



Alberto Burri'nin Çalışmalarında Biçim İçerik İlişkisi

The Relationship Between Form and Content in Alberto Burri's Works

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ÖZ

1940'ların sonlarında İtalya'da kendini gösteren figüratif, soyut ve soyutlama, sanatsal bakış açılarında, anikonik (tasvirsiz) ifade dilini kullanmıştır. 1945 sonrası sanat hareketlerinde yaşanan dinamizm, sanatçı özelliğini ortaya çıkararak malzeme olanaklarının zenginleşmesine ve atık nesnelerin ifade aracı olarak kullanılmasıyla biçim içerik ilişkisinin zenginleşmesini sağlamıştır. Postmodern anlatım dilini kullanan İtalyan sanatçı Alberto Burri, seçtiği malzemelerle biçim içerik anlamında yenilikçi teknikler geliştirir. Bu çalışma ile Burri'nin çalışmalarında biçim içerik ilişkisinin açıklanması amaçlanmaktadır. Kolaj kavramsallaştırarak Batı resim geleneğinin gelişmesine katkıda bulunan Burri, günlük malzemeleri manipüle etmeye yönelik farklı yaklaşımları ve montajları ile yakın tarihin travmasını; II. Dünya savaşı sonrasındaki harap durumu, hasarı, onarımı ve durum karşısındaki savunmasızlığı alımlayıcılara hissettirerek onların konsantrasyonlarını biçimlerin ruhuna sakladığı içeriklerle baş başa bırakarak onları iç hesaplaşmaya yöneltir. Burri, malzemeleriyle insanın varoluş dünyasına pencere açar; insanın derinliklerine inerek dramları, yaraları, mutsuzlukları gösterirken mutluluğun yeniden oluşacağını mesajını verir. Çalışmalarında, sanat kavramını sorgular ve doğayı taklit eden kurgusal anlayışıyla, sanatsal pratiğini hayatla ilişkilendirir ve sanatıyla hayatın gerçekliğini ortaya koyar.

Anahtar kelimeler

Alberto Burri, biçim, içerik, malzeme.

ABSTRACT

Figurative, abstract, and abstraction, which manifested itself in Italy in the late 1940s, has used the aniconic (non-depictive) language of expression in artistic perspectives. The dynamism experienced in the art movements after 1945 enabled the enrichment of material possibilities by revealing the artistic subjectivity and the enrichment of the relationship between form and content by using waste objects as a means of expression. Using the postmodern language of expression, Italian artist Alberto Burri developed innovative techniques in terms of form and content with the materials he chooses. This study aims to explain the relationship between form and content in Burri's work. Contributing to the development of the Western painting tradition by conceptualizing collage, Burri deals with the trauma of recent history with his different approaches and montages to manipulate everyday materials; II. By making the receivers feel the devastated situation, damage, repair and vulnerability to the situation after the World War II, it leaves their concentration alone with the contents that they have hidden in the spirit of the forms and directs them to internal reckoning. Burri opens a window into the world of human existence with his materials; while showing the tragedies, wounds, and unhappiness of people by going into the depths of the human, he also gives the message that happiness will reemerge. In his works, with his fictional understanding imitating nature, he questions the concept of art, relates his artistic practice to life, and reveals the reality of life with his art.

Keywords

Alberto Burri, form, content, material.

INTRODUCTION

Alberto Burri is a world-renowned Italian artist. His recognition by art circles coincides with the second half of the 20th century, that is, the beginning of postmodern art. Alberto Burri was born in Città di Castello, Italy, in 1915. He received his medical diploma from Università degli Studi di Perugia in 1940. He served as a medical doctor in World War II, and when his unit surrendered in 1943, he was taken to Texas in 1944. He started painting in the prisoner of war camp. By using the limited materials available in the camp, he produced works in a figurative style that reflected the chaos and violence he had experienced. In February 1946, Burri was sent back to Italy and he started working in his studio in Rome.

The artist, who improved and reinforced his artistic expression skill in the period of rich art movements in the postmodern era, added diversity to his works, without refusing traditional art approaches, with materials that would ascribe deep meaning to them through his experiences he had gained from his medical education, military years, and the captivity he suffered. In the postmodern era, when the principle of imitation in representation was questioned, daily materials changed the expression of art. This period is a period when change, transformation, and interaction in art, artist, and the recipient of art were technologically influential. However, in the 1950s, some artists preferred to maintain their bond with the tradition by combining innovation efforts with protest and anger. Such confrontation of classical art and modern, or contemporary art is traditional. As a result of wars, victories, and defeats that caused the world to change, methods that characterized the spirit of the period for artists were developed. While these changes in history revealed new creative thought in art, the Italian artists, far from the aesthetic debates in the temporary and unstable world, are seen to have a desire to reflect the complexity and emotion of the human spirit in their works. Artists such as Morandi, Fontana, Burri, Dorazio, Tancredi, and Vedova produced works that emphasized their relationship with spirituality. The artists freed themselves from the limitation of realistic representation, and supported the expressive richness of spiritual instincts with materials that would create different language skills. In this period, artists such as Fontana, Burri, and Manzoni did some experimental works and objected to all kinds of aesthetic and traditional attitudes. While the effects of futurism were going on, the artists approached the richness of mechanical structures from different perspectives in order to save Italian art from its past cult.

