bonichi) (four), Ardengo Soffici (two), Armando Spadini (one), and Arturo Tosii (four); sculptures by Giacomo Manzù (four), Marino Marini (one), Arturo Mar-
tino (one), and Mirko Basaldella (one); as well as drawings and prints by Carrà, Umberto Boccioni, Leo Longanesi, Mino Mascali, Manzù, Mirko Basaldella, Morandi, Scipione, Mario Sironi, and others. Morandi’s paintings were: V. 16, V. 219, V. 12, V. 52, V. 240, V. 35, V. 222, V. 101.

16. The exhibition was curated by James Thrall Soby and Alfred Hamilton Barr; See S. Melnoff, “Italy: Report on Recent Painting,” Magazine of Art (February 1946) and M. Bachell, “Giorgio Morandi,” Magazine of Art (October 1947).
26. Francesco Aranegi (1915–1974), Italian art historian and critic, was Roberto Longhi’s pupil and his assistant at the University of Bologna from the end of World War II to 1946. From 1958 to 1960, he was director of the Galleria d’Arte Moderna di Bologna. In 1967 he became a lecturer at the University of Bologna. He studied Morandi’s activity post-1942 and wrote a monograph about him in 1964. A text eventually rejected by the artist. For the role of Aranegi in Morandi criticism, see Fargnoli, “Giorgio Morandi: Criticism, Cities, Sources, Series,” F. Aranegi, “Morandi on Guido Reni of Bologna,” Art News (February 1955), 30–99.

27. Phillips was elected to the board of trustees of the Museum of Modern Art on October 25, 1929. He served until October 1935, when he became an honorary life trustee.

28. Carlo Cardinali was an Italian editor and owner of two historic Italian galleries, the Galleria del Naviglio in Milan and the Galleria Cavallino in Venice.

29. See letter from Soby to Homer Saint-Gaudens, 9 December 1946, in the Archives Morandi, Comune di Grizzana, Bologna.

30. Alexander Jolas’s Hugo Gallery practiced American art particularly pop art; Curt Valentin (1902–1954) worked at the Buchholz Gallery, Hamburg, from 1934 until he emigrated to the United States in 1942 with a sizable collection of modern German works. He opened a gallery in New York in April 1936, which he later moved to West 57th Street. This became the Girio Morandi Gallery. Noted for his interest in modern art, Valentin was one of New York’s most active gallery owners, organizing exhibitions and publishing important small editions of poetry and literature illustrated by contemporary artists; Curt Valentin papers, Archives of the American Art, New York.

31. John Rewald (1912–1994), renowned art scholar of German origin, emigrated to the United States in 1933 and became a professor at the University of Chicago, New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of California at Los Angeles. He was director of the Galleria d’Arte Moderna di Bologna, and wrote a monograph about him in 1964.

32. Upon Curt Valentin’s death, some of the Morandi works he had commissioned were passed to the Delius Gallery, directed by Delius Giese.

33. “Thou a painter, his canvases are far from being anemic. There is the miracle to invest deftly static compositions with poetry and substance.” L. Duse, Giorgio Morandi (New York: Delius Giese, 1955).


35. The presence of Morandi in American collections grew significantly in those years; a clear sign of the importance of the U.S. market for Italian art is the exhibition held at Palazzo Reale in Milan April 30–June 26, 1949, which then traveled to Rome, Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna, July 19–September 18, 1960; Arte Italiana del XX secolo di collezioni americane (Italian Art of the 20th Century from American Collections). The exhibition presented nine paintings by Morandi and a catalogue with an introduction by J. T. Soby.

36. Lionel Bendor (1885–1981), a celebrated Italian critic and art historian, lectured at the University of Turin beginning in 1915. He was obliged to abandon teaching under the Fascist regime, and he moved to France and then to Britain, where he continued to write. Based in New York, he was a professor at John Hopkins University and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and he lectured at the Ecole Libre des Hautes Études in New York in many other U.S. cities. He returned to Italy after the war and was a professor at the University of Rome. Concerning Ventrer’s role in Morandi criticism, see Fargnoli, “Giorgio Morandi: Criticism, Cities, Sources, Series.”


38. “The still life acquired by Phillips seems to be number 18 in the catalogue of this exhibition, which was no. 20 in the 1957 exhibition and no. 21 in the 1967 exhibition; the 1950 Still Life ($17,500, p. 36 in this publication) was no. 21 in the 1957 exhibition and no. 21 in the 1960 exhibition; the 1941 Still Life ($18,000, p. 29 in this publication) was no. 28 in the 1957 exhibition.”


