

## NUVOLO AND POST-WAR MATERIALITY 1950–1965

Curated by Germano Celant

October 27, 2017 – January 26, 2018

Di Donna Galleries is presenting *Nuvolo and Post-War Materiality 1950–1965*, an exhibition curated by Germano Celant that highlights the early career of the Italian artist Nuvolo (né Giorgio Ascani; 1926–2008). *Nuvolo and Post-War Materiality 1950–1965* features 20 works by Nuvolo, most of which have never been seen outside of Italy, contextualized by important works by other artists working in Italy, Spain, France, and the United States following World War II, including Alberto Burri, Ettore Colla, Pietro Consagra, Jean Fautrier, Lucio Fontana, Addie Herder, Piero Manzoni, Conrad Marca-Relli, Manolo Millares, Mimmo Rotella, Angelo Savelli, Salvatore Scarpitta, Toti Scialoja, Antoni Tàpies, and Cy Twombly.

Nuvolo was born in the town of Città di Castello in northern Umbria; he moved to Rome in 1950 at the suggestion of Alberto Burri. After World War II, the artistic culture in Italy was characterized by a clash between the tradition of figuration and new modes of abstraction, and by a proliferation of artistic and theoretical movements incentivized by a young generation of artists and by a new international exchange of ideas. Through Burri, Nuvolo met artists who shared an interest in suppressing the use of the paintbrush and developing uses for unconventional materials toward a new type of process-driven abstraction.

Working within a two-dimensional, rectangular format typically associated with easel painting, Nuvolo introduced new techniques that relied on tension and textural variation, using a range of materials that include commonplace textiles as well as deerskin. In the late 1950s he began to produce his first improvisational works using a motorized sewing machine. These constructions, which are termed “*cuciti a macchina*”, consist of fragments of his own clothing or other dyed fabric, which were stretched over canvas or collaged into abstract compositions and occasionally enhanced with paint. Nuvolo’s “*daini*” series comprises segments of deerskin sewn together into loose grids. Nuvolo also used the sewing machine to create evocative drawings made of stitched thread on unprimed canvas—works that constitute his “*diagrammi*” series.



Nuvolo (Giorgio Ascani). *Untitled*. 1961. Dyed and sewn deerskin, 80.3 by 60.8 cm (31½ by 24 in.). Private collection

*Nuvolo and Post-War Materiality 1950–1965* will feature compelling examples from the *cuciti a macchina*, *daini*, and *diagrammi* series, which collectively demonstrate the high level of variation Nuvolo achieved using quotidian materials and direct processes. In exhibiting these works alongside works by European and American artists who also used unconventional techniques and materials, *Nuvolo and Post-War Materiality 1950–1965* will document Nuvolo's role in radically redefining traditional notions of painting and sculpture by exploiting the physical properties of raw materials using unmediated processes.

*Nuvolo and Post-War Materiality 1950–1965* brings together works of art from private collections as well as loans from museums and foundations such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello; the MAC-Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Lissone; and the Fondazione Toti Scialoja, Rome. The exhibition is accompanied by a book published by Skira editore, Milan in collaboration with Di Donna Galleries. The publication features an essay by Germano Celant as well as a thorough chronology of Nuvolo's artistic explorations, contextualized within the non-figurative trends of his contemporaries as they unfolded in Italy, Europe, and the United States. Supporting materials include historical documentation and texts by and about the artist, accompanied by a large selection of color illustrations featuring works by Nuvolo produced between 1952 and 1965.

Di Donna Galleries is also pleased to announce the gallery's exclusive representation of the Estate of Nuvolo, in close cooperation with the Associazione Archivio Nuvolo, which manages the artist's legacy from his birthplace of Città di Castello. Di Donna Galleries is currently preparing a *catalogue raisonné* of Nuvolo's entire *oeuvre*.

