



# CREATIVE HERITAGE

edited by  
Jörg Schröder  
Maurizio Carta  
Sarah Hartmann

jovis

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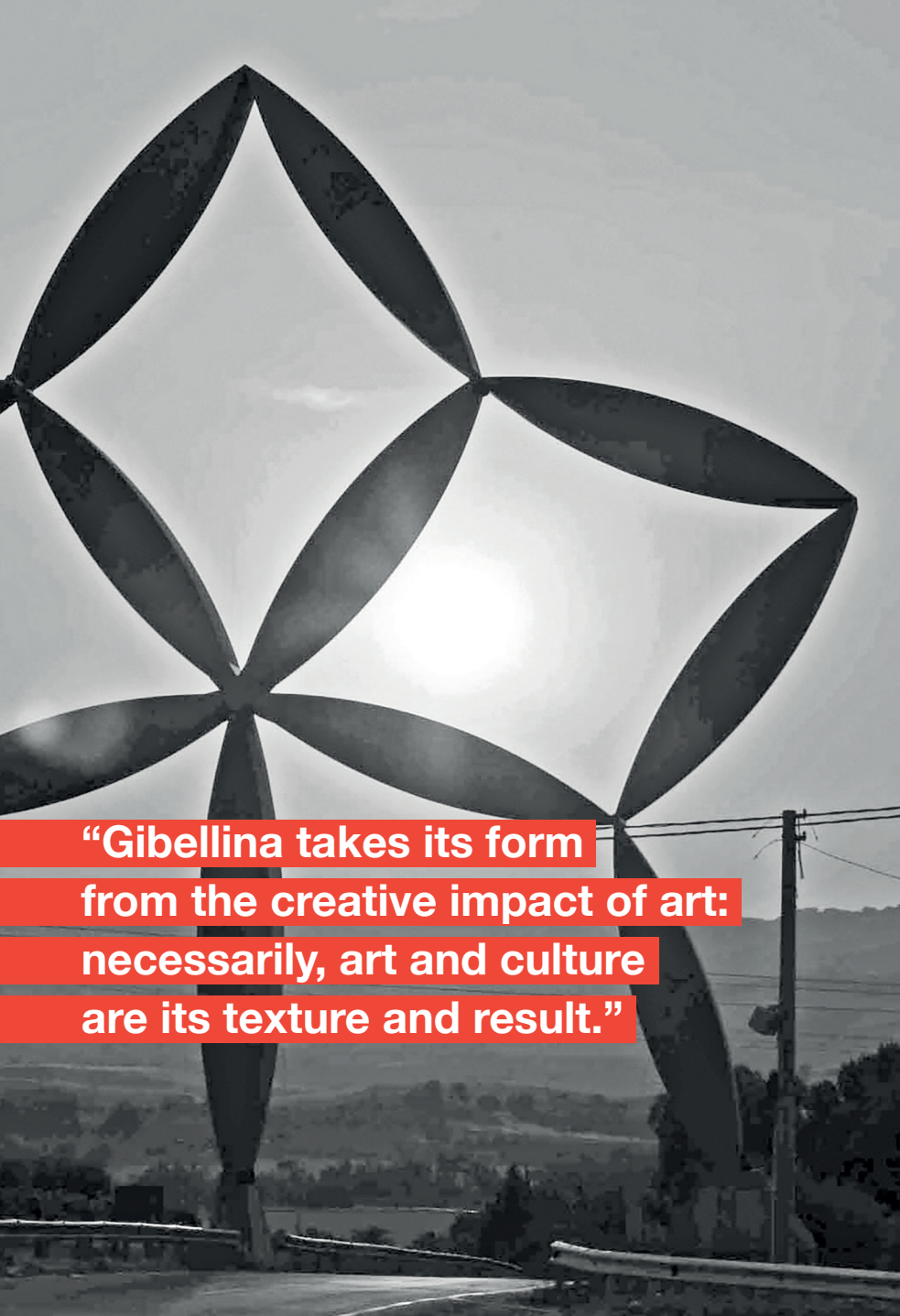
## Gibellina City of Art

The earthquake that hit Western Sicily in 1968 destroyed, among others, the town of Gibellina. Back then, the town was abandoned and a new city was built ex novo at a distance of eighteen kilometres from the original site. The ex novo foundation of a new city requires the interaction of two fundamental

components: one characterised by a physical-formal nature, related to urban layout and architectural characterisations, and the other related to socio-cultural issues concerning the relationships between citizens and their city. If the first component might be dealt with by means of theories and techniques from architectural and urban disciplines, how is it possible to deal with the even more important second component?

The reconstruction of the material components of Gibellina was guided by plans and projects developed by the regional government, with results that were more or less satisfactory. The difficult construction of a new identity—of a *genius loci*, of a link between the inhabitants of a city tragically destroyed and a brand-new settlement—was guided by the local population. Thanks to the charismatic guidance of the mayor Ludovico Corrao, Gibellina made full use of the vital and regenerative power of art to gain a new identity. In Gibellina, art has been practiced, experimented with, and fed from many sources: painting, sculpture, architecture, installations, live performances, theatre, music, poetry, and applied arts—involving internationally recognised artists as well as the full participation of the local population. Today, Gibellina has the highest ratio of works of art to inhabitants in the world, and it continues to be a place of contemporary art with worldwide relationships. Its tremendous talent, however, struggles to find recognition—and is held back by the socio-cultural framework of the Sicilian hinterland which struggles to accept and value the poetic as expressed by contemporary art.

Badami A., Picone M., Schileci E. (2008) *Città nell'emergenza. Progettare e costruire tra Gibellina e lo ZENI*. Palermo, Palumbo.



**“Gibellina takes its form  
from the creative impact of art:  
necessarily, art and culture  
are its texture and result.”**