The works produced by Alberto Burri in 1950 are among the iconic works of Italian art. The strength of his material is the component of his content. To him, the material is an entity, and it is used in such a way that it does not allow it to be transformed into a different form of expression. The use of worn-out, shattered, and waste material metaphorically refers to the concept of *consumption*. While synthesizing the relationship between material and form, Burri gets the viewer to think about the previous usage forms of the materials. The surface consisting of the painful cuts, scars, and burns of life is reminiscent of the traditional formal understanding. The artist lets the content of his works be interpreted in different ways and be evaluated aesthetically, and since he has created the form in line with the essence of the material, he handles his works in organic integrity; thus, the connection between the physical properties of the material and the structure of composition scheme is well established.

Although his works are mainly two dimensional, by creating burrows or bulges on the surface, he enhances the spirituality of the painting and creates a space unique to him for the

relationship between the art viewer and depth in the context of proximity-distance. Forms with geometrical obliques are reflected onto the viewer as an intuitive expression of experience. The form Burri has created with his materials is handled with an understanding in which reality is simulated, rather than the plastic forms of representation or the avant-garde. Thus, artistic production in a sense becomes a process that questions the material, and the form causes the content of the works to be felt through aesthetic realization and creative effort.

In the first stage of this study, the samples from Burri's series of *Catrami*, *Gobbo*, *Muffe*, *Ferri*, *Combustioni Plastiche* will be analyzed under the title of *Burri: Life, Art Environment and Works*, and in the second stage, a detailed analysis will specifically be performed under the title of *The Relationship Between Form and Content in Alberto Burri's Composizione*.

BURRI: LIFE, ART ENVIROMENT AND WORK

After the war, there were many artist communities in Rome in 1946. This period led to the emergence of art communities such as Futurism, Tactilism, and Multimaterial art and also paved the way for abstract and collage practices. During the Mussolini regime, the fascist artists produced works in the avant-garde style. During his visit to Paris in 1948, Burri saw Joan Miró's tarred paper collages and the figurative paintings which Jean Dubuffet produced on tarred backgrounds. Upon his return to Rome, he started trying pitch and black tar in his works. By mixing heated oil paint, acrylic, vinyl, Polyvinyl acetate (PVA) glue, shellac, tar, and ground pumice stone, he produced his works in *Catrami* series. Burri used materials such as pitch and tar in different intensities and shiny and opaque forms. In this series, in contrast to the smooth monochromes of other modernist artists, he created rough surfaces. He created the tension between chaos and control by forming geometrical shapes in thick layers of tar. These forms are a synthesis of Cubism and Surrealism movements. In this series, while investigating the depths of black and how black in life has emerged by using different materials and methods, Burri enabled all nuances of the color that give a feeling of total absence and are not noticeable in the black to be visible.

Figure 1. Alberto Burri, *Catrame 1 (Tar 1)*, Tar, oil and tar on canvas, 53 x 46 cm, Palazzo Albizzini, Citta` di Castello, 1949. (Origin: <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Catrame-I/186FCE4AB9F3FA40>)



Burri, who developed different working methods with different materials in order to obtain a variety of textures and embossing on the surface, in his series titled *Gobbo* -Hunchback-, obtained different bulges on the surface by squeezing tree branches, tin cans, and curved metal bars behind the canvas. In this way, he gave a dimension to the painting plane and pushed it towards the space of the viewer. The artist overturns the Renaissance perspective that the Cubists are trying to disrupt. The perspective now enables the work to expand in the space of the viewer, not as an expansion towards the depths of the space in order to represent a part of the reality in the painting. The hunches that the artist created on the surface can be associated with his research paper in medical school on rachitis and kyphosis -bending of the spinal cord- diseases that cause bone deformation. Burri, who produced dark and mysterious holes in the center and-or close to the center of his paintings along with the bulges and dents, used stained, wrinkled, and burnt rags and bandages in different parts of his paintings. On the surface of his works, he created mucus that reminded body fluid, bubbles that imitated the edges of healing wounds, and images that looked like tissues and thin membranes. It can be said that this series which makes disturbing references to the human body makes allusions to the feminist discourses in the 1960s.

