Columbia Celebrates Lazarsfeld’s 100th

An exhibition of Italian avant-garde art will be on view at Columbia’s Wallach Art Gallery from Oct. 3 to Dec. 8. The exhibition, “Arte Povera: Selections from the Sonnabend Collection,” will draw together major works by Giovanni Anselmo, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Janis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Mario Schifano and Gilbert Zorio, most of which have rarely been exhibited in the United States.

In 1968, a number of artists working in Italy produced one of the most authentic and independent artistic interventions in Europe. Grouped together under the term “Arte Povera” in 1967 by the critic Germano Celant in reference to the use of materials—natural and elemental—the artists delivered a powerful and timely critique of late modernism, specifically minimalism.

The exhibition at the Wallach Art Gallery seeks to explore the group’s unique contribution to postwar art, while re-evaluating Celant’s early categorization of the artists’ works. It emphasizes conceptual themes rather than material similarities, presenting a more inclusive approach. At the same time, it provides a unique opportunity to introduce U.S. audiences to key works, some of which have never been shown outside of Europe.

The works span a diversity of media ranging from Anselmo’s Direzione (Direction), 1967/69—a granite slab with a compass needle inserted—to Pistoletto’s Uomo seduto (Seated Man), 1962—63—a peculiar combination of photography, painting and collage in which a life-sized image of the artist, traced from a photograph onto thin translucent paper, is glued on an otherwise empty mirrored panel.

The exhibition is drawn from the rich holdings of the galleryist Hèléna Sonnabend. Sonnabend has long been recognized as one of the foremost collectors and promoters of American art from the 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s. Lesser-known is her devotion to an entirely different artistic phenomenon—the Italian neo-avant-garde—which is equally impressive. Striking in its comprehensiveness, the collection was assembled by Sonnabend and her husband, Michael.

Claire Gilman, a Ph.D. candidate in Columbia’s department of art history and archeology, curated the exhibition. In conjunction with the show, the Wallach Art Gallery will publish a fully illustrated catalogue.

A symposium and panel discussion on the subject will take place on Saturday, Nov. 3, from 1 to 5 p.m. Participants include Emily Braun, Benjamin Buchloh, Briony Fer, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Maria E. Vetrocq and Anthony White, along with Gilman.

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery is located in Schermerhorn Hall, 8th floor, at Broadway and 116th Street. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 1 to 5 p.m. (closed the week of Thanksgiving); admission is free. For more information, please call (212) 854-2877.

Lamont-Doherty Hosts Annual Open House Oct. 6

Columbia’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory is home to the most cutting-edge research about the Hudson River. This Saturday, the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory will showcase its latest Hudson River findings at its annual Open House, where the theme will be “Explore the Hudson, Explore the Earth.”

Free and open to the public, the Open House will take place on Saturday, October 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lamont-Doherty, Route 9W, Palisades, New York, at the NY-NJ state line, (Exit 4, Palisades Parkway).

The Open House will feature activities and lectures for both children and adults. Exhibits will include maps of the River’s depths, samples of glacial mud more than 6,000 years old, and stations at which children and their families can simulate their very own earthquakes. Lectures will explore such topics as “Mysteries from the River Bottom,” and “Trends in Contaminant Levels in the Hudson River.”

In recent years, the Columbia Earth Institute has been the primary research institution for the study of the Hudson River. Among the researchers at the Open House will be Robin Bell, the first scientist to map the Hudson since 1930; Peter Schlosser, whose gas tracer experiment has helped us know more about how contaminants move through the water; and Dorothy Peet, an expert on the history of the Hudson’s marshes, which protect the River’s young plants and animals as well as its shoreline.

For more information, please call (845) 365-8565 or go to http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/OH2001/.