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ON GIORGIO MORANDI: MILTON GLASER IN CONVERSATION WITH MATILDE GUIDELLI-GUIDI AND NICOLA LUCCHI

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Methodologies of Exchange: MoMA's "Twentieth-Century Italian Art" (1949), Issue 3, January 2020

ABSTRACT

This is the transcript of a wide-ranging interview with artist and graphic designer Milton Glaser that took place at CIMA in 2016. Glaser discusses his experiences as a Fulbright grantee in Bologna, Italy, where he enrolled in an etching class taught by Giorgio Morandi at the city's Accademia di Belle Arti. The interview provides insights into Morandi's personality and teaching method, into Glaser's consideration of Morandi's oeuvre, and into the designer's own artistic vision.

In 1952, a young Milton Glaser (b. 1929, New York) traveled on a Fulbright Scholarship to Bologna, where he would study with Giorgio Morandi. If this serendipitous encounter resulted from the system of cultural diplomacy put in place in the aftermath of World War II, Italian geography helped, too. Glaser was pursuing a research project that required frequent travel between Venice and Florence. The members of the U.S.-Italy Fulbright Commission recommended that Glaser make Bologna his temporary home, as the city constituted a strategic node in the peninsula's railroad network and residing there would ease Glaser's commute. Furthermore, they suggested that as a graphic arts student with knowledge of etching, Glaser might find a congenial mentor in Morandi, who had resumed teaching that technique at Bologna's Accademia di Belle Arti after the war.[1]

Visiting Italy under the aegis of the Fulbright program in the 1950s was a cultural experience for a new generation of intellectuals as well as a diplomatic mission sui generis. The Fulbright Program is named after United

States Senator J. William Fulbright, who in 1945 introduced a bill that called for the use of proceeds from the sales of surplus war property to fund the "promotion of international good will through the exchange of students in the fields of education, culture, and science."[2] The bill was signed into law by President Truman in 1946, with the first participants in the Fulbright Program going overseas in 1948. A bilateral partnership between the U.S. and Italian governments was signed on December 18, 1948, with Fulbright grantees first traveling to and from Italy in 1949.[3]

In the early stages of the Cold War, the program also functioned as a vehicle of American soft power. To be sure, its partnership with Italy began in the midst of the country's institutional reassessment and in the early stages of the economic reconstruction catalyzed, in 1948, by the Marshall Plan. The Fulbright program was not an isolated strategy of cooperation and cooptation: political tensions in Italy had prompted U.S. diplomatic channels to rekindle conversations with Italians on a number of cultural initiatives that had been interrupted by World War II, and that could now play a role in an anti-Soviet political framework. Chief among these initiatives was the Museum of Modern Art's 1949 exhibition *Twentieth–Century Italian Art*, a large survey that sought to systematize the evolution of Italian contemporary art while at the same time expunging its unpalatable Fascist connections. Thanks to the enthusiasm of James Thrall Soby and additionally prompted by the artist receiving first prize for painting at the 1948 Venice Biennale, Morandi had a great showing at MoMA. With thirteen paintings and five etchings on view, he was the third-most-represented artist in the 1949 exhibition, after Umberto Boccioni and Amedeo Modigliani. The MoMA survey laid the ground for more showings of Morandi's work in the U.S., making him the most acclaimed Italian artist abroad.

What follows is the transcript of a conversation with Glaser that took place at CIMA on March 23, 2016. The occasion for the event was a 2015–16 CIMA exhibition that featured some forty quiet masterpieces from the full span of Morandi's career, including rarely seen paintings from the 1930s and a selection of etchings. Morandi's work alters our way of seeing, Glaser states in this conversation; he adds that the capacity to transform reality through a rearrangement of the visual is the attribute of true art. The elder artist's hands-off approach to teaching – "You teach what you are, not what you say" – marked the young Glaser, who would go on to become a beloved teacher himself. In Glaser's account, Morandi's classroom was place of everyday interactions, with the teacher discussing restaurants and the movies, and limiting his suggestions to short but exacting technical remarks, with the gentle exhortation that his pupils process their plates with "*coraggio!*"

The text has been lightly edited for clarity. A video of the event is available at this link.

GUIDELLI-GUIDI: So, thank you very much for being here at CIMA to talk about Morandi with us. You studied with Morandi at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna as a Fulbright Student to Italy in 1952, and we were hoping that you could tell us a little bit about how it happened – if you knew of Morandi before going to Italy, and how it was to be a student of Morandi?

