

The Later MORANDI

Still Lives 1950–1964



The Later Morandi
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Marilena Pasquali

Essay and contributions by: Maria Mimita Lamberti, Laura
Mattioli Rossi, Franz Armin Morat, Giuseppe Panza di Biumo,
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Vettese

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edited by Laura Mattioli Rossi

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Graziano Ghiringhelli provided us with a great deal of information that helped to make this show a reality, and additional research was carried out at: the Ente Esposizione Nazionale Quadriennale d'Arte archive, Rome; the Fondazione di Studi di Storia dell'Arte Roberto Longhi archive, Florence; the Galleria Il Milione archive, Milan; the Giovanardi archive, Milan; the Giuseppe Marchiori archive, Lendinara; the Mattioli archive, Milan; the Morat-Institut für Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft archive, Freiburg; the Museo Morandi archive, Bologna; Archivio del '900 (Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco), Rome; Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee della Biennale (ASAC), Venice; Archivio Storico del Cinema / AFE, Rome; the Vitali archive, Milan; the Biblioteca dell'Accademia di Brera, Milan; the Biblioteca d'Arte del Castello Sforzesco, Milan; the Biblioteca d'Arte dei Musei Civici - Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin; the Biblioteca d'Arte del Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona; the Biblioteca Civica, Verona; the Biblioteca Comunale, Milan; the Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, Milan; Documenta Archiv, Kassel; the Frick Art Reference Library, New York; the Schweizerische Landesbibliothek, Bern; the New York Public Library, New York.

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The Peggy Guggenheim Collection grasped the opportunity to present this exhibition for several reasons. Firstly it is a model of how exhibitions of this kind should be curated, with its close attention to quality, numbers, and art-critical cohesiveness. Secondly, the exhibition helps us to understand with unprecedented and admiring clarity Giorgio Morandi's art in a period, his last, which is sometimes dismissed as too prolific, even facile. Thirdly, the long-term loan to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection of paintings from the Gianni Mattioli Collection includes six rare and beautiful early works by Morandi. One of these, a still life with two bottles and a fruit bowl of 1916, is often admired as Morandi's first masterpiece. This refers in part to its intrinsic quality, but surely also alludes to the fact that it is the premonition, the prototype of Morandi's mature compositional format and preferred subject matter, the table-top still life—precisely in fact those paintings so rigorously selected, scrutinized and sorted in this jewel of an exhibition. But the main reason of course is that it reveals to us what we all know, but will feel more strongly after seeing this exhibition: that Morandi is a great twentieth-century master to whom the epithet "genius" can safely be applied.

I would like therefore to extend my congratulations to the curator of the exhibition, Laura Mattioli Rossi, to her colleague Flavio Fergonzi, who contributed his scholarship and connoisseurship to the catalog, and to Massimo Di Carlo, who organized the exhibition in its first venue at the Galleria dello Scudo, Verona. I am grateful to both Laura Mattioli Rossi and Massimo Di Carlo for sharing my enthusiasm and for going to considerable trouble, together with Laura Lorenzoni of the Galleria dello Scudo, to enable the installation of the exhibition in Venice. It has been a pleasure to work with Gabriele and Bianca Mazzotta on the Venice edition of the catalog. The owners of the paintings in the show—the lenders—have been deprived of the pleasure of having Morandi's masterpieces near them for longer than they at first anticipated. Thank you, most warmly, to all of them.

Finally I would like to acknowledge all those who make possible the exhibitions at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, and this one in particular. The Regione Veneto has loyally and consistently subsidized the programs of the Collection since 1981. The individual members of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Advisory Board contribute annually to museum operations, thus fueling and encouraging what I trust is perceived as a vital and energetic organization. Assicurazioni Generali, so proudly identifiable with the emblem of the Lion of St Mark, has generously insured Morandi's paintings for their Venetian sojourn. Intrapresæ Collezione Guggenheim, the association of Italian companies that support the Peggy Guggenheim Collection on an annual basis, and whose names, like those of the Advisory Board, are published in this catalog, make possible the planning of our exhibitions with the happy confidence that the funding is in place.

Thomas Krens
Director
Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

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Note to the Reader

Each time an oil painting, watercolor, drawing or etching by Giorgio Morandi is mentioned or reproduced in this volume, the catalogues raisonnés and respective publication numbers are given, abbreviated as follows:

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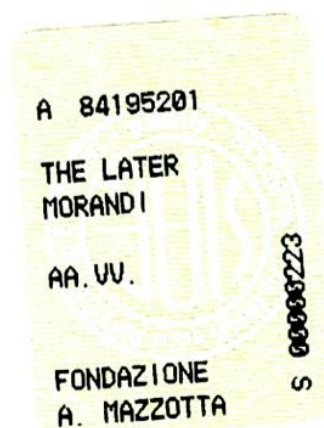
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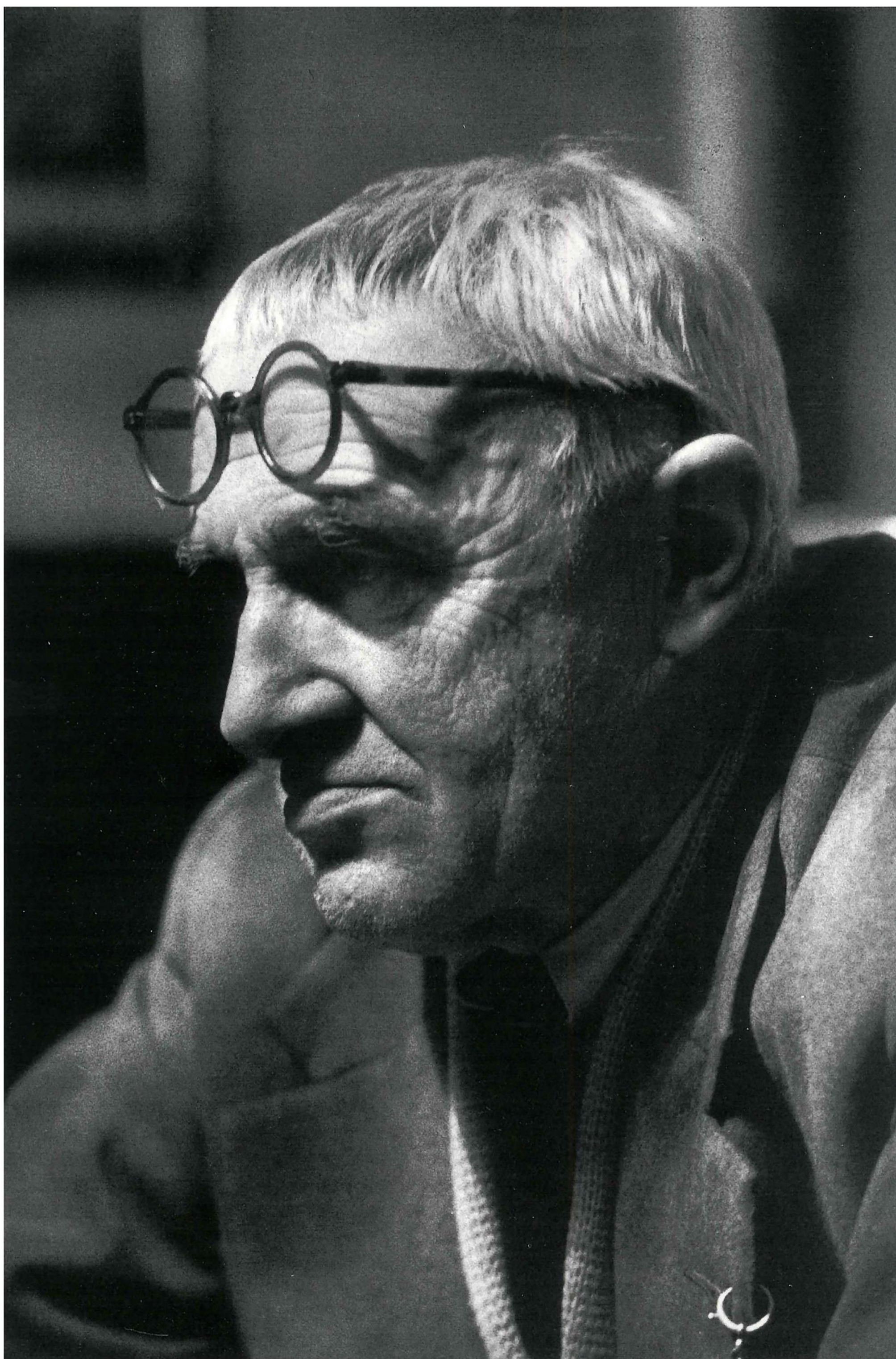
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Contents

9	Giorgio Morandi: Questions of Method <i>Laura Mattioli Rossi</i>
27	The Conventions and Convictions of a Painting Genre <i>Maria Mimita Lamberti</i>
41	Perception and Allusion in Giorgio Morandi's Mature Art <i>Marilena Pasquali</i>
51	Morandi and America: A Brief Survey of His Fortunes in the English-Speaking World <i>Joseph J. Rishel</i>
59	Morandi and Artistic Culture in the Post-War Period <i>Angela Vettese</i>
71	The Embodiment of "reine Malerei," or Pure Painting <i>Franz Armin Morat</i>
75	Morandi's Topicality <i>Giuseppe Panza di Biumo</i>
79	Catalog of Works <i>Flavio Fergonzi</i>
164	Technical Index of the Works <i>edited by Laura Lorenzoni</i>
169	Exhibitions and Bibliography Cited in the Technical Index of the Works
175	Giorgio Morandi. Life and Work 1950–1964 <i>edited by Lorenza Selleri</i>
187	Exhibitions 1950–1964 <i>edited by Lorenza Selleri with the collaboration of Laura Lorenzoni</i>
195	Bibliography 1950–1964
209	Select Bibliography



Giorgio Morandi in a photograph by Mario De Biasi, 1959.

Giorgio Morandi: Questions of Method

Laura Mattioli Rossi

In 1963, just a few months before Giorgio Morandi's death, Lamberto Vitali was writing his introduction to the monograph published by Edizioni del Milione. His opening words read: "The writer of this note would be happy if . . . it could be useful for some future biographer of Morandi (but perhaps the book on Morandi will come about only in fifty years time, when views will be more settled and many facts, the reason and importance of which those of us who have witnessed them are uncertain about, will become clear)."¹ Thirty-five years after these words were written, this exhibition now suggests a new interpretation of Morandi's work, focused on the last phase of his career, from the post-war period up to his death. Attention will be given to the still lifes with objects—considered the central theme of the artist's investigations, leaving aside the flowers and landscapes—painted from 1950 (the year in which, in the heat of post-war reconstruction, Morandi's new stylistic path seems to be defined) until 1964, when his last period was ended, characterized by an increasingly diaphanous use of paint.²

To write "the book on Morandi," as Vitali called it, is not the aim of this show, even as far as the Bolognese artist's late work is concerned. What it does intend to do is to make the most of the historical distance that time has placed between us and the works, in two ways: to test and deepen our understanding of the still lifes of the fifties and sixties by following strictly an art historic approach, and to ask certain basic questions about the meaning and value of these paintings, questions that inevitably involve the very concept of history as applied to artistic output, as well as the methods of art criticism.

