

UPDATED RELEASE

Feb. 17, 2009

Media Contact:

Shira Pinsker

202-387-2151 x220

spinsker@phillipscollection.org

***MORANDI: MASTER OF MODERN STILL LIFE* OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO SEE ARTIST'S WORK IN WASHINGTON FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER 50 YEARS**

Opens at The Phillips Collection on Feb. 21

Washington, D.C.—Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964), one of the most admired still-life painters of the 20th century, is renowned for his simple but stunning compositions. Combining a subtlety of design with a meditative aura, Morandi's finesse remains unrivaled. For the first time in more than 50 years, a retrospective exhibition of his work is on display in Washington, D.C. *Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life* features 60 works of art drawn primarily from collections in Italy, with key additions from collections in the U.S. With paintings dating from 1913 to 1962, the exhibition elucidates the evolution of Morandi's uncommon style. *Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life* is on view at The Phillips Collection Feb. 21–May 24, 2009.



Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964). *Still Life*, 1956. Oil on canvas; 15 15/16 x 13 15/16 in. Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto, Italy. © 2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome

Working from his studio in Bologna, a place he rarely left for long, Morandi dedicated his career to an obsessive investigation of the same bottles, bowls, jars, and biscuit tins. In his hands, these ordinary domestic objects shed their original identity to move beyond the simple reality of still-life painting. Quietly mesmerizing and mysterious, the paintings instead hover between physical and spiritual, traditional and modern.

Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life will unveil the remarkable—and surprising—freshness and individuality of these compositions. Rich in examples of early work that speak to his brief stylistic explorations of cubism, futurism, and metaphysical painting, the exhibition will also feature landscapes, a rare self-portrait, and a stunning representation of Morandi's mature work. In addition, the exhibition will highlight Morandi's considerable achievement in etching through a selection of prints that reveal his exceptional mastery of the medium.

1600 Twenty-first Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202 387 2151
FAX 202 387 2436
www.phillipscollection.org

Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life—page 2

“This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to encounter afresh the intimate and unadorned compositions of this great modern master,” said Dorothy Kosinski, director of The Phillips Collection. “It also shines a valuable spotlight on Morandi’s stylistic development through fine examples of his early work, an aspect little known or seen in this country.”

The exhibition is generously sponsored by Lockheed Martin Corporation and Fenner and Ina Milton.

“Lockheed Martin is proud to support *Morandi Master of Modern Still Life*”, said Larry Duncan, vice president of Federal and State Government Relations & PAC Affairs, Lockheed Martin Corporation. “At Lockheed Martin we believe that contributing to the educational and cultural quality of our community is an important responsibility of good corporate citizenship. When we invest in our community, we invest in the creativity, curiosity, diversity, and intellectual vigor of our country.”



Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964). *Still Life*, 1950. Oil on canvas; 15 15/16 x 17 15/16 in. Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Rovereto, Italy. © 2008 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/SIAE, Rome

Morandi, by legend a recluse, lived in a modest house in Bologna for his entire life with his mother and three unmarried sisters. He worked and slept in a single room where he spent hours, even days, moving, studying, and carefully painting his subtly varied arrangements of simple vessels. Morandi distilled their geometry using closely related hues of cream, rose and taupe, transforming still lifes into elegant luminous expressions that transcend material reality. “One can travel the world and see nothing,” Morandi said. “To achieve understanding it is necessary not to see many things, but to look hard at what you do see.”

During the course of Morandi’s long and productive career, the contemporary Italian avant-garde influenced him only minimally. He had little interest in the dynamic forms of the futurists and experimented only briefly with the hallucinatory imagery of the metaphysical artists, such as Carlo Carrà and Giorgio de Chirico. He claimed as his foremost influences Paul Cézanne and Georges Seurat, and the early Italian Renaissance artists Giotto di Bondone, Piero della Francesca, and Paolo Uccello, all of whom stressed balance, architectural forms, and tonal relationships.

