



BRUNO BOZZETTO BIOGRAPHY

Bruno Bozzetto was born in Milan on March 3, 1938. With over 65 years of career, he is regarded as one of the most influential and versatile figures in animation, both past and present. Entire generations have grown up with his characters and imaginative world, instantly recognizable for its essential, minimalist style that prioritizes content over form. His work is marked by sharp, often biting irony, offering a lucid yet visionary perspective on existence, everyday life, and the major questions of human life.

From an early age, he became interested in filmmaking, creating short films in various genres, with a particular focus on documentaries and the animal world, influenced by the writings of Desmond Morris and Konrad Lorenz. This early phase includes amateur 8 mm works such as *A Friendly Little World (Piccolo mondo amico)*, *The Clever Cats (I gatti che furbacchioni)*, and *Along the Grass (A filo d'erba)*, which already reveal a strong experimental curiosity.

His true revelation came with Ward Kimball's short *Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom*, which led him to devote himself entirely to animation. His path was also supported by a strong family influence: his father, Umberto, actively encouraged him, even building him a rudimentary animation stand.

His first professional short film, *Tapum! The Story of Weapons (Tapum! La storia delle armi, 1958)*, awarded at Cannes, marked the official beginning of his international career and led to early collaborations with key figures such as John Halas and Norman McLaren. From that moment on, a dense network of mutual respect developed with some of the greatest names in world animation, including members of Disney's Nine Old Men — such as Ward Kimball, Ollie Johnston, and Frank Thomas — as well as masters like Frédéric Back, Osamu Tezuka, and Yoji Kuri.

Throughout his career, he has created more than 300 works, including short films, feature films, commercials, television openings, and educational productions. His works explore universal themes — history, science, nature, human evolution, and social and psychological dynamics — always with an educational and informative intent, infused with a bitter irony and a clear-eyed pessimism that set him apart from animation aimed solely at children.

In the 1980s, he collaborated with journalist Piero Angela, producing around one hundred short animations for *Quark* and *Superquark*, making scientific communication more accessible and immediate.

Among his most important works are *West and Soda* (1965), the first animated spaghetti western, *Vip – My Brother Superhero (Vip – Mio fratello superuomo, 1968)*, and especially *Allegro non troppo* (1976), an international cult film often compared to — or contrasted in a parodic key with — Disney's *Fantasia*. This is followed by *At the Chinese Restaurant (Sotto il ristorante cinese, 1987)*, the short films *Grasshoppers (Cavallette, 1990)*, nominated for an Academy Award, and *Mr Tao* (1991), winner of the Golden Bear in Berlin, as well as numerous television productions for RAI and RTSI such as *Lilliput-put*, *Mr Hiccup*, and *Stripy*.

In parallel, the character of Signor Rossi was born — an icon of the “average Italian” and the protagonist of a long-running saga across cinema, television, and publishing. Around him developed three feature films, numerous short films, and a wide range of related works,

accompanied by the famous theme song *Viva la felicità* by Franco Godi. The character has remained highly popular over time, becoming an icon of Italian pop culture through reprints, publications, and editorial initiatives.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Bozzetto Film was structured with a highly skilled team, including Guido Manuli, Maurizio Nichetti, and Giuseppe Laganà. This period also saw intense advertising production, including the famous *Caroselli* and television openings that became part of Italy's collective memory, created for hugely popular shows hosted by Pippo Baudo and Mike Bongiorno.

Over his career, Bozzetto has received more than 150 international awards, including five Nastro d'Argento awards, the Winsor McCay Award, an honorary degree, numerous lifetime achievement awards, an Academy Award nomination, and the Golden Bear in Berlin. His influence is recognized worldwide and has inspired generations of filmmakers and animators.

His work has also been celebrated by major figures in contemporary animation: John Lasseter invited him to Pixar in 2012, while the Walt Disney Family Museum dedicated an exhibition to him, highlighting the conceptual dialogue between his work and Walt Disney's legacy.

Since 2000, he has continued to collaborate on new projects across cinema, television, and educational media, including *The Spaghetti Family*, *The Things*, *Psychovip*, and *Bruno the Great* for Disney Channel. At the same time, he has produced digital animated shorts such as *Europe vs Italy*, which went viral online.

He currently works with Studio Bozzetto & Co., founded by his son Andrea together with Pietro Pinetti, which continues the legacy of Bozzetto Film in advertising, television, and animation.

In publishing, he has collaborated with artist Gregory Panaccione on the graphic novels *Minivip and Supervip* and *the Mystery of the ViaVai* and *Toajêne*, while during the pandemic he created the *Doggy* series, dedicated to the relationship between humans and animals.

His life and work have also been portrayed in the documentary *Bozzetto non troppo* (2017) and in the autobiography *Il Signor Bozzetto. Una vita animata* (2024), both of which explore his artistic and personal journey.

His most recent work, *Sapiens?*, is a short film structured in three episodes that critically highlights the most destructive and contradictory behaviors of human beings. It addresses themes such as conflict and the relationship between humans, nature, and animals — a subject that is increasingly central to the artist's sensibility. Through his works and his daily sharp-witted cartoons, Bruno encourages a more attentive and respectful view of the animal world, reminding us that animals are sentient beings, often unable to defend themselves or make their voices heard.

Even today, Bruno Bozzetto continues to work with full creative freedom, developing new animated projects together with Studio Bozzetto such as *Sapiens?* and *Rossi Boomer*, and also taking part in film productions such as *The Story of Frank and Nina* (2024), in which he appears as an actor.