

REGGIO EMILIA, ITALY

# Gianni Caravaggio

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The seven sculptures that make up Gianni Caravaggio's exhibition "*Scenario*" present themselves as seven acts of creation for seven different universes. Indeed, Caravaggio conceives every work as a universe of meaning that the artist, acting as a demiurge, imbues with life. Near the center of the floor, a small work, *Principio* (Beginning) (all works 2008), simultaneously engenders two separate installations. The work is composed of a small silver-plated bronze piece, irregularly shaped and based on the form of the artist's open hand. Nine spheres of different materials (marble, aluminum, bronze, and so on) rest on its rough surface, along with some soybeans; the walls of the surrounding space are filled with pockmarks showing where these spheres have been hurled: This is Caravaggio's image of a universe in expansion. Plate and spheres are also positioned alongside a block of black marble, with which they form another work, *Principio con testimone* (Beginning with Witness). Part of the marble block's surface is ruffled, worked in such a way that it seems organic, while another part is





smooth and geometricized, with sharp edges, and here we see a series of holes. Those same spheres have passed through here (virtually), and so the marble stands as witness to the event.

*Agire come la falce di Cronos* (Acting Like the Sickle of Cronos) seems at first to consist only of a thin orange rope that hangs from the ceiling. On the ground, it coils in spirals, but these are squared off at straight angles. Moving in closer, the viewer realizes that the lower portion of the rope is actually made of painted bronze and is rigid; only the upper portion is really rope. This slender and beautiful sculpture is counterpointed by the swollen body of a large block of polystyrene foam, *Poco prima del sistema solare* (Shortly Before the Solar System). Irregular, its surface full of indentations, the large but extremely light ovoid form has at its summit a small column made of eight superimposed spheres. Made of bronze, zinc, and aluminum in alternation, they in turn support a single soybean, an unexpectedly organic and germinal element.

Caravaggio often exploits real space and incorporates the position of the viewer into his work. *Via dalla luce mia* (Away from My Light), for example, consists of two small blocks of marble, one white and one dark, glued together and positioned in such a way that at first the block seems half in shadow. To make *In un'altra dimensione* (In Another Dimension), Caravaggio tore away part of the upper corner of a plasterboard wall and left the gap visible. From this act of removal he generated another form, casting the torn-off corner in zinc, using the traditional lost-wax method. Now the missing portion, transformed, lies as an addition in front of the ripped-open wall. Finally, *Lo stupore è nuovo ogni giorno* (Astonishment Is New Every Day) alludes to the process of its own making. A sheet of aluminum with a pattern of holes scattered over its surface is positioned on the ground and covered with talcum powder, then propped on one side with a vertical stick. The talcum powder slides down and passes through the holes, forming an image of a starry sky on the ground—a celestial map representing the moment of the artist's birth. And so the idea of the body and its gestures, understood as the source of creativity, are tied to the idea of the cosmos as creation and incessant transformation.

—Giorgio Verzotti

*Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.*