

Morandi



Infinite
resonance



Giorgio Morandi (Bologna, 1890-1964) was an artist who remained faithful to his personal quest and to a silent and immobile painting that records states of mind and the flow of time through the poetry of objects. Fundación MAPFRE is presenting an exceptionally comprehensive survey of Morandi's oeuvre, which is one of the most significant, unclassifiable and challenging in the history of 20th century art. The exhibition includes more than a hundred works which show how the artist used everyday motifs (from a frequently depicted view to the objects in his studio) to “reinststate different emotional timbres and construct his severe, luminous elegy in a way that was always different”, in the words of the art critic Roberto Longhi.

Giorgio Morandi in his studio on Via Fondazza in Bologna, 1953
Photo by Herbert List

Unaffiliated with any pictorial trend and remote from the clamour of the avant-gardes, experiments with abstraction or any official academic language, it was in the objects that surrounded him that Morandi encountered the guiding thread to a coherent, seemingly immobile aesthetic and one that while always resembling itself, in fact involved continuous variations. This process of modulations on the same motifs, on occasions so subtle they are difficult to perceive, relates to the artist's well known declaration of 1955, when he said:

“For me nothing abstract exists; furthermore, I think there's nothing more surrealist, nothing more abstract than the real.”

In this sense his lesson has been fundamental for the painters who followed him and considered him “an artist's artist.”



Natura morta
[Still life], 1956
Collezione Augusto e Francesca
Giovanardi, Milán

From a very early date Morandi revealed that the subject of his painting was the very essence of painting itself. Taking this as his starting point, his early years were influenced by a reflection on Cézanne (one of the artists who devoted most time to meditating on the language of painting in the first decade of the 20th century) and his inability to “apprehend” painting in its fullest sense; a tension that also seems to affect Morandi’s work.



These artistic concerns led him to focus on Cubism while also carefully observing the evolution of the Futurist avant-garde and he participated in a number of the group’s debates and exhibitions in Florence and Bologna. During this period Morandi produced some depictions of the human form but soon abandoned this subject in order to concentrate on the study of objects. These years were followed by a brief but crucial affiliation with the Metaphysical painting of Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà in the form of a series of still lifes in which Morandi maintained the formal investigation that would become one of the principal characteristics of his work. Following these experiences the artist formulated a profoundly personal language that is clearly documented in his still lifes and also in a number of his landscapes and flower paintings; two genres that are represented in the exhibition and which reveal little known aspects of Morandi’s output.

Natura morta metafisica
[Metaphysical still life], 1918
Fondazione Magnani-Rocca,
Mamiano di Traversetolo, Parma

Paesaggio
[Landscape], 1928
Collezione Augusto e Francesca Giovanardi,
Milán



Natura morta
[Still life], 1953-1954
Collezione Augusto e Francesca Giovanardi, Milán



Natura morta
[Still life], 1942
Fondazione Magnani-Rocca, Mamiano di Traversetolo, Parma



Another aspect of this process of development was his interest in drawing and printmaking, which is also essential for an understanding of his constant study of light, volumes and form. In his works of this type Morandi maintained an ongoing dialogue with his pictorial output and moved beyond the traditional hierarchy of these disciplines as he considered his work on paper to be an independent project rather than a mere exercise related to painting.

Rachel Whiteread
Model IV, 2006
Collezione Massimo Antichi
Photo © Courtesy Galleria Lorcan O'Neill, Roma

Joel Meyerowitz
Morandi's Objects: Wood Grained Pitcher
Damiani
Photo © Joel Meyerowitz



Over the years Morandi became an internationally renowned painter who was able to influence subsequent generations through his serene, silent art. That potency still exists today and numerous artists, writers and filmmakers working in different countries and with different approaches have continued to establish a dialogue with the essence of Morandi's work. They include Joel Meyerowitz, Tacita Dean, Edmund de Waal, Rachel Whiteread, Bertozzi & Casoni, Alfredo Alcaín and Gerardo Rueda, to name just some of the creative figures also present in the exhibition. Through different approaches and techniques their works speak to us of a "living" Morandi whose aesthetic continues to influence international artistic practice today.

Curators

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Dates

24 September 2021 to 9 January 2022

Opening times

Mondays (except public holidays):
2 pm to 8 pm
Tuesdays to Saturdays: 11 am to 8 pm
Sundays and public holidays:
11 am to 7 pm
(Last entry 30 minutes before
closing time. Visitors must leave the
galleries 10 minutes before closing.)

Ticket prices

Standard: 5 €
Reduced: 3 €
Free entry: Mondays (except public holidays)

Guided tours

7 €
Times and booking: [on the website](#)

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Spanish and English

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Cover: *Natura morta* [Still life], 1941
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