

Rochelle Goldberg's *Intralocutors*

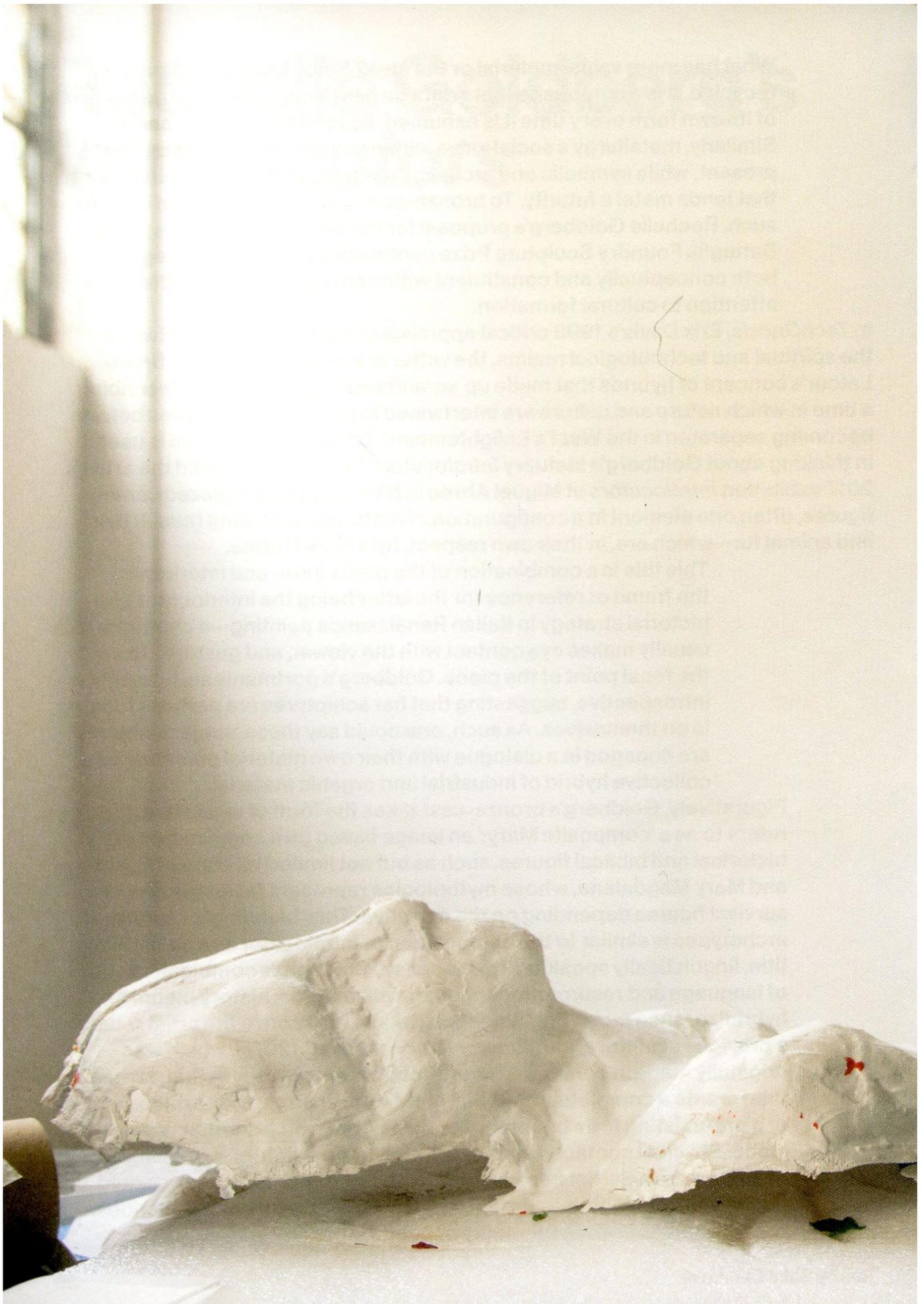
**Text by
Saim Demircan**

What has more value, material or the idea? Since bronze is often recycled, it is a composite that contains past lives, inheriting the histories of its own form every time it is exhumed, liquefied and recast anew. Similarly, metallurgy's social value within any given society past and present, while symbolic and archaic, continues to hold an applied worth that lends metal a futurity. To bronze-cast is also to invest in an idea. As such, Rochelle Goldberg's proposal for her piece awarded this year's Battaglia Foundry Sculpture Prize continues a project of aggregation both conceptually and constituent within an artistic practice that pays attention to cultural formation.

