

Morandi Study Days (New York, 19–20 May 16)

Center for Italian Modern Art, New York

Deadline: Feb 8, 2016

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The third annual exhibition at the Center for Italian Modern Art in New York (CIMA) is dedicated to the work of Giorgio Morandi (Bologna, 1890–1964). The exhibition includes some 40 paintings and works on paper ranging from 1916 to 1963, with a special focus on the 1930s, a decade in the artist's production that is less known and studied for several reasons. Morandi's painterly output in those years was limited, as printmaking became an integral part of his work following his appointment as professor of etching at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna in 1930. The majority of the paintings from the decade, moreover, entered Italian private collections, and they have rarely been exhibited abroad. Finally, the historical context of their production, Fascist Italy, has long complicated scholarly approaches to this body of Morandi's work.

The exceptional presentation at CIMA of a substantial number of works by Giorgio Morandi from the 1930s offers, therefore, an unprecedented opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the artist's aesthetics. It also permits inquiry into the intellectual and socio-political contexts of this decade. And the ready comparison with works from the rest of his career, which are also present in the show, allows for an examination highlighting particularities and continuities in Morandi's practice. In conjunction with this presentation and the issues raised above, the 2015–16 Fellows at CIMA invite proposals for papers for the Giorgio Morandi Study Days, to be held in New York over two days, May 19 and 20, 2016.

Day One: The 1930s

For Day One, CIMA seeks presentations focusing on the 1930s. Our goal is to give a more nuanced description of the political and intellectual context during this time of Morandi's production, as well as of the aesthetics of the period. We also aim to problematize accepted narratives that place the 1930s as an intermediary step in Morandi's progress towards the "mature" work.

Topics of consideration include:

- Morandi and still life: Morandi ultimately abandoned figure painting at the turn of the decade, in favor of still life and landscape paintings that are characterized by thick impasto, earthy tones, and an equally dense treatment of negative and positive space. How did Morandi engage ancient and recent artistic traditions, including his own earlier Metaphysical (1917-1919) and naturalistic phases (early to mid-1920s)? How are we to interpret Morandi's sudden stylistic changes during the 1930s, such as the 1938 series of still lifes with vibrant orange and blue pigments?
- What is the relationship between paintings, etchings, and drawings in the 1930s? Does the

hierarchy between mediums change vis-à-vis other periods of his career?

- Morandi and his critics, both the ones he knew and the ones he read. During the decade of the 1930s Morandi enjoyed the support of high-ranking members of the regime and was exhibited in many official national and international exhibitions. Can one trace mutual influences between the writers of the period and the painter? Does Morandi's friendship with critics such as Roberto Longhi, Cesare Brandi, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, and Francesco Arcangeli portend key political undertones? What role did the theory of puro-visibilismo play in shaping the debates of the period?

Day Two: A Quiet Star: Itineraries in Morandi's International Acclaim

Day Two expands the chronological scope of the conference. We welcome interdisciplinary topics, ranging from reception studies to reinterpretations of Morandi's "world" in photography and film. We aim to map the different modes of circulation and publicity of Morandi's work, exploring topics such as art and diplomacy, intertextuality, and historiography in the process. Topics of consideration include:

- In the aftermath of World War II works by Giorgio Morandi appeared in key international exhibitions as one of the most viable candidates to represent Italian art, with diplomatic purposes in mind. Notable exhibitions include the 1948 Venice Biennale, the 1949 MoMA Italian Art show, the 1953 Bienal de Sao Paulo, and the first documenta in Kassel in 1955. What ideological stakes informed the choice of exhibiting Morandi as well as the reception of his work in these different geopolitical contexts?

- What was the relation between Morandi and the market? What was his involvement with exhibitions in private galleries, notably in North America?

- Morandi and architecture: How did Morandi become a point of reference in architectural circles and magazines? How was Morandi's work repurposed by architects for their own aims? How was Morandi's work displayed in post-war bourgeois apartments and in museum spaces, both in Italy and abroad?

- Morandi and film: The work and the studio of Morandi became the object of focus for many photographers and filmmakers in the postwar years. From the camera of Luigi Ghirri to the most recent series by Joel Meyerowitz, from Federico Fellini to Michelangelo Antonioni, what can these photographic series and films tell us about Morandi? What levels of intertextuality do they engage? What features of Morandi's work and of the photographer do they respectively unveil?

- Subjective Morandi: How was Morandi differently seen and received by the artists of the postwar era, especially by figures of Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, and Transavanguardia?

Please send 300-word abstracts along with a CV to info@italianmodernart.org

Reference:

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