

Ugo Nespolo

A versatile and widely known contemporary artist, Ugo Nespolo works in a broad range of disciplines, from painting and filmmaking to print and sculpture.

In the late 1960s he was represented by the Schwarz Gallery, which counted among its artists Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Kurt Schwitters, Arman, and Enrico Baj. A solo exhibition in Milan at Schwarz was organized by the critic Pierre Restany, who was to remain a life-long friend of the artist. The exhibition was entitled “*Machines and Conditional Objects*” and effectively represents the beginning of the movement that was to become Arte Povera. Germano Celant attended the opening and went on to participate, together with Nespolo, in a series of exhibitions that were the first by this group.

The most important one, “*Nine for a path!*” was held in Rome. An enduring friendship with Enrico Baj began at this time, and Baj and Nespolo staged exhibitions and conferences and participated in events together in Europe and the USA.

In 1967 Nespolo fell in love with movies and began making his own with great enthusiasm. For many years Baj, Lucio Fontana, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Alighiero Boetti and Mario Merz performed in the artist's films. Together with Baj, Nespolo spent time in Paris with Man Ray, who gave him a text for the film “*Revolving Doors*”, which Nespolo made in 1982.

In France since the late sixties Nespolo was associated with Ben Vautier, with whom he shared exhibitions and performances.

In 1968 in Turin the artist held a series of exhibitions and meetings entitled “*Les mots et les choses*”, where with Ben, Boetti and others he initiated a series of events and Fluxus concerts that had never been held in Italy before.

His encounter with the artists of the New American Cinema: Jonas Mekas, Andy Warhol, Yōko Ono and P. Adams Sitney triggered the birth of the *cinema di ricerca* in Italy, promoted by Nespolo, as was documented in the exhibition “*Nespolo Cinema / Time after Time*” at the National Museum of Cinema in Turin.

Nespolo's films have been shown and discussed in prominent museums around the world and in Venice Biennale. In France, the Centre Pompidou showed a series entitled “*Nespolo – le cinéma diagonal*”.

Nespolo is currently the greatest Italian authority on pataphysics. Together with Baj he founded the Istituto Patafisico Ticinese and is honored to have had his diploma signed by Raymond Queneau, who liked a little book of formal logic written by Nespolo and printed by the publisher Schwarz in 1968. He has exhibited widely in galleries and museums in Italy and around the world.

In January 2019, Nespolo is conferred an honorary degree in Philosophy by the University of Turin.