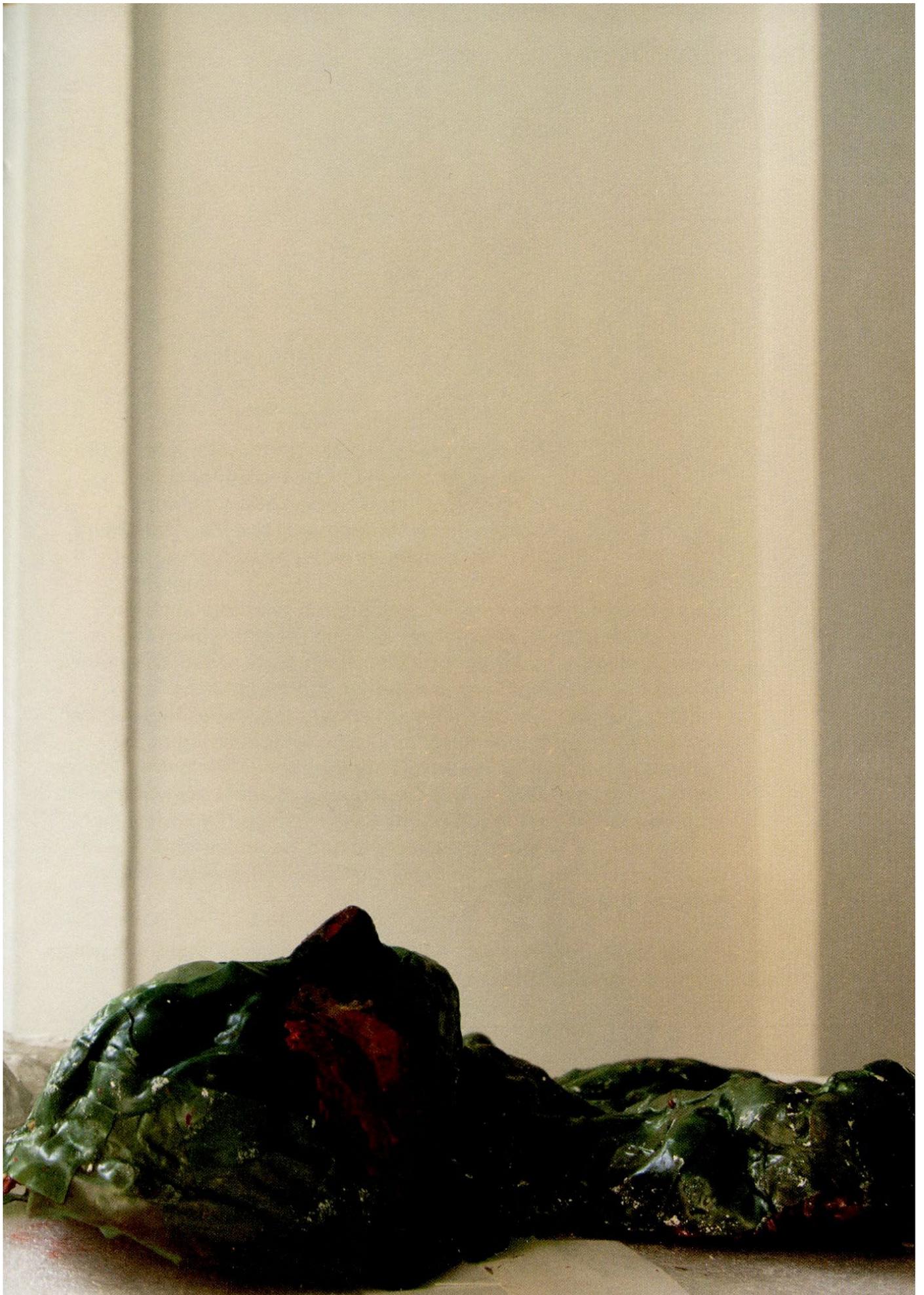
In *TechGnosis*, Erik Davis's 1998 critical appraisal of the relationship between the spiritual and technological realms, the writer draws on philosopher Bruno Latour's concept of hybrids that made up an 'anthropological matrix,' describing a time in which nature and culture are intertwined in premodern societies before becoming separated in the West's Enlightenment. Davis' interpretation is useful in thinking about Goldberg's statuary *Intralocutors* that first populated the artist's 2017 exhibition *Intralocutors* at Miguel Abreu in NY—fragmented glazed ceramic figures, often one element in a configuration of materials, including human hair and animal fur—which are, in their own respect, hybridized forms.