While 1964, the year of Morandi's death, saw the publication of two seminal texts, the monographs by Lamberto Vitali and by Francesco Arcangeli (besides those of Marco Valsecchi and Alberto Martini),³ in the following years exhibitions were held all over the world in rapid succession, beginning with the retrospective in Bologna in 1966 and continuing through to the centennial show in 1990 and the shows organized in Milan and in Japan⁴ between 1989 and 1990. In the past two years alone there have been four monographic exhibitions dedicated to the artist.⁵ Thus, it might almost seem difficult to say or suggest something new about Giorgio Morandi.

A look at the rich array of literature on Morandi shows how the fame of this great master of Italian art—which began to grow up around him already in the second half of the thirties and was consolidated in the fifties thanks to the post-war writings of Francesco Arcangeli, Cesare Gnudi, Roberto Longhi, and Giuseppe



Raimondi,⁶ as well to his success with collectors—has so greatly influenced later criticism that it is almost always anthological in scope and celebratory in tone. Apart from certain recent thematic shows,⁷ interest has always been in Morandi's career as it unfolded, stressing certain of the earliest paintings influenced by Cézanne, the Metaphysical and "Valori Plastici" periods, and works of the twenties and thirties. Despite a general appreciation of the later works, in particular the landscapes, and a recognition of Morandi's rigorous experimentation, a characteristic of his work up to the time of his death, resulting in a continual renewal of his expressive means,⁸ critics have tended not to investigate his activity from the fifties onwards (perhaps unconsciously put off by the number of works),⁹ considering it simply an unbroken continuation of his previous investigations.

According to this view, after his brilliant debut in the second decade of the century, seen in a few surviving canvases, Morandi reached his full maturity in the twenties and thirties, producing etchings as well as oil paintings. He continued this artistic course after the Second World War in a way that was completely coherent with the poetics he had already amply set out. Emblematic of this critical view is the fact that, in the historical panorama of Italian art of this century shown at the CIMAC in Milan, Morandi was, with a monographic room, presented together with Arturo Martini, Mario Sironi, and Filippo de Pisis as documentation of the period of the Fascist dictatorship. The only painting later than 1950 belonging to the Milan civic collection, the splendid *Still Life* with a yellow drape of 1952 (Vitali no. 831), present in this show, is exhibited together with the rest of the Vismara collection, of which it is a part, in Via Palestro.

However, the later work of the Bolognese master shows some striking innovations, ideas that were to bear fruit in time. The sheer number of works is enough to create a sense of embarrassment—as I have already hinted—among critics used to concentrating their attention on a few emblematic paintings of his earlier output. In fact, the catalogue raisonné of the oil paintings curated by Vitali shows that Morandi painted 603 works between 1910 and 1947 and some 772 from 1948 until his death.¹⁰ Thus more than half of Morandi's production comes from

Three still lifes of 1914–15 (from left, Vitali nos. 13, 18, 23), belonging respectively to the Giovanardi collection, the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris, and the Mattioli collection. They are the earliest example in absolute of a composition in which Morandi painted the same objects—a rectangular box, a pitcher, a bottle and/or a clock case—from various viewpoints.

this period; therefore, after having ascertained their quality (which, anyhow, has never been questioned by the critics and of which the painter himself was the greatest censor) it might reasonably be held that this is the period of greatest creative richness in the painter's life.

By now Morandi enjoyed the esteem of critics and collectors in an Italy characterized by full economic growth and the desire to forget the drama of the war and the years under Fascism. In such a climate, the artist seems to have found a greater confidence in himself and a new serenity which translated into a chromatically clear and luminous color range and a fertile creative impulse. The large number of paintings he produced in these years may further be explained by his working methods and the very meaning of the works: this is strictly linked to the undertaking of *series*, that is, numerous pictures of similar subjects differentiated by variations of different kinds. In this show six out of a total of ten of the 1952 "yellow drape" series illustrate this new way of working.

The first two very similar, specular still lifes date from 1923 (Vitali nos. 79 and 80), though upon close inspection, the still lifes of 1914–15 in the Giovanardi collection in the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris and in the Mattioli collection (respectively cataloged by Vitali as nos. 13, 18, and 23) prove to depict the same objects—a rectangular box, a jug, a bottle and/or clock-case—from different viewpoints, from the front and from the side, above and below, near and far. More than one version of the same model appears in 1927–29.¹¹ From 1939–40 he began to take up with greater frequency the repetition of the same composition, changing the position of one or other object and the distance from it. In these last years the variations are also related to the format (as in *Still Life* Vitali no. 260, which is the oval version of the *Still Life* Vitali no. 259) or the subject plane (in the *Still Life* Vitali no. 265 part of the canvas is taken up by the table whose presence is only hinted at in *Still Life* Vitali no. 263) and they were also extended from the still life to the landscape, as in the two views of Bologna under the snow (Vitali nos. 283, 284); later on this procedure would be applied to flower paintings as, for example, may be seen in certain pictures of 1950 (Vitali nos. 728, 730).

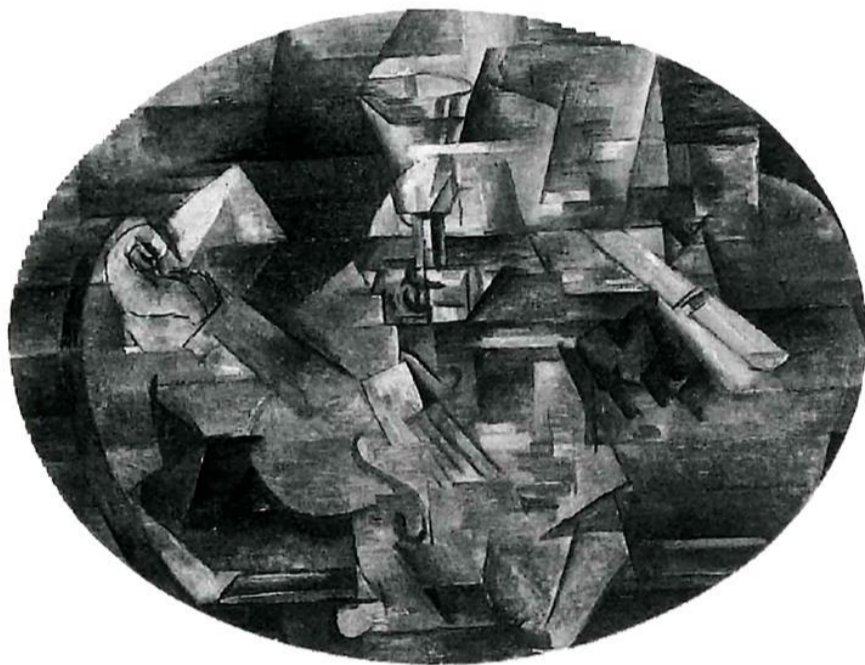
After 1940 the repetition of the same subject became more frequent. In certain paintings part of the composition, for instance the right half, remains unchanged while the left half and the distance change (as in the still lifes, Vitali nos. 291, 293–296). In others (as in the still lifes, Vitali nos. 314–318 and 320) the grouping of the objects changes while the viewpoint moves across from the center to one side. From this point onwards the painter seems to want to try systematically the various possibilities latent in the model, multiplying the number of paintings inspired by the same theme, for example in the still lifes of shells from 1943 (Vitali nos. 433–435 and 439–443). The succession of canvases, then, documents the long sequences of transformations of the same composition in progress, as occurs in the still lifes Vitali nos. 488–493 of 1945,

In the years 1939–40, Morandi took up the repetition of similar compositions, changing the format, framing or the subject plane. In the *Still Life* of 1940 (Vitali no. 265) at the Nationalgalerie of Berlin, part of the canvas is taken up by the table, the presence of which is only hinted at in the *Still Life* of the same year (Vitali no. 263, right), in a private collection.



The Conventions and Convictions of a Painting Genre

Maria Mimita Lamberti



Georges Braque, *Violon, verre et couteau*, 1910. Prague, Národní Galeri. Reproduced with the title *Still Life* in *La Voce*, December 1911.

Books and Paintings in Via Fondazza

“Still life is our dictionary, and also our Treatise on harmony and our book of grammar. . .”

(Henri des Prureaux, “Della natura morta,” *La Voce*, Florence, 22 June 1911)

Henri des Prureaux’s definition of still life was undoubtedly a revelation for the young Morandi, as well as a stimulus to make that “most humble and aristocratic genre his own. Following the example of Chardin and Cézanne, the still life surely provided his painterly intelligence with a field free of ambiguity about content. The modern still life, “daughter of the spirit of analysis and of individualism” was indicated as the matrix for “abstract, almost occult painting, something that should never leave the studio.”¹

In December of that same year, and again in *La Voce*, des Prureaux developed this theme, publishing the first photos of Cubist paintings. Among these was Braque’s oval still life, now in Prague, which in its play of mirror reflections is similar to an experiment by Morandi of 1912 (Vitali no. 4).

In obedience to the purity recommended in the magazine Morandi was always to call his works by the anodyne title of “still life.” He insisted on this neutral and already academic label even when his dialectic series of individual paintings and his elusive depiction of objective data might have suggested a term such as “composition,” which is so widely used among abstractionists.

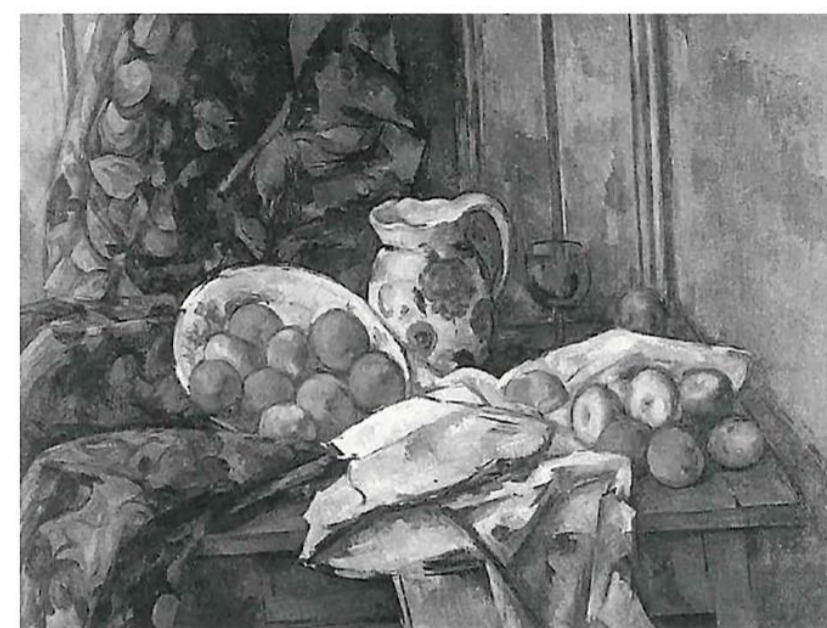
If in some cases critics have grouped certain paintings by referring to a shared detail (for example in the still lifes featuring a drape), this is only a kind of studio usage which the artist himself never publicly confirmed. *Still Life* and nothing more; what counted was the picture, the painting (or rather, the work process): this was what Morandi repeated in interviews. His acceptance of such a neutral and traditionally academic term seemed to protect rather than disturb him, like the old fashioned and unchanging formulas of courtesy which he used in his letters. Morandi, afraid of giving offence, once said to Francesco Paolo Ingrao after years of friendship, “You must excuse me if I use the formal *Lei* instead of *tu*, but I also use *Lei* with Lamberto Vitali.”² A formal education, or form as education, might be the correctly ambiguous formulas of these defenses, both as a man and as an artist.

