



INSTALLATION OF RARELY SEEN WORK BY ITALIAN MODERN MASTER GIORGIO MORANDI OPENS AT CIMA OCTOBER 2015

**Showcasing Morandi's Rare, Early Paintings from 1930s, Installation Marks First Time in Decades
That Majority of Works will be on View in the U.S.**



From Left to Right: Giorgio Morandi, *Self-portrait*, 1930, and *Still Life*, 1931.
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New York, NY (October 6, 2015) – This October, the Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) will present a major installation of Giorgio Morandi's (1890–1964) rarely seen paintings from the 1930s—a seminal and yet relatively unexplored decade for the acclaimed Italian modernist, during which he reached full artistic maturity and developed his distinct pictorial language. Featuring nearly 40 paintings, etchings, and drawings, the presentation will mark the first time in decades that the majority of these works—gathered from important public and private holdings across Europe—will be on view in the U.S. The installation will also include select works from the very beginning and end of the artist's career, in the 1910s and 1960s respectively, to demonstrate the thematic continuities in his practice.

On view October 9, 2015 through June 25, 2016, *Giorgio Morandi* will be the third presentation mounted by the nonprofit, which promotes public appreciation of and new scholarship on Italian 20th-century art through its annual installations and research fellowships. In conjunction with the installation, CIMA will present work by four contemporary artists—Tacita Dean, Wolfgang Laib, Joel Meyerowitz, and Matthias Schaller—relating to Morandi's practice thematically or conceptually. CIMA will also host a full roster of public programs, including lectures, artist talks, film screenings, and other special events tied to the exhibition, throughout the year.

“While Morandi is one of the more well-known Italian modern artists internationally, there's been very little attention paid to his work during the critical decade of the 1930s. It was during these years, when Morandi experimented with dark colors and thick, dramatic brushstrokes, that he truly developed his most

personal approach to painting, focusing on landscapes and still life objects and emphasizing the material over the representational characteristics of painting,” said CIMA Founder and President Laura Mattioli. “The period of the 1930s was vital to Morandi’s development, but the artist produced comparatively far fewer works during this decade than at the end of his career; this makes our show a unique chance for our visitors to explore this period and gain new insight into Morandi’s creative development and artistic approach.”

Added Executive Director Heather Ewing, “We’re very excited to be presenting a new perspective on this celebrated Italian artist for our third season at CIMA. Our installations are unique because they act as a springboard for careful and extended re-examinations of modern Italian art, and, as with our previous installations of works by Fortunato Depero and Medardo Rosso, we look forward to the new discoveries and scholarship that the Morandi installation and the dedicated work of our fellows will generate.”

About Giorgio Morandi and the Installation at CIMA

Among the best-known Italian artists of the 20th century, Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964) was a celebrated painter, draughtsman, and printmaker who spent much of his life working in his hometown of Bologna and trained in the city’s Accademia di Belle Arti. While during his lifetime he was most closely associated with his hometown’s heritage of the Carracci brothers and Classicism, the artistic connections he developed were precociously international and he consistently tested the boundaries of avant-garde art. Throughout his career, Morandi tirelessly repainted the same subjects—mainly still lifes in the studio—with intellectual rigor, to elicit the unique qualities of an object and investigate the practice of painting itself.

This artistic strategy crystallized for Morandi during the 1930s, at a time when Italy was under Fascist rule. A period of great personal and professional change, this decade saw his work grow increasingly recognized by critics and patrons alike, culminating with Morandi being awarded a solo room at the Rome Quadrennial in 1939. Morandi’s creative output during this time was slow and deliberate, as he sought to define his practice—he created approximately 100 oil paintings in these years, fewer than one a month, as opposed to the nearly 500 works he would go on to paint in the 1950s. It was during this time that the painter solidified his autonomous pictorial language that would mark his later works for which he is now best known. As demonstrated by the more than 20 works from this time period that CIMA’s presentation encompasses, Morandi embraced an expressionistic and dramatic energy, developing a dense, highly elaborated matter in his paintings and etchings, with iconic, strongly two-dimensional subjects rendered simply in relatively monochromatic tones.