40. Palma Bucellini (1910–1988) was an art historian specializing with the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome, which she directed from 1942–70.


42. “The still life acquired by Phillips seems to be number 18 in the catalogue of this exhibition, which was no. 20 in the 1957 exhibition and no. 21 in the 1967 exhibition; the 1950 Still Life ($17,500, p. 36 in this publication) was no. 21 in the 1957 exhibition and no. 21 in the 1960 exhibition; the 1941 Still Life ($18,000, p. 29 in this publication) was no. 28 in the 1957 exhibition.”

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45. John Rewald (1912–1994), renowned art scholar of German origin, emigrated to the United States in 1941 and is the author of fundamental studies on mod-
WORKS
FLOWERS, c.1913

STILL LIFE, 1914
SELF-PORTRAIT, 1924

FLOWERS, 1928
STILL LIFE, 1931

STILL LIFE, 1936
THE WHITE ROAD, 1941

FLOWERS, 1942
STILL LIFE, c.1951

FLOWERS, 1952
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**Works by Giorgio Morandi**

**Flowers** (Fiori), c. 1913
- Oil on canvas
- 64.5 x 49.5 cm
- 25 3/8 x 19 1/2 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto
- Giovanardi Collection
- Page 62

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1914
- Oil on canvas
- 73 x 64.5 cm
- 28 1/4 x 25 3/4 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto
- Giovanardi Collection
- Page 63

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1916
- Oil on canvas
- 60 x 54 cm
- 23 7/8 x 21 7/8 in.
- Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Mattioli Collection, Venice
- Page 28

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1916
- Oil on canvas
- 65.5 x 55.5 cm
- 25 1/4 x 21 7/8 in.
- Private collection
- Page 28

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1918
- Oil on canvas
- 65 x 55 cm
- 25 1/4 x 21 3/4 in.
- Civiche Raccolte d’Arte, Riccardo and Magda Jucker Collection, Milan
- Page 24

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1919
- Oil on canvas
- 45 x 59 cm
- 17 1/4 x 23 7/8 in.
- Private collection
- Page 48

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1921
- Oil on canvas
- 45 x 53 cm
- 17 1/4 x 20 3/8 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto
- Page 65

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1923
- Oil on canvas
- 50 x 60 cm
- 19 1/4 x 23 3/8 in.
- Private collection
- Page xx

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1923
- Oil on canvas
- 60 x 60 cm
- 23 7/8 x 20 3/8 in.
- Civiche Musei, Alberto Della Ragione Collection, Florence
- Page 114

**Still Life** (Natura morta), c. 1923
- Oil on canvas
- 43 x 46 cm
- 17 x 18 1/4 in.
- Private collection
- Page 80

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1928
- Oil on canvas
- 47 x 42 cm
- 18 1/2 x 16 1/2 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto
- L. F. Collection
- Page xx

**Flowers** (Fiori), 1928
- Oil on canvas
- 36 x 46 cm
- 14 1/4 x 18 1/2 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto
- L. F. Collection
- Page 126

**Landscape** (Paesaggio), 1928
- Oil on canvas
- 61.5 x 47 cm
- 24 1/2 x 18 1/2 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto
- Giovanniard Collection
- Page 135

**Still Life** (Natura morta), 1929
- Oil on canvas
- 34.5 x 46.5 cm
- 13 1/4 x 18 1/2 in.
- Museo d’Arte Moderna
Still Life (Natura morta), 1931
Oil on canvas
36 x 56 cm
14 ⅞ x 22 ⅞ in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1932
Oil on canvas
55 x 57 cm
21 ⅞ x 22 ⅞ in.
Pinacoteca di Brera, Emilio e Maria Jesi Collection, Milan
V. 137
Page xx

Still Life with Coffee Pots and Yellow Cloth (Natura morta), 1929
Oil on canvas
51 x 47 cm
20 1/8 x 18 ⅜ in.
Private collection
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1930
Oil on canvas
47 x 51.5 cm
18 ⅞ x 20 ⅜ in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
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Flowers (Fiori), 1942
Oil on canvas
24 x 36.2 cm
9 ⅞ x 11 ⅜ in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
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Landscape (Paesaggio), 1941
Oil on canvas
33 x 52.5 cm
13 x 20 ⅛ in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, L. F. Collection
V. 333
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1930
Oil on canvas
50.5 x 60.2 cm
19 ⅞ x 23 ⅝ in.
Giovanardi Collection
Trento e Rovereto, Museo d’Arte Moderna