Like the secret space of the studio, the still life genre, in its apparent monotony and above all in the importance it placed on the identity and recognizability of the obsolete objects chosen by Morandi, risked becoming a kind of cage, a scheme for judging the content first and only later its stylistic qualities. This was apparent in the scorching letter that Licini wrote to Marchiori after visiting the Rome Quadrennial in 1939: the artist's identification with his objects was mistaken for nostalgia for humble kitsch *à la* Gozzani.³ To paraphrase a beautiful phrase Cesare Garboli wrote about Penna's poetry, we might answer that, "as the dazzling and splendid history of an obsessive neurosis" Morandi's painting "has nibbled at all the walls of his prison."⁴

Even if, instead of applying the traditional label of "still lifes," or "silent lifes" as Isabella Far de Chirico preferred, we were to refer to Morandi's paintings by the evocative titles of recent exhibitions based on this theme—from *Der stille Dialog* (1978) to the *Objects of Desire* (1997)—little would be gained in terms of understanding Morandi's repertoire. A paradoxical attempt to describe bottles, worn cups, and chipped vases as *Gemälte Schätze* (painted treasures) would perhaps serve, in its jarring dissonance, to underline how ironic such a choice would be. Just think of the difficulty in recognizing such an elusive object as the clock-case that appears in some still lifes of 1914 and which so firmly negates a content-orientated reading of painting.

The elementary analysis of the still lifes of Le Douanier Rousseau is the second pole of this deliberately low-key choice of humble nineteenth-century objects, like an ironic junk-dealer's stock-taking list not so different from the Florentine roast-chestnut sellers' signs which elicited the same amazement for the naïf in Soffici as Le Douanier's paintings. From the beginning Morandi's objects are *trouvés*, marginal, provocative choices that, cannot be rendered explicable by forced references to the standard decadent poets. Baudelaire, a poet much loved by turn of century artists, dedicated a whole poem to a perfume flask,⁵ including these two fascinating lines, "Je suis un vieux boudoir plein de roses fanées, / Où gît tout un fouillis de modes surannées."⁶ Among other things this parallel, which has a funerary aura, with its wardrobes and drawing-rooms hiding mementos and old-fashioned objects, a tomb and a common grave, and the weight of the artist's memories and thoughts, is already to be found in the ideas evoked by the title itself, *Spleen*: boredom, detachment, a sense of the emptiness and uselessness of everyday life which a reading of Baudelaire may have focused in Morandi's mind, at least in his youth, when he was trapped by family obligations and frustrated by his wretched job as a drawing teacher in an elementary school (Morandi always rejected with disdain the obsequious epithet of "maestro" as a result of these years).⁷

Luigi Magnani used to tell a story confirming that the poverty of Morandi's objects was deliberate: when, at Magnani's insistence, Morandi agreed to paint a still life with musical instruments (Vitali no. 313), he substituted the precious instruments that had been lent to him with a little guitar and a trumpet, toys he had bought at a fair (both today conserved in the Morandi museum, Bologna). This unusual still life at first subverted Magnani's intentions, but then went beyond them by making an open reference to such a great precedent as Chardin's *Les attributs de la musique*, now in the Louvre. In fact it is only in this case (one of particular difficulty for Morandi, struggling with a theme imposed on him from the outside) that the reference to Chardin can be precisely identified: not only in the horizontal guitar, frontally placed towards the viewer, but in the wind instrument placed diagonally above it, as well as the raised surface on which the whole rests and the descending belt. These recur both in Chardin's decoration (originally a panel placed above a door) and in the elongated form of Magnani's picture.



Paul Cézanne, *Pichet et fruits*, 1900–1906.
Winterthur, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart.



The still life by Le Douanier Rousseau of 1910,
formerly in the collection of Ardengo Soffici.
Private collection.

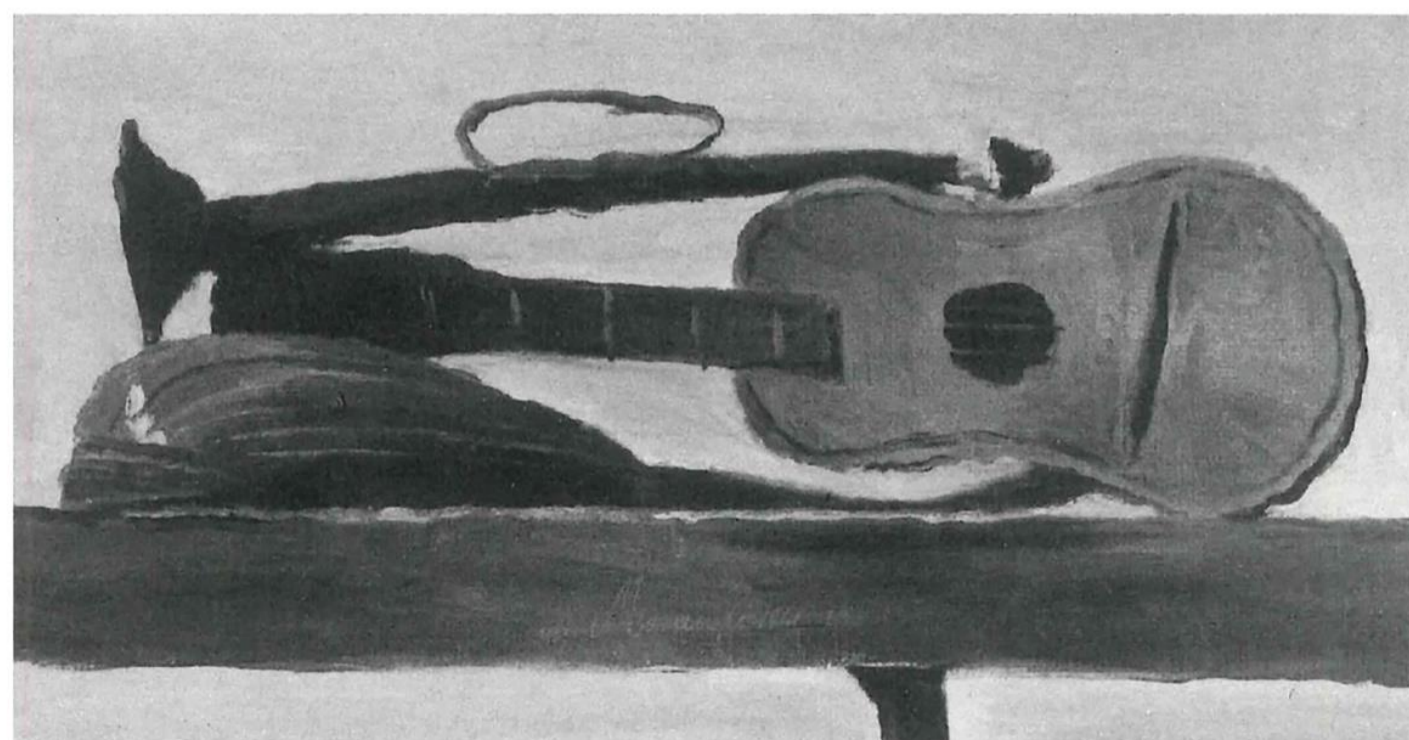
Even if overturned, not only by referring to the non-cultural language of children's toys but in the details (the guitar is rotated from right to left, the belt can be seen behind the supporting plane. . .) these quotations from Chardin are, what is more, the only ones that can be easily recognized in Morandi's output.

Because he was a painter who reacted so acutely to visual experience that he practically nullified his own language (he confessed that he could not paint for some days after visits to shows), Morandi transformed all input after a long process of meditation: any study of works undeniably influenced by Chardin ends by leaving a wide margin of autonomy with the barest of contacts (certain volumetric relationships, the double axis of identical objects in a rhythmic whole, the planar layout, the tonal researches into white, the light and play of shadows. . .).⁸ Morandi had been well aware of Chardin's role as inventor of the modern self-referential still life and forerunner of Cézanne's revolution ever since he had read the letters by des Prureaux and Soffici in *La Voce*.⁹ The artist himself wrote in a letter to Bartolini: "I would be only too happy to achieve a tenth of what Chardin created."¹⁰ In the heat of the controversy over the Quadrennial, Bartolini, poisonously pointed out Chardin's precedents, to then hurl the unfair accusation of plagiarism: "And I repeat that sometimes Morandi lifted the subject of a painting by Chardin in its entirety: as he also did when he etched the beautiful print of the pears, apples and muscat grapes, one of those that I praised . . . but praised when I did not yet know that the etching was derived from the painting *Fruit* in the Reinhart collection at Winterthur. Morandi, among other things, has never been to France, but he saw Chardin from photos of paintings by Chardin that he kept pinned up on the walls of his studio in 1932."¹¹ While the direct comparison of the Chardin with Morandi's etching demonstrates the complete lack of foundation of this insinuation, in any case it is interesting to hear of the reproductions of Chardin's works pinned to the walls of Morandi's studio; in fact, Bartolini had already mentioned this detail elsewhere, but here he gives a precise date, 1932.¹²

In 1932 Valori Plastici published in Paris, in French, a monograph on Chardin edited by André de Ridder and illustrated with ninety-six black and white reproductions,¹³ including all his major paintings in the Louvre as well as, under the title *Fruits*, the Winterthur still life (pl. LXXVII).¹³ The book was printed in November 1931 in Spoleto in a limited edition. Morandi's copy, however, is not only intact—and therefore the plates cannot have been cut out of it—but a letter found inside it proves that it was not sent from Florence to the painter until 1939.¹⁴ Of course this is not sufficient to rule out the de Ridder edition as a possible source for the Chardin iconography known by Morandi in the early thirties: given the close relationships between the two documented by the Bro-

Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Les attributs de la musique*, 1765. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

Still Life, 1941 (Vitali no. 313). Mamiano di Parma, Fondazione Magnani Rocca.





glio archive from 1932, the publisher, whom the artist had already asked for a photograph of Cézanne's *La maison du pendu*, might well have supplied him with some of the volume's clichés while the book was being printed in Spoleto.¹⁵ Even though de Ridder's text is full of biographical observations on Chardin that could be applied as they stand to Morandi's habits and quirks, it should be noted that in the copy found today in the Morandi museum in Bologna the only marks in the margins dating from after the Second World War (and there is no reason to doubt that they are by Morandi) highlight techniques for preparing canvases and for laying down color.¹⁶