Figure 2. *Alberto Burri, Rosso gobbo (Red Hunchback), Acrylic, fabric, Vinavil, and combustion on black fabric; Vinavil can on verso, 86 x 100 cm, Courtesy Galleria Tega, Milan, 1955. (Origin:<http://federicobartoliniartolico.blogspot.com/2016/12/alberto-burri-la-verita-della-materia.html>)*



Figure 3. Alberto Burri, *Rosso gobbo (Red Hunchback)*, Acrylic, fabric, Vinavil, and combustion on black fabric; Vinavil can on verso, 86 x 100 cm. Courtesy Galleria Tega, Milan (Back view)1955. (Origin:<http://exhibitions.guggenheim.org/burri/art/hunchbacks/rosso-gobbo-1955>)



The *Muffe* -Mold¹ series of the artist is named after its appearance. Colored layers of soil that look like mold, bacteria, or feces are displayed on the surface. Burri obtained the look of mold by mixing ground pumice stone with paint and synthetic resins, and in addition, he created a transparent and shiny surface with Polyvinyl acetate, which is a synthetic resin. Burri was influenced by the way the traditional Western art used white and used the white pigment in his works with plaster and material used under the frescoes or Gesso used for preparing canvasses. By using texture and coating in order to obtain opaque, semitransparent, shiny, and dim passages, Burri creates variations in our perception of the white.

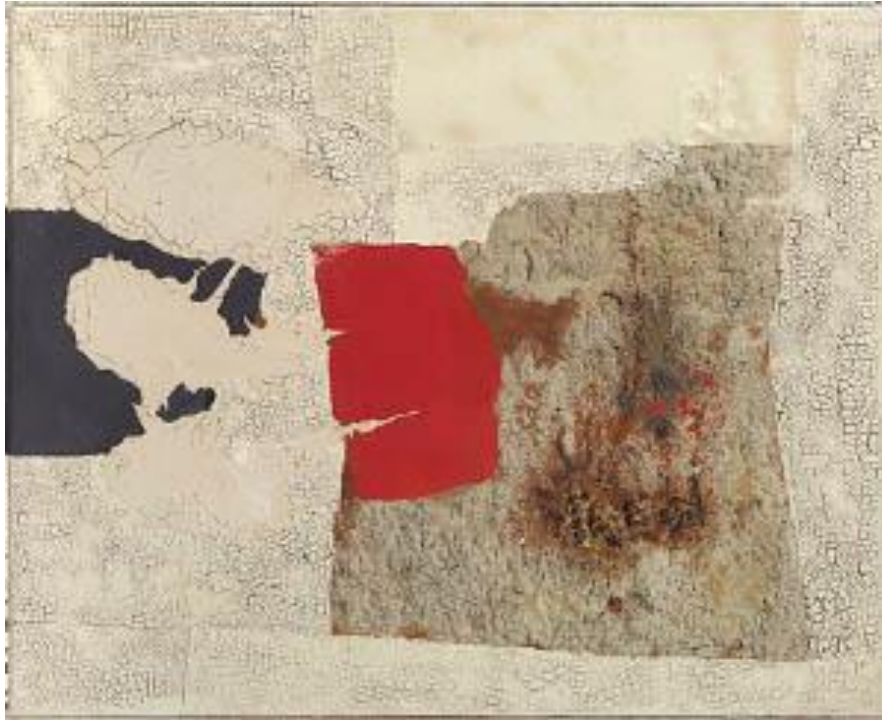
In his works in which he produced characteristic textual effects by burning Celotex, the artist created cracks in the paint by manipulating pigments and bonders -especially zinc white and the chemical properties of PVA-. Forming a surface in this way represents the moment of change between the painting and the material, and fiction and reality in *Muffa* series. The appearances with relief effect formed on the surface evoke the topographic maps or barren scenery of Texas where he was kept as a prisoner for a while. Although he had the opportunity to paint with the psychology of imprisonment in that period, the effects of being kept a prisoner left on him are not known. This uncertainty emerges in the traces and textures in his paintings.

The life in the world that is left from the ongoing destructive process is doomed to cancel all forms of existence and to explode; the barren and scorched environment that the work represents ends with a story which refers to the existence of leftover entities (Nocchi, 2014, p.114).

These forms express the depressive process that the artist went through along with his soul being crushed and turns the situations that he internalized by associating the feeling of breathing, using free will, or struggling for survival with being scorched and drought into a cry, both in terms of form and expression.

¹ Mold is a general term for fungal spore that develops in damp conditions.

