

museo Morandi

PRESS RELEASE

WAYNE THIEBAUD at MUSEO MORANDI Curated by Alessia Masi with Carla Crawford

March 4th – October 2nd, 2011
Opening: March 3rd, 6.30 pm

The **Morandi Museum** in Bologna carries on its program of tracing connections between Morandi's oeuvre and that of some of the greatest contemporary artists, after the 2005 homage to **Josef Albers** and the wide-ranging **Bernd and Hilla Becher** exhibition in 2009. From **March 4th to October 2nd, 2011**, the works of world-famous American artist **Wayne Thiebaud** will enter the museum's main rooms alongside Morandi's oeuvre, establishing a dialogue meant to underline both their similarities and differences, beyond the immediately evident serial and chromatic aspects.

Wayne Thiebaud, born in Arizona in 1920, is considered a **key figure in contemporary American art**. Often associated to **Pop Art**, Thiebaud has nonetheless always refused to be ascribed to any artistic movement, just like Morandi. If, on the one hand, his subjects of choice seem to bring him close to Pop artists – symbols of consumer culture such as candy, sweets, chewing gum, hot gods, cosmetics, toys – on the other hand the absence of both critique and celebration of American culture, the technical research, the slow, materic, grainy brushstrokes, the attention to perspective and formal, geometrical aspects of composition used to depict the soul of those objects set Thiebaud far apart from the mechanical, impersonal clichés of Pop painting in general. This attention to painting as a discipline, in particular – Thiebaud always referred to himself as a “painter” rather than an artist – is what Thiebaud and Giorgio Morandi share with other key figures such as Chardin and Edward Hopper.

Thiebaud often stated his admiration for Morandi: he did, most recently, in the conversation with curator **Alessia Masi** he carried out in preparation for this exhibition, published in the show's catalog (**Edizioni Corraini**), which includes the following excerpt:

“There are such good lessons to learn from looking at his work. They have to do with certain propositions that I think serious painters need to be aware of. One of them, I think, is the wonder of intimacy and the love of long looking. Of staring but at the same time moving the eye, finding out what's really there, and there are so many things that are subtle and may look like something at one moment but not the next. There's always that kind of “not quite” with Morandi and yet the feeling of totality is so nicely

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complete. It's always a joy to look at his work. He also cautions us painters against the idea of over doing. It's alright to have drama but not melodrama. So many good lessons".

Wayne Thiebaud started his activity as a cartoonist, briefly working as an animator at Walt Disney Studios. This experience will play a crucial role in the subsequent developments of his aesthetic research. He will enjoy fame as a commercial artist before fully devoting himself to painting.

Among the prizes he was awarded over the course of his career: in 1994 he was presented with the National Medal of Arts by then President Clinton; in 1998 he was made member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston, and received a honorary doctorate from the San Francisco Art Institute; in 2004 he was shortlisted for the NY American Academy of Arts and Letters "Gold Medal for Graphic Arts"; in 2010 he entered the California Hall of Fame alongside other famous figures such as movie director James Cameron, Secretary of State George Schultz, historian Kevin Star, singer Barbra Streisand, tennis champion Serena Williams and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Wayne Thiebaud's work has been included in the collection of the most prestigious American museums, such as the **MoMA** and the **Whitney Museum of American Art** in New York, the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art** and the **Chicago Art Institute**.

If, on the one hand, **Thiebaud's** and **Morandi's** still lifes and landscapes can seem very distant in their inspirations and context, on the other hand a deeper scrutiny reveals strong affinities: an interest for everyday objects, simplified so as to become purely formal elements, the tendency to align them in strictly ordered progressions, the apparent repetition of representations, the study of variants, the aesthetic isolation of objects or groups thereof, the search of strong visual impact through a deep attention to light, form and brushstroke quality. The juxtaposition of their work reveals a shared tendency to subjectively interpret and reconstruct visual reality in conformity to their inner vision.