Obviously, the artist's approach to the illustrations was different: he never made direct quotations but limited himself to a lengthy study of the compositional schemes. This was Morandi's longstanding habit, and it had always permitted him to draw the greatest advantage from black and white photographs of inaccessible works. The 1932 book (chronologically the first of the four texts kept in the library)¹⁷ confirms, among the most obvious references, *La tabagie*, a still life that for its play of sharp volumes and the presence of the large jug seems to interact with various of the painter's works of the twenties.¹⁸

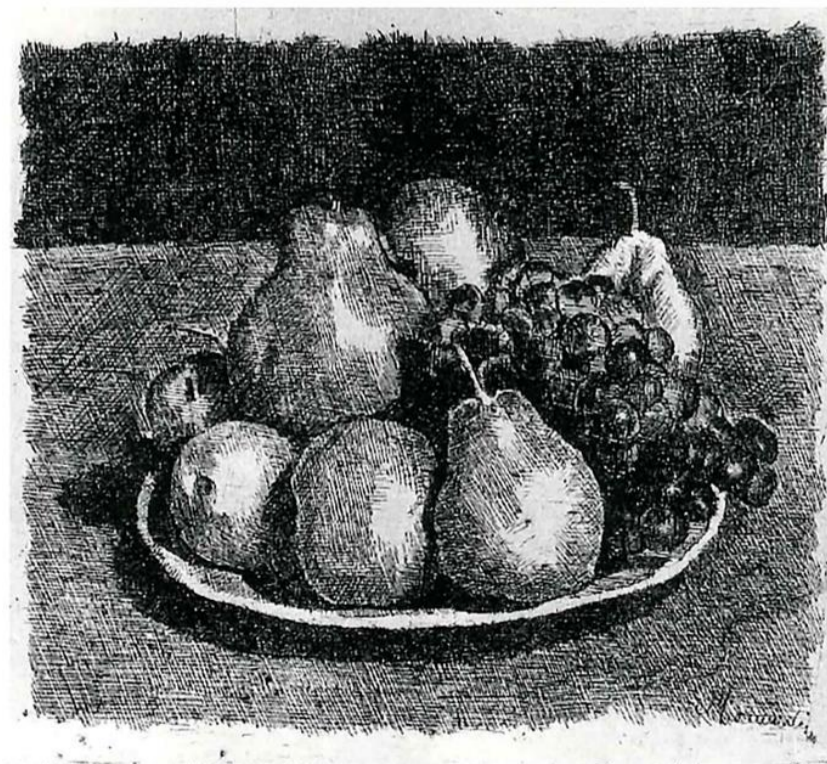
Jeune homme construisant un château de cartes is well documented in de Ridder's reproductions: in 1956 when Morandi went to Winterthur he studied the picture at length and observed the detail of the cards on the table, probably verifying a construction that had already caught his attention in photographs.¹⁹ And, although the 1932 book documented the Hermitage variant of *Jeune homme jouant avec des cartes*, it is, for the moment, mere speculation that Morandi knew of the replica of this painting that arrived in the Uffizi in 1951.

The detail of the house of cards (in a horizontal parallelepiped form in the Reinhart version, like a stage wing in that of the Uffizi) can be related to various of Morandi's still life schemes (such as the extreme foreground of the two still lifes of 1953, Vitali nos. 891 and 892), but so can his habit of hand-constructing cardboard boxes, now conserved in the Morandi museum, to be used in his still lifes together with milk containers and bottles, repainted or zoned with paint.

The artist's work on his chosen objects is analogous to hand-building things, a way to alter real data in view of his plans for a painting. It is not different from Morandi's dust, about which so many fascinating words have been spent (dust as the basis of tonal play, as the sign of time passing, like the sand through an hourglass, or, instead, the suspension of events; again, as the extreme *vanitas*

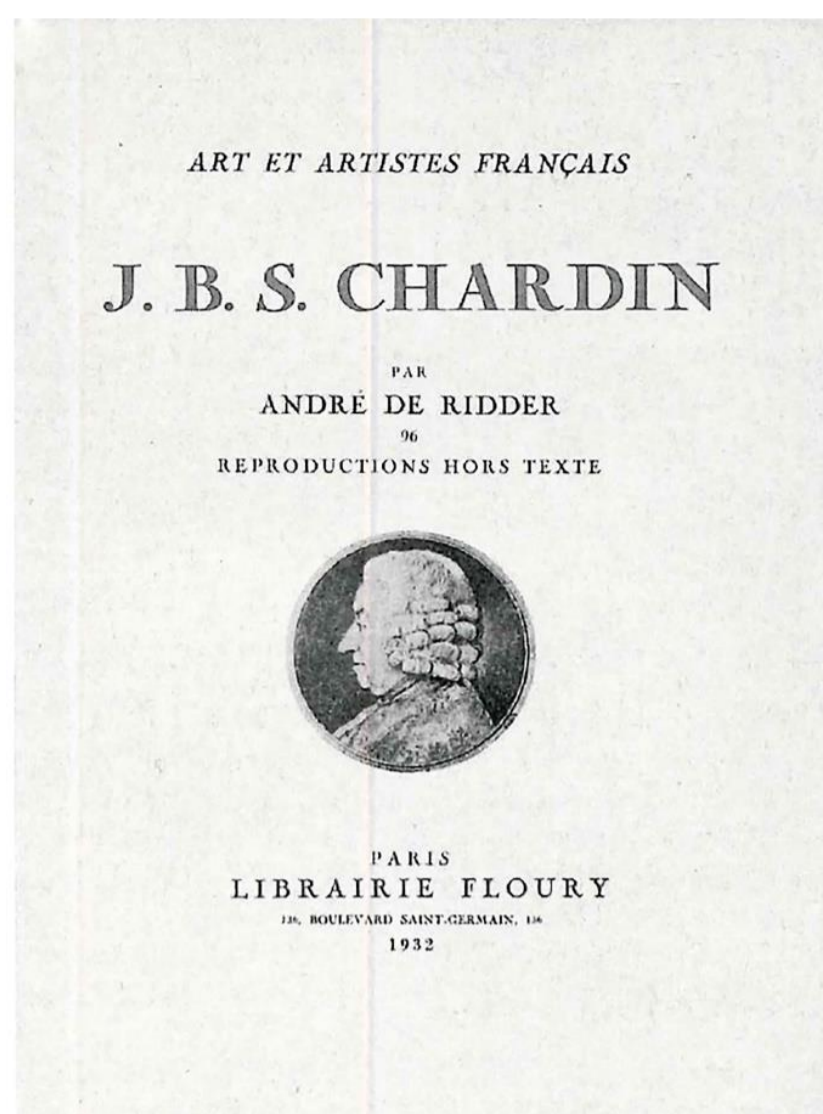
Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *La tabagie*, ca. 1737. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Fruits*, 1758. Winterthur, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart.



Still Life with pears and grapes of 1927 (Vitali etchings no. 36).

From Morandi's library: the monograph on Chardin by André de Ridder published in Paris in 1932 with the reproduction of *Jeune homme construisant un château de cartes* of ca. 1735. Winterthur, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart.

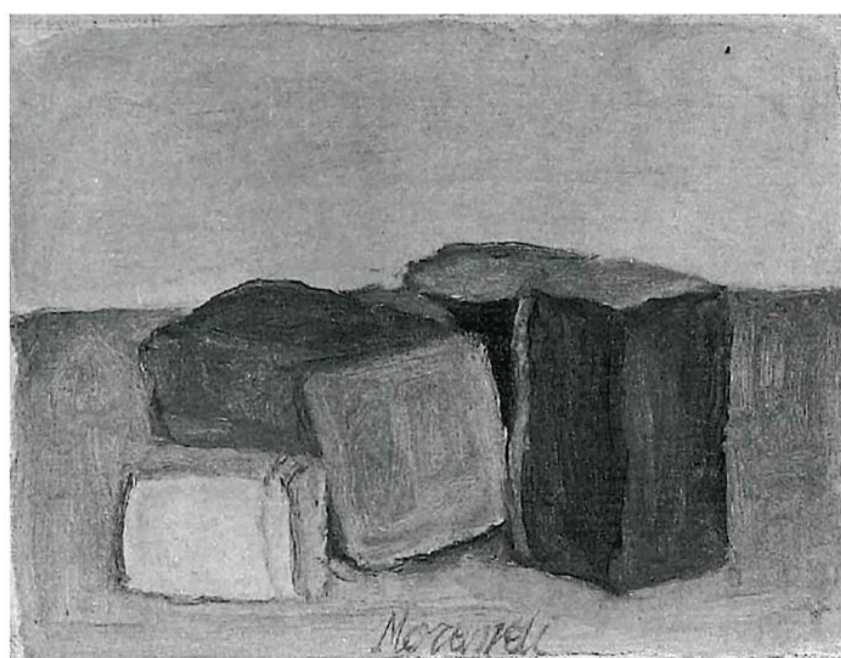


vanitatum or even the equivalent of snow softening the features of a landscape). Further evidence of Morandi's relationship with the still lifes set up on the three surfaces in front of the two easels in his studio, is the change in relative size between the real objects and the painted ones (a notable scale reduction which, in his last years, led to an unusually reduced format even with respect to easel painting). It is as though the painter observed "so-called nature" by reversing the binoculars already used at Grizzana in order to distance the landscape subjects; an alienation perhaps suggested by a note by Pascoli to his *Fanciullino* ("Little Boy"), a poem that Morandi's sisters, who were school teachers, must have known by heart. The passage did not escape Pasolini in his graduate thesis, even though he did not see its connection with Morandi's method, known to only a few: "Do you have some binoculars? Point them on the countryside, on a house, a town. Look through the right end: that is prose. Look through the other end: that is poetry. The first has more details and is more distinct. The second more vision, and more . . . poetry."²⁰

Bartolini, in his usual derisive tones, referred to Morandi as a fake, Pascoli-like "little boy," and perhaps this was meant to refer not only to the image spread by the critics but also to specific knowledge of reading or conversations that took place in Via Fondazza when they were still friends.²¹

Just as Pascoli the critic offers clues to the reasons behind Morandi's technique so, with an apparent paradox, a literary interpretation of Morandi's choice of objects might come from Cézanne's well-known words about the physiognomy of a sugar bowl, which transforms the still life into a portrait and the compositional relationships into an intimate dialogue between things.²²

The existential unease underlying what seems so cosy and homelike has its most moving comment in a private confession of Matisse: the choice of objects the painter depicts while experiencing them is not a neutral act but the projection into the things of a feeling (and a need) for tenderness "without the risk of suffering from them, as happens in life."²³