This title is a combination of the prefix intra- and interlocutor, the frame of reference for the latter being the interlocutor as a pictorial strategy in Italian Renaissance painting—a character that usually makes eye contact with the viewer, and gestures toward the focal point of the piece. Goldberg's portmanteau, however, is introspective, suggesting that her sculptures are perhaps looking in on themselves. As such, one could say these 'subject-objects' are engaged in a dialogue with their own material presence as a collective hybrid of industrial and organic material.

Figuratively, Goldberg's bronze-cast takes the form of what the artist refers to as a 'composite Mary,' an image based on a combination of historical and biblical figures, such as but not limited to, Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdalene, whose mythologies represent fallen women, or survival figures depending on the narrative. This 'blending' of female archetypes is similar to the composition of intralocutor as a collective title, linguistically speaking. In this sense, Goldberg's combination of language and resurrection together with material history blend, or hybridize, once more. For instance, to make her bronze the artist recast a previous sculpture, *Intralocutor (Mary of Egypt) (2017)*, which was originally made in ceramic. This approach is noteworthy in that, rather than create a completely new wax mold from scratch, the surface, or skin, of a pre-existing form becomes the basis from which another cast is then made. Physical contact, whether through impression, or a re-assigning of agency as the artist necessitates, with raw material returns a would-be denial of the collective webwork lost to modernity, as Davis describes, back into an 'ever-present reality of hybrids.'



Saim Demircan, 'Rochelle Goldberg's Intralocutors', *Battaglia Foundry Sculpture Prize #03*, CURA.BOOKS, Rome, 2019



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Rochelle Goldberg

***Intralocutors* thinks through the agency of written-over subjects in the face of falsely ascribed mythology. If many women over time were compressed into the role of one Mary, then Mary too can be many as we try again to meet her.**

Mary of Egypt, popularly pillars evoking self-preservation as brutality, the patron saint of flesh, specifically carnal flesh and its abandonment, leaves a legacy misunderstood as a mutual rejection between her corporeal-self and the world, rather than her own decisive action. Through her desert entry, she escapes the material world that she no longer needs to 'know.' Her forlorn figure has become an emblem for the possibility to choose both love and peace and the further possibility to both choose and reject the world which we live in. Over time her weathered flesh layers as her environment so that her environment, the desert, in turn, becomes her flesh—a hybrid surface that conveys the accumulation of contact a body endures through time.

Her resurrection signals the return to say “hello,” “hello I am here,” “hello she will be here,” “hello they have always been here.”

As the *Intralocutor* wears her self, her world, and everything she touches, thousands of years of material refinement in the lost wax bronze casting process are pressed up against how our ideas of skin, surface, protection, survival, body, gender, and life have changed and will continue to change.

Molten-hot and liquefied, she is poured into the future.



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