



Gianni Caravaggio: *Stand Out of My Light (The Truth)*, 2008, marble and shadow, 13¾ by 9¾ by 7½ inches; at the Collezione Maramotti.

It is in the arena of the Bacardi ads of Jeff Koons, the logo works of Ashley Bickerton, and the re-presentations of Haim Steinbach and other 1980s artistic "commodity traders" that Vezzoli's real inspiration can be found. Vezzoli's homage to appropriation and commodity sculpture is perhaps the most enduring (and endearing) aspect of his latest excavation of art and marketing.

—Cornelia Lauf

REGGIO EMILIA, ITALY
GIANNI CARAVAGGIO
 COLLEZIONE MARAMOTTI

Gianni Caravaggio's "Scenario" (2008) featured what the artist called a "cast of characters," referring to the six installations in the exhibition and recalling Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921). Commissioned by fashion tycoon Luigi Maramotti for his private-collection-turned-museum, "Scenario" was conceived for a stagelike space: a parallelepiped delimited on one side by a floor-to-ceiling glass window facing a courtyard.

Agire come la falce di Cronos (Acting Like the Sickle of Cronus) consists of two orange ropes. One is suspended from the ceiling and dangles to eye level, while the other appears to levitate from the floor to touch the upper segment. In fact, the bottom segment is a painted bronze cast. *In un'altra dimensione* (In Another Dimension) also includes a cast, this time in zinc, of the ripped-out corner of the upper wall beneath which the cast lies on the floor. *Poco prima del sistema solare* (Shortly Before the Solar System) is a massive

pockmarked ovoid in white polystyrene foam, surmounted by a small tapering column of minuscule metal spheres topped by a real yellow soybean. Similar spheres are arranged on a tiny metal sheet resting on the floor in *Principio con testimone* (Beginning with Witness), with the surrounding gallery walls containing countless hollows (as if left by the impact of those spheres). There is also a black marble element, part blob and part polyhedron, with cylindrical perforations carved throughout the length of a flat side. Such effects are reminiscent of Lucio Fontana's "Buchi" (Holes) from the 1950s and '60s, as are the holes stabbed in the umbrella-like aluminum sheet of *Lo stupore è nuovo ogni giorno* (Astonishment Is New Every Day). Finally, *Via dalla luce mia (La Verità)* (Stand Out of My Light [The Truth]) is a half-black, half-white marble piece somewhat resembling a human skull, positioned on the floor near a wall whose shadow is precisely cast across the black side.

In the exhibition catalogue, Caravaggio—who has a background in philosophy, though he studied with the Arte Povera artist Luciano Fabro in the mid-1990s—offered six sequences of actions that he terms "possible scenarios." Each incorporates the titles of all six works in a different permutation. For instance, "Scenario One" reads: "In another dimension, shortly before the solar system, when astonishment is new every day, the beginning unfolds space in the presence of the witness, and by standing out of my light, I act like the sickle of Cronus." As enigmatic and paradoxical as the installations, these texts stimulate the imagination to make

sense of the works and their relationships to one another. Caravaggio explores the potential of sculpture to create other, possible worlds, in which forms are dynamic, rooted in mystery and offered as a point of departure rather than arrival.

—Anna Mecugni



View of Xu Zhen's performance/installation *The Starving of Sudan*, 2008; at the Long March Space.

BEIJING
XU ZHEN
 LONG MARCH SPACE

Xu Zhen's recent solo show raised issues of human exploitation that have surfaced occasionally in the contemporary art world since at least 1972, when Gino De Dominicis included a young man with Down Syndrome in his installation at the Venice Biennale. Xu's *The Starving of Sudan* (2008), featuring a live African toddler menacingly eyed by a mechanical vulture in the middle of a brightly lit, hot desert scene, was one of just two large-scale installations that made up the exhibition titled "Impossible Is Nothing." The glib Adidas tagline seemed apropos for one work, cruelly ironic for the other.

Visitors first encountered *Decoration* (2000), a full-size model of a spaceship suspended in the gallery's front room, which was deliberately left unheated in the middle of winter. Playing with the notion of challenges triumphantly overcome in the deep cold of interplanetary space, the piece—with its accompanying spotlight globe and fake "cosmonaut" video—recalled other media-and-history-mocking Xu pranks, such as his alleged 2005 expedition to remove and transport to China the top 6 feet of Mount Everest.

In the second gallery, Xu's re-creation of