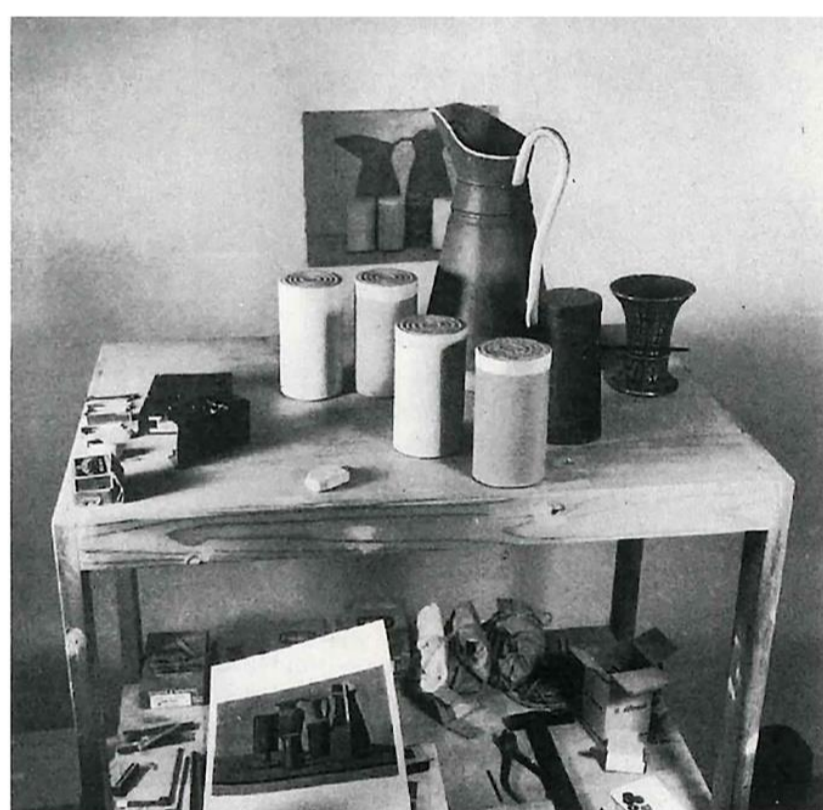


Still Life, 1935 (Vitali no. 892).
Whereabouts unknown.

Perception and Allusion in Giorgio Morandi's Mature Art

Marilena Pasquali

"A white bottle is all that remains."
Giorgio Morandi, 1962¹



From *Style*, no. 4, 1961: one of the two work tables in the Grizzana studio. Note how in his arrangement of the model for a new composition, Morandi takes account not only of a just-finished work, hung behind the objects (Vitali no. 1232, of 1961, now at the Winterthur Kunstmuseum), but also of a previous work with a similar layout: on the lower surface is a reproduction of a *Still Life* of 1942 (Vitali no. 376). The photograph, representative of the artist's working method in his maturity, captures both the phase of perceptual *selection* of the visible—the choice and arrangement of the objects—and its *rendering* in the work of art.

For some time now critics have placed a particular value on Giorgio Morandi's works of the fifties and sixties. By then, the sixty-year-old artist had digested the lessons of the masters, re-elaborated the stimuli of the avant-garde and overcome all his existential and expressive insecurities. While abroad there is a unanimous chorus of recognition that this is the highest point of the whole of Morandi's output ("a well-drawn trajectory" Robert Longhi has said with great intuition),² perhaps only in Italy, and out of an old habit that we are not inclined to discuss, there are still those who consider Morandi one of the part players in the Meta-physical movement or one of the masters of the Novecento group. They do not recognize his unique role as one of the protagonists of this century's art of which he expresses the intense interior dissatisfaction as well as the aspiration (fought against, denied, betrayed and yet impossible to renounce) to beauty and harmony.

Morandi is a difficult and secret artist of "understated luminosity,"³ and it is not possible to explain his poetry, reduce its musical flow to concepts and words, isolate its vital impulse and emotional impact. Each work of his must be seen, felt, accepted or refused at a deeply personal level. Words, even when poetry in themselves, must remain mute before these images so rich in sensations, so full of meaning, so immediate and complete in their capacity for expressive synthesis. In order to approach the world of the artist and try to understand his linguistic characteristics we can try to analyze the constructive mechanisms of the image, what Gombrich has called the representative scheme.⁴

The Method

There are three basic phases in Morandi's creative process. First of all there is prefiguration, that is the assiduous and constant conceptual activity that identifies and puts the images into focus in the *mind*. Morandi does not start from reality but arrives at it and confronts himself with it, moving from what he has within him (was it not perhaps David Hume who said that "beauty in the eye of the beholder?").

In the second place he constantly seeks contact with the visible—one of the artist's preferred words in which he reveals his complete oneness with the culture of his times—and he looks for it through perception, that is by awareness of the sensory experience, a difficult but sure bridge built between man and reality in

9. *Still Life*, 1951.
Oil on canvas, 35 × 45 cm.
Vitali no. 1365.
Private collection.

10. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 36.2 × 46.4 cm.
Vitali no. 816.
Private collection.

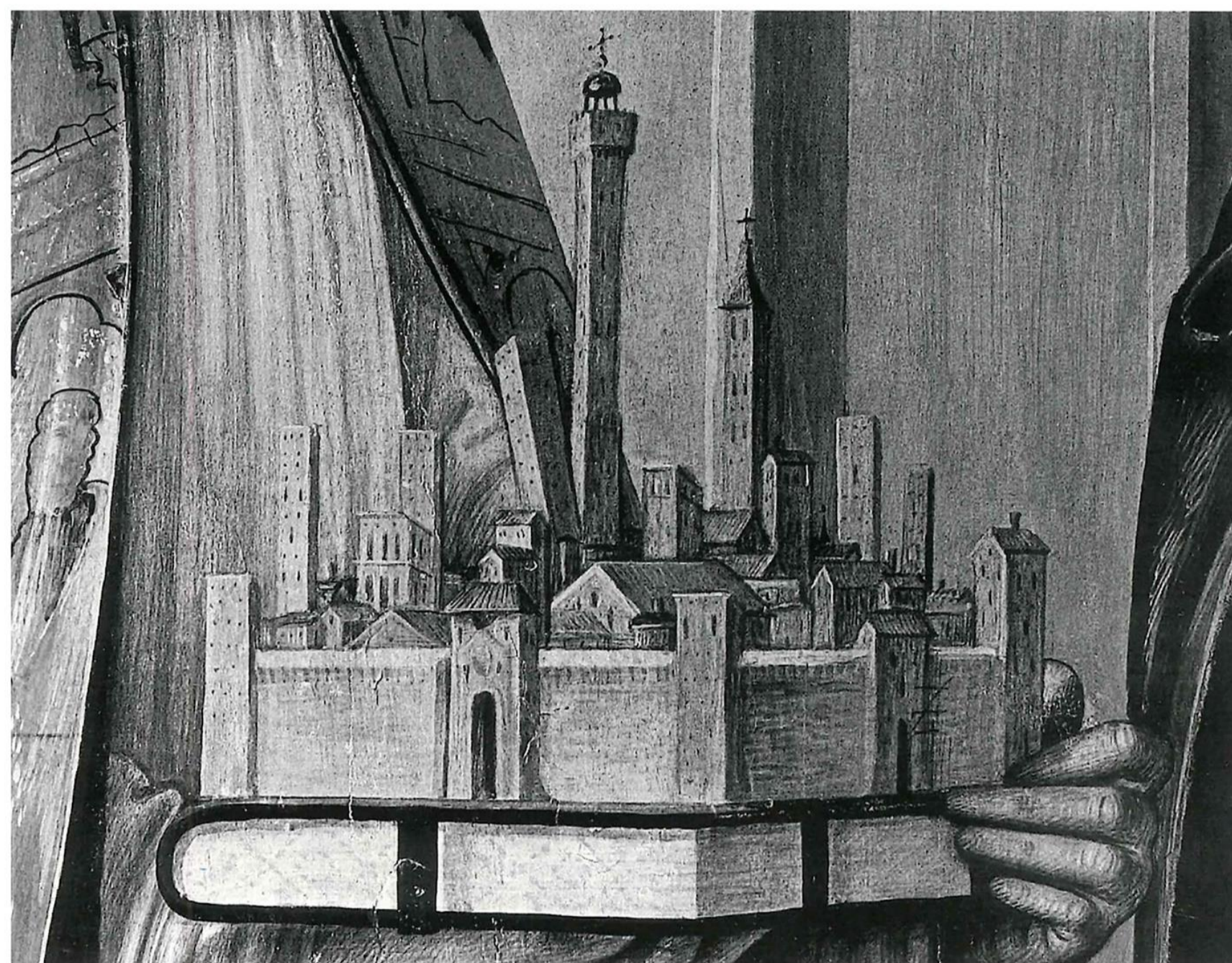
11. *Still Life*, 1960.
Oil on canvas, 30 × 40 cm.
Vitali no. 1188.
Trento, Museo d'Arte Moderna e
Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto,
deposito Giovanardi.

"In Bologna, as everyone knows, lives the most mystical and lyrical of contemporary painters, Morandi. He paints in his bedroom; on a table his bottles raptly wait for him to draw from them and the spaces between them the music of serene melancholy in which they will appear in his luminous and genteel pictures" (de Giorgi, 1992, p. 190). This was how, in an autobiographical novel published in 1955 and referring to the events in Rome in 1944, Elsa de Giorgi represented the meeting between Sandrino Contini Bonacossi and Giorgio Morandi in Bologna a few months before the Liberation. In the fifties the identification of Morandi's painting with the objects they depicted was virtually complete. In 1957 Lionello Venturi warned the American public, on the occasion of an important Morandi retrospective, against this kind of stereotyping. The public at large, he said, sees a limitation in Morandi's insistence upon representing small bottles and in his refusal to paint a human figure: he is called "il pittore delle bottigliette" (in Italian in the original, Venturi¹, 1957).

