

Rochelle Goldberg

Born 1984 in Vancouver, British Columbia; lives in New York

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Many of Rochelle Goldberg's sculptures exist as parts of larger installations that incorporate ceramics, industrial materials, natural and human-made fibers, and organic matter such as chia seeds, crude oil, and even live snails. Together, these elements take the shape of human figures and architectural spaces that are activated by the growth of the sprouting chia seeds, which, along with the crude oil, can be consumed by the snails. The variety of materials and the depiction of human forms implicate the complex role of humans in both the maintenance and the destruction of the ecosystems that support us. Goldberg's installations play heavily on the boundary, or lack thereof, between interior and exterior in both organisms and ecosystems. As a result they materially deconstruct the binaries that are often the basis of our knowledge and information structures, producing a space of radical hybridity.

Intralocator, "Does the ground support you" (2017) is a life-size statue of a woman whose head and torso are constructed from thick, snaking coils of clay that are built up to constitute a body, face, and hair and are glazed to a bright industrial shine. Legs of steel extend from her garment to meet ceramic feet. Goldberg contextualizes this series of figures through a passage from Luce Irigaray's seminal feminist text *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), which examines Plato's allegory of the cave to ascertain the ways in which women have been excluded from the origins of philosophical discourse. The sculpture itself visually and conceptually references Donatello's sculpture (c. 1453–55) of the emaciated Mary Magdalene, who was a wealthy Jewish supporter of Jesus and the apostles. In the New Testament, however, she has been conflated with Mary of Egypt, who after an early life as a prostitute and beggar repented and spent the remainder of her life as a hermit in the desert. Because of this conflation, Mary Magdalene is traditionally depicted covered by long hair, as Mary of Egypt did not own clothes in the desert. Thus the sculpture's garment of felted fur and human hair represents both the erasure of individual female subjecthood and the predominance of the belief in women's inherent vices. Both lifelike and industrially rough, Goldberg's "intralocator" asserts the importance of an intermediary space in which women may move beyond the archetypes of sinner and saint regardless of the conventions that would consign them to one role or the other.

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Je suis une femme, 2014; Forton, modified hanging system, underwear, synthetic hair extensions; 60 x 58 x 38 in.
(152 x 46 x 91 cm)

THE BODY IN PIECE