

Metaphysical Masterpieces (New York, 26–27 Apr 19)

CIMA - Center for Italian Modern Art, 421 Broome Street, New York, Apr 26–27, 2019
Deadline: Jan 27, 2019

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Study Days

Metaphysical Masterpieces

Keynote speaker: Mia Fuller, University of California – Berkeley

The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) presents for its 2018-2019 season a major exhibition devoted to masterpieces of metaphysical painting (*pittura metafisica*). Drawn primarily from the collection of the Pinacoteca di Brera, as well as from other public and private collections, the exhibition features a key work by Giorgio de Chirico, rarely seen early works by Giorgio Morandi, and important paintings by the lesser-known artists Carlo Carrà and Mario Sironi—together offering a richer and more nuanced view of this seminal chapter in the development of modern Italian art.

The term *pittura metafisica* refers to an artistic tendency closely associated with the art produced by Giorgio de Chirico between 1909 and 1920. It often featured disquieting images of eerie spaces and enigmatic objects, eliciting a sense of the mysterious. Although art historians have rejected the notion of metaphysical painting as a school or movement, when de Chirico moved back to Italy from Paris (1916), his peculiar art immediately began to influence the Italian cultural context of the time. The Carrà, Morandi, and Sironi works in CIMA's exhibition clearly show how the encounter with de Chirico's art was crucial to finding ways of expanding upon the visual languages they developed while involved in Futurism. However, many other artists, authors, and intellectuals engaged with the uncanny interpretation of reality offered by metaphysical painting. Thus, Zeno Birolli's interpretation of the tendency as "a sort of research stronghold, a force vector able to give momentum to a number of different cultural enterprises" (1980) is still valid today, and may be considered a starting point for further original investigations.

Aiming to analyze the major themes suggested by the exhibition, as well as to offer new insights into the general debate about the creative practices inspired by metaphysical painting, the 2018-2019 CIMA Fellows invite proposals for papers for the Metaphysical Masterpieces Study Days, to be held on site in New York on April 26 and 27, 2019. The Study Days will be an occasion to gather scholars from different disciplines, illuminating metaphysical painting's influence on Italian and foreign culture from the 1920s to the present.

Topics of consideration may include:

1. The relationship between metaphysical painting and Futurism.

2. Considerations of metaphysical painting as part of the avant-garde or as opposed to it.
3. The influence of metaphysical painting in different fields, such as: decorative arts, literature, music, architecture, cinema, photography, and theater.
4. The connections between metaphysical painting and other movements: i.e., Neue Sachlichkeit, Magic Realism, Surrealism, Regionalism, Precisionism.
5. New perspectives on metaphysical painting's recurrent themes: mannequins, drafting implements, interior and public spaces, the ambiguity of time and space.
6. The dissemination and acquisition of metaphysical art: market and collecting practices, of both private individuals and public institutions.
7. Hubs of actors involved in pittura metafisica: Paris, Ferrara, Milan, Turin, Florence.
8. The critical assessment of metaphysical painting in the United States and abroad from the 1920s to the present.
9. Metaphysical painting and contemporary artistic movements.
10. Metaphysical painting's response to ancient, medieval, and Renaissance traditions.

Please send an abstract (250-300 words), title, and a short biography (100-150 words) in English to info@italianmodernart.org with the subject line "Metaphysical Masterpieces CFP" by Sunday, January 27, 2019. Please send these materials in a single PDF document. Please do not send multiple attachments.

Presentations are not to exceed 20 minutes. No reading of papers in absentia is allowed. All speakers receive a \$300 honorarium and participants may request additional financial assistance for travel and accommodation, which CIMA may award as appropriate.

The proceedings will be filmed for archiving on CIMA's website, and the papers will be published in CIMA's online journal Italian Modern Art.

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Reference:

CFP: Metaphysical Masterpieces (New York, 26-27 Apr 19). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 13, 2018 (accessed Jul 2, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/19524>>.