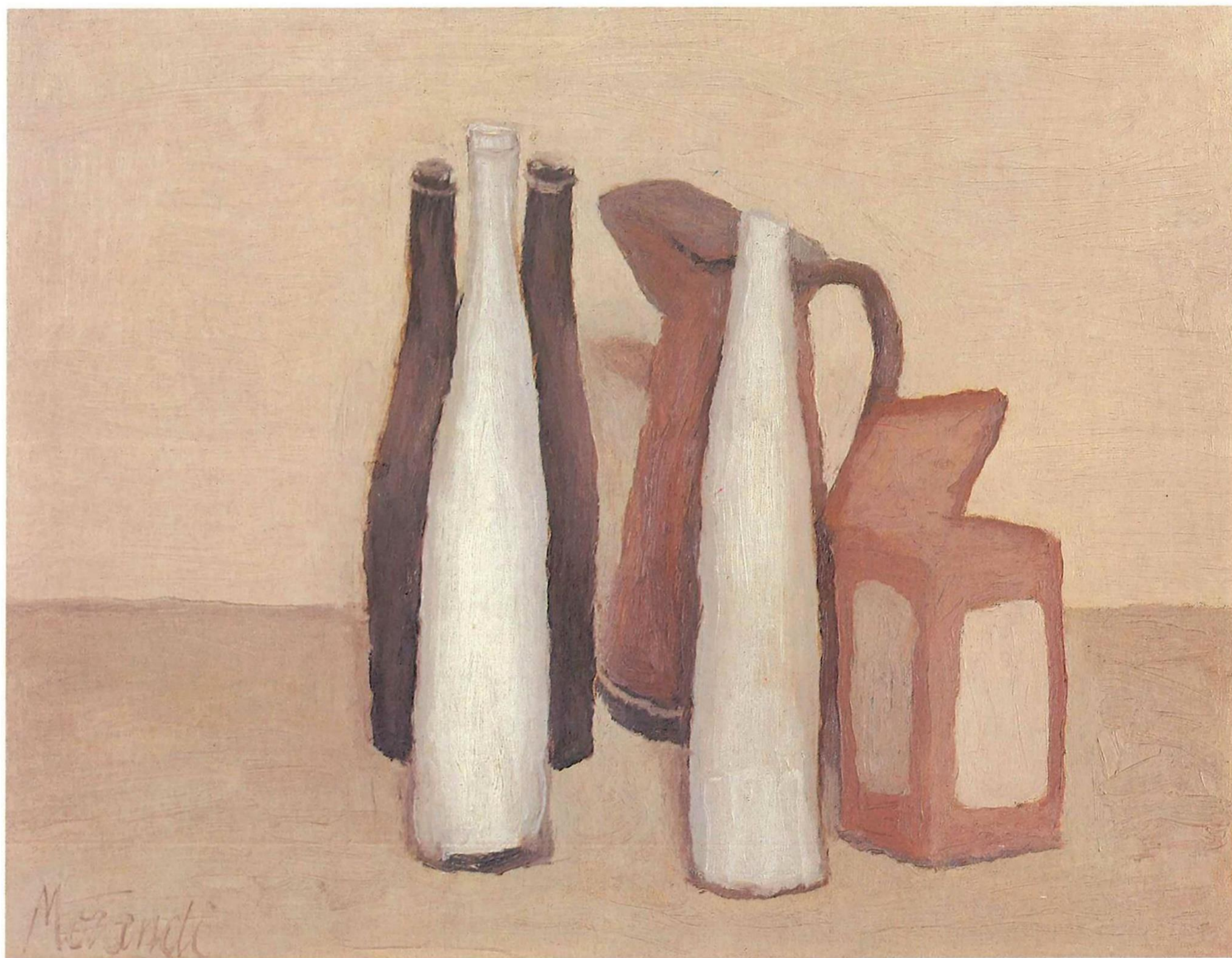
Venturi, of course, interpreted Morandi as a strict formalist and he saw in his choice of painting bottles the innocent self-deception of continuing in the figurative tradition ("The task of the bottles in Morandi's paintings is to assure him that the tradition is safe; that he may live, even when he is painting, in the old tradition"). But, though the American public was completely ignorant of the discussions that developed regarding Morandi after the 1939 Quadrennial, to ask what was the meaning of the objects filling his paintings was none the less an overwhelming temptation:

"One suspects that the bottles only contain a little water for sprinkling on the floor or eau-de-cologne for cooling one's brow, certainly nothing as strong as wine," John Berger noted, struck by the extreme delicacy of the tonal passages, in the first article to be published on the artist in the United States (Berger, 1955, p. 67). And, reviewing the new show in the World House Galleries five years later, such a neo-figurative painter as Sidney Tillim po-

lemically overturned Venturi's interpretation and gave a completely content-orientated one of his own: to restore nobility to subject matter, to forcefully declare the factual existence of things was seen as part of a conscious project for the potential re-humanization of art (Tillim, 1960, p. 45). Beginning in 1951–52 Morandi returned, in his still lifes, to the tall narrow bottles of the Bolognese wine-sellers and trattorias, which he had already begun to use in 1929



The city of Bologna held in the hands of St. Petronius, from the altarpiece by Lorenzo Costa *Madonna with Child, St. Petronius and St. Tecla*, 1496. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



(Vitali no. 138) and that, colored white (with his usual aim of avoiding luminous reflections), from 1932 on, throughout the thirties, were to become a constant presence: their task was to give the still lifes a vertical thrust and, at the same time, give them a strong graphic pattern, with profiles etched against the emptiness of the background.

The three still lifes shown in this sequence reveal very different aspects of this return to the bottles in the post-war period. In the first painting, a continuation of the 1950–51 period of warm amber tones, the bottles become the basic spatial reference point for the picture for which they also supply the extremes of the chromatic range, with a violent difference between the velvety brown of the bottles in the background and the compact white of those in the foreground. In the second, stylistically quite different but close to the first in time (the Milione label no. 6647 allows us, with the help of the gallery archives, to establish that the picture was bought in 1952, directly from the artist), we can see an unexpected reutilization of solutions tried out at the end of the thirties and the beginning of the forties: the objects are lined up in an almost obsessive frontal manner, the application of the paint becomes richer in color (over the plum-brown colored bottle a range of colors extends from the light strokes of the central reflection to blackish shadings), while a strong light from the left lengthens the shadows across the table.

The long bottles return again to Morandi's paintings dating from the fifties, in limited but crucial episodes: especially in cases when, in the arrangement of the group of main objects, it became necessary to emphasize, or even to contradict, the format of the picture. For example, in a beautiful series from 1957 (one of the most significant pictures, Vitali no. 1033, was seen in the two exhibitions at the World House Galleries in 1957 and 1960, and was reproduced in *Art News*) the black and white bottles, painted with vibrant brushstrokes, with a velvety finish, are superimposed over a rectangle developed vertically on a horizontal format. In two paintings from 1959 (one is no. 37 in this show) the long bottles close the back of a composition that, though having a squarish format, seems subjected to a strong centripe-



Still Life, 1957 (Vitali no. 1033). Whereabouts unknown. Reproduced in the catalog of the exhibition *Giorgio Morandi. Retrospective. Paintings, Drawings, Etchings 1912–1957*, World House Galleries, New York, 1957.

tal force. The last time the tall bottle appears in the list of Morandi's works is in the picture exhibited here as no. 11: in this case too the Galleria Il Milione label (no. 8474) permits a precise dating of this acquisition by Ghiringhelli from the artist (14 April 1960), allowing us to date its execution to the previous month. This information is fundamental because the stylistic quality of the picture (which has no chiaroscuro construction at all and is immersed in a clear and cold light that emphasizes the blue-yellow-green juxtaposition of the three objects, from which the chalky white bottle stands out) is unique in Morandi's production and also, it seems to me, in relationship to the two paintings (Vitali nos. 1089 and 1090) which are placed together with it in the artist's catalogue raisonné.

In 1953, in his presentation in Florence of the Mattioli collection, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, who had admired Morandi for many years, reversed the intimist-tonal interpretation which still held sway in Morandi criticism and hailed the painter as a lucid architect of space. His still lifes "are not rhythms and atmospheres and tones, or they are these things only in an organization and artistic image that can ideally be reconstructed in plan—and Morandi, as everyone knows, draws, trying out the plans of his compositions, calculating in this way the occupation of the planes and the volumes, establishing the right distance, stepping back or zooming in on the background, the sides, the top and the

bottom with respect to the dimensions, evaluating the orientation and the correlations of the objects, creating a pattern of shadows and light—and can be reconstructed in different elevations and horizontal or oblique cutaways, in a synthesis which, once critically explained, gives the viewer an idea of the immense value of a construction that is, as I said, wholly architectural, so much so that it should prompt us to speak of cathedrals rather than of bottles" (Ragghianti, 1953, p. 16). More recently a Bolognese painter, Concetto Pozzati, has asked himself how much the tension found in the arrangement of the objects might be derived from the academic practice of using a trestle on which to place a model: "Morandi made this boring academic routine an emotional process. . . . The composition is in itself creation, the construction is already a formal certainty in which there is a ritual magical balance" (Pozzati, 1985, p. 70).

In a 1955 issue of *La Fiera Letteraria* on Morandi (in that period certainly the artist most admired by writers and poets), Libero De Libero developed an idea contained in the passage by Ragghianti quoted above, declaring that the still lifes seemed like "little cathedrals held in the arms of new saints" (De Libero, 1955). I must thank Francesca Valli for the suggestion that De Libero was, perhaps at Morandi's suggestion, referring to the traditional images of the city of Bologna, encircled by its walls and towers, held in the arms of St. Petronius. In particular, in an altarpiece depicting the *Madonna with Child, St. Petronius and St. Tecla* by Lorenzo Costa kept in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna (obviously a museum often visited by Morandi), St. Petronius holds a miniature Bologna that seems to be referred to in the painting shown here as no. 10: the walls and bastions in the foreground that lead to the vertical elements of the towers and houses seem to be repeated in the sequence of bottles and boxes, reflecting the same pursuit of a three-dimensional effect (on the subject of Morandi's ability to isolate analogous details in complex pictures, such as the view of Bologna in the *Madonna del Rosario* by Guido Reni, a text of fundamental importance is the narration by Francesco Arcangeli of a visit with the painter to the exhibition of Reni in 1954, Arcangeli, 1955, pp. 30–32 and 69).



12. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 32 × 48 cm.
Vitali no. 823.
Bologna, Museo Morandi.

15. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 40.5 × 46 cm.
Vitali no. 828.
Milan, Mattioli Rossi collection.

13. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 40.6 × 40 cm.
Vitali no. 824.
Private collection.

16. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 35 × 40 cm.
Vitali no. 831.
Milan, Civiche Raccolte d'Arte.

14. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 35.8 × 45.8 cm.
Vitali no. 826.
Private collection.

17. *Still Life*, 1952.
Oil on canvas, 40.5 × 45.9 cm.
Vitali no. 830.
Private collection.

In 1952 Morandi worked on an extremely compact series of ten still lifes featuring a folded cloth at the center of the foreground. The minimum variations from one painting to another have deceived even the compilers of Morandi's catalogue raisonné in which, due to two photographs which seem to be quite different as a result of the lighting and the focus of details, the same picture is reproduced twice as nos. 823 and 829 (this is the work once belonging to the Ingrao collection and now in the Museo Morandi, reproduced here as no. 12).