GLASER: If I only had a memory. [*Laughter*] Being a student of Morandi was one of the real transforming experiences of my life. I had graduated from the Cooper Union [in New York] and gone to work, and I received the Fulbright grant the following year. I had a proposal that involved a study project between Venice and Florence. The Fulbright committee approached me and said, "Since you're going to be between Venice and Florence, why don't you associate yourself with the Accademia in Bologna?" I said, "That sounds fine." They said, "Incidentally, there's a guy there named Giorgio Morandi who teaches a course in etching. We noticed that you are a graphic arts major and that you've studied etching." I said, "That's true." "Would you be interested in registering for his class?" As a requirement of the Fulbright, you had to be attached to an institution that taught something, and so I said, "That would be fine." And I had actually known of Morandi's work. Not comprehensively, certainly, but I had seen his work and admired it for many years – that is, his etchings. I didn't know anything about his paintings.[4]

And so I registered at the Accademia, and I started to go to class with Morandi, who taught one day a week. He taught a class of young girls between fifteen and seventeen, who had no art experience of any kind, which was a curious level to be teaching at, particularly for Morandi.[5] He would teach them the rudiments of etching. They were sweet girls, but I was the only one in the class that had ever actually done an etching before the beginning of the class. One of the things I learned from Morandi, which was perhaps most critical about teaching, was, you teach what you are, not what you say. One thinks that teaching is about telling people things, or instructing them to do something, or criticizing them in some way, or correcting errors. But that is not what significant teaching is about.

I've been teaching now for fifty-five years, inspired by the fact that Morandi had such a profound influence on my life. You teach by providing a model for students that they want to emulate, about the nature of life, about the nature of art, about the nature of being in the world. That is the most powerful instrument you have as a teacher. Simply criticizing what people do, as you all know, is not a very effective way of teaching anyone anything. But it was a powerful and extraordinary time for me, largely because I was in the presence of an extraordinary man.

It is astonishing, after you're in this room [at CIMA] for a while, to see the power and the effect of these modest works, and to realize that was an intention of Morandi's, to transform your idea of what reality was. It is accomplished by these works in a half hour. When you leave this space, you are no longer the same. I think that almost everybody who comes here realizes the extraordinary invisible power of these works. I think that you would call them "art" to designate the experience you have in looking at the Morandi as an alternative to looking at most of the things you see in life, including other paintings. One thing you discover is that many, many things called "art," many of which are painting, actually are not art. They are something else. There is one characteristic of art that is essential to the experience of Morandi, which is that he transforms your idea of what is real because, as you all know, there is no such thing as reality, only a process that occurs in the brain that invents something you then call "reality." But with Morandi, and with great artists – and I think of Morandi as being as great as Leonardo – there is this capacity through a single work to transform your idea of what an ear is, what an eye is, what atmosphere is, what color is, what light is. It occurs deeply and experientially. You no longer feel the same. And that is a test, I must say, that I apply to all experiences that are called "art." Conversely, some things that are not intended to be art, that exist in the world for other purposes, may have the same effect as art. Although not intentional, they still affect us as art does because of some strange way that the brain receives vibrations from objects. I think one of the things I learned from Morandi was the distinction between the two.

So it was an incredibly powerful time for me. Morandi was a very modest man; he never talked about art. He talked about restaurants [*laughter*] and good hotels, and the best trains to take to get out of Bologna, although he didn't leave very often. He was an extremely provincial man.[6] How somebody could be so provincial and so worldly at the same time is a great mystery. He was generous, never self-serving, and, as you know, largely overlooked, because he didn't enter into the realm of commerce, or self-promotion, or style – all of which are preeminent characteristics of the art world today. I mean, if you are not a commodity, you're not in the art world. But Morandi was truly dedicated, a fully committed artist. It was the only thing he wanted to do; he worked at school once or twice a week, went home, where he lived, as most of you know, with his three sisters, and painted all day. That literally was the only thing he spent his life doing, and that commitment shows in everything you have experienced in seeing the show here. I guess you would use the word "authenticity" – a word frequently used, but rarely experienced.

It was a great, great experience, because I found him to be a model for what I would hope to be, in terms of his commitment to the work that he did, and to his sense of its appropriateness to the community he served. He was a great, great man.

