

Alberto Burri
Black Cellotex

Alberto Burri
Black Cellotex



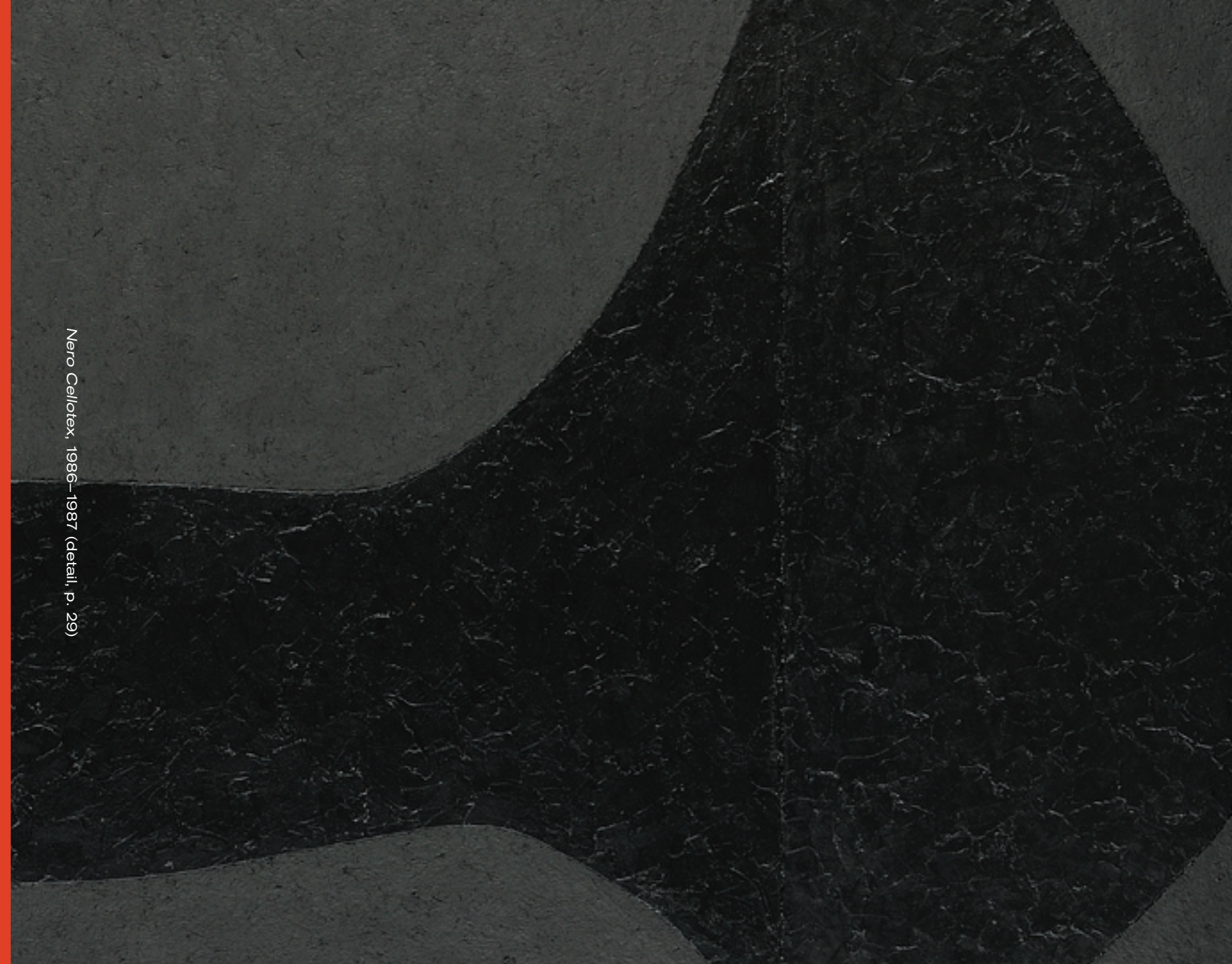
Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987 (detail, p. 39)

