

Talking Points: Sculpture To Help Us Remember

A collection of imagery and sources designed to stimulate conversation around the idea of sculpture used to help us remember.

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Cretto di Burri by Italian Sculptor Alberto Burri



Alberto Burri – *Cretto di Burri (Crack of Burri)*, 1984–2015, concrete, 1.50 x 350 x 280 m (4.9 x 1,150 x 920 ft), Gibellina, Sicily, Italy, photo: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#) by [Luca Di Ciaccio](#)

The *Cretto di Burri* alias Crack of Burri is a landscape artwork by Italian visual artist,

painter, sculptor, and physician [Alberto Burri](#)

Located in Sicily, Italy, the project began in 1984, only to stall in 1989 when funds ran out. It was finally completed 30 years later in 2015.

This piece of land art sculpture, made from cast concrete, commemorated the destruction of the city of Gibellina in 1968 by the Belice earthquake.

The quake destroyed the landscape and left thousands of families homeless.



Alberto Burri – *Cretto di Burri (Crack of Burri)*, 1984–2015, concrete, 1.50 x 350 x 280 m (4.9 x 1,150 x 920 ft), Gibellina, Sicily, Italy, photo: [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#) by [Michele Cannone](#)

Alberto Burri was an artist involved in the creation of a new town, 20 km to the west of the destroyed town. [This article](#) describes how the mayor was so impressed with Burri that he invited him to make a piece of art to commemorate the catastrophic event. At first Burri wasn't sure, but after he visited the destroyed area he said:

I almost felt like crying and immediately the idea came to me: here, here I feel that I could do something. I would do this: we compact the rubble that is so much a problem for everyone, we arm it well, and with the concrete, we make an immense white crack, so that it remains a perennial memory of this event.

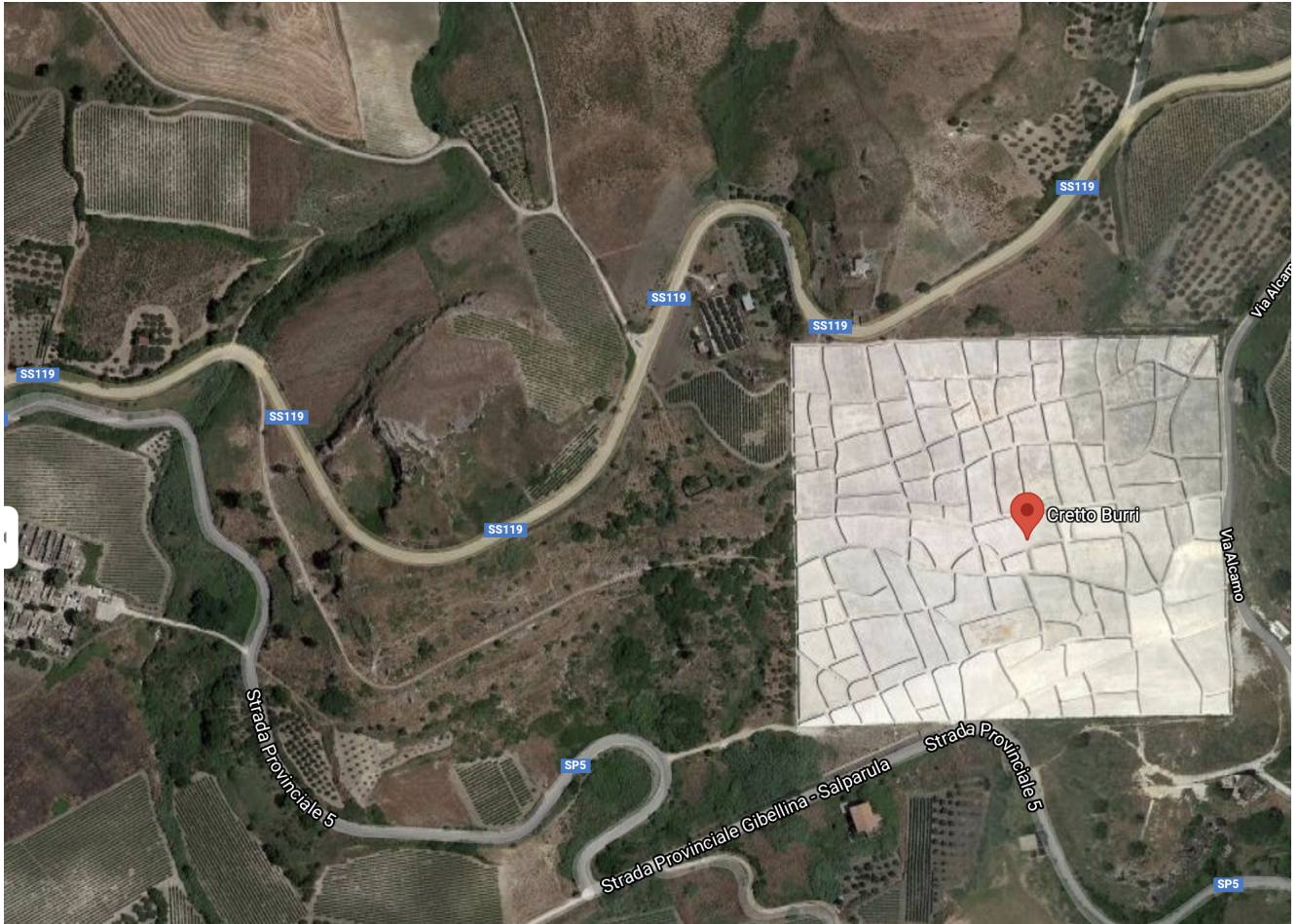
Burri and his workers collected the rubble and redistributed it, casting it into huge cement blocks to recreate the old streets.

"The cracked white concrete of this monument memorializes and conceptualizes the ordeal and suffering of the Belice earthquake, with the slits marking not just the literal streets and corridors of the old town but also the violence done to the land, people, as well as profoundly to the cultural memory of the site."

<https://publicdelivery.org/cretto-di-burri/>



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Questions to Ask Children

Describe what you see.

Which words would you use to describe the whole piece?

Can you imagine walking through the structure? Flying over it? What would it smell like? Feel like?

What do you think the artist is trying to say with this artwork?

How does it make you feel?

What is the environmental impact of the piece?