GUIDELLI-GUIDI: So you mentioned that he didn't talk about art, but would he show you art? From the Accademia or…

GLASER: No, he would never show you anything he did.

GUIDELLI-GUIDI: Or other works?

GLASER: He would never talk about art. That just wasn't part of it. He might say, "Could you make that a little darker?" [*Laughter*] I mean, the criticism was fundamental. It wasn't "Change that line," or "Move that over here," or "Maybe you should," it was really the simplest kind of gestures, because he knew you had to learn it yourself.

GUIDELLI-GUIDI: Right. There was no example that he would put in front of you?

GLASER: Not at all.

LUCCHI: Going back to the practice of etching, I'm wondering if you could say something as to how his work in etching, and your own practice as an etcher, influenced your work as a graphic designer?

GLASER: Well, you know, it's odd, because if you look at Morandi's paintings, you rarely think of him as a skillful technician. I mean, because the paintings are fuzzy, or rough. But if you look at the etchings, they are extraordinarily precise, with a kind of control that is almost impossible to master. So if you're looking at these two variations [*Natura morta con caffettiera* (Still Life with Coffee Pot, 1933), and *Grande natura morta scura* (Large Dark Still Life, 1934; figures 1 and 2)], of by and large the same composition, you realize that it's very hard to get that kind of density in etching, because you have to consider the actual strength of the acid and the amount of time you leave it in place. Incidentally, the one thing he used to say, as you were about to slip your plate into the acid, was "*coraggio!*" [*Laughter*]

Which, I must say, is a great attitude to have for all of life and life's encounters. But it is an extremely complex methodology, and depends on extraordinary sophistication of timing and acid strength, and all other things. But you can see here the total control between going from a light version of what he was doing, and making it as though the lights had gone out. Everything is fully realized in both cases. The light one is fully realized, the dark one is fully realized.

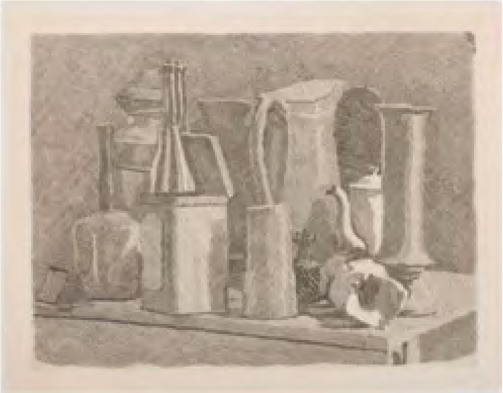

Figure 1. Giorgio Morandi, "Grande natura morta con caffettiera" [Large still life with coffee pot], 1933. Etching, 15 3/8 x 11 11/16 in. (39 x 29.6 cm). Private Collection. © 2020 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome.

For Morandi, and probably also for Matisse and Picasso, the idea of doing a sequence of paintings probably came from their activity as printmakers. If you start making prints you realize that the inevitable consequence of printmaking is that you do proof after proof, change after change, modification after modification – that's the truth of the advent of printing. Rembrandt is always doing additions that reflect a whole new set of

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inserts into the print. And that idea that you take a theme and then produce its variations probably came from one's experience making prints, because the whole point of making prints is to see them as mutable, and to take five of this, add something, take another five, add something, and so on. And of course, Morandi did the same thing in his paintings. I suspect that the origins of that impulse to take the same composition, or the same elements, and reconform them in some way – dark in some areas, light in some areas, take some areas out, introduce new things – all came from the physical act of making prints, largely engraving and etching, a little less so lithography.

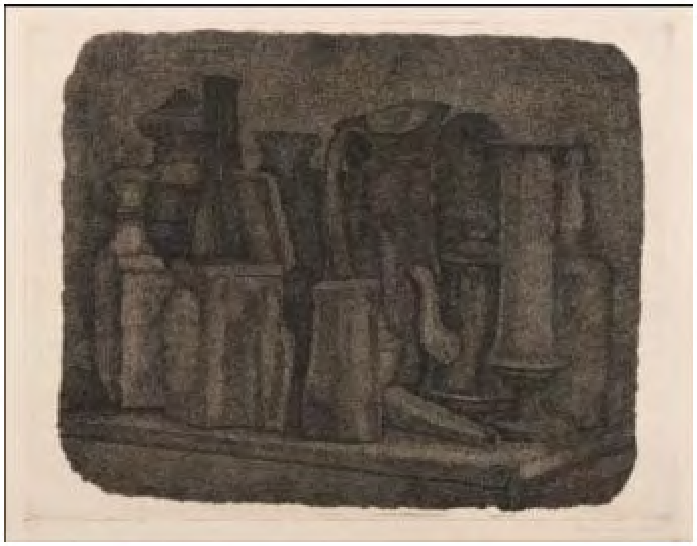

Figure 2. Giorgio Morandi, "Grande natura morta scura" [Large dark still life], 1934. Etching, 15 1/8 x 11 11/16 in. (38.4 x 29.6 cm). Private Collection. © 2020 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome.