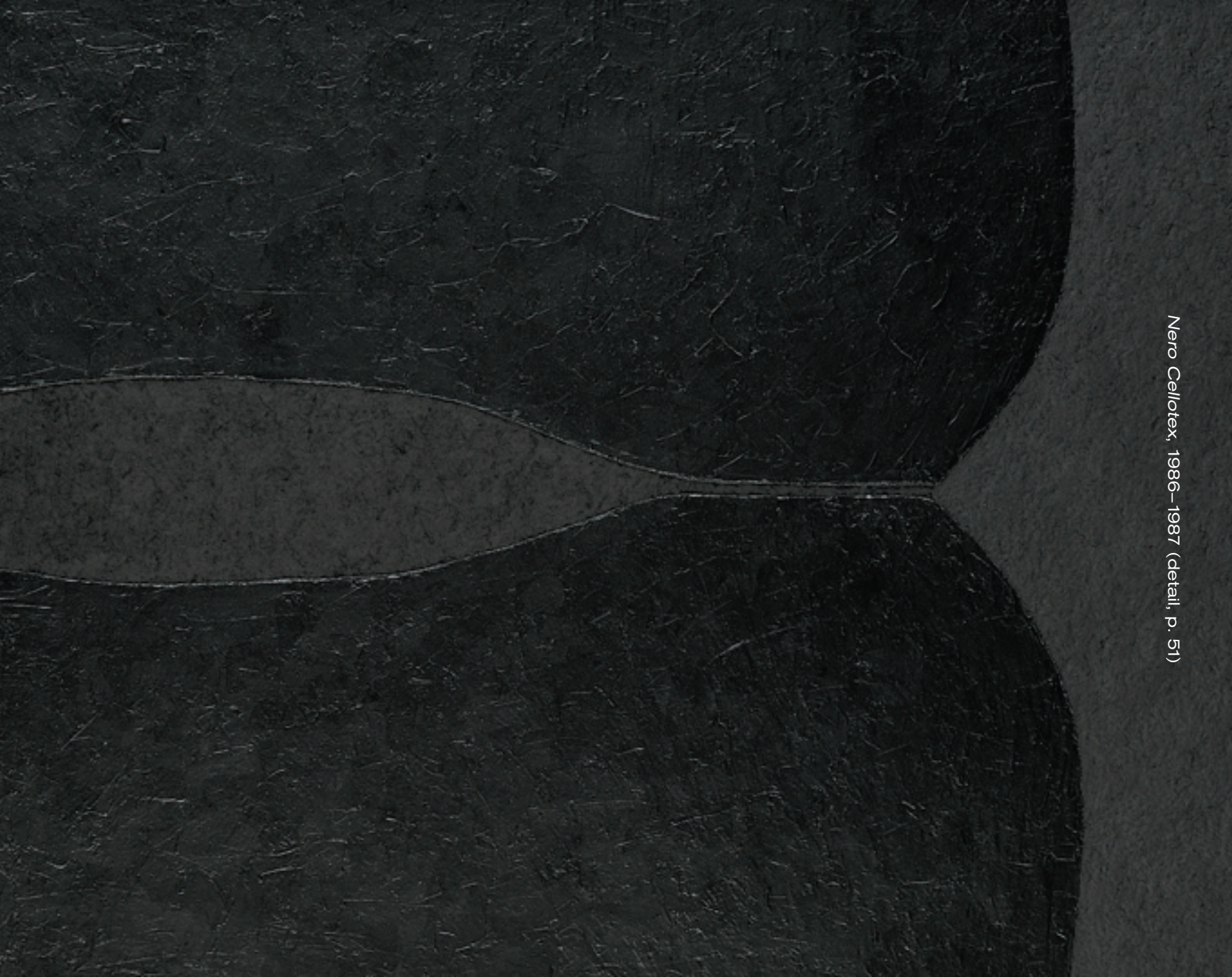
Alberto Burri had a particular fondness for this cycle of ten works titled *Nero Cellotex*, which he considered among the most important testimonies to his artistic will. This series was created in 1986-87 at his studio in Los Angeles where he spent every winter with his wife Minsa Craig.

