

# Gianni Caravaggio

## *Sculptures with Thoughts and Feelings*

During my journey across the Alps, I find myself in awe at the sight of a majestic mountain ridge, delicately covered by the season's first snowfall. The mist just below the crest veils it, making it seem as though it were floating in the air. This entire vision, and the emotion it stirs, appear to exist outside of me. And yet they arise because I feel such a natural spectacle echoing within my deepest memory – something that is in me but does not belong to me: it secretly inhabits me. The dissolution of the self in a cosmic experience seems to contradict the tendency to withdraw into everything. Perhaps I could say that, if a portrait of me were ever to exist in such a moment, it would be one of complete surrender, of abandoning myself in wonder before the other. I step aside; I offer everything to the one who is perceiving.

Sculpture harbors a particular possibility of confrontation with the other because it is, first and foremost, a thing, a body, and by its very nature it resists narcissistic projection, like a comet unexpectedly attempting to penetrate our atmosphere. Even if we use things with increasing technical determination, reducing their apparent physical resistance, they still oppose us with a demanding psychic resistance, so that only in moments of grace can they secretly appear animated and, in turn, animate us. This resistance of sculpture's "thingness" offers the viewer two possibilities: to reassure oneself with what is casually recognized as material or figure, or to perceive the opportunity for a listening that takes place outside oneself. Such listening – the attentive, sensitive perception of what stands before us – may unexpectedly bring forth images that have atavically and primordially inhabited us, yet which we do not possess as certainties. Listening, therefore, is not confirmation, but a shared participation in a possible imaginative dimension evoked by something other.

Within this perceptual and evocative dimension, sensations become true. Like a portion of mountain veiled by mist, a wedge-shaped piece of alabaster covered with a sheet of opaline paper appears as a faint two-dimensional phantom, before revealing the full mass that lies beneath. An entire alabaster rock – an ovoid petrification formed in the Upper Miocene through the concentration and evaporation of marine waters trapped in closed basins – is gradually cut into sections shifted in one direction, and thus appears like a cloud moved by the wind, as if unveiling its own feelings. This wind also seems to trace the trajectory of two serpents, gleaming in the light of two different metals, that part and reunite along a straight line and appear to encounter a limit only in the circumference of the globe. Two stone slabs – one of white alabaster and the other of Belgian black marble – seem to have long nurtured the design that has emerged upon their surface: the cloud-like structure of the white alabaster appears to have announced the first rain, and the delicate white veins in the black marble have finally illuminated the three light bulbs in the constellation of Orion. Outside, beneath the plants in the courtyard, a piece of Guatemala green marble, in the sunlight, remembers having once been a leaf.

– Gianni Caravaggio

Gianni Caravaggio was born in 1968 in Rocca S. Giovanni (Chieti), Italy, and was raised in Sindelfingen, Germany. He currently lives and works between Milan and Stuttgart.

He studied philosophy in Germany before moving back to Italy to attend the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan, where he is currently a professor of sculpture.

Selected solo and two-person exhibitions include: *unforeseen* (with Johannes Wald), Galerie Stadt Sindelfingen (2025); *Per Analogiam*, Galleria d'Arte Moderna - GAM, Turin (2023); *When Nature Was YOUNG*, Kunstmuseum, Reutlingen (2021); *iniziare un tempo*, Museo Novecento, Florence (2018); *Sostanza Incerta*, The Open Box, Milan (2017); *About Things Bigger Than Us*, Galerie De Expeditie, Amsterdam (2016); *Finalmente Solo / En in Seul*, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Etienne Métropole, Saint-Etienne (2014); Museo MAGA, Gallarate (2014); and *Scenario*, Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (2008) among others.

His work has been exhibited in numerous group shows, including recently: *Cutting Clouds / Tagliando le nuvole*, Madre, Naples (2024); *Vita Nova: arte in Italia alla luce del nuovo millennio*, Villa d'Este, Tivoli (2022); *Arte Povera Italian Landscape*, Metropolitan Museum, Manila (2020); *Noi e il MASI. Donazione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati*, MASI, Lugano, (2018); *Collezione Acacia*, Museo del Novecento, Milan (2016); *Avviso di garanzia, Fuori Uso*, ex tribunale di Pescara, curated by Giacinto di Pietrantonio and Simone Ciglia (2016); *Il Pane e le Rose*, Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milan (2015); and *Ritratto dell'artista da giovane*, Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2014) among others.

Among various prizes, Gianni Caravaggio was awarded with the Premio Acacia (2013); the Castello di Rivoli Prize (2008); and the Special Fund Prize, PS1, New York (2002).