

The interior world of Giorgio Morandi, an artist who embraced lockdown

The enigmatic Italian painter thrived on self-imposed confinement during fascism and beyond



Still life in oil on canvas (1951) © Mondadori; [Getty Images Share on Twitter \(opens new window\)](#)
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A painter who once said he hoped his compositions expressed “tranquillity and privacy, moods I have always valued above all else”, he is an ideal companion for those of us now confronted with domestic confinement. How astute, then, of Italian dealer Robilant + Voena to unveil an elegant virtual display devoted to the Bologna artist.

At the exhibition’s kernel is a video that centres on a single still life painted by Morandi in 1943. Ostensibly it is a typically serene offering, showing a bowl placed behind a vase and pitcher, painted in a selection of Morandi’s signature pigments: milky coffee, sun-baked terracotta, pearlescent grey. Yet as the video’s producer Carolyn Miner points out in her commentary, this humdrum encounter suppresses a tremor of unease. The pitcher and the vase are placed off-centre, their lack of symmetry gesturing perhaps at a world that is out-of-kilter. Meanwhile, their cool, austere verticality could be that of sentinels intent on guarding the bowl, with its vulnerable open mouth.

[...]

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