In the early 1950s Burri began using cellotex, a particleboard made of compressed sawdust and glue, as a simple support for his paintings. The industrial material appealed to him since it was poor, resistant, and almost indestructible. Emerging from the drama of the Second World War, with all its attendant emotional and physical scars, the significance of Burri's choice to experiment with the materials endemic to post-war reconstruction should not be underestimated. The *Nero Cellotex* works acknowledge the necessity of

healing the wounds of the war while simultaneously suggesting that we must engage in an investigation of the modern world and its new materials. In the mid '70s, after twenty-five years of using cellotex as an invisible support, this raw material became Burri's primary field of focus.

Using knives and various hand-made instruments, Burri sculpted the surface of the cellotex board, cutting, shaping, scratching, pulling, and marking to create textured black on black forms. In these *Nero Cellotex* works, the forms expand horizontally, alternating motifs that are strictly geometric and known, with those that are more free and unexpected. The alternating of opaque and glossy areas in these paintings creates a series of close relationships between the paintings, evoking the idea of a cycle. This group of





Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987 (detail, p. 51)

Nero Cellotex paintings removes the final crutch of color and reveals Burri's work at its most bare and radical form.

Chance, created previously by the reaction of the materials used in the combustions and cracklings, no longer plays a role in these last artworks. In this body of work there is a perfect harmony between the elements – a poetic equilibrium between time-form-material-space and the creation of a new universe.

With these last works, Burri concludes his artistic philosophy, unique, innovative, and a source of education and inspiration for many of his contemporaries and future generations.

Antonio Sapone
February 2013

“I chose to use poor materials to prove that they could still be useful. The poorness of a medium is not a symbol: it is a device for painting.”

Alberto Burri quoted in G. Norland, *Alberto Burri. A Retrospective View 1948-1977*, Los Angeles, 1977, p. 72



Burri A Casenove di Morra, 1978. Photo credit: Aurelio Amendola.



Burri's studio at the Ex Seccatoi del
Tobacco at Città di Castello, 1978.
Photo credit: Aurelio Amendola.