In the years between the two wars this representation of a cloth on the table had been frequently attempted by Morandi, and the cloth, theatrically placed, alluded directly to the great still life tradition stretching from the seventeenth century to Cézanne. In the period following the Second World War, on the other hand, and for the only time in this series, the artist represented the cloth as being soft and without a previously fixed form (as are the bottles, boxes, and vases) but one decided on by him. In the arrangement of the objects to be represented on the table top, this involves a gesture that goes beyond mere positioning, to also involve the actual modeling of one of the elements. Despite the fact that the folded cloth, as Marilena Pasquali has noted, tends to take on the compactness of the surrounding objects (Pasquali, 1996, p. 116), the particular quality of the paint, one in search of a soft *ductus*, and an unusual tonal complexity that extends from straw-color to violet, underline the exceptional character of this intrusion. The fact that we are looking at a sequence in which there seems to be a

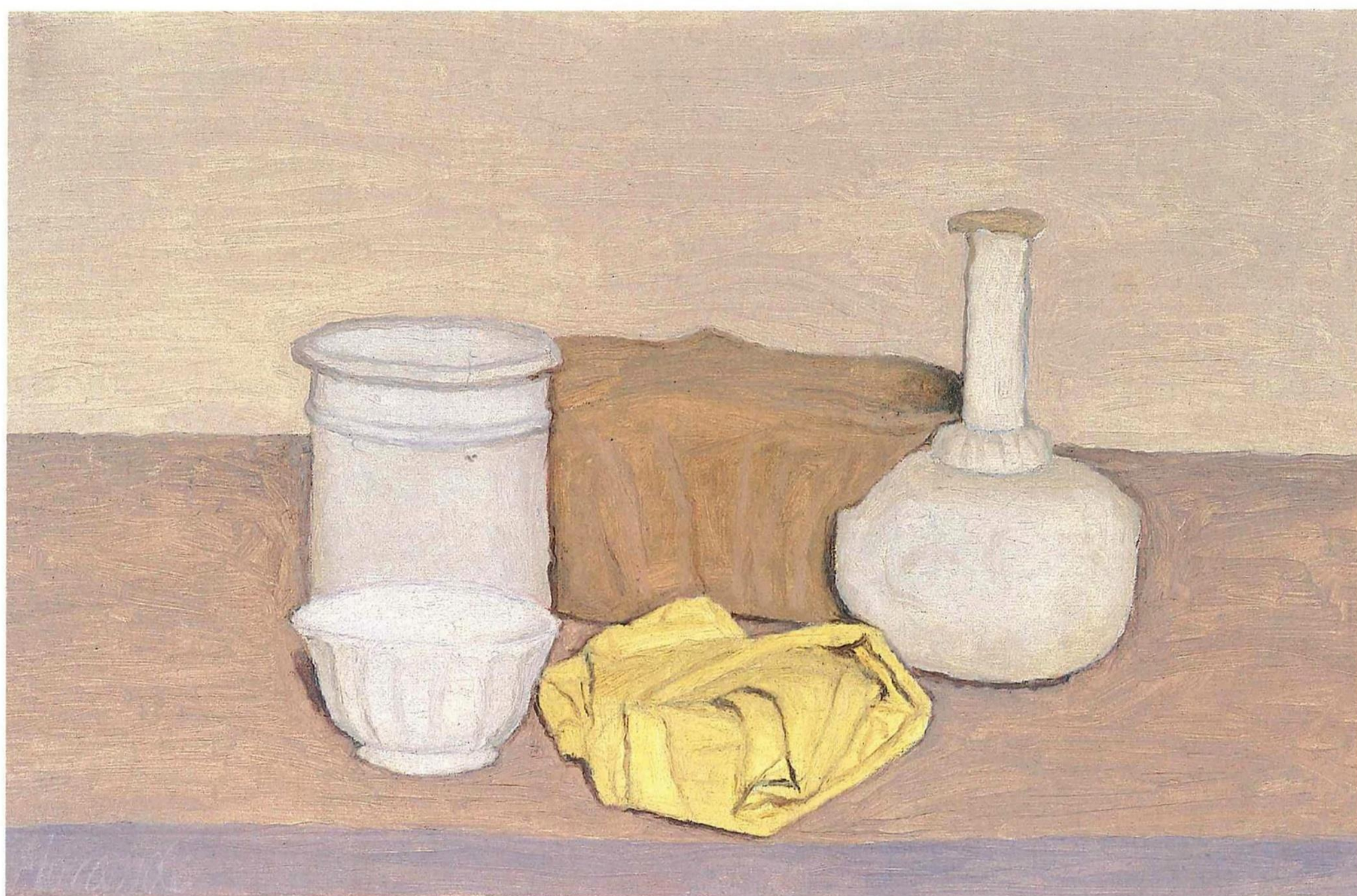


Still Life, 1929 (Vitali n. 137). Private collection.

breaking up of the implacable architecture of the objects displayed in the still lifes of the previous two years, is shown in part by the strange and, until now, unidentified presence seen behind the cloth in the paintings reproduced here as nos. 12, 13, and 17. This is the bread basket already seen in an etching of 1921 (Vitali etchings no. 15) but which has lost its handle and, in this state, is still to be found among the objects in the studio of the Museo Morandi. The same object, no longer subject to the minute examination of the etching, is to be seen in a picture evidently inspired by Cézanne, of 1929 (and which should be compared with painting no. 13 in this catalogue). Here the basket is seen together with a cloth placed on the edge of the table, and it cannot be ruled out that, after a break of

over twenty years, Morandi might have taken up the subject again on purpose: for the 1952 series the painter probably roughly covered the basket with paper so as to eliminate the texture of the wicker and, as with the cloth, he seems interested in a painterly effect resulting from an unusual, irregular, mat surface.

The presentation together in this show of six still lifes from the series of ten permits us to reflect on the meaning and modes of Morandi's way of working in series. Apart from the paintings, four drawings have survived that document part of the studies for this series of still lifes. This unified sequence (all the sheets are taken from a single notebook, 23.5 × 32.5 cm) provides some important information on the development of the cycle. In three of the drawings (Pasquali-Tavoni nos. 1952/2, 7, and 9) the objects shown are the same as in the series Vitali nos. 830–833, though the vantage point is at the same level as the objects, which are therefore seen as profiles against a neutral background. In the first, a brief sketch placed together with two other sketches (for a different still life of 1952 and for a vase of flowers) the theme is rendered by a quick outline. In the second the object is emphatically shadowed against the background: this is the starting point for the strong, unique chromatic contrast seen in all the pictures of the series. In the third, today in the Museo Morandi, a light from the left creates a marked chiaroscuro effect on the vase, cup, and bottle; the bottle casts a decisive shadow on the table to the right. At this point the artist must have realized that the folded cloth, penalized by too low a vantage point, would appear flat, nearly



12.

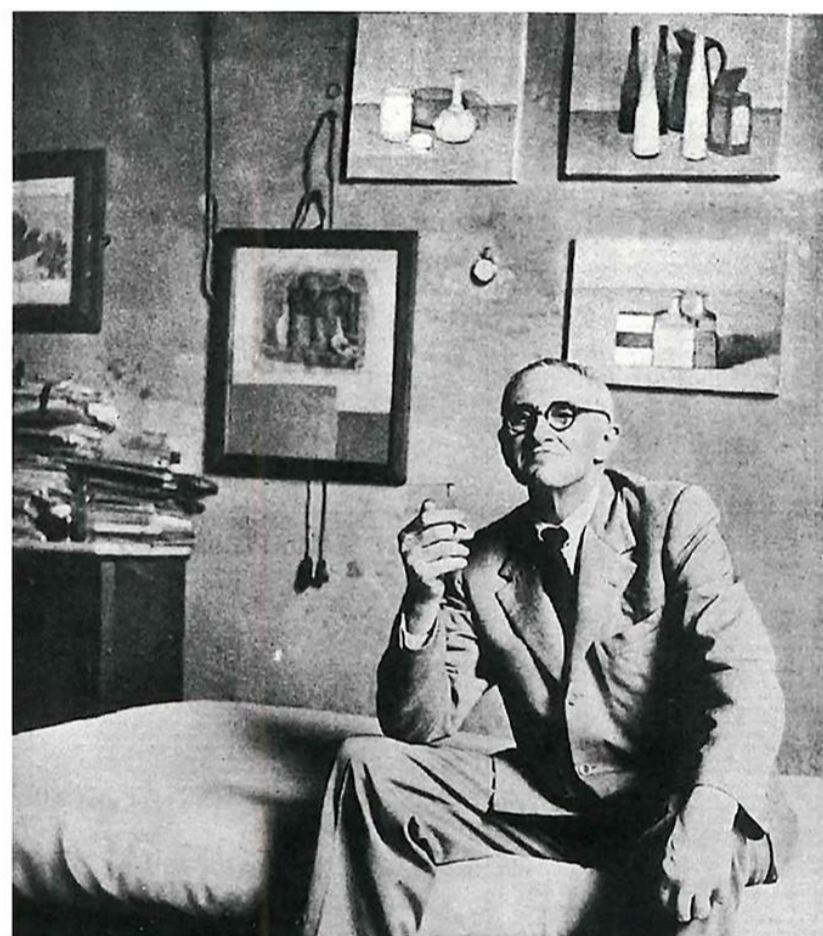
24. *Still Life*, 1953.
Oil on canvas, 30.5 × 45.5 cm.
Vitali no. 873.
Albinea, Achille and Ida Maramotti collection.

27. *Still Life*, 1953.
Oil on canvas, 26 × 70 cm.
Vitali no. 904.
London, private collection.

25. *Still Life*, 1953–1954.
Oil on canvas, 35.5 × 40.4 cm.
Vitali no. 895.
Private collection.

26. *Still Life*, 1953–1954.
Oil on canvas, 26 × 70 cm.
Vitali no. 896.
Trento, Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, deposito Giovanardi.

In a photograph by Sanford Roth published in the February 1955 issue of *Art News*, as an illustration for two articles about Morandi, we can glimpse, behind the seated painter, arms crossed (defined in the magazine as “the Metaphysician of Bologna, Grand Old Man of Italian Painting”), two paintings from a series characterized by an unusual elongated horizontal format. The one hung higher up, showing a horizontally-striped cigar box which marks out the space in which the bowls and bottles are inserted (Vitali no. 897, present whereabouts unknown) is very similar, except for the format, to the second still life exhibited in this show. The lower painting (Vitali no. 899), partially hidden by the head of the artist in the photo, is part of a group of three painted immediately after this series; the cigar box is replaced by a small black bottle and one of the two bowls is taken away, spatially isolating the three white objects on the right. For readers with modernist leanings such as those of *Art News* (a magazine noted for its battles in favor of non-figurative art and Abstract Expressionism) these still lifes must have seemed in harmony with the cool-toned, rigorous compositions that, from the time of the show of Italian art in 1949 at the Museum of Modern Art, were associated with Morandi. John Berger’s text was not free of clichés about the Italian-ness of an artist of a quiet, local humility, who follows the gradual, impersonal passing of time—the days falling like single grains of sand in an hourglass (Berger, 1955 p. 29; two issues earlier, Alberto Burri, in an article by Milton Gendel, was described as an ancient Umbrian, in equally picturesque terms).



From *Candido*, 16 August 1959: Morandi in his studio, in a photograph that can be dated back to 1953. We can recognize still lifes from 1951 (Vitali no. 1365, reproduced here as no. 9), 1952 (Vitali no. 834), 1953 (Vitali no. 873, reproduced here as no. 24).

But, between the lines, Berger was trying to suggest a modernity directly descending from the luminous abstraction of the masters of the early Renaissance, saying that his paintings precisely evoke this particular quality of light, the same quality that one finds, for example, in the works of Piero della Francesca or Giovanni Bellini), in keeping with a critical stance typical of the fifties, which tended to consider fifteenth-century Italian art as one of the prime sources of contemporary painting. In this context the success in America of two of the four paintings presented in this sequence does not appear coincidental.

No. 24, which can be seen behind the artist in a photo from 1953 taken in the studio in Via Fondazza and published a few years later in the Milanese magazine *Candido* (Monti, 1959, p. 51), was chosen as part of the selection of eleven paintings by Morandi exhibited in the fall of 1955 at the Delius Gallery, New York. The catalog of this show was found during the research conducted for the present exhibition. The picture was then to become part of the collection of Clare Booth Luce, wife of the Time-Life-Fortune magnate, and American ambassador to Italy from 1953 to 1959.

