Dedicated to one of the most important Italian artists of the second half of the twentieth century, to a tireless experimenter in conceptual art, the exhibition *Vincenzo Agnetti. NEG: suonare* *le pause* is built around the rediscovery of a work that had long disappeared and is presented to the public for the first time ever on this occasion.

The NEG, designed and patented by Agnetti (Milan, 1926-1981) and then built in collaboration with the famous electronics company Brionvega in 1970, was used for the realization of a single work (*Vobulazione e Bieloquenza NEG*, 1970, in collaboration with Gianni Colombo), and was lost after the artist’s death. It wasn't until 2019 that the Archivio Vincenzo Agnetti, in collaboration with the Milan-based company Recipient.cc, rebuilt the NEG by faithfully adhering to the original patent and using period components.

In the words of the artist, the NEG is a "detector of pauses", "a pausometer", an instrument to make "music in the negative". Agnetti has, in fact, modified a stereophonic record player so that, in the absence of a sound signal, the machine would produce a white noise that would give prominence to silence, to the pauses in the music or speech. A conceptual operation but also strongly linked to a critical reflection on society, the NEG continued Agnetti's interest in the machine as an instrument for investigating the processes of alienation of the new technological civilization of the time, as had already occurred in the famous *Macchina drogata* (Drugged machine, 1968). More generally, the NEG is an important though little-known stage in Agnetti's reflection on the concept of "negative" that runs through much of his work, as also demonstrated by the artist's participation in the well-known exhibition *Vitalità del negativo*, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva (Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, November 1970 - January 1971).

Around the NEG the exhibition moves in two directions. On the one hand, it presents a selection of works that are chronologically and thematically close to the NEG (*Vobulazione…,* il *Brevetto/NEG*, gli *Assiomi*, il *Libro dimenticato a memoria*) and reconstructs the theoretical reflection that Agnetti elaborated around that work, through archival materials, some of which have never been seen before. On the other hand, the exhibition aims to bring the NEG and Agnetti's intuition into the contemporary context. To this end, some musicians from different backgrounds (avant-garde, electronic, improvisation, experimental rock) have been invited to compose pieces specifically created to be conceived and performed together with the sound-pause of the NEG. The music of Bellows (Giuseppe Ielasi & Nicola Ratti), Ricciarda Belgiojoso & Walter Prati, Gea Brown, Manuele Giannini & Alessandro Bocci (Starfuckers), Alessandra Novaga was recorded in audio by Attila Faravelli and in video by Matteo Frittelli (Alto Piano) in the spaces of Standards in Milan. Presented within the exhibition in Bologna, these performances give sound and image to a fifty-year-long pause that has finally been interrupted.