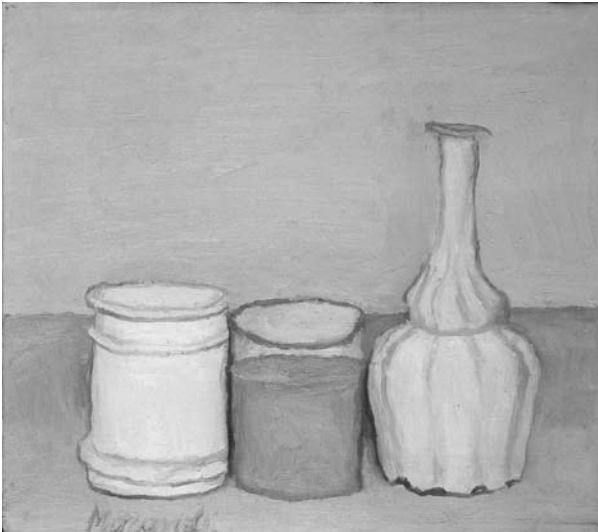


looking for the black cat...

GIORGIO MORANDI



The classical still-life has been a distinct genre in painting since the seventeenth century with Caravaggio, and by the 1930s it had been subjected to Chardin's masterful precision, Cézanne's bleeding colors, Picasso's cubist distortions, Magritte's language games, and Dali's surreal juxtapositions. Nevertheless, from 1910 to 1964, to the noise of the modern era's machines, wars, and technology, Giorgio Morandi painted still-life after still-life, each one almost identical to the next. To paint a bottle sitting next to a jar, he seemed to say, would always be a speculative process. From the opposite side of the Atlantic, Morandi remained committed to breaking apart what Jasper Johns called the "things the mind already knows." Faced with the immensity of such a subject, he worked away, rarely leaving his tiny Bologna apartment. Often composed of a few bottles, glasses, jars, pitchers, and vases set upon a table-top—a classical still-life arrangement—and nothing more, Morandi's paintings brought together a complex visual field of volume, vacuum, surface, light, shadow, and color. And after a slight adjustment in placement, or proportions, or time of day, he tried again. Most of all, his brush painted what was not there: the negative space around the objects and the slow passage of time.

(Sept. 11, 2009 –Jan. 3, 2010)

Giorgio Morandi was born in 1890 in Bologna, where he died in 1964. He showed his work in the *Novecento italiano* exhibitions of 1926 and 1929, and was awarded first prize for painting at the 1948 *Venice Biennale*, and grand prize in the 1957 *São Paolo Biennale*. The Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini paid tribute to Morandi by featuring one of his paintings in his emblematic masterpiece *La Dolce Vita* (1960). The Metropolitan Museum of Art organized a retrospective of his work in 2008, an exhibition that travelled to MAMbo–Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna.

Image:

*Still Life, 1953-54*

Oil on canvas, 14 1/8 x 18 1/8 inches

Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Professor  
and Mrs. Theo Haimann.

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