

PATRIMONIO CULTURAL:

Ética, capacidades
y sostenibilidad

Ester Alba Pagán
Ximo Revert Roldán
(Coords.)



Universidad
Internacional
de Andalucía

ISBN 978-84-7993-417-0 (edición PDF web)

Enlace: <http://hdl.handle.net/10334/9351> Licencia de uso: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Gibellina and Contemporary Arts. Landscape, Public space and Identity beyond the ruins

Cristina Costanzo

Università degli Studi di Palermo (Italia)

cristina.costanzo@unipa.it

Cristina Costanzo is a researcher of the History of Contemporary Art at the University of Palermo. Her area of expertise is the arts and collecting practices from the 19th century to the present, with a special focus on the painting of Southern Italy in the 19th and 20th centuries and the Art Nouveau within an international framework. She is specialized in post-World War II Art with a special focus on Environmental Art. Her essays and art-critical contributions have appeared in an array of scholarly and popular publications about Contemporary Art. She has curated exhibitions in museums and art spaces such as the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, the RISO, Regional Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Palermo, and the Italian Cultural Institutes in Melbourne and Osaka. Dipartimento Culture e Società, Università degli Studi di Palermo, Viale delle Scienze 90128 Palermo, Italy.



Resumen

El artículo trata sobre Gibellina y las artes contemporáneas con un enfoque especial en la relación entre el paisaje, el espacio público y la identidad más allá de las ruinas. El 15 de enero de 1968, varios pueblos del Valle del Belice, Sicilia, fueron golpeados por un poderoso terremoto. Sacudiéndose de ese desastre natural, la Gibellina de hoy ha respondido a un doble papel, suspendida como está entre lo antiguo y lo nuevo, la ciudad destruida y la reconstruida. La imagen del pueblo está impresa en el imaginario colectivo como un verdadero tópos en el que las artes visuales, junto con la poesía, la arquitectura y el teatro se entrelazan en el paisaje urbano y natural a través de un proceso compartido y participativo, desde sus claras recaídas identitarias. En los años posteriores al terremoto, el papel más impactante en la zona fue el de Ludovico Corrao, alcalde del pueblo y promotor de las artes. Gracias a este esfuerzo compartido, se crearon una multitud de obras de arte que luego se colocaron en una especie de museo al aire libre donde ahora más de 70 piezas son accesibles al público en espacios abiertos, incluido el "Il Grande Cretto" de Alberto Burri.

En este contexto, junto con el vínculo siempre importante entre la obra de arte y su entorno, surge el papel crucial de la relación entre lo antiguo y lo contemporáneo. Esta relación sustenta conceptualmente la formulación de las obras a través de las cuales la comunidad afectada por el terremoto ha podido reconstruir su identidad y adoptar nuevas formas de rituales colectivos.

Palabras clave

Artes contemporáneas; museo al aire libre; Gibellina; identidad; paisaje urbano y natural.

Abstract

This article is about Gibellina and Contemporary Arts with a special focus on the relationship between landscape, public space and identity beyond the ruins. On January 15th, 1968, several towns in the Valley of Belice, Sicily, were hit by a powerful earthquake. Shaking off from that natural disaster, today's Gibellina has heeded a calling to a double role, suspended as it is between the old and the new, the destroyed city and the rebuilt one. The town's image is imprinted in the collective imaginary as a real topos in which visual arts, along with poetry, architecture and theater are woven into the urban and natural landscape through a shared, participatory process, from its clear identity relapses. In the post-earthquake years, the most impactful role in the area was that of Ludovico Corrao, town mayor and promoter of the arts. Thanks to this shared effort, a multitude of works of art were created and then placed in a sort of open-air museum where more than 70 pieces are now publicly accessible in open spaces, including Alberto Burri's "Il Grande Cretto".

In this context, along with the ever important link between artwork and its environment, the crucial role of the relationship between ancient and contemporary emerges. This relationship conceptually sustains the formulation of the works through which the earthquake-hit community has been able to rebuild its identity and adopt new forms of collective rituals.

Keywords

Contemporary Art; open air museum; Gibellina; identity; environmental art.

On January 15th, 1968, several towns in the Valley of Belice, Sicily, were hit by a powerful earthquake. The inland town of Gibellina was completely destroyed and in the years to follow it was rebuilt some 20 km further in the valley, thanks to a significant contribution by pioneering artists such as Pietro Consagra, Carla Accardi, Mimmo Paladino, Fausto Melotti, Nanda Vigo¹. Shaking off from that natural disaster, today's Gibellina has heeded a calling to a double role, suspended as it is between the old and the new, the destroyed city and the rebuilt one. The town's image is imprinted in the collective imaginary as a real topos in which visual arts, along with poetry, architecture and theater are woven into the urban and natural landscape through a shared, participatory process, from its clear identity relapses.

In the post-earthquake years, the most impactful role in the area was that of Ludovico Corrao, town mayor and promoter of the arts; his call was answered by intellectuals such as Leonardo Sciascia and Renato Guttuso and by many artists that took part in the reconstruction of the new town. Thanks to this shared effort, a multitude of works of art were created and then placed in a sort of open-air museum where more than 70 pieces are now publicly accessible in open spaces.

