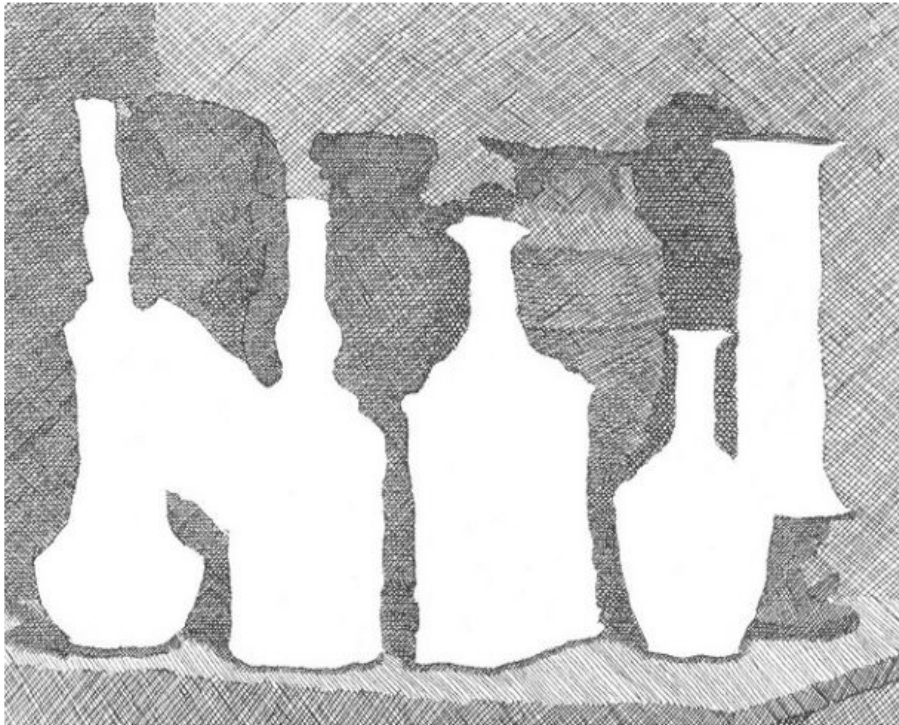


Wall Street International

Thursday, 24 January 2013

Giorgio Morandi: Lines of Poetry

16 January - 7 April 2013 at Estorick Collection, London.



Giorgio Morandi, *Still Life of Vases on a Table*, 1931. Etching, 249 x 336 mm. Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy).

In 2013 the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art celebrates its 15th anniversary. To inaugurate this special year the museum is organising a career-spanning exhibition of around eighty meditative and intimate prints, paintings and drawings by the master of poetic understatement, Giorgio Morandi.

One of the Estorick Collection's most popular artists, Morandi is often presented as a somewhat reclusive figure whose works embody 'eternal' and 'timeless' artistic values, transcending the mercurial languages of modernism through their masterly compositional balance, subtle tonal range and exquisite luminosity. However, the fact that Morandi passed through the ranks of F. T. Marinetti's Futurist movement, exhibited alongside Novecento artists such as Mario Sironi and was affiliated with Giorgio de Chirico's *Scuola metafisica*, reveals him to have been a far more complex and multi-layered figure than might be supposed on first acquaintance with his ostensibly uncomplicated still lifes and landscapes. As de Chirico noted, Morandi was a master of uncovering the 'metaphysical dimensions of the commonest objects', that is, of discerning the poetry within 'those things that habit has rendered so familiar to us that we [...] often look upon them with the eye of one who sees but does not understand.'

Organised in collaboration with Bologna's Galleria d'Arte Maggiore, and with loans from a number of private collections as well as from the Estorick Collection, *Lines of Poetry* focuses on works on paper, including a large section devoted to the artist's etchings. Entirely self-taught as a printmaker, Morandi began to produce etchings in 1912 and quickly mastered the technique, coming to consider it an important vehicle for artistic expression, and going on to hold the Chair in Printmaking at Bologna's Accademia di Belle Arti for over twenty years. Although restricted in terms of subject matter, these works reveal the artist's great stylistic versatility and thirst for experimentation through their different formats and incorporation of a wide range of mark-making processes. For example, the exhibition includes a jazzy work from Morandi's fleeting Futurist phase, in which his famous bottles and pitchers appear to jostle for elbow room on a shallow desktop, energised by dynamic contours and vigorous, multi-directional shading. Other images explore effects that seem to allude to gestalt theories concerning the instability of perception, focusing as much attention on the spaces between objects as on the objects themselves. Morandi's works frequently exploit the creative nature of perception, providing the viewer with the most minimal visual data necessary for constructing the image and comprehending the spatial relationships between the objects depicted. Others are simply exquisitely-rendered naturalistic images built up with the finest and most subtle use of cross-hatching. Also included in the show are a number of watercolours, works that are rarely seen in the United Kingdom, and which therefore make this exhibition a truly unmissable occasion for any admirer of Morandi. Perhaps more than any others, these works exemplify the artist's peculiar ability to distil the essence of a complex scene or composition into an arrangement of near-abstract forms. Captivating in their restraint and extraordinary economy of means, these images are nevertheless intensely evocative of time and place. This extensive selection will be complemented by drawings by Morandi from the Estorick Collection, making this exhibition one of the most comprehensive overviews of his graphic art ever mounted outside Italy.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of delicately reworked Polaroid images and digital prints by the celebrated Italian photographer Nino Migliori. Created during the mid 1980s, these works form a series entitled *Imagined Landscapes: The Places of Morandi* and explore the Grizzana landscape beloved by the artist and immortalised in so many of his works. In recognition of his affection for the town and its surrounding area, Grizzana was renamed 'Grizzana Morandi' in 1985. Best known for his black and white neo-realist images of life in 1950s Italy, these works reveal a different side to Migliori's research in which the photograph is merely the starting point for an image that aspires not simply to document a moment in time or a specific location, but to express something of its emotional resonance.

Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964)

Morandi studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna, receiving his diploma in 1913. He studied the works of Paolo Uccello, Giotto and Masaccio in Florence and collected black and white reproductions of paintings he could not see at first hand, particularly those by Cézanne, Derain and Henri Rousseau. In 1912 he began to teach himself to etch, using old manuals, and the medium continued to be important to him throughout his career. Morandi exhibited with the Futurists in 1914, but was never influenced by their aesthetics or interested in their cultural agenda. The Metaphysical works of de Chirico and Carrà inspired him to create a small number of still lifes with groupings of enigmatic objects, but by 1919 he had abandoned such compositions to pursue more formal qualities in his still lifes. Morandi participated in the Novecento exhibitions of 1926 and 1929, but his work had greater affinity with the Strapaese movement, which was inspired by provincial cultural traditions. Morandi did not visit Paris until 1956 but was always well-informed about the cultural debates of his age. From 1930 until 1956 he held the Chair in Printmaking at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Bologna, but continued to paint until his death.

Nino Migliori (b. 1926)

Like Morandi, Nino Migliori was born in Bologna, and lives and works in the city to this day. He began his career in 1948, exploring neo-realist aesthetics, but quickly began to work with materials such as Polaroid film and to incorporate a range of unorthodox and completely original techniques into his photographic images, thereby creating his 'Oxidations' and 'Pyrograms'. These works were unsurpassed in the immediate post-war period for their experimental approach, and can even be seen as foreshadowing certain aspects of art informel. From the late 1960s, his work took on a marked conceptual dimension that was to characterise his imagery thereafter. Migliori is represented in a number of important international collections, including New York's MoMA and Turin's Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea.

Permanent The Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art is internationally renowned for its core Collection of Futurist works including major paintings by the movement's main protagonists. It comprises some 120 paintings, drawings, watercolours, prints and sculptures by many of the most prominent Italian artists of the Modernist era. There are six galleries, two of which are used for temporary exhibitions, on three floors. The library of over 2,500 books, primarily on 20th century Italian art, is an unrivalled resource for students of important modernist movements. Since opening in 1998, the Collection has established a considerable reputation as an important venue for bringing Italian art to the British public and has achieved both public and critical acclaim for its artistic and educational programmes.

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art

39a Canonbury Square
London N1 2AN
Ph. +44 0 20 7704 9522
www.estorickcollection.com

Opening hours:

Wednesday to Saturday 11 am to 6 pm hours
Sunday 12 pm to 17 pm hours
Late night opening the first Thursday of the month until 9 pm hours
Closed Mondays and Tuesdays
Shop: open gallery hours. Library: by appointment only

Admission:

£5.00, concessions £3.50, includes permanent collection and temporary exhibitions
Free to under -16s and students on production of a valid NUS card
Library, by appointment only, £2.50 per visit
Groups: Groups of 10 or more may book gallery talks by curatorial staff on the current exhibition and the permanent collection. Talks last for approximately 50 minutes and there is an additional charge of £70 per group. Lunch can also be arranged.
Catalogue: The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, which will include an essay by the respected author Andrea Baldinotti, published by the Estorick Foundation.

Photos:

1. Giorgio Morandi, *Small House with Portico and Cypress*, 1924. Etching, 201 x 235 mm. Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy)
2. Nino Migliori, *Imagined Landscapes – The Places of Morandi*, 1985. Digital print, 500 x 500 mm. Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy)
3. Giorgio Morandi, *Houses of Campiario in Grizzana*, 1929. Etching, 228.5 x 348 mm. Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy)
4. Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964), *Still Life*, 1960. Watercolour on paper, 248 x 340 mm, Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy)
5. Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) *Still Life*, 1962. Watercolour on paper, 160 x 210 mm. Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy)
6. Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) *Landscape (Levico)*, 1957. Watercolour on paper, 210 x 310 mm. Courtesy Galleria d'Arte Maggiore G.A.M., Bologna (Italy)

Published: Thursday, 3 January 2013

Author: **WSI Administration**