Giorgio Morandi draws primarily from two major Italian collections formed in dialogue with the artist during his lifetime—the Gianni Mattioli Collection and the Augusto Giovanardi Collection, now on long-term loan with the Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto. The collections—connected by their strong representation of Morandi’s 1930s works, and by exchanges these collectors had with the artist throughout this period—together represent some of the largest holdings of the artist’s work across the globe and have rarely been exhibited outside of Italy. The installation will feature additional loans from important European public and private holdings, including the Fondo Ambiente Italiano, the Morandi Museum and the Museum d’Arte Moderna in Bologna, the Galleria d’Arte Moderna in Rome, the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Highlights within the installation include:

- An oil-on-canvas self-portrait, *Self-Portrait (Autoritratto)*, 1930, which has not been presented in the U.S. in nearly half a century. Departing from the style of his earlier portraits, Morandi does not clearly identify himself as a painter within this image—choosing not to incorporate an easel or artist palette. The work also highlights his increasing emphasis on materiality and the physical qualities of painting as a medium.

- Select still-life etchings from 1931–34. A self-taught printmaker, Morandi developed a distinctive technique of very fine lines and subtle gradations of shadow, evidenced clearly in this series.
- Approximately 20 still-life paintings from throughout the 1930s, all of which represent the subject for which Morandi is best known—bottles of varying shapes, sizes, and colors positioned on a table. Morandi returned repeatedly to this same subject matter because it allowed him to paint in a way that explored the nature and power of painting itself. The focus is not on the subject, but on the medium’s ability to express the different feelings and senses of perception and imagination that characterized the artist’s experience of the world.
- An original copper bottle-like object fabricated by Morandi specifically for depiction in his still-life paintings. Two of the paintings on view at CIMA—created in 1960 and 1963—feature this unique sculptural object.
- An early double-sided painting, featuring a still life of a cactus on the front and a self-portrait on the verso, which was thought to have been lost (1918–19). Framed for decades as *The Cactus*, the self-portrait was discovered in 2008 through conservation work initiated by CIMA Founder and Curator of the Gianni Mattioli Collection, Laura Mattioli. CIMA’s installation will present *The Cactus* side of the canvas, and include a reproduction of the self-portrait alongside.
- Select works created by the artist during the latter part of his career in the 1960s. During this period, Morandi embraced a diaphanous, nearly liquid gesture, marking a clear shift away from three-dimensionality to a progressively abstract mode of representation.

In conjunction with the installation, CIMA will present select works by four contemporary artists that complement and reflect upon the Italian modernist’s work. Contemporary works represented will include still images from videos of Morandi’s studio by Tacita Dean; a wax sculpture by Wolfgang Laib; a series of photographs by Joel Meyerowitz taken in Morandi’s Bologna studio, capturing the objects that Morandi rendered in his still-life paintings; and a photograph of Morandi’s palette by Matthias Schaller.

Public Programs

Following are highlights of fall 2016 public programs, hosted in conjunction with *Giorgio Morandi*.

- **Public Lecture: When Hollywood and the U.S. Fell in Love with Modern Italian Art** (October 22, 2015, 6 – 8 PM)
Former CIMA fellow, art historian and curator Raffaele Bedarida examines the emerging interest in Italian modern art in the U.S. during the late 1950s—looking closely at the Italian art exhibitions that traveled the U.S. in those years, as well as the art that was incorporated into fashion magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*, and the films and private art collections of Billy Wilder, Kirk Douglas, and other Hollywood stars.
- **Public Lecture: Artist and Author Janet Abramowicz in Conversation with Emily Braun** (November 7, 2015, 3:30 – 5.30 PM)
Artist Janet Abramowicz, author of *Giorgio Morandi: The Art of Silence* (Yale UP, 2005), studied under Giorgio Morandi at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna and subsequently became his teaching assistant. She will discuss her recollections of the artist and thoughts on the work at CIMA with Emily Braun, Distinguished Professor of Art History at Hunter College and The Graduate Center, CUNY and the Guest Curator of *Alberto Burri: The Trauma of Painting* concurrently on view at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

- **Drawing Night**

(November 16, 2015, 6 – 8 PM)

CIMA holds its first Drawing Night in collaboration with the New York Studio School, opening CIMA's unique and intimate setting to students and artists, encouraging them to interact with, analyze, and draw inspiration from Giorgio Morandi's works. Painter Graham Nickson, Dean of the NYSS and originator of the institution's famed Drawing Marathon there, will open the program.