## About Nuvolo

Nuvolo (*né* Giorgio Ascani, 1926–2008) was an Italian painter and pioneer of screenprinting techniques. Born in Umbria to a family of printers, he participated in the Resistance in World War II, where he gained his nickname "Nuvolo", Italian for "cloud". Following the war, Nuvolo moved to Rome where, in Burri's studio, he began to develop his own artistic practice, under the influence of artists who shared his interest in a progressive departure from the use of the paintbrush toward an engagement with unconventional materials and techniques. In 1955, the poet Emilio Villa organized Nuvolo's first one-person gallery exhibition. His work was subsequently promoted by some of the most prominent gallerists in Italy, including Peggy Guggenheim, who acquired some of Nuvolo's works and bequeathed a selection of them to major U.S. museums. In 1979, Nuvolo became Chair of the Academy of Fine Arts of Perugia, a position he held until 1984. In 2015, Nuvolo's family established the Archivio Nuvolo to safeguard his legacy, and donated some important works to the Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello.



Nuvolo (Giorgio Ascani). *Composition*. 1957. Oil and fabric on canvas, 171.5 by 116 cm (67½ by 45¾ in.). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim. Photograph © 2017 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

## About Germano Celant

Germano Celant is a renowned art historian and theoretician, internationally acknowledged for his theories on *Arte Povera*. He is the author of over one hundred publications, including both books and exhibition catalogues. He is also a prolific curator of exhibitions in prominent museums and other institutions worldwide. Mr. Celant is the Artistic and Scientific Superintendent of Fondazione Prada; the Curator of Fondazione Aldo Rossi, Milan; and the Curator of the Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova, Venice. Most recently, he was Curator of the exhibition, *Arts & Foods: Rituals from 1851* in the Expo 2015 Art Pavilion at the Triennale, Milan; and Project Director of *The Floating Piers*, a major work by Christo and Jeanne-Claude at Lago d'Iseo, Italy. Celant is a regular contributor to international publications for art and culture, including *Artforum* (Contributing Editor, 1977–present); *Interview Magazine* (1991–present); the Italian weekly magazine *L'Espresso* (1999–present); and the Italian design magazine *Interni* (visual arts columnist, 1991–present). He has received numerous awards for his art criticism and curation, including the Agnes Gund Curatorial Award from Independent Curators International, New York in 2013.

## About Di Donna Galleries

Di Donna Galleries specializes in museum-quality exhibitions and sales of European and American art from 1900 to 1970, with an emphasis on Surrealism. The gallery also advises private and institutional clients in building distinguished collections; it has placed important works of art in both private collections and museums worldwide.

Founded in 2010 by Emmanuel Di Donna, formerly Vice Chairman of Sotheby's Impressionist & Modern Art Worldwide, Di Donna Galleries has organized monographic exhibitions of work by René Magritte, André Masson, and Andy Warhol, among others—in addition to ambitious group exhibitions such as *Fields of Dream: The Surrealist Landscape*, which featured over 70 works by various artists in a range of mediums. In 2016, Di Donna Galleries opened a new state-of-the-art, 6,500-square-foot space on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The gallery's inaugural exhibition, *Paths to the Absolute: Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian, Newman, Pollock, Rothko, and Still*, united 13 masterworks which exemplify two defining moments in the evolution of European and American abstract painting. Di Donna's most recent exhibition, *A Surrealist Banquet*, presented more than 50 works of art inspired by the sensual aspects of gastronomy as interpreted by the Surrealists and other 20<sup>th</sup>-century artists. The gallery also exhibits at Art Basel in Switzerland and Miami Beach and TEFAF New York. Di Donna Galleries is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA).

## Opening and Exhibition Dates:

Opening Reception

Thursday, October 26, 2017 from 6PM to 8PM

October 27, 2017 – January 26, 2018

Monday – Friday, 10AM to 6PM

Saturday, 12PM to 6PM on October 28, November 4 and 11, January 20

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