Crowning the background of the new town scenery is Alberto Burri's *Il Grande Cretto*, a large land art work shaped by him to cover the ruins of the old town, deemed one of the most significant works of land art existing today². In addition to this rich artistic open-air legacy, there are the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art "Ludovico Corrao" and the

1. For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Gibellina and Contemporary Arts see: LA MONICA, Giuseppe, *Gibellina. Ideologia e utopia*, Palermo, San Paolo: Ila Palma, 1981; BONITO OLIVA, Achille, *Paesaggio con rovine*, Gibellina: Fondazione Orestadi, 1992; FRAZZETTO, Giuseppe, *Gibellina. La mano e la stella*, Gibellina: Edizioni Fondazione Orestadi, 2007; BIGNARDI, Massimo, LACAGNINA, Davide, MANTOVANI, Paola (a cura di), *Cantiere Gibellina*, Roma: Artemide, 2010; *50 anni dal terremoto del Belice. Vicende e visioni*, Gibellina: Edizioni Fondazione Orestadi, 2019; COSTANZO, Cristina, *Gibellina. Memoria e utopia. Un percorso d'arte ambientale*, Venezia: Marsilio, 2022.

2. See TEDESCHI, Francesco, *Il mondo ridisegnato. Arte e geografia nella contemporaneità*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2001; ZORZI, Stefano, *Parola di Burri. I pensieri di una vita*, Milano: Electa, 2016; Alberto Burri. *Il Grande Cretto di Gibellina*, testo di M. Recalcati, fotografie di A. Amendola, Città di Castello: Maganza, 2018.



Figura 1. Il Grande Cretto di Alberto Burri, part. Ph. Iole Carollo.

Museum of Mediterranean Textures in Gibellina³. Grouped together in a precious ensemble of post-war and 21st century art, in synergy with the numerous artistic and theatrical events that contribute to the awareness of these spaces, they give the town a new identity and ultimately add momentous value to the whole area.

In this context, along with the ever important link between artwork and its environment, the crucial role of the relationship between ancient and contemporary emerges⁴. This relationship conceptually sustains the formulation of the works through which the earthquake-hit community has been able to rebuild its identity and adopt new forms of collective rituals.

The most emblematic case is that of Burri, who retraced the old layout of the destroyed town through a process borrowed from the practice

3. See SORGI, Orietta, MILITELLO, Fabio (a cura di), *Gibellina e il Museo Trame Mediterranee. Storia e catalogo ragionato*, Palermo: CRicd-Regione Sicilia, 2015; *Gibellina, una storia d'arte. Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Ludovico Corrao*, Palermo: Caracol, 2021.

4. See COSTANZO, Cristina, LIMONCELLI, Massimo (a cura di), *Antico e (è) contemporaneo*, Palermo: Palermo University Press, 2021.

GIBELLINA AND CONTEMPORARY ARTS.
LANDSCAPE, PUBLIC SPACE AND IDENTITY BEYOND THE RUINS



Figura 2. Il Grande Cretto di Alberto Burri, part. Ph. Iole Carollo.

of archeological restoration and which conserves the trace of the original town layout through the language of contemporary art practices. His work represents the active presence of the ancient and suggests a dialog between the persistence of history, in the nearby archeological areas of Segesta and Selinunte, and its urban plan open wound, healed by contemporary art by giving its ruins a new meaning.

Bibliografía

- 50 anni dal terremoto del Belice. Vicende e visioni*, Gibellina: Edizioni Fondazione Orestyadi, 2019.
- Alberto Burri. *Il Grande Cretto di Gibellina*, testo di M. Recalcati, fotografie di A. Amendola, Città di Castello: Magonza 2018.
- BIGNARDI, Massimo, LACAGNINA, Davide, MANTOVANI, Paola (a cura di), *Cantiere Gibellina*, Roma: Artemide, 2010.
- BONITO OLIVA, Achille, *Paesaggio con rovine*, Gibellina: Fondazione Orestyadi, 1992.
- CHIARAMONTE, Giovanni (a cura di), *Gibellina. Utopia concreta*, Milano: Federico Motta Editore, 1990
- COSTANZO, Cristina, *Gibellina. Memoria e utopia. Un percorso d'arte ambientale*, Venezia: Marsilio, 2022.
- COSTANZO, Cristina, LIMONCELLI, Massimo (a cura di), *Antico e (è) contemporaneo*, Palermo: Palermo University Press, 2021
- FRAZZETTO, Giuseppe, *Gibellina. La mano e la stella*, Gibellina: Edizioni Fondazione Orestyadi, 2007
- Gibellina, una storia d'arte. Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Ludovico Corrao*, Palermo: Caracol 2021.
- LA MONICA, Giuseppe, *Gibellina. Ideologia e utopia*, Palermo, San Paolo: Ila Palma 1981
- SORGI, Orietta, MILITELLO, Fabio (a cura di), *Gibellina e il Museo Trame Mediterranee. Storia e catalogo ragionato*, Palermo: CRicd-Regione Sicilia, 2015.
- TEDESCHI, Francesco, *Il mondo ridisegnato. Arte e geografia nella contemporaneità*, Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2001
- ZORZI, Stefano, *Parola di Burri. I pensieri di una vita*, Milano: Electa, 2016.