Louise Bourgeois
An Unfolding Portrait

Louise Bourgeois: An Unfolding Portrait explores this celebrated artist's prints and books, a little known but highly significant part of Bourgeois's larger practice. Her copious production in these mediums—addressing themes that perennially occupied her, including memory, trauma, and the body—is examined here within the context of related sculptures, drawings, and paintings. This investigation sheds light on Bourgeois's creative process, which is uniquely and vividly apparent through the evolving states and variants of her prints; seeing these sequences unfold is akin to looking over the artist's shoulder as she worked. Published in conjunction with an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, this catalogue features an insightful essay by curator (and longtime friend of the artist) Deborah Wye, examining Bourgeois's involvement with these mediums alongside the developments of her long life and career. Interviews with three of the artist's close collaborators further illuminate her artistic practice and output, some three hundred examples of which are presented in this volume.

248 pages, 330 color and 27 black-and-white illustrations

ISBN-13: 978-1-63345-041-7
9 781633 450417

WYE

Louise Bourgeois
An Unfolding Portrait

MoMA

Louise Bourgeois
An Unfolding Portrait

MoMA

Deborah Wye

Louise Bourgeois An Unfolding Portrait

Prints, Books, and the Creative Process

The Museum of Modern Art | New York

Louise Bourgeois revisiting an early copper plate for *Champfleurette, the White Cat* (1994), at her home/studio on 20th Street, New York, 1995. Photograph by and © Mathias Johansson

Contents

6 Foreword
GLENN D. LOWRY

7 Acknowledgments

9 Introduction
"time stopped, time remembered, time recreated"— Louise Bourgeois: Prints and Books
DEBORAH WYE

Themes and Variations

36 Architecture Embodied
62 Abstracted Emotions
90 Fabric of Memory
114 Alone and Together
146 Forces of Nature
176 Lasting Impressions

Working Relationships

195 Jerry Gorovoy, *Assistant*
203 Felix Harlan of Harlan & Weaver, Inc., *Printer*
208 Benjamin Shiff of Osiris, *Publisher*

214 Notes
221 Chronology
231 Checklist of Plates
240 Selected Bibliography
243 Index
246 Lenders to the Exhibition
248 Trustees of The Museum of Modern Art

Louise Bourgeois at the printing press in the lower level of her home/studio on 20th Street, New York, 1995. Photograph by and © Mathias Johansson

Deborah Wye

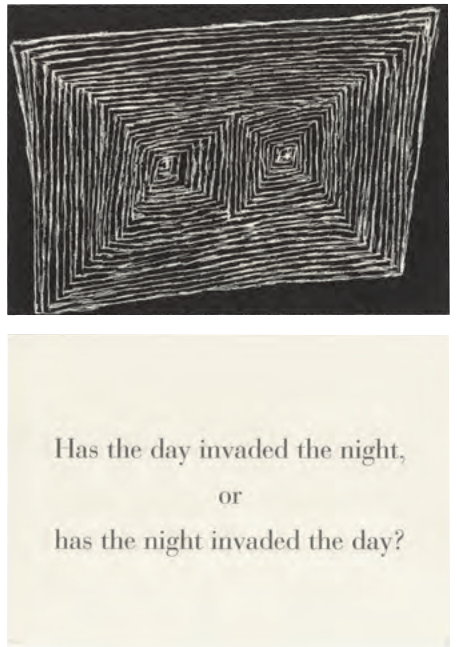
“time stopped, time remembered, time recreated” Louise Bourgeois: Prints and Books

The deeply affecting art of Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010) encompasses multiple mediums. The artist is most celebrated for sculpture, particularly her iconic *Spiders*, provocative figures and body parts, and room-size *Cells*. But Bourgeois also drew continuously and, most importantly for this study, created a vast body of prints and illustrated books. Her printed œuvre comprises some 1,200 individual compositions and, with their evolving states and variants, approximately 4,800 sheets in all.[1] Her printmaking took place primarily in the last two decades of her very long life, but also for a period at the beginning of her career. In the 1940s, while raising three small children, she printed on a small press at home and also at outside facilities. Later, in the 1990s and 2000s, specialized printers and publishers came directly to her to work on projects. The small printing press was resurrected in the lower level of her house and another one added. Proofing and editioning were also carried out at professional printshops.

