

ALBERTO BURRI
2nd October – 30th November, 2015



Alberto Burri, *Sacco e rosso*, 1956, burlap and canvas, 100 x 86 cm
Courtesy Mazzoleni London

Mazzoleni London is pleased to announce its forthcoming landmark exhibition of works by Alberto Burri, from 2nd October – 30th November, 2015. Burri was an undisputed master of twentieth-century art; his oeuvre brought a new language to Post-War art and his use of unconventional materials created a new aesthetic that paved the way for many younger artists.

The exhibition demonstrates the gallery's continuing commitment to a programme of exhibitions on Post-War Italian artists and coincides with a major retrospective of Burri's work at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York during the celebration of the centenary of the artist's birth.

This extensive solo exhibition at Mazzoleni London brings together works from several important stages in the artist's life, many of them from private collections and rarely shown publicly. The majority of the works exhibited come from the Mazzoleni family's personal collection - a prominent collection of works built up over several decades. The gallery has previously held two solo exhibitions of Burri's work at its Turin space in 2003 and 2011.

The exhibition in London is a rare opportunity to view approximately 30 works from across this pioneering artist's practice. Early tactile collages in unconventional materials such as pumice, black tar and burlap, including *Nero Catrame* (1951), *Sacco e Rosso* (1956) and *Sacco Bianco e Nero* (1956) transform the traditional definition of painting by employing a new language and giving life to hitherto unheard-of expressive results.

Also on display are Burri's *Combustioni* burnt wood, paper and plastic works, including *Nero Rosso Combustione* (1964) and *Bianco CN4* (1966), a rare humpbacked piece *Gobbo* (1968) and pieces created from welded iron sheets. Later works, such as Burri's cracked paintings *Nero Cretto* (1970) – influenced by the view of the desert from his prison camp window in Texas – and his *Cellotex* works, including *AN2 Nero* (1979) bear witness to the artist's evolving dedication to invention.

Luigi Mazzoleni explains: *'Using a host of everyday materials Burri exposed the potential of matter; translating it into collage, protrusions, lacerations, stitching and burns, his creations become endowed with a tragic quality.'*

An illustrated colour catalogue in English and Italian will be published especially for this exhibition. It includes an important essay written in 1963 by Cesare Brandi (1906-1988), photographs by Aurelio Amendola and an introduction by Vittorio Brandi Rubiu, who has curated many exhibitions of Post-War art. His main publications include: contributions to Burri's Catalogue raisonné (appendix to the monograph of Brandi, Editalia, 1963), Alberto Burri (Einaudi, 1975) and Pascali (De Luca, 1976).

Alberto Burri was born in Città di Castello, Perugia, on 12th March, 1915. He graduated in medicine in 1940. As medical officer, he was taken prisoner by the Allies in Tunisia in 1943 and was sent to a camp in Hereford, Texas, where he began to paint. Having returned to Italy in 1946, he settled in Rome and dedicated himself to painting. In 1947 and 1948, he held his first solo exhibitions in Rome at the Galleria La Margherita. From 1950 onwards, his *Sacchi* became increasingly important, dominating many of his solo exhibitions in various American and European cities. In the Sixties and Seventies a succession of solo and group exhibitions took place in some of the most prestigious museums of the world, including at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, the Tate in London and the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris. The Seventies saw a progressive refinement in his technical methods, with his shift towards monumentality, from *Cretti* (soil and Vinavil glue) to *Cellotex* (compressed for industrial use). In 1978, as homage to his hometown Città di Castello, Burri created the Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini – Collezione Burri, which aims to promote, protect and most importantly exhibit his work. In 1989, the Foundation acquired the former Ex Seccatoi del Tabacco (Old Tobacco Warehouses), a complex of industrial buildings which until the Sixties served to dry tobacco. These colossal structures have become an ideal location to display for important series of paintings and large-scale sculptures. Burri died in Nice on 13th February, 1995.

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Gallery opening hours: Monday-Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday 11am – 2:30pm or by appointment

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