

THREE BEAN POLES

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Published February 21, 2012

In her piece, *Dead-End, Infinite* (2011) at “III,” a group exhibition at Martos Gallery, sculptor Rochelle Goldberg takes on the daunting task of criticizing the apotheosis of materials in iconic 20th-century works such as Brancusi’s *Endless Column*, which rises seamlessly from the ground without a trace of a struggle against gravity. “Anything that clean or shiny doesn’t speak to the journey of the process it took to make it,” Goldberg lamented to *Interview*. “I wanted to slice some of that type of sculpture open, and see what spills out.”

The resulting work is a 9-foot-high paper tube wrapped in photo backdrop paper that Goldberg crumpled and tore around the supporting structure, and then splattered with white and silver paint. Slender and messy, the sculpture visually morphs upon circumambulation. From one angle, it resembles a large beach umbrella that has gone through a nuclear holocaust. From another, it looks like a rocket that has just returned from a trip to the moon, picking detritus from the atmosphere up along the way. And from yet another, a sculpture by the hyper-masculine John Chamberlain that has been unfurled, and then pulled vertically. “I like the double take of grounding through the weight of materiality, but also the sense of blast-off,” Goldberg explained. “The sculpture really pushes your own physical limits. It becomes a spectacular body.”

Although the sculpture disputes the transcendence of objects without any trace of struggle, it still soars, less an object than a weightless trace of materials. Its physicality takes on an ethereal, otherworldly form. “There is a way in which space becomes displaced or dislocated when something has that much height,” Goldberg said. “I can’t assert my own presence on it.”

Goldberg, who recently disbanded her successful jewelry line, Ralph and Duchess, to focus her on art, collaborated with artists Elaine Cameron-Weir and Robin Cameron on “III”, which consists of three 9-foot-tall vertical sculptures in different mediums. Seen together, the resulting works look like totem poles made by three different tribes from the moon. “The works came out of all of us,” Goldberg said. “We took the idea of the infinite vertical, and broke it into three pieces.”