Bourgeois's approach to printmaking sheds light on her creative process overall. She constantly revisited the themes and forms of her art, in all mediums, as she sought to grapple with the troubling emotions that motivated her. Since printed images can be replicated, it was easy to go back over her compositions and branch out in any direction. She tirelessly altered her proofs with pencil, ink, watercolor, and gouache additions as she envisioned subsequent steps. Many prints went through fifteen, twenty, or even thirty stages of development, with states, variants, and versions. This unfolding progression of the artistic process has usually disappeared by the final stage of a painting or sculpture, but it remains visible in printmaking because these evolving proofs survive. Reviewing them is akin to looking over Bourgeois's shoulder as she worked — a rare opportunity for insight into an artist's vision.

Just as she was inclined toward the dynamics of printmaking, Bourgeois also favored traditional print formats — the series, portfolio, and illustrated book. These involve the gathering of related images and their sequencing, with or without added text. Sequencing generates a form of narration, and this suited Bourgeois, who was a vivid speaker, writer, and storyteller. She was highly articulate in describing the motivations for her work and kept copious notes in appointment diaries and notebooks, on countless loose sheets, and on the backs of drawings. Her pithy phrases also appear on individual prints, in series (FIGS. 1, 2), and on multipanel prints, while her parables and stories provide the texts for illustrated books.

Bourgeois was also well served by the collaborative nature of printmaking. It is not a medium often attempted alone in an artist's studio, although Bourgeois did some of that in her early years. Usually prints require technical expertise from professional printers and support from adventurous publishers. Bourgeois fostered several close and creative relationships through printmaking. In fact, the printers and publishers with whom she had a special rapport were able to buoy her spirits and lift her from recurring bleak and debilitating moods. When they were scheduled to arrive at her home she was most often energized. Such stimulating collaborations became part of the daily routine in her late years.


Has the day invaded the night,
or
has the night invaded the day?

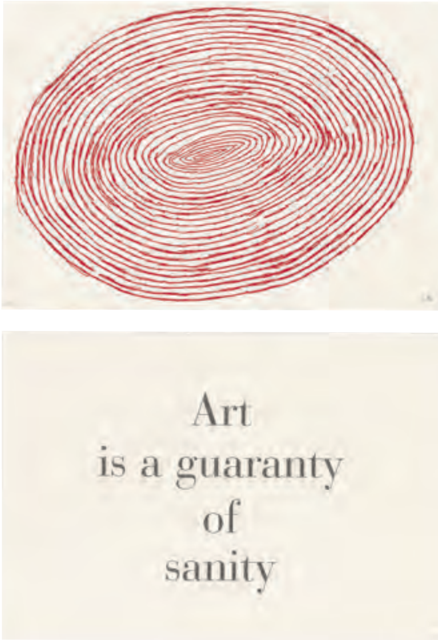
Interpretations

There are many approaches to Bourgeois's art, yet, as her fame grew, it was her own words that occupied center stage in interpreting it. Her riveting explanations captured the interest of many critics, curators, and scholars, this author among them. She dwelled on compelling episodes in her biography as motivators of her art, and they were indeed difficult to ignore. She also described her art in intimate terms as "a guaranty of sanity" and a form of "survival."[2] I interviewed Bourgeois extensively in preparation for her first retrospective held at The Museum of Modern Art in 1982, and again about each of the 150 compositions in her print catalogue raisonné of 1994. Her instinctual responses and disturbing memories were revelatory for me,[3] and many others have found them similarly meaningful. Although she was speaking about herself—and one was moved to feel empathy—the concerns she expressed were universal. In addition, for those unfamiliar with her strange and disquieting aesthetic, her statements provide an accessible entry point.[4] In the final analysis, however, her descriptions may be limiting: they can make it difficult to see her art with fresh eyes. Eventually, an overdependence on Bourgeois's captivating tales led to a justifiable critical backlash among those who believed her art's formal, historical, and theoretical dimensions were being overshadowed.[5]