It's a wonderful introduction to form making, because you have to be so precise about every choice, you have to really know the effect if you're using a borer and then digging in on a plate, you have to understand exactly how much pressure to apply. Morandi is unexcelled in that way in his printmaking, even though you would think from the later works, and from his paintings alone, that he had a kind of expressionistic flare. But the control he had was truly extraordinary. I'm always interested in the idea of abstraction versus reality, or versus naturalism, because everything is an abstraction. And Morandi is constantly walking the line between what is abstract and what is naturalistic, and actually introducing the contradictions between the two. As you all know, you look at a painting by Morandi and the space between bottles turns out to be a third bottle, and things go from being fully realized objects to pure space, because the idea of the space changes, and the idea of what is real changes, in every Morandi. He basically plays with you constantly by guiding you along false paths from abstraction to reality.

Incidentally, one of the most extraordinary experiences you have in front of a Morandi is the fact that it's constantly shifting its meaning from form to space, and from abstraction to reality. At a certain point you realize a painting, and an etching, cannot be anything but abstract: going from two to three dimensions demands abstraction. And I find that in my own life, when I look at something, I'm very conscious that when I see something abstract, I immediately fill it in with something that's real, and when I see something that's real – I'm talking here about painting and etching – I immediately fill it in with abstraction. The great experience you have in looking at a Morandi is your own attempt, realized or not, to conceptualize what it is that you're looking at, and to separate out, to separate the spaces from the forms. Every painting by Morandi has this series of puzzles for you to solve, that you do automatically, basically, but with a sense of accomplishment, not knowing exactly what it is you've accomplished.

LUCCHI: Could we see some of your work that illustrates this practice?

GLASER: I'll show you some of the work I did when I was invited to do a poster for the Hermitage [in St. Petersburg]. It was basically a celebration of their poster collection. And what I have come to in my life, and maybe inferentially I learned this from Morandi, is that when I do something, I don't wait to start. Every time I have an interview with a student they always say, "What inspires you?" This is a misunderstanding, and what I have to tell them is, "What inspires me is the act of work." That inspiration doesn't come from out there because it's all in your brain to begin with. What I do is I step on the path and I start moving towards an objective that I don't know yet. I don't know where I'm going, all I know is that I've started. So, when I work on a computer – and I love the computer, even though at first it seemed like the worst enemy of anybody who was capable of drawing – when I work on the computer now, I love the path and its deviations. I love the fact when it goes off the path, then you have to pull it back and get on the path. When you design something, you always have an objective in mind, and the goal in design is to turn an existing condition into the preferred condition. You set the elements up so that you can follow a path by reducing the complexity, until you arrive at the objective. It's the opposite of what you do for a painting or a work of the imagination. When you do that, you start blindly down a path, and hope that walking down the path will lead you to the solution.

When I started working on the Hermitage design on the computer, I started with a head that I did as a paper cut (figure 3).

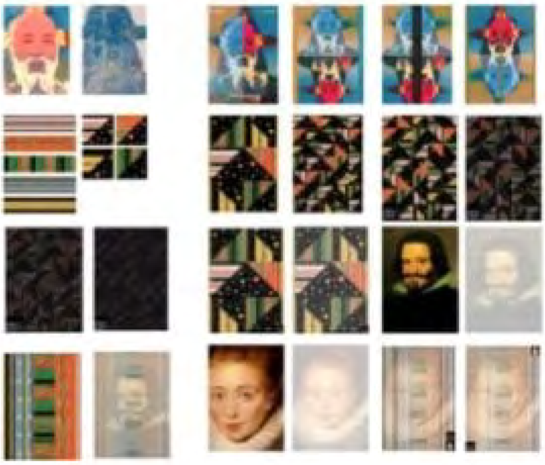

Figure 3. Milton Glaser, suite of designs in preparation of a poster marking the 250th anniversary of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, 2014.

