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Morandi at the Met

by [Karen Wilkin](#)

On "Giorgio Morandi, 1890–1964" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Giorgio Morandi can be described, with equal accuracy, as one of the most admired and celebrated of twentieth-century Italian painters or as one of the most misunderstood and underestimated. Responses to his magically quiet, introspective paintings, etchings, drawings, and watercolors seem to occupy opposite ends of the aesthetic spectrum. Initiates rank him among the giants of modernist painting. Cognoscenti of printmaking prize his etchings as highpoints of the tradition. Others dismiss him as “that painter of bottles.” Since many of Morandi’s most passionate fans are painters and sculptors, for once the hackneyed phrase “an artist’s artist” is absolutely accurate. He’s a challenging painter in the truest, best—as opposed to currently modish—sense of the word. For some of his admirers, and I count myself among them, an ability to appreciate Morandi’s subtle excellences can serve as a kind of ...

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