The White Road (La strada bianca), 1941
Oil on canvas
37 x 40 cm
14 ⅞ x 15 ⅜ in.
Civico Raccolte d’Arte, Casa-Museo Boschi Di Carlo Collection, Milan
V. 332
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1943
Oil on canvas
34.5 x 44.2 cm
13 ⅞ x 17 ⅛ in.
Private collection
V. 366
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1943
Oil on canvas
22.8 x 35.3 cm
9 x 14 in.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Gift of Mrs. Paul Mellon
V. 517
Photo: Ron Jennings
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1947
Oil on canvas
43 x 60 cm
17 x 23 ⅜ in.
Private collection
V. 570
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Still Life (Natura morta), c. 1949
Oil on canvas
35.6 x 45.4 cm
14 x 17 ⅝ in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation
V. 697
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1951
Oil on canvas
35.8 x 40.3 cm
14 ⅚ x 15 ⅞ in.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Gift of Mrs. Paul Mellon
V. 747
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1950
Oil on canvas
40.5 x 45.5 cm
15 ⅜ x 17 ⅞ in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
V. 763
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1951
Oil on canvas
9 x 14 in.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Gift of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation

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Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1948–49
Oil on canvas
38 x 45 cm
15 x 17 ⅜ in.
Private collection

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Still Life (Natura morta), 1949
Oil on canvas
30.8 x 48.8 cm
12 ⅛ x 19 ⅞ in.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon
V. 517

Photo: Lee Stalsworth
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1950
Oil on canvas
35.9 x 47.3 cm
14 ⅞ x 18 ⅞ in.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

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Still Life (Natura morta), 1950
Oil on canvas
40.5 x 45.5 cm
15 ⅜ x 17 ⅞ in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
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Civiche Raccolte d’Arte,
13 3/4 x 15 3/4 in.
35 x 40 cm
Oil on canvas
(Natura morta), 1952
still life
Private collection

Flowers (Fiori), 1952
Oil on canvas
45.5 x 45.6 cm
17 13/16 x 17 15/16 in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
V. 796
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1952
Oil on canvas
35.8 x 45.8 cm
14 1/4 x 18 in.
Private collection
V. 826
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1953–54
Oil on canvas
26 x 70 cm
10 1/2 x 27 7/8 in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
V. 896
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1954
Oil on canvas
35.6 x 46.5 cm
14 x 18 7/8 in.
V. 918
Photo: David Stansbury
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1954
Oil on canvas
35.6 x 45.5 cm
14 x 17 7/8 in.
Private collection
V. 920
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1955
Oil on canvas
30.4 x 36.2 cm
12 x 13 1/3 in.
Private collection
V. 972
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1956
Oil on canvas
25.2 x 34.9 cm
9 1/4 x 13 3/4 in.
Collection of Robert Lehman, courtesy of Aimee and Robert Lehman, Washington, D.C.
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1956
Oil on canvas
40.5 x 35.4 cm
15 3/8 x 13 15/16 in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Giovanardi Collection
V. 886
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Courtyard on via Fondazzio, 1957
Oil on canvas
54 x 47 cm
21 1/2 x 18 3/4 in.
Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto, Italy, Giovanardi Collection
V. 1070
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1958
Oil on canvas
25 x 28 cm
9 7/8 x 11 in.
Private collection
V. 1133
Page xx

Still Life (Natura morta), 1959
Oil on canvas
30.5 x 35.2 cm
12 x 13 1/3 in.
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon
V. 1137
Photo: Ron Jennings
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1959
Oil on canvas
30.5 x 35.2 cm
12 x 13 1/3 in.
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon
V. 1275
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1960
Oil on canvas
28.1 x 33.7 cm
11 7/8 x 13 1/2 in.
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon
V. 1359
Photo: Eric Lessing
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Still Life (Natura morta), 1962
Oil on canvas
28.1 x 33.7 cm
11 7/8 x 13 1/2 in.
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
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Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875)
View from the Farnese Gardens, Rome, 1826
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
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André Derain (1880–1954)
Title, date
Location
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Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Still Life, 1913
Location unknown
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Piero della Francesca (c. 1420–92)
still life,
(c. 1420–92)
Piero della Francesca
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Jean-Siméon Chardin (1699–1779)
La table d’office,
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Pinacoteca Communale, Sansepolcro
1444–64 (detail)
(c. 1420–92)
Piero della Francesca
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Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)
Still Life, 1913
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Madonna della Misericordia, (1444–64) (detail)
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Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796–1875)
View from the Farnese Gardens, Rome, 1826
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Brandi, C. “Europismo e autonomia della cultura nella moderna pittura italiana.” L’Immagine 3 (June 1947).


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