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Roberto Longhi remembered

by [Marco Grassi](#)

On the Italian art critic and scholar.

The recent Giorgio Morandi exhibition, so artfully installed in the Lehman Wing of the Metropolitan Museum, was for many an opportunity, perhaps for the first time, to discover a surprisingly unfamiliar Italy—not the Italy of Roman antiquity, nor the Italy of the Renaissance city-states, not even the Italy of Baroque splendor—cultural landscapes with which an American public is reasonably enough acquainted. With Morandi, instead, we entered a far less well-traveled territory: the Italy dating from the threshold of the twentieth century through the end of the Second World War. It was a period during which, for more than twenty years of Fascist government, the country existed in a self-inflicted isolation willed by a purposeful, nation-obsessed, but fundamentally provincial, regime that is euphemistically referred to as the *ventennio* (twenty-year span). This, of itself, would have been reason enough for our Anglo-American culture to p ...

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