The Phillips Collection owns two late still life paintings by Morandi, both of which will be featured in this exhibition. Duncan Phillips was one of many American collectors who took an interest in Morandi during the mid-1950s. In 1954, Phillips purchased *Still Life* (1953); three years later he acquired a slightly earlier oil painting. In 1957, The Phillips Collection was the first American museum to present an exhibition of Morandi’s work.

Morandi’s suggestion of the poetic presence of objects through painstaking arrangement and subtle tones echoed the goals of many of Phillips’s favorites: Jean-

Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life—page 3

Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Giorgio Barbarelli da Castelfranco, and Édouard Vuillard among them. His paintings also revealed a sensitive artistic temperament coupled with firm individuality—qualities that Phillips greatly admired. In conjunction with *Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life*, the museum will display still lifes from its permanent collection, with paintings by artists including Georges Braque and Chardin.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Giorgio Morandi was born in Bologna, Italy in 1890. He studied at that city's Accademia di Belle Arti from 1907 to 1913 and first encountered works by modern French and Italian artists at the 1909 and 1910 Venice Biennales. Although never an active partisan of the futurist movement, Morandi attended the futurist exhibition in Florence in 1914. He taught drawing and printmaking in Bologna public schools from 1916 to 1929. Beginning in the 1920s and continuing until the end of his career, he participated regularly in international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale and Rome Quadrennial, receiving numerous awards. As renowned for his etchings as for his paintings, he was awarded the position of chair of intaglio at the Bologna academy in 1930, a post he held until his retirement in 1956. His only trip outside of Italy occurred in 1956 when he traveled to Switzerland for his exhibition at the Winterthur Kunstmuseum. Morandi died in Bologna on June 18, 1964.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION

This exhibition has been organized by Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (MART) in collaboration with The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. MART owns the largest collection of works by Morandi, after that of the Morandi Museum in Bologna.

EXHIBITION SPONSORS

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin employs 140,000 dedicated men and women worldwide. Lockheed Martin is a premier systems integrator principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration, and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products, and services.

Fenner and Ina Milton are longtime supporters of The Phillips Collection. Fenner Milton has been a member of the museum's Board of Trustees since 2006. The couple's passion for early and mid-20th-century art is reflected in their collecting as well as their philanthropy. At the Phillips, they have supported a variety of exhibitions including *Americans in Paris*, *The Great American Epic: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series*, *Société Anonyme: Modernism for America*, and a current traveling exhibition on El Lissitzky.

Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life—page 4

THE CATALOGUE

A 128-page book with 67 color illustrations accompanies the exhibition. *Morandi: Master of Modern Still Life*, published by The Phillips Collection, features essays by Elisabetta Barisoni, MART exhibition curator, and Flavio Fergonzi, professor of history of contemporary art at Udine University, Udine, Italy. The book will be available in the Museum Shop for \$45.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection offers an intimate encounter with one of the finest collections of impressionist and modern American and European art, with works by Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Claude Monet, Honoré Daumier, Georgia O’Keeffe, Arthur Dove, Mark Rothko, Milton Avery, Jacob Lawrence, and Richard Diebenkorn, among others. The Phillips Collection, America’s first museum of modern art, has an active collecting program and regularly organizes acclaimed special exhibitions, many of which travel nationally and internationally. The museum also produces award-winning and in-depth education programs for K–12 teachers and students, as well as for adults. Its Center for the Study of Modern Art explores new way of thinking about art and the nature of creativity, through artist visits, seminars, and classes. Since 1941, the museum has hosted concerts in its wood-paneled Music Room. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum supported primarily by donations.

VISITOR INFORMATION

The Phillips Collection is located in the heart of Washington’s historic Dupont Circle neighborhood, at 1600 21st Street, NW, near the Dupont Circle Metro (Q Street exit). Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays until 8:30 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Mondays and New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

###