It wasn't interesting, so I went to a reverse of it in paper. That wasn't going anywhere, so I went to combining the two, the red one and the blue one, and splitting them. That looked like hell. Then I put them flat top to bottom with the words, and that didn't look good either. I widened them to see if they would look more interesting with typography, and that wasn't going anywhere. So I changed them and did another, and pulled another proof in paper. That didn't look like anything, and then I remembered that I had done some scarves on the computer, a series of five scarves that were related, so you could wear one, two, three, four, or five at the same time – a good commercial product that nobody ever bought. [*Laughter*] I started distributing the arrangement of the scarf forms until they looked sort of interesting. I worked on another one, and made the black more dense, eliminated most of the triangular forms, and I kept the typography, with dots left over. I brought back that white grid, superimposed on the pattern of scarves, and made it more intense and frequent. Then I remembered a Velásquez that was in the collection at the Hermitage, an extremely ugly man [*laughter*], and I thought, "Maybe I should start elsewhere…" I imposed that grid I had used earlier over him, but then decided he was *too* ugly. So I thought, maybe I can bring back the scarves? I brought back the scarves, superimposed on him. It was interesting, but he was now obliterated and still ugly. I went on. I remembered they had this fabulous Rubens painting of a beautiful woman. I threw out the Velázquez, placed her in the grid – it immediately looked better – and I reintroduced the scarves. [*Laughter*] And put on the logo for the show.

But the interesting thing was that the image itself, and the path of moving the image, led me to a conclusion that I wouldn't have arrived at if I had simply objectified it and decided in advance how to get there. And actually, these are things I did when I was in Bologna.

GUIDELLI-GUIDI: We have here some works that you made for Olivetti (figure 4). We were wondering if you wanted to talk about the influence that Italian art, old masters as well, have had on your imagination. Consider these two posters, one for Campari and one for Rimini.

GLASER: Well, there I don't think there was any direct influence from Italian art history, except in the Piero Di Cosimo that I used with that dog for Valentine typewriters. That is a part of a painting by Piero Di Cosimo, a mourning dog at the feet of Paris, I believe. I thought it would be funny to use the dog – I always loved that dog – at the base, showing only the feet of the poet and introducing an Olivetti typewriter into the composition. I don't know how many typewriters sold. [*Laughter*] The other poster was just references from other Italian paintings and architectural details, because the Olivetti typewriter was a ball typewriter – not much thinking there. But there are other things that occur, where being in Italy makes you think Italian, as you know…

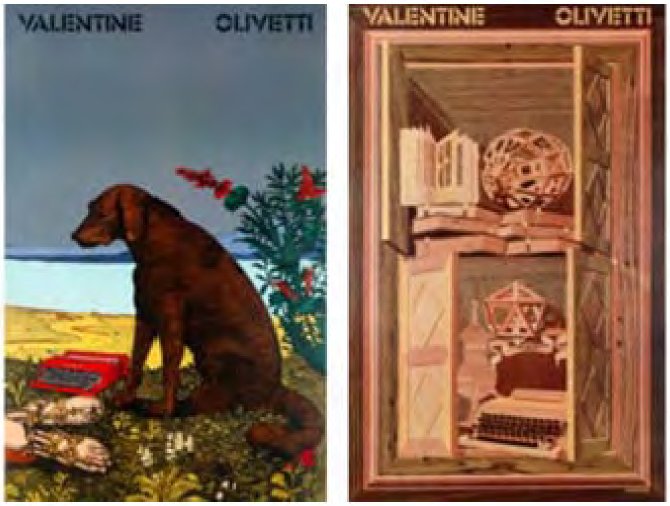

Figure 4. Milton Glaser, selections of poster designs realized for Olivetti in the 1980s.

LUCCHI: Another thing that is quite interesting, going back to your rapport with Morandi, is the idea that as a graphic designer you are a person who works a lot in communication. It's all about communication with your posters and your designs and the logo types, whereas the work of Morandi oftentimes is considered very silent, and laconic to some extent.

GLASER: The difference between communication and art is that in the communication business you're always trying to persuade someone to do something. Buy a product. Wear their hair differently. Eat more chocolate. Whatever it is. At the root of all commercial communication is persuasion. One of the great ethical problems for anybody in the communication business is, what are you persuading people to do? And is that persuasion useful to them or not? As you know if you are related to the advertising field, it is very rarely useful to the person who is being persuaded. The role of art, on the other hand, is to illuminate the real, to give people enough of an insight into the idea that their view of the world may not be accurate or real, so that they can reevaluate what reality is, or see it differently experientially.

