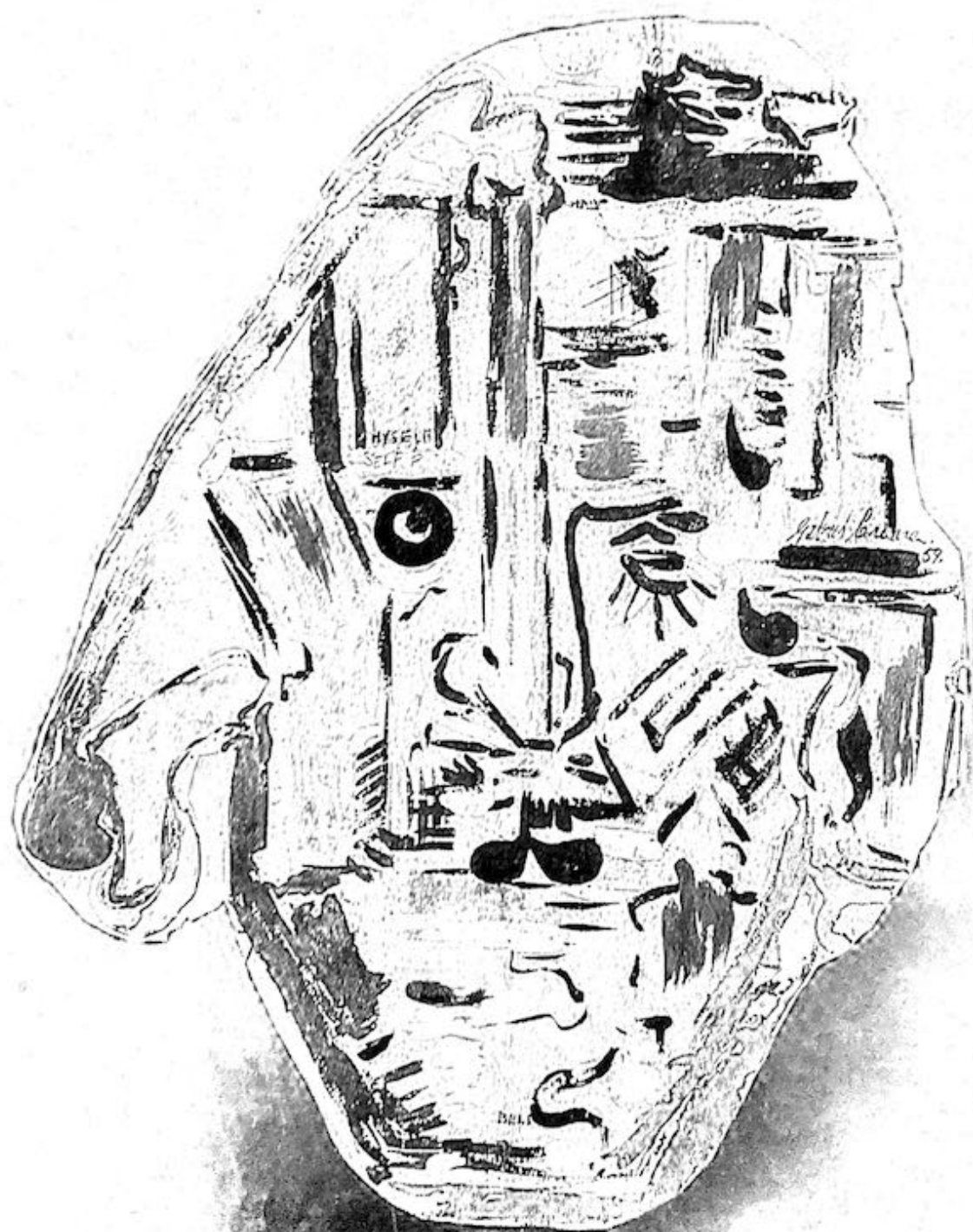


Another side of GABRIEL CARUANA

His non-ceramic work



Bonne ten Kate
Author and Photographer

Foreword by Peter Serradino Ingiosi
Introductory essay by Victor P. DeBattista

Foreword

Since 'Installations', 'happenings' and other ephemeral embodiments have become the predominant forms for the manifestation of art, photography is being called upon to perform a third major kind of function in the service of art. First it emerged as a new medium of art – that signified by the very etymology of the word: 'writing with light'. Then, because of its reproducibility, it helped create what Malraux called the *Musée Imaginaire*. Now the makers of the new kind of art which breaks down the old distinction between the performative and the fine arts look to the photographer to save metamorphosed traces of their essentially transitory works. While the seventeenth century Baroque artists sought to capture flashes of the eternal in each of the fleeting moments that they attempted to seize in their images, the photographer of ephemeral works of art gives them durability without any contradiction of their intrinsic ephemerality. Photography constitutes an image out of a performance and thus enables the ephemeral art form to insert itself into the sequence of traditional visual art.

Right from his earliest works Gabriel Caruana has been a sort of prophet of the kind of dynamic art that did not quest after embodiment in relatively permanent material forms. He has found in the extraordinary skill and disposition of Bonne ten Kate the singular means by which it can be given a more lasting figuration than has unfortunately all too often been the fate of some of his imaginative works. Even the private owners of works that have been well taken care of may see them in a different light after discovering their images in this book.

Gabriel Caruana has been for half a century a prophet of the most advanced contemporary art not only because of its frequently performative character, but also because he has always been against watertight compartments between the arts and sought to remove all types of artificial frontiers between painting and sculpture and architecture. This second volume of illustrations of his work was conceived by Bonne ten Kate and then supported by Madame Marie-Amélie Gleizes Dewavrin, President of The Institute of Maltese Culture, also because it helps remove any unilateral impression that Caruana is exclusively or even essentially a cultivator of just one medium of expression namely ceramics, when he is really a comprehensive plastic artist and a designer in a multitude of media. In particular, he has totally transcended the dichotomy between major and minor arts. Some may even have got the impression that for him it is work in clay that constitutes the major key and that work in what are usually held to be the major media are in fact minor. This book should prove to be a definitive rebuttal of this misconception. The works selected for inclusion in this volume, even when manifestly not intended for any permanent putting behind glass in an old fashioned museum, do not fall in the category of mere craftsmanship. They are clearly emanations from the same volcanically creative personality.

The brief texts included in this volume bring out the dominance in Caruana's work, not often noticed, of his ideogram or more precisely hieroglyph of the human being, implying the rather Beuysian idea that every human being is a special kind of artist rather than that the artist is a special kind of human being. The text also stresses that the specifically human creative energy is seen as the thrusting point of the *élan vital* that is the dynamic source of Caruana's rumbustious faith. The verbal component occupies only a very modest part of the physical space of this book. Most of all it provides an indication of the diversity of ways in which it is possible to look at Caruana's work. The photographer provides a principal perspective; the critical commentary is that of an astronomer specialized in the study of (literally) galaxies and he provides an unusual although by no means eccentric angle from which to garner another outlook upon Caruana's work. This panorama of his non ceramic work, which even includes oniric visions of large scale landscape art, through the masterly use of photography, bridges the chasm between modern and post-modern art.

Peter Serracino Inglott