Figure 4. *Muffa (Mold)*, Oil, PVA, pumice, sand, and paper on Celotex, 74 x 60 cm. Private collection, London, 1952. (Origin: <https://www.amicimuseicastelfranco.it/event/conferenza-oltre-la-superficie-burri-fontana/>)



The artist, who used construction industry materials required for the rebuilding of Italy in the postwar period in the 1950s, redesigned the sack clothes with wood coating, sheet metal plate, plastic coating, and isolation materials. *Ferri 1958-61 -Iron-* series is a collage made up of cold-rolled² steel, cloth, junk, and found objects. In this series, "Waste materials are recycled and given life directly in the painting." (Brandi, as cited by Sola, 2017, p.21). By cutting the plates as three-dimensional engravings and turning them into abstract geometrical shapes, and combining these pieces with nails, he created a canvas painting as industrial monochrome shapes. The clothes in this series were used to support the gaps formed, as in *Sacchi*. He used the scars he employed in other series in this series as well. He enhanced the graphic effect of the work with the factory signs and writings on the metal. By repeating the stitching technique he used in *Sacchi* -welded beads-, instead of the feminine concept of *stitching* in the *Sacchi* series, Burri uses the masculine concept of *welding machine*, and the needle is replaced by the welding machine. He sometimes eliminates the oxidation waves in blue, violet, brown, and yellow he has created by changing the heat of the welding machine and sometimes reinforces their effects in his works. He places a curved and pointed protrusion between the planes cut by heat and oxidation. These protrusions represent the evil in compositions that have a reassuring smoothness. The works of this period are threatening and point to a potential danger because of the gaps that emphasize the sharp corners of the metal plates. Now, it is time to heal the wounds and face the past. With a sensitivity that questions compassion and pain, and mercilessness and resistance, he puts forth the responsibility of a surgeon.

² Rolled steel is the metal sheet that is formed when metal is heated under its crystallization temperature and passed through one or more cylinders in order to reduce its thickness.

Figure 5. *Ferro SP (Iron SP)*, Welded iron sheet metal, oil, and tacks on wood framework, 130 x 200 cm. Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna e contemporanea, Rome, 1961. (Origin: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/alberto-burri-ferro-sp-iron-sp>)



When the restructuring period ended in Italy in the 1960s, the country experienced an economic boom. Petrochemical facilities and refineries were set up in North Italy. Daily products such as plastics, Tupperware, packages, and artificial leather started to be produced in factories. In his *Combustioni plastica* series, Burri experimented with plastic materials and preferred to use oxyacetylene torch instead of the brush as an artistic tool, and instead of canvas, he used plastic, which is durable but fragile at the same time. The artist, who produced his red and transparent works from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and black works from polyethylene (PE), used some auxiliary materials such as Celotex, acrylic, cloth, thread, vinavil (PVA) in these works.

By shrinking the plastic with the heat of the oxyacetylene torch, he added movement to it and created lines on the surface with the resulting fume. By piercing and manipulating the melted material with the help of a paintbrush or stick, he created the war metaphor that alludes to alchemy with scar images and images that have a similar look to body texture. He created a sense of depth by filling in some holes and canals with acrylic paint, and during the burning process of the material, he obtained crystallized effects by using threads in different colors and properties.

Burri, controlling the material by using techniques specific to the material, adds a different component to the composition process by using fire in this series. This is because burning acts on the material according to physical principles that cannot be completely controlled. This series radicalizes the importance of action and causes us to perceive the content in secondary importance. He forms darkened and waving textures on the surface which reveals how the material surrenders to the destructive power of fire; he achieves to turn a destructive force *fire* into creative art. Burri's understanding of beauty is the reappearance of things that are industrially produced and thrown away after consumption as a work of art. His way of exhibiting the works points to a postmodern understanding of art, and he makes the recipient look through transparent plastic or holes, thus makes him-her perceive the world via burnt

materials. Actually, what he shows with industrial materials is the blood that clogged in fragmented bodies and deep wounds opened.

Figure 6. *Rosso plastica (Red Plastic), Plastic (PVC), acrylic, and combustion on plastic (PE) and black fabric, 142 x 153 cm. Modern Art Foundation, 1961.*(Origin: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/alberto-burri-rosso-plastica-red-plastic>)



514

Burri's images have a tactile aspect, and for this reason, he maintains his relationship with existential reality. The powerful effect of the work results from the activation of the tactile sense. Burri brings together the object and the vision on a single spatial plane on the same surface. Therefore, it basically stays as the material on the surface; however, it moves from low value to higher value and then to meaning degree. The common denominator of the materials is that they are living materials and that they are thrown aside with their history and past. The artist has directed the interest of the viewer to the past of the materials which wears them out and makes them more resistant to events. In other words, he establishes a special bond with the objects that have become a part of the individuals. Therefore, the resulting works are emotional reactions that reflect realities along with the aesthetic presentation. In terms of content, he puts forth that time does not pass by, and that it cannot be saved from the heavy wear and tear of life.