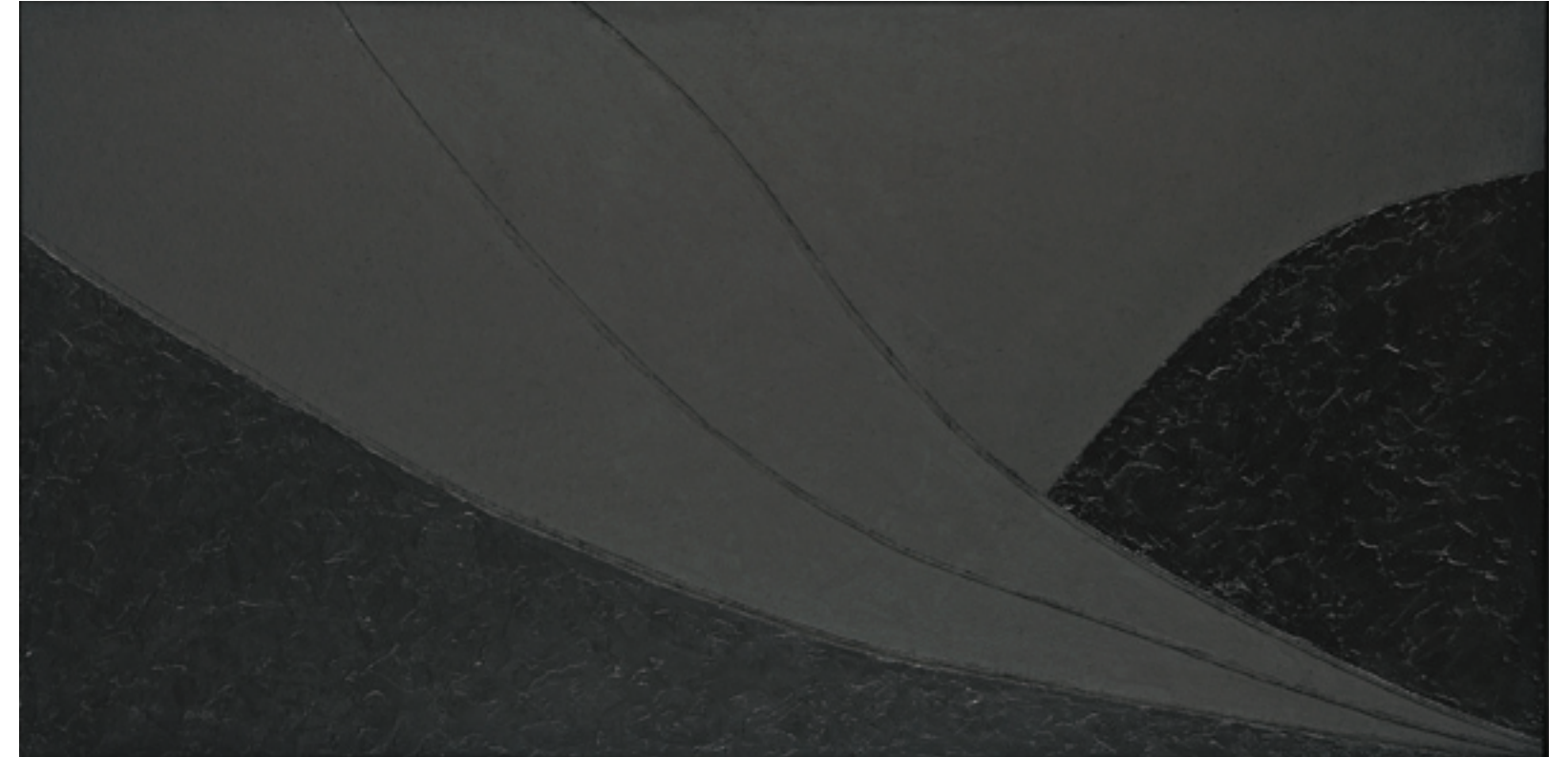
Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 x 97 7/8 in. (127 x 248.5 cm.)



Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 x 97 7/8 in. (127 x 248.5 cm.)



