



Giorgio Morandi, *Still-life*, 1955 © Collezione Casamonti

Morandi Balla De Chirico and Italian Painting: 1920 - 1950

PRESS RELEASE

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Morandi Balla De Chirico and Italian Painting: 1920 - 1950

12th February - 18th April 2020, Tornabuoni Art London

Private View: Tuesday 11th February, 6pm - 8pm

Panel Discussion: Tuesday 11th February, 10.30am -12pm

Between political art and tradition: in and around Novecento with Dr Flavia Frigeri (Teaching Fellow at UCL), Dr Roberta Cremoncini (Director of Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art) and Dr Teresa Kittler (Lecturer at University of York)

Tornabuoni Art presents the first ever London exhibition of the Italian Novecento, the figurative art movement founded in the 1922. Featuring over thirty works of art by leading Italian artists, such as Giorgio Morandi, Giorgio de Chirico, Felice Casorati, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini and many others, this exhibition explores Italian art in the period between the two World Wars. Most of the works on display come from the Tornabuoni Art collection, with a loan from the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art in London.

This exhibition takes inspiration from the landmark 1926 exhibition “Prima Mostra del Novecento Italiano” in Milan, organised by the charismatic writer and curator Margherita Sarfatti, who launched the Novecento movement. In particular, the show looks at figurative art of this period through the three main themes of the original *Novecento* exhibition: still life, landscape and the representations of women. The artist Giorgio Morandi presented three works at the 1926 exhibition in Milan: a landscape, a portrait and a still life. Tornabuoni Art will display two Morandi's still-lives (1955 and 1962) and *Landscape* (1932). In addition, the show will feature other major works, including: Balla's *Ballucecolormare* (1924-25), De Chirico's *Still-life* (1930) and Casorati's *Nude from the back* (1939), an important figurative artist from Turin who is being rediscovered.

After World War I, Novecento artists sought to return to what they saw as the simplicity of the Italian pictorial tradition, as a kind of return to order after the chaos of war. The Novecento artists set themselves apart from Metaphysical artists, whom they saw as too intellectual, and adopted a more homely, earthy sensibility. No other show in London has ever looked before at the movement as a whole.

Ursula Casamonti, Director of Tornabuoni Art London, comments:

“Our mission as a gallery is to spread knowledge about Italian Modern art. Until now Tornabuoni Art London has focussed on avant-garde and post-war artists, such as Fontana, Boetti, Burri and Dorazio, but there are other interesting stories of 20th-century Italian art to tell. In addition, the Novecento movement was championed by a fascinating and visionary woman, the art critic and curator, Margherita Sarfatti, whose story is one of the most dramatic of the first half of the twentieth century”.

Margherita Sarfatti was a popular writer and journalist who wrote the first biography of Mussolini, with whom she had a romantic relationship. As she was Jewish, broke with Mussolini and fled Italy when the German race laws came into effect in the late 1930s, emigrating to Uruguay and then returning to Italy after the war. A friend to intellectuals and artists, first a socialist and then a supporter of Fascism, she promoted the Italian Novecento enthusiastically from 1924 onwards. She described it as “modern classicism” and became an informal ambassador for the art movement outside Italy.

The exhibition catalogue includes an essay by the scholar Dr Flavia Frigeri, teaching Fellow at UCL. Tornabuoni Art is organising an academic conference on the opening day with a panel of experts, including Dr Frigeri, Roberta Cremoncini, Director of the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art in London, and Dr Teresa Kittler, lecturer at University of York.

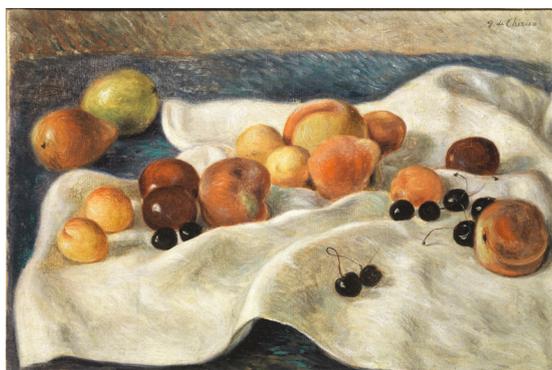


Felice Casorati, *Nude from the back*, 1939 © Collezione Casamonti

ABOUT TORNABUONI ART

Founded in Florence in 1981 by Roberto Casamonti, in the street that gave the gallery its name, Tornabuoni opened other exhibition spaces in Crans-Montana in 1993, Milan in 1995, Forte Dei Marmi in 2004, Paris in 2009 and London in 2015. Specialising in Post-War Italian art, the gallery presents the work of artists such as Fontana, Burri, Castellani, Bonalumi, Boetti, Scheggi and Manzoni.

Tornabuoni also has a permanent collection of significant works by major Italian artists of the Novecento, such as de Chirico, Morandi, Balla and Severini, as well as international 20th-century avant-garde masters, such as Picasso, Mirò, Kandinsky, Hartung, Poliakoff, Dubuffet, Lam, Matta, Christo, Wesselmann, Warhol and Basquiat. Complementing its focus on Italian art, the Tornabuoni collection also features the work of young contemporary artists such as the Italian artist Francesca Pasquali and the Italy-based Armenian artist Mikayel Ohanjanyan, who won the Golden Lion at the 2015 Venice Biennale and whose work is on show at Yorkshire Sculpture Park since 2017.



Giorgio de Chirico, *Still-life*, 1930
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Tornabuoni participates in major international art fairs such as the FIAC in Paris, TEFAF in Maastricht, Art Basel, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Basel Hong Kong, Artefiera in Bologna, Miart in Milan, Frieze Masters in London, Artgenève in Geneva and Artmonte-carlo in Monaco.

The gallery also works closely with museums and institutions. With its experience and knowledge of the work of the artists it represents, the gallery has also established itself as an advisor for both private and public collections.