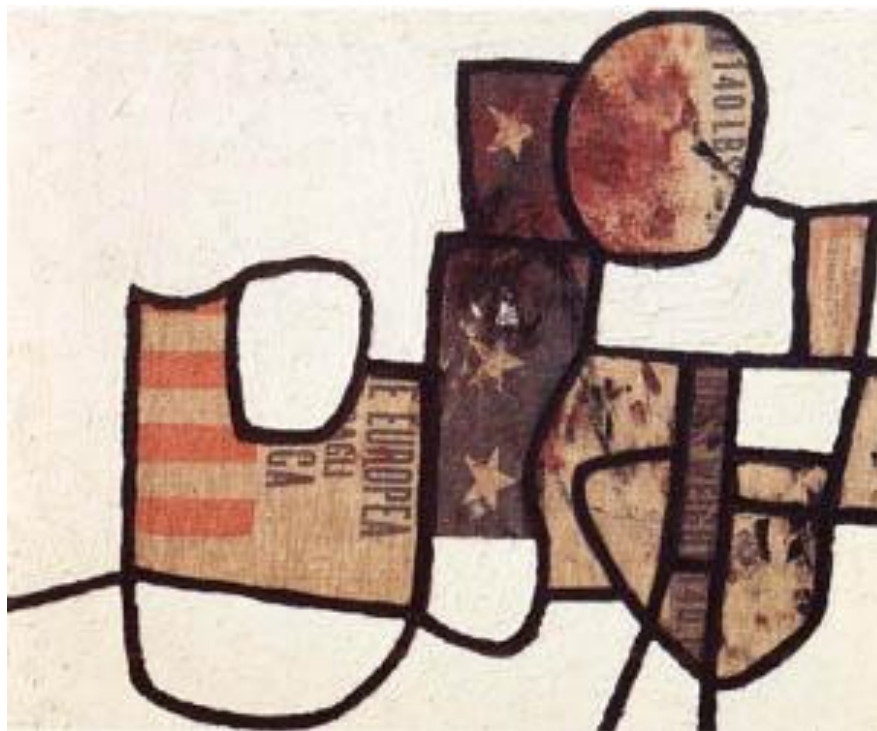
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORM AND CONTENT IN ALBERTO BURRI'S COMPOSIZIONE

While the traditional idealist view of art was prevailing in Europe in the 1950s, debates were continuing among artists in Italy about *representative art* and *abstract art*. In this period, many artists were divided among themselves according to their political views and ideological beliefs. In such an atmosphere, Burri did not join art movements based on politics and ideology, and he was not among the artists who fought against-defended the fascist regime, but he used non-political real materials at a critical threshold. The artist's understanding of

form, content, and the material does not fit in any art category in this period. Hence, Burri's works were firstly categorized in the Surrealism movement, and later in the Existentialism movement.

In Burri's works, there is an expression related to pain. He took part in the intervention and representation of disasters -wars and geological disasters- experienced in his society. "In the post-war period, the artist left the emotional and existentialist content and developed a new material reality. He redefined the blurry boundaries between painting, sculpture, and engraving" (Akçay, 2016, p.194). In *Sacchi* -Sack- series, Burri explored the possibilities of expression of form and materials, and the new techniques he obtained paved the way for his future works. He started to use the patching and stitching process, which he tried in some of his works, more comprehensively in SZ1 in 1949. He makes this new style he developed in SZ1 works more dominant in his *Sacchi* series in 1950. As the artist moved away from the traditional understanding of painting by recycling waste materials and bringing them into the *sacred* space of traditional painting, his style is criticized in Italy.

Figure 7. Alberto Burri, *SZ1*, oil and burlap, 48 × 58 cm. Palazzo Albizzini, Citta` di Castello, 1949. (Origin: <http://federicobartoliniartolico.blogspot.com/2016/12/alberto-burri-la-verita-della-materia.html>)



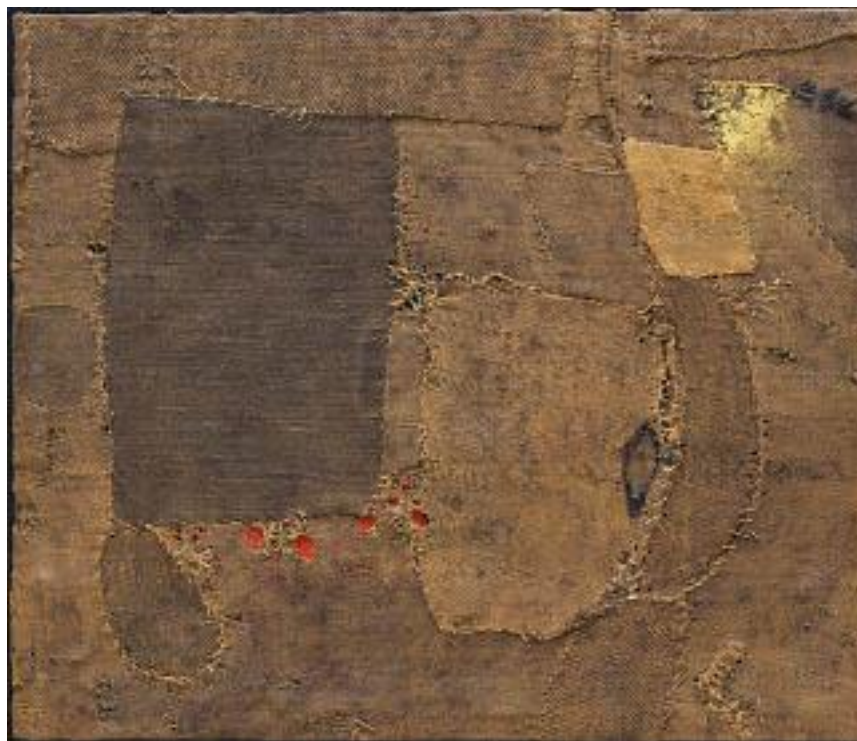
He produced Sacco³ from his *Sacchi* series, which is the artist's most renowned work that made him famous, from sackcloth installed on a stretcher in 1950. The sackcloth was used during World War II as supply sacks, sand bags, and camouflage. During his stay in the war prisoners' camp in Texas (1943-46), the artist painted figurative paintings on gun bags and empty sacks in the mess hall. Therefore, his images "(...) are a part of being born in painting,