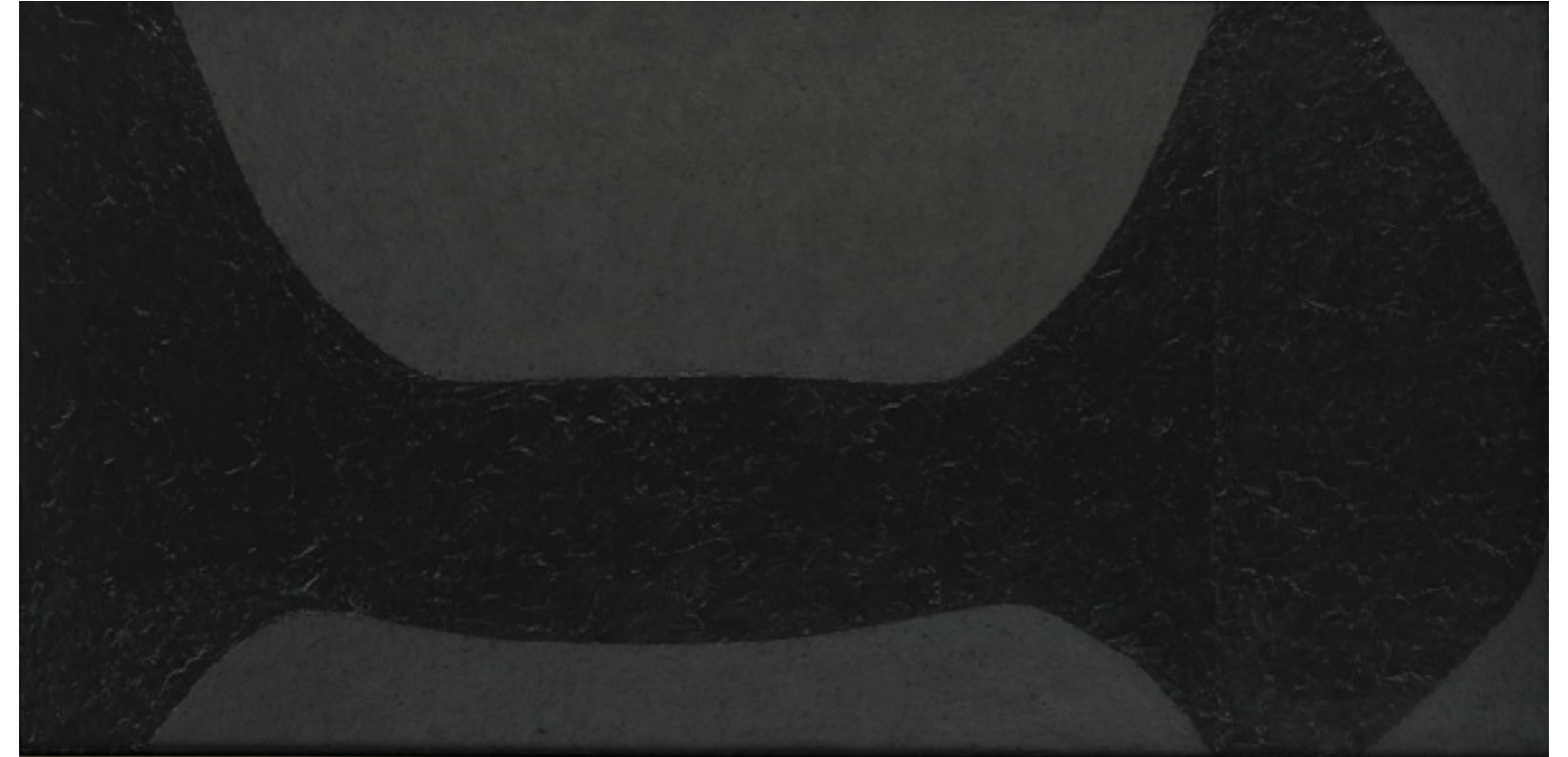
Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 × 97 7/8 in. (127 × 248.5 cm.)

