



## **From earthquake devastation to a massive work of art**



On the night of January 14, 1968 a disastrous earthquake rocked the northwestern corner of Sicily destroying about a dozen towns and claiming over 1100 victims. One of the towns, Gibellina was complete destroyed. Thousands remained homeless for years after the disaster and eventually, the ravaged town was completely abandoned and the entire town was moved to a new location about 10 miles away.

The new Gibellina was built with extravagance, featuring public gardens, large piazzas, post-modern buildings, wide roads, and numerous works of gigantic contemporary sculpture created by Italy's top architects and artists. The project, known as the "Dream in Progress," was designed to turn Gibellina into a modern open-air museum. Here are just a few pictures of its many monuments.



Star Entryway



Entryway to Botanical Gardens



Mother Church by Quaroni



Double Spiral

The site of the old Gibellina ruins was given over to artist Alberto Burri who turned the disaster area into a permanent memorial. Called **Cretto di Burri**, the monument is a



labyrinth of concrete hugging the side of a hill like an enormous grey-white tortoise shell. The maze of pathways through this concrete slab precisely corresponds to the street-plan of the old town—all 29 acres of it!

Nearly five feet of concrete was poured over the town, as if a shroud had been laid over the ruins. It engulfed everything—dead trees, collapsed buildings, broken furniture, utensils, toys. While

covering the town with concrete, the layout of the original town was preserved, leaving the streets as pathways throughout the concrete. A deep, eerie silence surrounds visitors as they walk the “streets” of Cretto di Gibellina. But it serves as a reminder that though nature may topple a city, we humans have the ability to make artwork out of the damage.

Click on the button below to take a virtual tour of Cretto di Gibellina. It's awesome!

[Cretto di Burri](#)

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