That said, Bourgeois's words still must be taken into consideration. In addition to those she spoke, she left a voluminous body of writing, matched by almost no other artist. She conveys powerful sentiments in both and, in particular, reveals the distress she suffered and the struggles she had in coping. These emotions were clearly the force behind her art; to release and understand them was her goal. As she said: "It is not an image. . . . It's not an idea. It is an emotion you want to recreate."[6] In a search for the forms of her art, she asked herself:

> how this given vocabulary can be made to
> express elemental emotions . . .
> the hunger
> the envy
> the disgust
> the indignation
> the violence
> the revenge. . . .
> no one could fail to be shaken by the emotion
> conveyed.[7]

FIGS. 1, 2
Nos. 5 and 9 of 9 from the series ***What Is the Shape of This Problem?*** 1999.
Letterpress. SHEETS (each): 12 × 17" (30.5 × 43.2 cm). PUBLISHER: Galerie Lelong, Paris and New York. PRINTER: SOLO Impression, New York. EDITION: 25. Gift of the artist



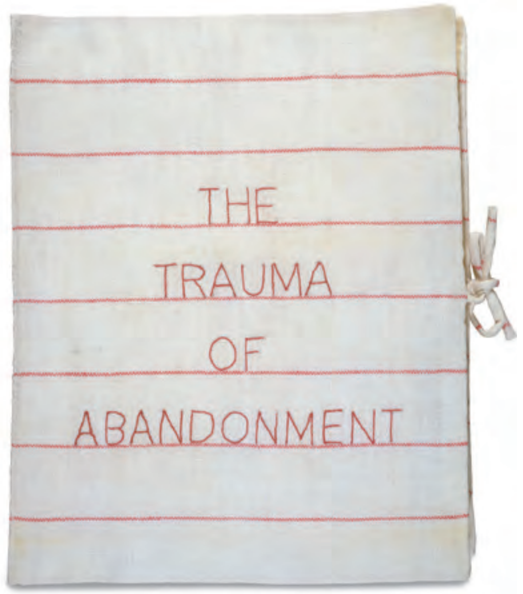
Bourgeois fought against despair with a fierce will and directed her formidable intelligence to comprehending her emotions. Art was the tool, and making it was empowering. It allowed her, she said, "to re-experience the fear, to give it a physicality so I am able to hack away at it. Fear becomes a manageable reality."[8] Yet she never fully alleviated the pain, even though very old age brought a certain mellowing. For much of her life she dealt with anger and aggression, guilt and anxiety, depression and loneliness.

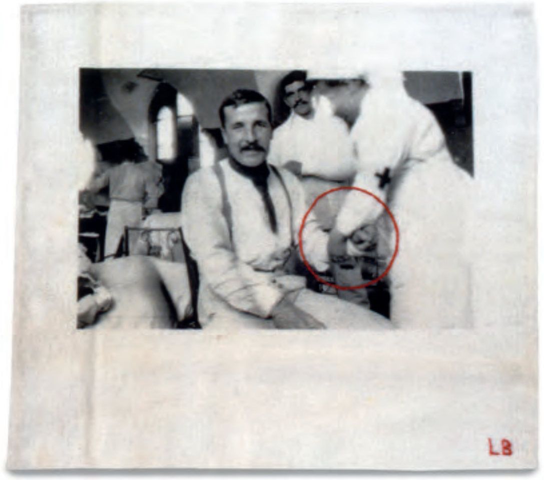
Some part of Bourgeois's fragile temperament was surely inborn, and family history supports that premise. In addition, she experienced events in her young life that appear unmistakably traumatic.[9] Such events, according to current thinking, could affect a child's developing brain and have long-lasting repercussions.[10] As she said: "I have been a prisoner of my memories and my aim is to get rid of them."[11] This constant fighting back infused her art with the raw power and penetrating hold that are its hallmarks, and also led to an inventive multiplicity of forms rather than a clear stylistic path. As Bourgeois told herself in one of her writings: "Your formal inventions are not the meaning of the work whereas other artists have exploited those formal ideas as the meaning and very essence of their works . . . that is the reason I do not have one ~~style~~ medium."[12]