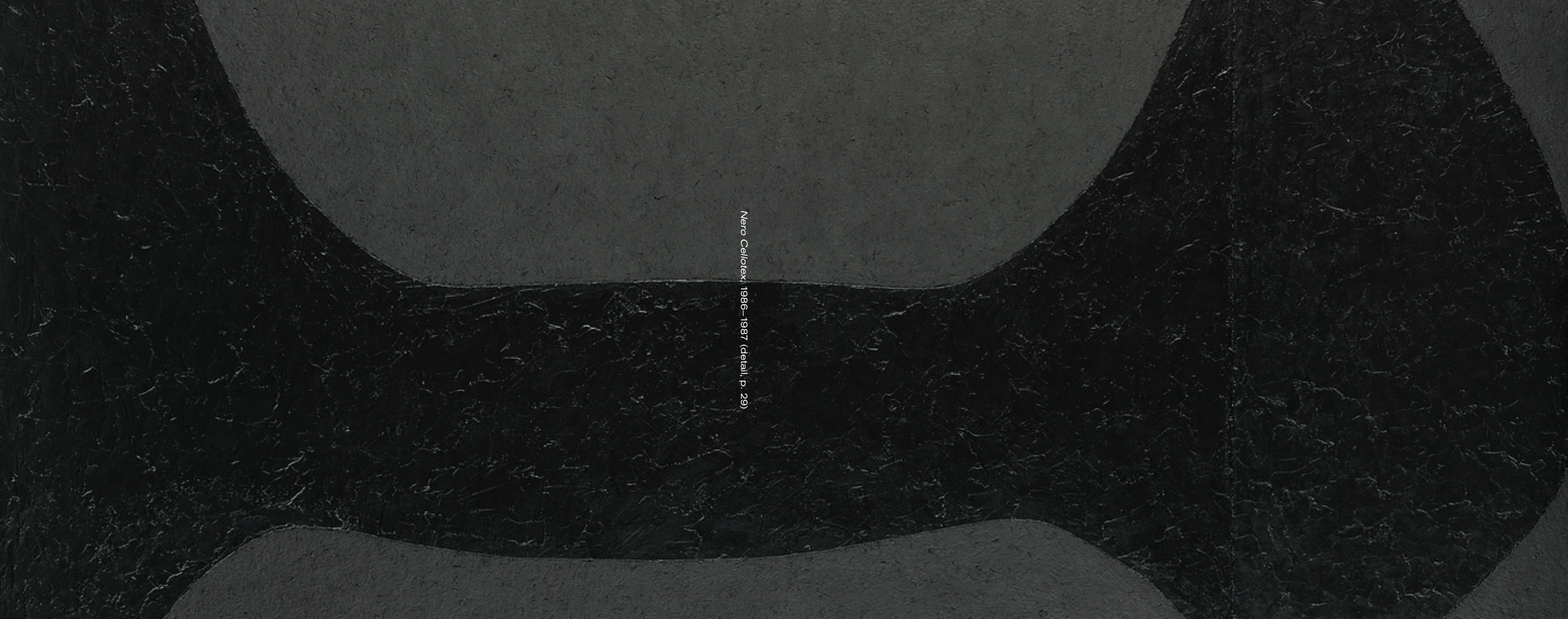




Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987 (detail, p. 25)

