

Celebrating 50 Years of Arte Povera

Alexandra M. Fanelli (November 29, 2017)



For the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Arte Povera Movement Lévy Gorvy Gallery New York presents an exhibition on the visionary Ileana Sonnabend, gallerist, patron, and collector who championed the movement. Curated by renowned art historian Germano Celant, "Ileana Sonnabend and Arte Povera" is on view through December 23, 2017.

On November 2, the [Lévy Gorvy Gallery](#) [2] in New York opened Ileana Sonnabend and Arte Povera, an exhibition that highlights the significant role of gallerist [Ileana Sonnabend](#) [3] in the international reception of the movement.

The exhibition was curated by renowned art historian [Germano Celant](#) [4], who in 1967 coined the term "[arte povera](#) [5]"—poor art. This term refers to a group of Italian anti-establishment artists who, during the period of turmoil at the end of the 1960s, attacked the corporate mentality with unconventional materials and style. "Arte Povera was concerned with taking away, eliminating, and downgrading things to a minimum," said Mr. Celant.



Ileana Sonnabend: A Career Spanning Half a Century

The exhibition also explores the friendship between Celant and Sonnabend that grew out of their shared interest in Italian artists.

"The process of bringing together this project at Lévy Gorvy has been a personal journey," said Germano Celant. "My memories of Ileana and Michael Sonnabend go back to our first meeting at Venice Biennale in 1964. My friendship with them continued for decades, and our affection for each other was strengthened by professional exchanges. Ileana's contribution to Arte Povera artists was profound: she brought them into an international context. Today, this exhibition celebrates her work and shares this history, from 1962 to 2014."

A gallerist and noted collector, Ileana Sonnabend, whose first husband was the extraordinary art dealer [Leo Castelli](#) [6], continuously discovered and promoted progressive young new talents. In her New York and Paris galleries, she showed many of the most significant artists from both continents such as Rauschenberg, Acconci, Merz, Pistoletto etc. Sonnabend was instrumental in introducing American Pop Art and Minimalism to Europe and Italian Arte Povera to the United States through a series of influential exhibitions.

The exhibition includes works by Giovanni Anselmo, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, and Gilberto Zorio, most of whom were originally displayed at Sonnabend's New York or Paris galleries.

Lévy Gorvy
909 Madison Avenue
10021 New York
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