The American history of no. 27 is even more interesting and can be reconstructed through a series of letters from Morandi to the owner of the Buccholz Gallery in New York, Curt Valentin, now conserved with the Valentin papers at the Museum of Modern Art. The relationship between the two, documented as early as 1950, became stronger in 1953 when Valentin decided to organize a Morandi retrospective that was, however, complicated by the difficulty in obtaining the Metaphysical works already promised for the show the following year in the Hague. According to the correspondence, it was Valentin who explicitly requested the horizontal format that characterizes this period of Morandi’s work. In fact on 26 July 1953 Morandi replied to Valentin that he had “nearly completed the painting with the elongated format similar to those of Braque and Miró that you own. It measures 40 × 20 cm” (Vitali no. 872, presently in the Phillips Collection, Washington). On 18 November he added, “I have four paintings (still lifes) ready for you and I am already at work on



31. *Still Life*, 1955.
Oil on canvas, 26 × 40 cm.
Vitali no. 944.
Freiburg, Morat-Institut für Kunst und
Kunstwissenschaft.

34. *Still Life*, 1956.
Oil on canvas, 35.7 × 45.7 cm.
Vitali no. 1012.
Milan, Mattioli Rossi collection.

32. *Still Life*, 1955.
Oil on canvas, 30.4 × 35.2 cm.
Vitali no. 972.
Private collection.

35. *Still Life*, 1956.
Oil on canvas, 35.5 × 35 cm.
Vitali no. 1013.
Bologna, Museo Morandi.

33. *Still Life*, 1956.
Oil on canvas, 40.5 × 35.5 cm.
Vitali no. 986.
Trento, Museo d'Arte Moderna e
Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto,
deposito Giovanardi.

From 1946 onward Morandi had attempted to combine simple geometric objects (the parallelepipeds of two coffee boxes and a cigar box), showing them frontally and moving them close to the edge of the table and thus nearer to the viewer. He had not tried this solution since his metaphysical period: the coffee boxes in the pictures from 1942–44, in fact, were either seen by a glimpse of one of their side-facets, or their rectangular geometry was neutralized by the mass of bottles and vases. With the passing of time, in order to make the compositions more compact and their profiles more regular, this strategy was repeated, either by re-using the same objects (though, from 1949 on, with the cigar box mostly seen from the larger rectangle thus making the most of the flattening effect of the colored central band), or from 1950 onwards by using the square facet of the Persian bottle which supplied a harsher light. Starting with the backgrounds of certain “square-based” still lifes of 1953 (Vitali nos. 852 and 853 for instance) Morandi began to use other simple paper boxes: the vibrato of the brushstrokes eliminated the risk of the solids being too inert, their corners resulting irregular, as though the light-filled surfaces were etched, with a slight over-exposure, on a background which could not support the flood of light. As early as 1946 Francesco Arcangeli had understood this phenomenon: “The clarity of the objects vibrates, slightly but visibly, at the edges as a result of the brush work, as though an effect of a subtle but corrugated modulation; the handling is sure and, from a distance, is absorbed into the overall effect of the work” (Arcangeli, 1946). In the series



Detail from Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin,
Jeune homme construisant un château de cartes,
1735 ca. Winterthur, Sammlung Oskar Reinhart.

seen here, this trembling at the edges is so marked as to make us think of boxes constructed by the artist himself that have maintained the irregularity of the folds of the paper from which they are made: I think a significant precedent (variously illuminated facets of a fragile and empty solid) is to be found in a detail of the *Jeune homme construisant un château de cartes* by Chardin, a picture long loved by Morandi and admired in the monograph that he owned (published by André de Ridder in 1932; plate LXXVIII). The original was eventually seen by him at the Sammlung Oskar Reinhart in Winterthur on the occasion of his show with Giacomo Manzù

held in 1956 in the Kunstmuseum of the same city.

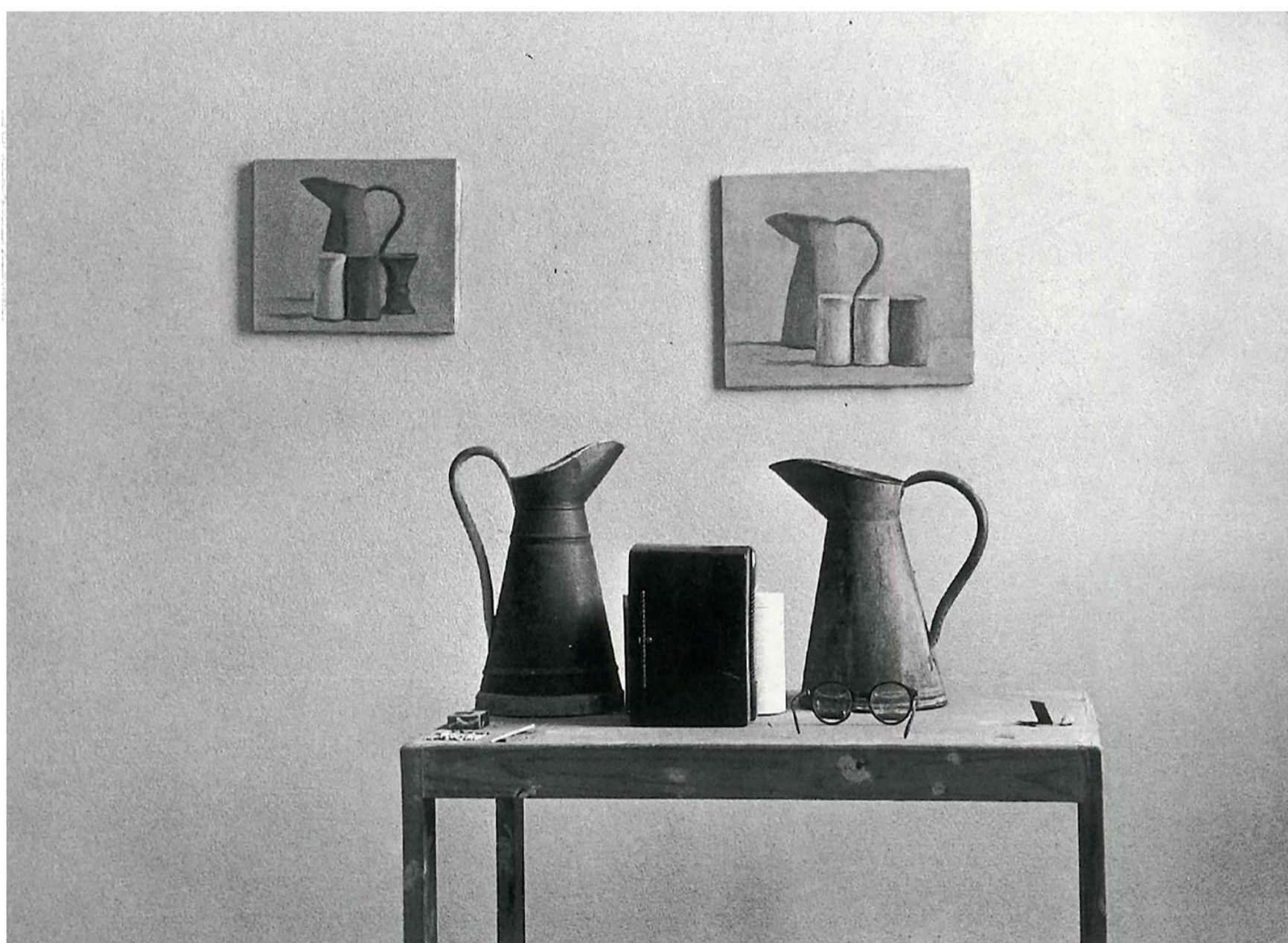
Used at the beginning as objects for balancing a composition full of other objects (as happens in the first two still lifes exhibited here) these boxes, with the growth of the series were to become the protagonists of a combination game. In the still life here, no. 33, they take over the foreground by themselves and, in the following two, they are what mainly determines the construction and luminous quality of the picture. These two works represent one of the high points of Morandi's spatial research: only in very rare cases (the cigar box in the horizontal still lifes of 1954 for example) did an object arrive at the edge of the table nearest the painter (and viewer) and line up with it. The result is completely new: in this way the two spatial systems of Morandi's still lifes, the stage-like one (the table and the visible portion of the studio hidden by the well-known paper covers) and those of the objects placed in a setting, are forced to be compared directly and find a difficult equilibrium.

For this operation the first priority was obviously that of finding the best vantage point. In what seems to have been a preceding series of pictures (Vitali nos. 944–948) it was already strongly angled from above: in this way there was not only accentuated the tonal contrast between the two faces of the parallelepipeds (the strongly illuminated frontal one and the dust-veiled one higher up) but above all they were aligned with the corners of the boxes in the foreground. The next step, that of placing the objects on two distinct and non-communicating planes (as can be seen in the still life reproduced here as no.



38. *Still Life*, 1960.
Oil on canvas, 30.1 × 45.3 cm.
Vitali no. 1198.
Private collection.

39. *Still Life*, 1962.
Oil on canvas, 31.4 × 36 cm.
Vitali no. 1263.
Private collection.



A photograph by Lamberto Vitali taken in Morandi's studio at Grizzana: on the wall, a still life from 1960 (Vitali no. 1200) and the painting reproduced here as no. 39. (Courtesy Enrico Vitali.)

From 1960 on Giorgio Morandi worked on an easily isolated sequence characterized by two distinct planes of objects: one or two jugs variously oriented in the background, and three or four cylindrical cans of various colors in some rare cases (such as no. 38 here) interspersed with a

paper parallelepiped or a small vase of the same height.

His periodic insistence on an identical kind of composition is in part due to the fact that the objects painted were kept in Morandi's new house in Grizzana, a place where the artist returned periodically for

summer vacations from 1959 on: a fine photograph seen in the Swiss magazine *Style* in 1961 (Peillex, 1961, p. 15) shows us the same objects arranged as for a still life (and a painting from this series can be seen on the wall) on a modern table that surprised many visitors who were used to the old decor of the house in Bologna. Grizzana also helps to explain the suggestion of luminous blue, unusual for Morandi, that serves as background to these compositions: the previously mentioned visit by Beccaria describes his surprise at "an unusual blue never before seen in his pictures, like a voice heard for the first time" (Beccaria, 1963, p. 56) and Morandi confirmed to his friend that it was the result of the atmosphere of this much-loved place in the Apennines.

This series was for contemporary critics a new occasion for thinking again about the meaning of the obstinate permanence of the object, here seen at its most archetypal (the pure forms of the cylinders) as well as being so domestic (the familiar profile of the jug). In an obituary notice on Morandi written for *Rinascita* by Antonio Del Guercio, the existentialist dimension of the artist-object relationship was polemically brushed aside: "The dowdy, worn, and everyday objects of Morandi are not the immobilization of a fleeting contingency, but an effort to re-interpret the relationship between man and the things that man himself uses and consumes" (a.d.g., 1964).