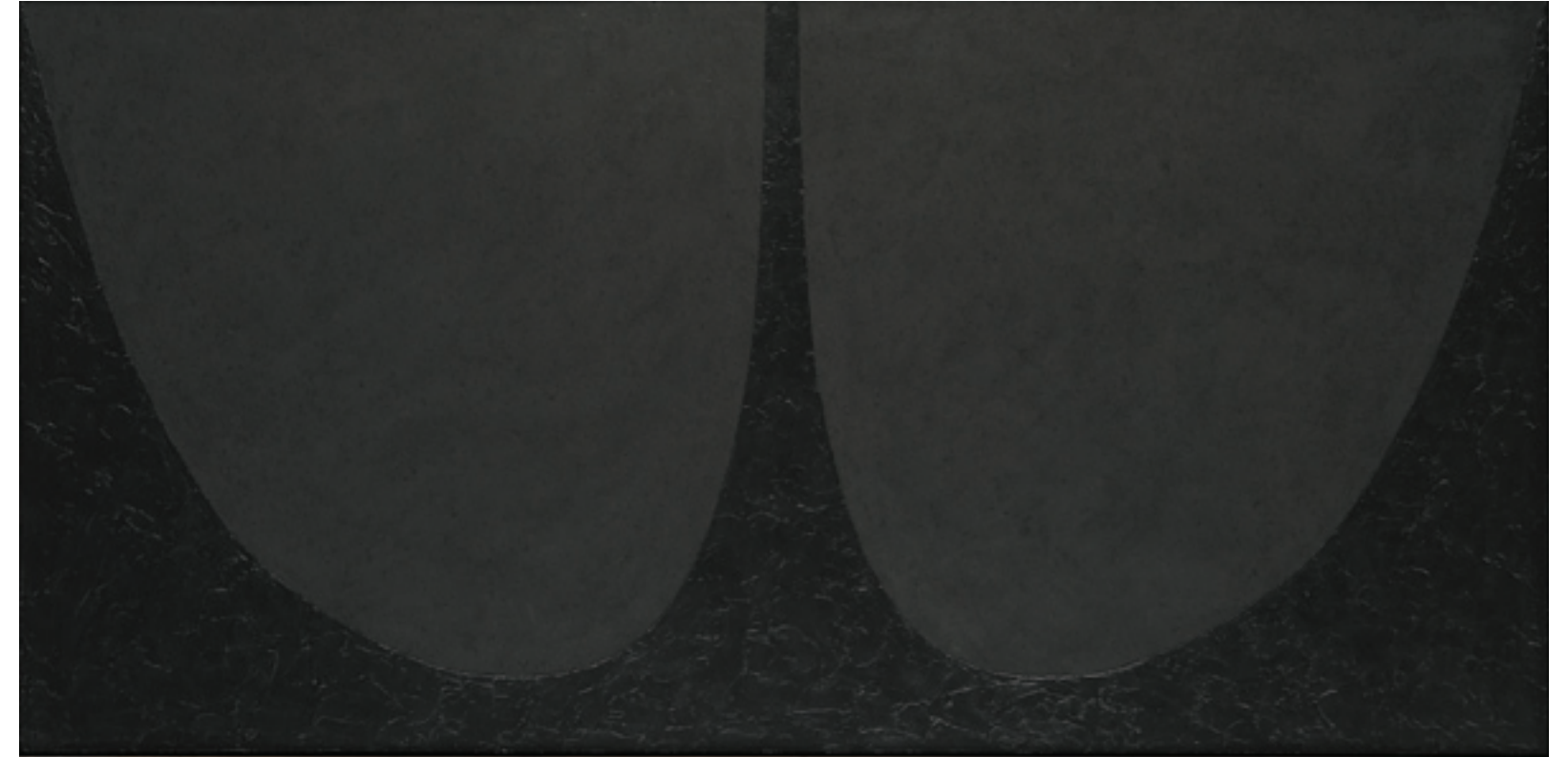
Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 x 97 7/8 in. (127 x 248.5 cm.)





Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987 (detail, p. 29)

Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 × 97 7/8 in. (127 × 248.5 cm.)



Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 x 97 7/8 in. (127 x 248.5 cm.)



Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 × 97 7/8 in. (127 × 248.5 cm.)