A **video** on Wayne Thiebaud, shot by Bologna-based young director **Germano Maccioni** and winner of the 2010 Michelangelo Antonioni prize for the best short film at the International Film&Tv Festival in Bari, can be viewed by the public alongside the show's exhibition path.

The presence of one of the most representative contemporary American artists within the complete collection of Morandi's work further proves the importance of Giorgio Morandi's practice within the international art world. Yet another proof of this is offered by the wide-ranging travelling exhibition ***Dialogo con Morandi, da De Chirico a Fontana*** which will be held between April 9th and September 19th in three important Japanese

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museums. The first will be the **Toyota Municipal Museum of Art**, opened in 1995 and since become a point of reference for Japanese, European and American modern and contemporary art. Based on an extraordinary design by Yoshio Taniguchi, the museum is built on a hilltop overlooking the city of Toyota, on the former site of the Shichishu castle whose tower is reproduced by the building's entrance. After Toyota, the show will travel to the **Tottori Prefectural Museum** and to the **Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura & Hayama**.

The **MAMbo Educational Department** offers, during the show, two kinds of activity to the general public. A guided tour will allow to discover the works of Wayne Thiebaud, while the Department's labs at MAMbo will offer participants an opportunity to experiment with the chalk cast technique used to create "artist's food" inspired by the subjects of choice of Thiebaud and Pop artists. A new space of educational activities and workshops within the **Sala Ottagonale** at Museo Morandi will be presented to the public during the exhibition's opening ceremony: an exciting display system will allow schools and families to experience Morandi's technique and language within the artist's atelier. For info, bookings and educational fees: ph. +39 051 6496652.

For further information: www.mambo-bologna.org

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LIST OF WORKS BY WAYNE THIEBAUD

Sandwich group, 1961
Oil on paper mounted on canvas
30,5 x 40,6 cm
Thiebaud family collection

Salt and Pepper Rose, 1964
Oil on canvas
45,7 x 30,8 cm
Thiebaud family collection

Club Sandwich, 1967
Oil on canvas
30,5 x 35,6 cm
Thiebaud family collection

Four cupcakes, 1971
Oil on canvas
27,9 x 48,3 cm
Betty Jean Thiebaud collection

Bananas, 1975
Oil on canvas
35,6 x 43,2 cm
Private collection

Office Still Life, 1980
Oil on canvas
41 x 50,8 cm
Thiebaud family collection

Cherries, 1981
Oil on canvas
35,6 x 35,6 cm
Betty Jean Thiebaud collection

Virginia Landscape, 1981
Oil on canvas
30,5 x 38 cm
Matt Bult collection

Candy bag, 1984
Oil on canvas cardboard mounted on wood
32,7 x 26,4 cm
Betty Jean Thiebaud collection

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Night Streets Study, 1990

Oil on canvas

52,3 x 31,1 cm

Private collection

Single and Doubledecker, 1998

Oil on canvas cardboard

27,6 x 35,2 cm

Betty Jean Thiebaud collection

French fries, 2003 – 2008

Oil on wood

25,4 x 46 cm

Private collection

Cheese Wedges, 2011

Oil on canvas

46 x 61,3 cm

Courtesy Paul Thiebaud Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Two Cheese Cubs, 2011

Oil on canvas

27,9 x 35,6 cm

Courtesy Paul Thiebaud Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Condiment bowls, n.d.

Oil on canvas

40,6 x 50,8 cm

Thiebaud family collection

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TECHNICAL SHEET

Title:	Wayne Thiebaud at Museo Morandi
Curator:	Alessia Masi with Carla Crawford
Venue:	Museo Morandi Palazzo d'Accursio, Piazza Maggiore, Bologna
Dates:	March 4 th – October 2 nd , 2011
Opening times:	tue – fri 11 am – 6 pm sat, sun, holidays 11 am – 8 pm closed on mon, Jan. 1 st , May 1 st , Dec. 25 th
Tickets:	Adults € 6; reduction € 4
Information:	Museo Morandi ph. +39 051 2193338 fax +39 051 2193403
Catalog:	Edizioni Corraini
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