Those are two very different functions. Sometimes they overlap, sometimes one can't be separated from the other, sometimes things that persuade also are life enhancing. I would use that term, I would say that art is intrinsically *life enhancing*. What it does is create a kind of relationship between all those who share the experience. So, if I listen to Mozart and you listen to Mozart, we already have something in common. That commonality, or that role of uniting a culture, and making people feel as though they have something in common, is essentially what art is about. Communication, and design, has no such responsibility, unless you want it to have that responsibility. And for people in professional life, increasingly they realize that they don't want to be responsible for people causing harm to themselves. So, one of the first questions I ask my students to ask themselves is, does this cause harm? And then, make up your mind whether you're going to do it anyhow, because at least awareness of the fact that you're producing harm is the beginning of a process. What we have now is denial about the harm that you do. I mean, cigarettes are an obvious villain, but the truth of the matter is almost anything you advertise is a villain. But at least you acknowledge that, right? And acknowledgement is the only way to begin.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What do you consider yourself – an illustrator, a graphic designer, or an artist?

GLASER: Well, I'm a designer. That's the way I live – hopeful that occasionally my work may have artistic content. I think you're an artist not by aspiration but by the effect your work has on others. You can call yourself anything you want, it doesn't make you anything you want. Everybody aspires to be an artist – who have you met that doesn't want to be an artist? How many artists are there, actually? The issue is not what you call yourself, because the great thing about art is that it's self-designated. Anybody can say they're an artist, there are no tests to pass! Any jerk, any moron, any guy on the street can say, "I'm an artist," and in fact be believed! So, the great thing about it is, finally, there is no criteria by which you measure an artist except by history, and the effect on others. You don't have to bother naming yourself, it doesn't matter. Others will name you.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Did Morandi extend any interest towards you as a visiting Fulbright scholar taking his class?

GLASER: Did he extend his interest to me in any way? Not at all. [*Laughter*] I mean, he was always polite, because he was a polite man. But I was indistinguishable from the other thirty girls in the class. [*Laughter*]

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Are there other Italian artists who have influenced you?

GLASER: Historically, yes. I was influenced by the great history of the Renaissance. I have a great love for Piero della Francesca, and Morandi had that same admiration. He loved Piero. And it would be easy to overlook the relationship between Piero and Morandi. But experientially, that same solidity, that same powdery color… I mean, it's hard to see, but once you see it, it's everywhere between the two. And I guess I would use that word again, the same sense of *authenticity*. You really believe what Piero is telling you. Even in his most fantastic creations, you believe because apparently he did too.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Could you speak about the issue of ethics in art? Do you think this topic should be taught in art school?

GLASER: Well, it certainly shouldn't be taught as a separate issue for art students. I mean, ethical behavior is something you hope everyone shares. Certainly, art students shouldn't be exempted from that study either. First you are a member of a community, and now, above all, the need for ethical behavior has become overwhelming – this idea of doing no harm. When you see what's going on in the world, how are we going to get to a state where we recognize what we're doing? But because designers and artists are in the communications business, that means they have a central role in shaping understanding. And it's the same thing for journalists, right? You might look at this responsibility as a journalist does – you don't want to misrepresent reality, you don't want to lie to people, you don't want to persuade people to do things that are not based on their own good. I would not separate the need for artists to have this, except for the additional complexity of being in a situation where people are informed and persuaded by what you do to them. That means you have an extraordinary burden.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: How have you experienced the work of Morandi over time? Has it changed?

GLASER: That's an interesting question, because it's so internal. I feel closer to Morandi now as an influence than I ever did when I was young and studying with him. I mean, we just bought a new house in the country, and we're painting the walls based on a Morandi painting. [*Laughter*] Yellow and tan and a pale blue…

Also, there's the idea of clarity and density and tonality and recognition. The question of when you recognize what you're looking at has become more interesting to me, and more a subject of what I do. What does it mean to make something clear, as opposed to making people reach for it? Those fundamental questions that exist in Morandi have – not consciously – basically changed the way I think about my work, particularly this idea of recognition. At what point do you do something where people understand what they're looking at? I've done a series, for instance, of portraits of Shakespeare, where he disappears by giving less and less information in the details. That is a kind of influence that I couldn't even evaluate, and didn't know I was going through, but I realize so much of it came out of my experience with Morandi.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: What do you think about Morandi's choice of objects in his still lifes?