³ Sackcloth is produced from jute, linen, or hemp that are rougher than thin linen thread used for the canvas of artists. Sackcloth is produced for industrial purposes as mainly food and grains bag.

being saved from the war experience which resulted in collective disaster, and his search for transformation" (Panzera, 2007, p.79). After returning to Italy, Burri utilized the sacks used for carrying the food supplies within the scope of the America (US) Marshall Plan -to provide relief to Italy 1948-53-. These sacks also refer to the historical context of postwar Italy as a poor country dependent on the United States of America (USA). Besides, although the sacks he used were interpreted as a criticism of American imperialism, they can also be defined as the witnesses to economic need and recovery.

The artist makes the viewer feel that he is an important part of the society in which he lives by collecting used sacks from the millers in his city and adding his own pieces in addition to the stitches on them, thus revealing his social realist aspect. Many of the stitches on the sacks are original, and they have patches and repairs that strengthen the weak points. The artist meaningfully complemented these characteristics that were already present in the nature of the material on the surface of the work. In his works, Burri diversifies the ways the stitch is used, and presents his works with straight combining and sometimes with the protruding stitch -the inner side of the sack-. The versatile artist first learned how to sew from his mother -a primary school teacher using the Montessori method-, and later he learned the surgical stitching technique during his surgical training. In this regard, most of the stitches in Sacchi show a similarity to the techniques used in skin grafting.

Figure 8. Alberto Burri, *Composizione (Composition)*, Burlap, thread, synthetic polymer paint, gold leaf, and PVA on black fabric, 86 x 100.4 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1953. (Origin: <http://federicobartoliniartolico.blogspot.com/2016/12/alberto-burri-la-verita-della-materia.html>)



Composizione -Composition- is one of his works from the 1953 Sacchi series. The references to the war that ended recently are clearly seen on the surface of the canvas. Burri uses *violence* in his work as a means for humanity to accept their irresponsible actions and to remind them of

that. In this work, the unpainted sackcloth functions as the background. In Burri's work, "Sacks carry their own meaning, and they do not need to be enriched with any other meaning attributed to them" (De Santis and Marotta, 2011, p.101). The sack as an object becomes the expressive element of the work without changing its original form a lot. While creating the formal expression with lines, shades of colors, warp threads of the cloth, stain, patch, and stitches, he makes use of original stitches to create vertical and perpendicular parts on the plane of the work. He uses new techniques specific to the material -cloth, paint, PVA, and sand- to obtain unusual color and texture effects.

The fact that the material in this work is real and natural shifts the emphasis from the traditional idealist aesthetics to the essence of experienced reality. The order and symmetry in *Composizione* similar to the traditional understanding are expressed through implication, while the feeling of space and depth provided with dark-light tones constitutes a similarity to the traditional understanding. Unlike traditional art, this situation is provided not as an illusion but physically, because the material points to not the hidden reality but itself only. By combining the appearance of the material according to the emotional dynamics of colors, he establishes connections that carry a meaning with the other elements in the painting within themselves.

The scenery that represents life on the Earth in *Composizione* is obtained through a surface organization that ensures the material look like human flesh. At the depths of the surface, life and body are presented. The work gives a feeling of a live body, and provides a sensory-sensual experience. The stitched areas in *Composizione* makes one feel the bleeding wounds. The artist obtains a skin-like texture on the surface, which is reminiscent of healing scratches and scars, with the help of PVA glue. The cadmium red he used in the work is the essential component of the painting. Burri supports the gap seen through the holes in the form with red clay paint. In Renaissance panel painting, the same red clay is used as preparation under the gold leaf surface. Burri strategically places the gold leaf component in his works in which he used red clay paint. While *red* is seen as a large color block in some compositions, in this painting it is seen smaller but in a more effective way. The contrast, which determines the inner rhythm and reflects other interventions and which he created with the color of the sack, is one of the elements that became a part of the artist's painting narrative.