This discussion of Bourgeois's prints and illustrated books proceeds chronologically, placing them within the arc of her life and artistic development, and within the broader art world context. The visual and thematic correspondences found in her printmaking—and in all her work across decades—will be examined in later chapters. Bourgeois's situation was unusual in that she gained recognition late in life and her early work was discovered at the same time as her new work. This simultaneity certainly had an influence on her revisiting of earlier themes, but in fact she was always concerned with a recurring set of issues and emotions.[13] While most artists are wrapped up in their latest efforts, for Bourgeois the past and present were intertwined. As she said: "For a lifetime I have wanted to say the same thing."[14] To interpret this body of work, scholars now have access to the appointment diaries and notebooks she kept over the course of her life, letters, family photographs going back to the early twentieth century, and more than fifteen hundred handwritten sheets she never parted with.[15] "Nothing is lost," she said, "there is something sacred about things that are your past."[16]

A Formative Childhood

Bourgeois, born in Paris in 1911, often talked about the early years of her life. She could be moved to tears describing a childhood incident, even some five, six, or seven decades later.[17] Events of the here and now stirred up old memories and feelings not sufficiently buried. Her youngest years were beset by war and family conflicts that certainly would have adversely affected almost anyone to some degree. But Bourgeois had a deeply sensitive nature, vulnerable to emotional upset, and may have been predisposed to psychological affliction. Her brother, Pierre, just thirteen months her junior, suffered debilitating psychological breakdowns that led to his confinement in an institution for much of his adult life.[18] She recognized their similarities. "I have Pierre's trouble and will fall





apart, slowly and surely, so the sooner the better, and let us be thru with it."[19]

Bourgeois's experience of World War I undoubtedly had a lasting impact. She was just under three years old when her father joined the military, following his brother who had been killed almost immediately. Her aunt and two cousins were taken into Bourgeois's family household for a time. For other periods, she, Pierre, and their older sister, Henriette, were displaced to relatives in Aubusson, in central France, which Bourgeois later described as "the safest place in France."[20] During the fighting, her mother visited her father near his encampments, with the very young Louise in tow. There are photographs of the trip to the hospital in Chartres when he was wounded. Bourgeois was four at that time and recollects her mother's jealousy toward the nurses who fussed over her charming father. Adding more uncertainty to the family's life, he returned to action after his recuperation.[21] Bourgeois's close proximity to war's violence, the realization on an emotional level that injury or death could be imminent, and the real tensions she perceived between her parents, all would have constituted an ongoing traumatic situation for a young child. Indeed, Bourgeois has characterized her father's war deployment as "The Trauma of Abandonment" (FIGS. 3, 4).

When Bourgeois was five, her mother, who headed the family's tapestry restoration business, fell ill with what may have been influenza related to the pandemic of 1918. Thus, at an early age, Bourgeois had seen and felt the vulnerabilities of both her parents. Her mother never completely recovered and, starting in 1922, the family sought out the more healthful climate in the South of France during winters. At eleven, acting as a companion, Bourgeois began to help care for her mother, a task that continued until Louise was twenty. "I took her from spa to spa," Bourgeois remembered. "They told me it was a vacation, but it really was a way of pushing back death."[22] Also at this time, her father brought an English tutor into the household for Louise and her siblings. Sadie Gordon Richmond would stay with the family for the better part of ten years. As a young adolescent, Bourgeois certainly would have looked up to the youthful tutor, only six years her senior. But Sadie also became her father's mistress, and Bourgeois reacted bitterly: "I was betrayed not only by my father, damn it, but by her too. It was a double betrayal."[23]