GLASER: That's not a question. [*Laughter*] The objects were chosen because Morandi was dealing with ideas about form – tall forms, squat forms, fat forms – and so what he has is a theater with a lot of different actors playing different roles on different occasions. What I find so touching is something I wasn't conscious of then, that many of these objects didn't otherwise exist! Many of them were not fully realized objects until Morandi saw the opportunity to turn them into a painted object. And so, what he needed was a repertoire of forms going in different directions, of different thicknesses, of different surfaces, because the way the surface receives life – light – is obviously one of his great concerns. Everything seems to have been encased in something before the light was shone on it. I think the tallness of some objects is just so he'd have a repertoire of being able to move up when he wanted to move up, or move sideways when he wanted to move sideways, or go squat when he wanted to go squat. The objects represent, many people have said, his little theatre. All those objects are actors.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Could you share some examples of what you were discussing earlier, of objects that were not intended as art in the first place but become perceived as art?

GLASER: I think they're all over the place. You know, one of the great discoveries of Duchamp and early Surrealism was this idea of found objects. Marcel Duchamp spent his whole life identifying urinals and common objects that he considered as good as sculpture. If you have that frame of mind, they are! That is one of the things about changing your perception. If you look at a urinal and forget about what it is, and see the light off of its surface, and the intersection of light and metal forms... There are things that lend themselves to that, and then the question of whether it's art or not becomes moot. If Duchamp was able to make a lifetime of work out of that, it's good enough for the rest of us. [*Laughter*]

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Is there a particular period in your working life that you favor the most?

GLASER: You know, one thing I learned from Picasso was that you don't have to be loyal to style. That there was no way of creating art that was guaranteed to work. That modernism was a style, it was not the inevitable consequence of truth, but merely a way of working at a certain period that was useful for a certain time because it communicated certain things to a certain audience. I realized that fairly early in life, probably about the same time I was studying with Morandi and looking at Renaissance Italy and going around and realizing that a building built in the fourteenth century was much more beautiful than a Mies van der Rohe. I began to think of how limited we are, as practitioners, to think that the style of the moment is the only one that can be effectively practiced. Morandi suffered from this all his life, really. He was always a kind of outsider among the Futurists, for instance, and among the Surrealists who were around him and succeeding.[7]

Morandi was always out there by himself, not identifying with a particular methodology or style, but just doing his work, these magnificent things that have no precedent, they are just inventions that could have come from anywhere in history. And so, in my own work, I'm really interested in what I've been doing and I hate the idea that people identify me with a particular way of working. We're all limited by our own neurology, but I'd like to think that has not been my practice – that I've tried to move the way I think along to accommodate my own change of interests, rather than the marketplace.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Did Morandi teach drawing in that etching class that you took?

GLASER: No, Morandi never taught. Remember what I said earlier – all those girls had never studied art. I mean, they couldn't draw if they had to! So they would draw in a very rudimentary, unexperienced style, and Morandi would just criticize it from a production point of view – if you put it in the acid this long, and you dampened the paper this way, you get this kind of imagery. We never talked about drawing.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: So what did you talk about in class?

GLASER: I told you, good restaurants, good transportation. [*Laughter*] He spoke rarely, but he never talked about art. He would talk about what was going on in town, if there was a good movie playing, etc. But never about art.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: Did you take any other classes at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna?

GLASER: No, all I studied was with Morandi. One or two days a week, that's all. You know, what is really astonishing is how powerful an effect a very short experience can have. Sometimes, you can have a conversation with somebody, it lasts twenty minutes, and your life is changed forever. And with Morandi, his presence, and his authenticity, was so powerful that once you were willing to accept it, it was totally transformative, in the same way as these paintings are transformative. You will not be the same after seeing Morandi.

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Citations

1. Glaser's participation in the Fulbright program is sometimes erroneously reported as 1951, notably in the exhibition catalogue, *Giorgio Morandi, Milton Glaser* (Milan: Mondadori, 1989). The date 1952 is confirmed by a number of official Fulbright sources, including an interview to Glaser for the Fulbright alumni project, and Glaser's 2011 Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal. These can be accessed, respectively here and here (last accessed October 29, 2019). The date 1952 is further corroborated by Glaser's participation in a 1953 exhibition by Fulbright artists held at the American Academy in Rome; see "Cronache," in *Emporium. Rivista illustrata mensile di arte e cultura* CXVIII, 704 (August 1953): 82.
2. "Fulbright Program History," U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website (last accessed October 29, 2019); see also *Congressional Record*, vol. 91, Part 7 (1945), 9044.