The original flaws on the material -ruptures and patches- become the formal elements of the composition. The material which the artist chooses in the process of creating the work undergoes many changes in the process.

His main approach supports his reprocessing ability of indistinct cultural-figurative sub-later, which is defined in certain forms but appears with a new formulation as a result of displacement. What Burri shows each time is a unique figure imbued in history, a rupture in the flesh of the world and art (Modorati, 2007, p.246).

The problem in Burri's work is the relationship of the surface with the figure. The surface is where he expresses the form, but also where he questions and attacks it. The existence of the form evokes-rejects the surface, that is, it becomes the tool of paradoxical view. On the surface presented in a contradictory way, inspiring-motionless and existence-nihilism are perceived together.

Burri believes that thought and materials should be continuously experimented, and the experimentation of the new should be made with a poor Franciscan way, and thus the content in the form can be a symbol of passage beyond contemplation in a paradoxical and powerful inseparability (Mazzeo, 2019, p.10).

Sackcloth, which Burri used, has been used in Italian art for centuries, and it is also a part of the Christian culture. The most renowned saint of Christians, Franciscan (1182–1226), was born in Burri's hometown of Umbria as the child of a rich cloth merchant, and he renounced worldly possessions by imitating the suffering of the Messiah. In paintings, Saint Franciscan is depicted in his patched and worn-out robe, and these are described as scars. This stigmata iconography turns into small red holes and patches in *Composizione*. The *thread* used in stitching creates shadows on the surface since it appears on the surface of the sack, and in this way, a three-dimensional view is obtained in the work. While the stitches help create a physical tension on the surface of the work, tight stitches add richness to the grid lines of the weave of the cloth as well as bending the time, and thus, a difference in elevation on the surface is created. These changing physical planes increase the feeling of depth.

The worn and torn material reveals the call for a resurrection that appeared with Italian Futurism as the reminder of anger, embarrassment, power, hope, fragility, and reputation. In *Composizione*, the stitches that are supposed to cover the wound become the proof showing the freshness of the wound. He places the stitches in the context of the wound, thus emphasizing the need for repair. This situation can be associated with the debate on how the belief in avant-garde ideals will be repaired. Burri's stitches point to the existential crisis that has not healed yet in the postwar period.

Cut, pain, and acceptance function together with the stitch and the self-created in the recovery process. This dialectic relationship in the stitching process that appears in Burri's practice is the way of becoming historical and discursive. Here, the term 'stitching' is strategically used in order to explain the subjective consistency of rupture (Hamilton, 2008, p.42).

Burri's recurring stitches object to gender-based stereotypes in the feminist art discourse.

In *Composizione*, an expression through metaphor that establishes the relationship of contemporary and visual experience with a universal concept is at work. "Sackcloth is a part of a larger psycho-social stitch of the wounds of the modernist painting, which seen as a serious crisis" (Hamilton, 2008, p.34). Burri turns the red areas in the cuts in the sack, the use of PVA glue, stitches, and patches into an outcry based on a metaphorical narration. While this feature in the work with shades of colors is used effectively, the *living body* metaphor constitutes a strong expression. By anthropomorphizing the work⁴, the human body is transferred to the material, and these materials are added to human relations by physically creating their own experiences in line with animist⁵ reality perception; thus, it is emphasized that they can suffer, change, rot, and die just like a human being. In this way, instead of art representing reality, it reveals itself and turns into reality.

⁴ Anthropomorphism is defined as attributing human properties to non-human beings and interpreting/making inferences about non-human entities as if they were humans.

⁵ The view argues that nature as a whole and beyond the material existence of each and every entity has a spirit as well.

EVALUATION

The art recipient is made to feel the messages in the content of his works in the process of making sense of the works -which is of essential importance- through designed or intuitive codes with/without rules. Interpretation of works requires knowledge of the cultural codes of the artist and the internal dynamics of the life he has lived, and therefore, it necessitates new coding that will make the recipient form his-her knowledge-interpretation of the artist. In the postmodern period, the artist creates visible-invisible signs while producing her works. While the signs that emerge during this creation process are sometimes clearly put forward, sometimes they are realized as the expression of the images that have intuitively settled in the artist's memory.

Freud divides content into two as visible content and hidden content. The visible content is the emergence of conscience on the surface of the work. The hidden content, on the other hand, is the experience of satisfaction of the unconsciously unrealized desire with the work. Therefore, to him, what really matters is the revelation of the hidden content of a work of art (Mishra, 2011, p.160).

Burri's works contain both visible and hidden content.

Postmodern art benefits from the approach suggested by postmodern philosophy, but it refuses to exist together. Burri's point of view is different from the philosophical understanding of the West that questions events; however, it is also the protector of these philosophical methods. By bringing to the agenda the relationship of the content with artistic production and the subjective perspective he designs with the problematic structure of life through questions, Burri, who establishes a bond first with himself and later with the viewer, creates the content in his artistic production through intellectual intuition and its arguments. The situation he avoids while reflecting his *own* point of view he has produced intuitively in the work is that what he thinks in the work is not the basis. While creating the content, he tries to move to the content of the represented with the harmonious combination of form and colors and beyond what is perceived. By establishing a balance between the hidden contents behind the representation, he constructs the elements according to their formation and historicity.

