

Peggy Guggenheim COLLECTION

Palazzo Venier dei Leoni

701 Dorsoduro

30123 Venezia, Italy

Telephone 041 2405 411

Telefax 041 5206885

Press release

PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION TO OPEN AN EXHIBITION OF LATE PAINTINGS BY GIORGIO MORANDI

Opening April 30 (preview April 29) through September 13, 1998, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, will present *The Later Morandi: Still Lifes 1950 – 1964*, an exhibition of over 40 paintings revealing the refined sensibility and dazzling quality of Morandi's later work through the lens of a single theme and format - the Still Life.

While numerous exhibitions in the past two decades have focused on the work of the renowned Bolognese painter Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964), the last fifteen years of his life, among his most productive, remain largely unexplored. Exhibitions as well as writings on Morandi have tended to concentrate on his work up to the 1940s (his development from the influence of Cézanne to 'pittura metafisica' and 'valori plastici'), overlooking the importance of his last years as the inevitable evolution of earlier experiences. In a century that has privileged the notion of the avant-garde and the ongoing re-definition of art and its role, the position of Morandi – often seen as an isolated defender of 'buona pittura' in the realm of still-life painting – requires reconsideration.

This exhibition of Morandi's still life paintings executed between 1950 and 1964, with its groundbreaking catalog, radically revises our understanding and perception of Morandi's late work. The careful selection of more than forty paintings from 1950 onwards reveals Morandi's almost obsessive repetition of the same subject matter, with variations only in tone, composition and viewpoint. An analysis of this aspect of his work is crucial if we are to reach a full understanding of the meaning of his painting. Beginning with the oblique compositions, in which the supporting plane is still explicit (as in the painting from the Giovanardi Collection of 1951), the pictorial space acquires a different, ambiguous spatial tension in subsequent works, in which objects are arranged horizontally (for example the 1953 canvas from the Rodolfo Pallucchini Collection). For the first time the exhibition brings together six versions of a remarkable series executed in 1952 that share the compositional device of a bundled yellow cloth. The artist's final move towards an increasing dematerialization and dissolution of form and an heightened awareness of the expressive possibilities of the basic pictorial elements – light, color and composition – testify to Morandi's kinship with, and importance for post-war avant-garde tendencies, ranging from Rothko's and Warhol's serial paintings to the artistic production of today.

The exhibition is curated by **Laura Mattioli Rossi**, assisted by a group of distinguished Morandi scholars, among them **Maria Mimita Lamberti**, **Franz Armin Morat** and **Marilena Pasquali**, director of the Morandi Museum, Bologna.

The exhibition catalogue - available in Italian (304 pages; Lire 60.000) and English (208 pages; Lire 60.000) editions and published by Mazzotta, Milan - contains a number of innovative essays on Morandi's late work, with contributions by **Laura Mattioli Rossi** ("Giorgio Morandi: Questions of Method"), **Maria Mimita Lamberti** ("The Conventions and Convictions of a Painting Genre"), **Franz Armin Morat** ("The Embodiment of *Reine Malerei*, or Pure Painting"), **Marilena Pasquali** ("Perception and Allusion in Giorgio Morandi's Mature Art") and **Fausto Petrella** ("*Lux claustris*: costruzione di un mondo sublime" – Italian edition only). Further essays by **Giuseppe Panza di**

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Biumo and **Angela Vettese** explore the relationship between Morandi and post-war European avant-garde art, while **Joseph Rishel**, curator for contemporary art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, considers the artist's critical reception in America. Apart from the catalogue entries and extensive bibliography assembled by **Flavio Fergonzi** and **Lorenza Selleri** respectively, the volume also contains a collection of historic documents illuminating Morandi's relationship with art-historians and collectors such as Francesco Arcangeli, Roberto Longhi, Giuseppe Marchiori, Gianni Mattioli and Lamberto Vitali.

The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with the **Galleria dello Scudo, Verona**, where it was on view from December 14, 1997 until February 28, 1998. Paintings have been loaned by numerous private and public collections from Italy and abroad. In the wake of its overwhelmingly positive reception in Verona, the show will gain a further dimension at its second venue in Venice, with the juxtaposition of six early paintings by Morandi from the Gianni Mattioli Collection presently on long term loan at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, and comprising the work usually considered Morandi's first masterpiece – *Bottles and Fruit-bowl* of 1916.

The exhibition is supported and insured by : Assicurazioni GENERALI S.p.A.

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INTRAPRESÆ COLLEZIONE GUGGENHEIM

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