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3. See Board of Foreign Scholarships, *Fulbright Program Exchanges* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1980), 25; and Board of Foreign Scholarships, *A Quarter Century, The American Adventure in Academic Exchange; A Report* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1971).
4. A native-born New Yorker, Glaser in his youth would have not had much occasion to see Morandi's paintings. The few exhibitions of his work in New York in the 1930s and 1940s consisted of etchings. With Morandi's international renown increasing exponentially in the aftermath of World War II, in the 1950s his paintings were featured in focused group and solo shows, leading to two large solo exhibitions of his work at the World House Galleries in 1957 and 1960–61.
5. In 1930, through the intercession of Fascist minister Giuseppe Bottai, Morandi was appointed chair of etching at the Accademia di Bologna – "per chiara fama." He held this position until he retired, in 1956. It remains unclear why Glaser's classmates in 1952 were teenage girls, but it is known that by 1952 Morandi was only sporadically making new etchings because of his declining eyesight.
6. Morandi's provinciality is legendary. He spent his life between Bologna and Grizzana, a mountain town south of the city, and traveled abroad only once. He did, however, travel to Florence, Venice, and other notable Italian locales more often than is commonly alleged, and kept in contact with the artists, dealers, critics, and collectors of his generation.
7. Dissatisfied with academicism, the young Morandi befriended artists inBologna such as Osvaldo Licini, Severo Pozzati, and Mario and Riccardo Bacchelli, who avidly absorbed modernism through illustrated magazines and exhibitions. In 1913, he traveled to Modena and Florence to attend Futurist-organized evenings of art and music; in 1914, in Bologna, he attended Filippo Tomaso Marinetti's performance of Elettricità futurista (Futurist Electricity). Around that time, Morandi and his peers exhibited their Futurist-inspired paintings at the Hotel Baglioni in central Bologna; through that exposure he was called to participate in the Esposizione libera futurista internazionale (Free International Futurist Exhibition) at Galleria Sprovieri in Rome. Glaser's mention of Surrealism is likely in reference to Morandi's early encounter, in 1917, with the work of Giorgio de Chirico and Carlo Carrà. Over the following two years, his own brief metaphysical period gave him international visibility through the publication of his work in Mario Broglio's international journal Valori plastici (1918–22) and traveling exhibitions organized under its aegis.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Milton Glaser

Milton Glaser is an artist and graphic designer. He was a founder of Push Pin Studios, and later established *New York Magazine* and his own graphic design studio, Milton Glaser, Inc. He is the author of the iconic "I Heart NY" trademark logo (1977) and of many successful advertising posters and trademarks for companies including Brooklyn Brewery, Campari, DC Comics, and Olivetti. As a Fulbright grant recipient, he traveled to Italy in 1952 and worked alongside Italian artist Giorgio Morandi in Bologna. Glaser is the recipient of a National Medal of Arts (2009).

Matilde Guidelli-Guidi

Matilde Guidelli-Guidi is Assistant Curator at Dia Art Foundation and a PhD candidate in Art History at The Graduate Center, CUNY, where she advises master's degree students. Titled "Archipelagos of Knowledge: Le Corbusier's Museums, 1919–1965," her dissertation takes Le Corbusier's lifelong commitment to reimagining the modern museum as an entry point through which to analyze discourses and practices of museum architecture in France, from the aftermath of World War I through the decades of decolonization up until 1965. At Dia, Matilde is preparing exhibitions of the work of Mario Merz, Jill Magid, Meg Webster, and Luciano Fabro, among other projects. She was the recipient of two Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellowships and a 2015–16 Fellow at CIMA, where she researched the work of Giorgio Morandi.

Nicola Lucchi

Nicola Lucchi is Substitute Lecturer of Italian at Queens College. He received his PhD in Italian Studies from New York University in 2016. His research interests include twentieth-century Italian art and literature, industrial history, labor history, and the reception of Italian culture in the United States. He has published articles and book chapters on Eugenio Montale, Bruno Munari, and Italian Futurism.