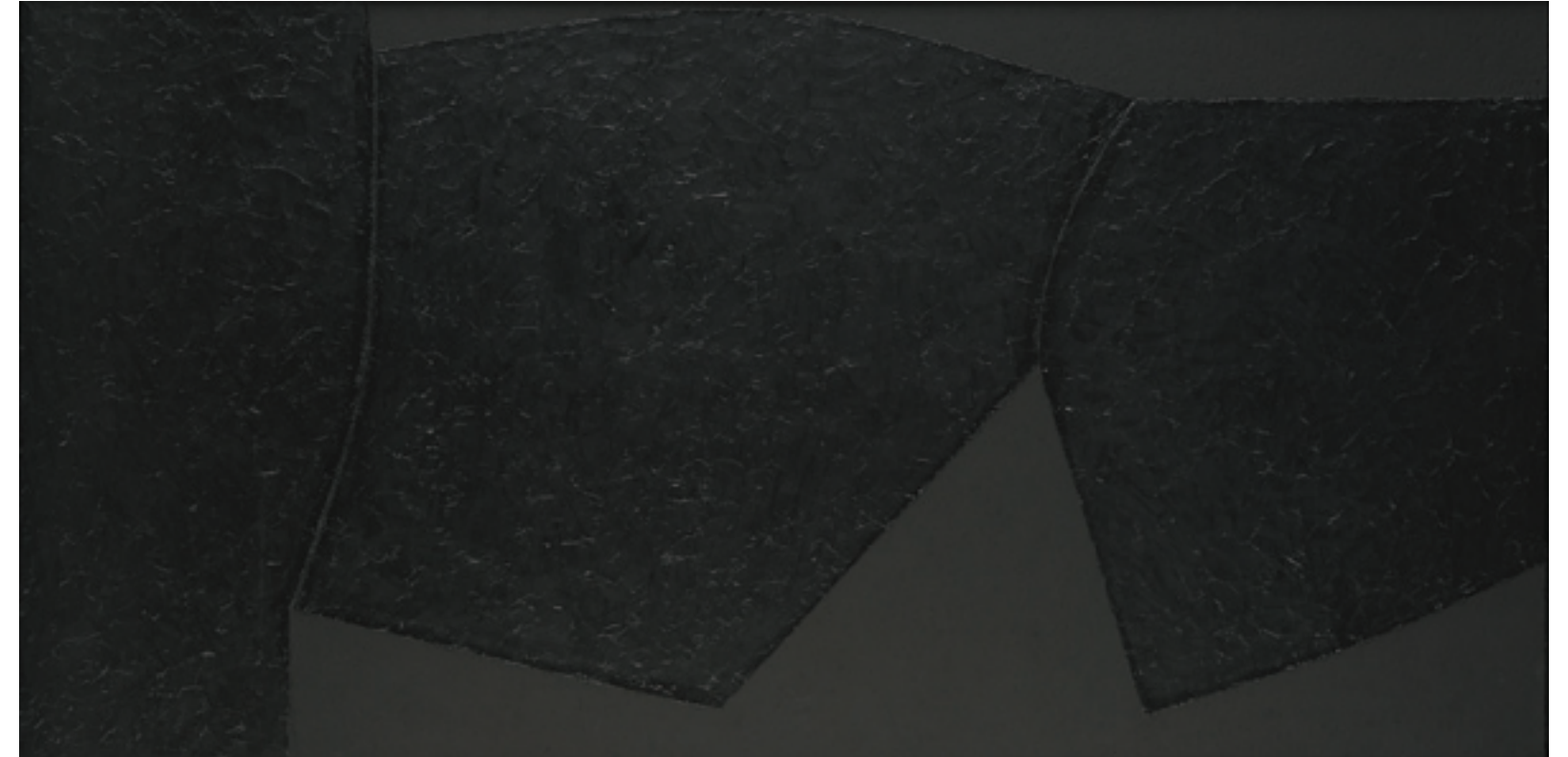


Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987 (detail, p. 39)

Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 x 97 7/8 in. (127 x 248.5 cm.)



Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 × 97 7/8 in. (127 × 248.5 cm.)



Nero Cellotex, 1986–1987. Acrylic and vinavil on cellotex. 50 x 97 7/8 in. (127 x 248.5 cm.)



Acknowledgments

We are fortunate to have the support and assistance of the Fondazione Burri and we would like to thank Maurizio Calvesi, Bruno Corà, Giuseppe Fortuni, Chiara Sarteanesi, Tiziano Sarteanesi, Italo Tomassoni and Daniela Moni. We discovered Burri's work thanks to Antonio Sapone, the force behind the Burri Foundation and his life-long friend and gallerist. We thank Antonio for his friendship, his insight and his love for these works, which have inspired us a great deal.

Daniella Luxembourg, Amalia Dayan
and Alma Luxembourg

This catalogue was published
on the occasion of:
Alberto Burri
Black Cellotex
March 8th–April 20th, 2013

Luxembourg & Dayan New York
64 East 77th Street
New York, NY 10075
+1 212-452-4646 luxembourgdayan.com

All Alberto Burri artwork images courtesy
Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini, Collezione
Burri, Città di Castello, Italy
© 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York / SIAE, Rome.

Publication © 2013 Luxembourg & Dayan
Essay © 2013 Antonio Sapone

Cover: *Nero Cellotex*, 1986–1987 (detail, p. 35)

Design by An Art Service
ISBN: 978-0-615-77465-7