Burri's works use autobiographic narrative rather than internal existentialism, abstract or ideal narrative. The applied materials are existentially objective, but empirical wearing which characterizes the artist's work is also observed. The *worn and torn* materials used in order to reflect the content in his works refer to the temporariness of the age in which art is consumed. There is a deep reality that Burri discovered regarding the content and existence in his works. "To Brandi, the creation of a work of art necessitates the effort of the artist to separate the object from the reality in which it exists" (Morera, 2019, p.257). The different forms of humans, animals, and other entities in the space constitute the reality of *spatial matter*. In philosophy, material reality and the physical world are prioritized more than the world in the conscience. Scientists use this in order to distinguish objective observations from personal reactions. Burri complements his works with an understanding of material reality⁶. To him, a work of art does not have a function as representing the world; a work of art should not transmit *only one*

⁶ Material reality is the representation of experienced reality with evidence.

message. The work, which forms the content with its formal identity and physical structure in its own existential space, is designed as an event with a sense of reality.

In the postmodern period, forms are reactivated with the unique interventions of the artist, and they push the ontological entities into a new conflict-analysis space. Burri has established a bond between aesthetics and ontology in his works. The artistic process of forms is also the type of relation in which creative activity establishes a bond with the entity. The first characteristic that distinguishes Burri from postmodernism is his expression of creative experience through the function of recycling in a liberating way, and the second one is his creation of reverse dialectics in the forms in which he describes entities with all their phenomenology in their original space. The artist's re-suggestion of the function of beauty in the ontological sense enables him to make sense of the function of forms in a different context. The conflict between the real and the ideal in his works transforms entities into a dialectic that imposes the hegemony of the forms rather than structuring them. The dialectic function of forms forces the range of self-reference in determining life, identities, and differences. The feeling of void which is made tense and compact in Burri's works is the stability and width of the order. Forms, which are dominant in the beginning, become softer and more relaxed later, and the expression of forms is presented sometimes in a tough and tense way, and sometimes with elegance.

The period which started with the collage works of Picasso and Braque in 1912 and continued with Duchamp's ready-made materials and Jean Dubuffet's *Assemblaj -Assemblage-* changed the course of art history. Burri, on the other hand, has added diversity to the form and expression values of the material.

This form builds itself in the context of the material that sets, carries, and shows the meaning in the visualization processes of thought. This intellectual space where different materials are presented with different codes extends to different styles structured on the layers of various independent systems on the basis of artists. This integrity reflects a complicated diversity that includes all of the movements preceding it historically and sometimes moves independently of all others (Karaçalı, 2018, p.32).

In the 1950s, an experimental approach was displayed in the production of forms. Burri uses the material in his works in an experimental way and sees the materials as the determining piece of the structure of the work. He neutralizes the tendency of the material to be an entity, but redefines and historicizes it on the work. In Burri's works, "The production process is full of randomness; however, what is fixed in his works are represented reversely; materials are given forms, but the figurative beauty which is glorified as a form is inclined towards search" (Lotti, 2018, p.19). This randomness is not related to reviving dead materials on which he works by turning waste materials into a human flesh metaphor, but with capsizing the mental process of art recipient with the social sensitivity he wants to revive and maintain through ordinary materials and deep meanings as a surgeon.

CONCLUSION

Burri, who represents the material as a living entity and depicts life, existence, and memories with their deep meanings through materials, by remembering the wounds he primarily identifies with the society he lives in and himself as a member of it and shares the steps that will repair, treat, and revive them. He redefines all materials he uses and strikingly associates

the bond of each material with himself and his community with deep meanings. The techniques and materials he uses in his works and the gestures he presents through colors make the pains of the society pieces for museums. The artist emphasizes the content with opposite colors that represent *life and death*. By manipulating non-artistic materials in order to obtain the emotional expression, he initiates the viewer's sense of touch.

Burri refuses the figurative painting components present in the traditional understanding. Therefore, the holes, stitches, ruptures, and red holes that are generally interpreted as wounds can be seen as the figurative elements that structure the painting in *Composizione*. By transforming the physical and psychological wounds caused by the trauma of war into a healing metaphor, this work of Burri enables the art recipient to look and feel by blending his-her perception potential and historical knowledge with his -her emotional intelligence.

The activity carried out by the artist, who associates storylines corresponding to each material and meaning designs with his life experiences in his brain, is the silent outcry of time. While he expresses that time inevitably continues to pass by with each worn and torn material he uses, and by soldering, stitching, melting, he lets the viewer understand that resurrection and standing up again are within the boundaries of possibility.

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