- **Artist Talk: Joel Meyerowitz**

(November 2015, exact date TBD)

CIMA welcomes celebrated American photographer Joel Meyerowitz to discuss his recent project, *Morandi's Objects*. Working in Morandi's Bologna studio, Meyerowitz created portraits of 270 objects used by the artist as inspiration for his still life paintings. A selection of these photographs, along with one of the objects from Morandi's studio, are on view at CIMA.

- **Film Screenings: *La Dolce Vita* and *La Notte***

(Winter 2015)

CIMA looks at Italian modern art's representation in film with screenings of Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* and Michelangelo Antonioni's *La Notte*—both of which feature the artwork of Giorgio Morandi.

- **Artist Talk: Matthias Schaller in Conversation with Germano Celant**

(Winter 2015)

Contemporary artist Matthias Schaller, whose photographic series *Das Meisterstück* includes an image of Giorgio Morandi's artist palette, discusses his thoughts on the artist and the body of work on view at CIMA with acclaimed art historian, curator, and critic Germano Celant.

About CIMA's 2015-2016 Fellows

In tandem with the opening of the installation, CIMA will launch its third annual fellowship program in support of new scholarship on Italian modern art in the U.S. and abroad. Students pursuing pre- and post-doctoral study of Italian 20th-century art history and related fields have been awarded fellowships to research and address various aspects of Morandi's career and legacy during their residency in New York.

This year, the program will support a total of five fellows—four New York-based fellowships and one travel fellowship in Italy. Fellows include: **Matilde Guidelli-Guidi** (Fall Fellow), a Ph.D. candidate in Modern Art History at The Graduate Center, CUNY; **Lucia Piccioni** (Fall Fellow), an art historian with a Ph.D. in Art History from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris) and the Scuola Normale Superiore (Pisa); **Nicola Lucchi** (Spring Fellow), a doctoral candidate in Italian Studies at New York University; **Nicol Maria Mocchi** (Spring Fellow), an art historian specializing in 19th- and 20th-century art; and **Teresa Kittler** (Travel Fellow), who received her Ph.D. in 2014 at University College London.

About CIMA

The Center for Italian Modern Art (CIMA) is a nonprofit organization established to promote scholarly research and advance public appreciation of modern and contemporary Italian art in the U.S. and internationally. Through research fellowships, annual installations, and ongoing sponsorship of cultural

programming, CIMA advocates for a deeper awareness of 20th-century Italian art and its enduring legacy, fosters cultural exchange between Italy and the U.S., and serves as an incubator for new discourse and scholarly debate. Founded in 2013 and based in New York City, CIMA is overseen by Executive Director Heather Ewing, with guidance by the CIMA Advisory Committee, including President Laura Mattioli, Emily Braun, Flavio Fergonzi, Vivien Greene, and Valentina Pero. CIMA's most recent installation focused on Medardo Rosso and featured for the first time in the United States a large body of the artist's drawings and experimental photography, in addition to his better-known sculptural work.

Location, Hours, and Admissions

CIMA is located in a historic cast-iron building in New York City's SoHo neighborhood, on the fourth floor of 421 Broome Street, in a space designed by Irina Verona Architecture.

The exhibition space is open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays for guided visits at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., and 5 p.m. Tours last approximately one hour and are led by CIMA's fellows. Admission is \$10 (entry is free for CIMA members and for students with valid ID). Group tours can be arranged by appointment on other days. For more information and to book a visit, go to italianmodernart.org.

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