

Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore
10th May – 28th July 2019

BURRI *la pittura, irriducibile presenza*

curated by Bruno Corà

The Fondazione Giorgio Cini presents a landmark survey show dedicated to Alberto Burri (1915-1995). This exhibition constitutes the final chapter of a series of international exhibitions and events staged to celebrate the avant-garde Italian artist over the course of the past year.

The exhibition is organised with the Fondazione Burri and in collaboration with Tornabuoni Art and Paola Sapone MCIA and in partnership with Intesa Sanpaolo.

Taking place at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, **between the 10th of May and 28th of July**, *BURRI la pittura, irriducibile presenza* constitutes the final chapter of a series of international exhibitions and events staged to celebrate the avant-garde Italian artist Alberto Burri (1915-1995) over the course of the past year.

Curated by **Bruno Corà**, the President of the Fondazione Alberto Burri, and organised with the **Fondazione Burri** and in collaboration with **Tornabuoni Art** and **Paola Sapone MCIA**, in partnership with **Intesa Sanpaolo**, the exhibition chronologically covers the many important facets of Burri's artistic output, and includes a number of masterpieces belonging to each phase of the artist's career – from the incredibly rare *Catrami* series, starting in 1948, to the final *Cellotex* works from 1994. The show presents **around 50 masterpieces** on loan from important museums in Italy and abroad, from the Fondazione Burri and from prestigious private collections. Significantly, the Fondazione Burri, in the artist's home town of Città di Castello, Umbria, is lending many major works from its collection for the first time, creating a fuller picture of the artist than has previously been seen. Together, these works span the entire length of Burri's career as one of the most important figures in the Post-War art of the 20th century. The show is also somewhat of a **homecoming for Burri**, whose work was last shown in Venice in 1983, when the former Cantieri



Navali on the island of Giudecca played host to 18 examples from Burri's cycle of works entitled *Sestante*, or 'Sextants'.

Viewers will have the privilege of **seeing a unique grouping of his most important works**, many of which **have never been seen before** - from the rare first series of works titled *Catrami* ('Tars', from 1948) and *Muffe* ('Moulds', from 1948), presented in conversation with his iconic *Sacchi* ('Sacks', from 1949-50) and the *Gobbi* ('Hunchbacks', from 1950), all the way through to the seductive *Combustioni* ('Combustions', from the 1960s), the *Legni* ('Woods', from 1955), the *Ferri* ('Irons' from 1958), the contorted *Plastiche* ('Plastics', from the 1960s) and the extraordinary evolution of the *Cretti* ('Cracks', from the 1970s), which, with the *Sacchi* and *Plastiche*, became perhaps one of his most recognisable series of works, and ending with the large-scale and colourful *Cellotex* works, which he made up until the mid 1990s. This show proposes a holistic and meaningful analysis of the way in which this pioneer of contemporary art of the second half of the 20th century tackled the central theme that underlies his entire oeuvre: **the transformative use of materials, or 'matter', into art.**

"Just over a quarter of a century following his death, in 1995, this show will shine a light on the radical transformation that Burri brought to the art of the 20th century," says Bruno Corà, curator of the show and President of the Fondazione Burri, who continues: *"The revolution Burri brought to art by engaging with a systematic presentation of material as the subject matter itself, rather than using it as a tool for representation, is arguably as important as when Giotto abandoned the stylised gold skies of Mediaeval art and began to paint it blue, just as it appeared in nature. What brings these two innovators together is the introduction of something 'real' in lieu of imitation. The absolute shock of Burri's work in the years that followed WWII can be measured in terms of the quantity of art and artists that he clearly influenced, from the New Dada of Rauschenberg, Johns e Dine, to the Nouveau Réalisme of Klein and Rotella, the Arte Povera of Pistoletto, Kounellis, Pascali and Calzolari, as well as process-based art and monochromatic neo-minimalism."*

Highlights of the show at the Fondazione Cini include some large *Sacchi* works from 1952, each one around 2.5m wide, which Rauschenberg is known to have seen in Burri's studio in 1953, while he was preparing for his own show, titled 'Boxes and Fetishes', at the Galleria dell'Obelisco, in Rome. Rauschenberg's visit to Burri's studio had such a profound effect on him that it changed the way he made art, and in 1954 he began his famous *Combine Paintings*, which show obvious influences taken from Burri's own work. The show also includes a cycle of very important *Plastiche* and *Cretti* works, as well as a monumental *Cellotex* from 1979, measuring almost 3m x 4m.

The work of Alberto Burri has received increasing international attention in the past years, consecrating him as one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. In



2015, the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York** presented a survey show which then travelled to the **Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen K21 Ständehaus in Düsseldorf**, while the Fondazione Burri itself hosted a major exhibition in Città di Castello (in the province of Perugia).

This exhibition is complemented by a **multimedia archive**, including never-before-seen film footage of the artist at work. A **bilingual catalogue** (Italian-English) with **introductions** by the curator **Bruno Corà**, President of the Fondazione Burri, and **Luca Massimo Barbero**, Director of the Institute of Art History at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, proves to be a useful tool in the study of Burri's work and will also include an updated bibliography. The exhibition has been designed by the architect Tiziano Sarteanesi.

Intesa Sanpaolo, as part of its Culture Project, a three year plan of cultural initiatives, is supporting this exhibition both as a sponsor and as a lender of two works from its collection. These important pieces by Burri are *Sabbia* (1952) and *Rosso nero* (1953), and form part of the bank's collecting programme 'Works from the 1900s', a collection dedicated to promoting 20th- and 21st-century art and installed in the Bank's museum in Milan, the Gallerie d'Italia. It is particularly relevant for Intesa Sanpaolo to show these works in this exhibition, during the Venice Biennale, which provides an occasion to highlight their importance and value to the wider world of art.

Exhibition organised with:



In collaboration with:

tornabuoniArt

Paola Sapone MCIA

In partnership with:



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