A final, extremely painful event of Bourgeois's youth occurred in 1932, when the mother for whom she was caring died at age fifty-three. Bourgeois was distraught and even attempted suicide. To make matters worse, her father mocked her grief.[24] Yet, of all these troubling details in her family history, it was the incident with the mistress Sadie that Bourgeois cited repeatedly — starting in the early 1980s — as the direct source of the jealousy, anger, and fear of abandonment that fueled her art. But aspects of any of these early events could have been sources for the loneliness and isolation she felt, the difficulties she endured in her relationships, and the anxiety, despair, and depression that plagued her throughout her life. These were the maladies she exorcised through her art. "Do not look for a rational treatise," she said. "Life is made of experiences and emotions. The objects I have created make them tangible."[25]

FIGS. 3, 4
Cover and no. 9 of 12 from the fabric illustrated book ***The Trauma of Abandonment.*** 2001.
Cover: 2006, stitched text, $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$" (31.8 × 24.8 cm). No. 9: digital print with stitched circle. PAGE: $7\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$" (19.1 × 21.6 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: commercial printshop. EDITION: unique. Private collection

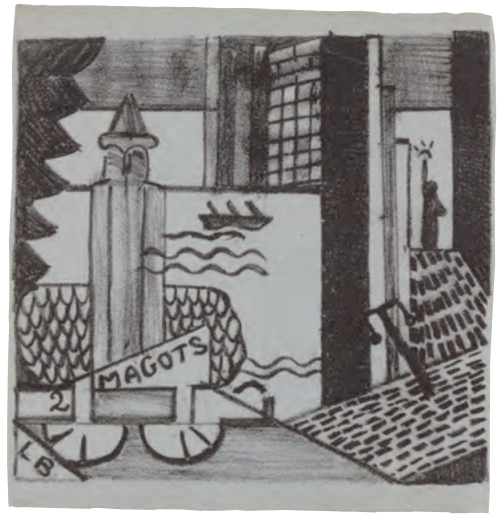


FIG. 5
St. Germain. 1938.
Lithograph. SHEET: $5 \times 6\frac{15}{16}$" (12.8 × 17.7 cm). PUBLISHER: the artist. PRINTER: commercial printshop. EDITION: c. 250. Gift of the artist

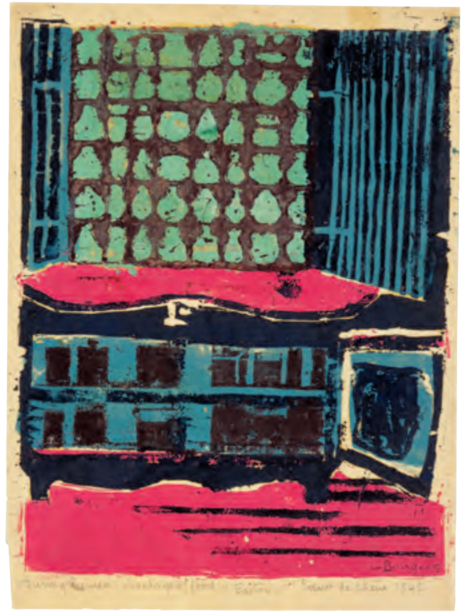
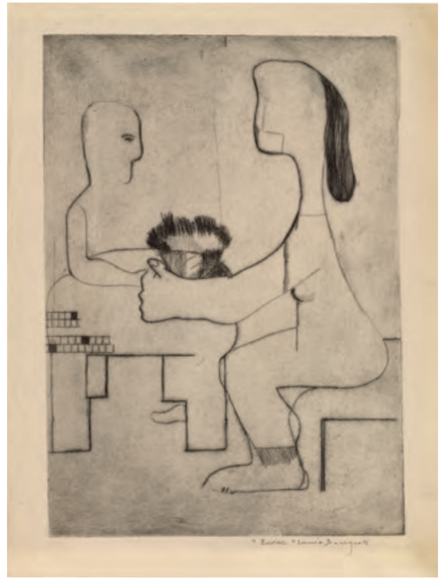


FIG. 6
During the War: Shortage of Food in Easton, state III of IV. 1942–44.
Woodcut. SHEET: $12\frac{3}{16} \times 9\frac{3}{16}$" (31 × 23.3 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: the artist. EDITION: 4 impressions of all states. Gift of the artist

A Turn to Art

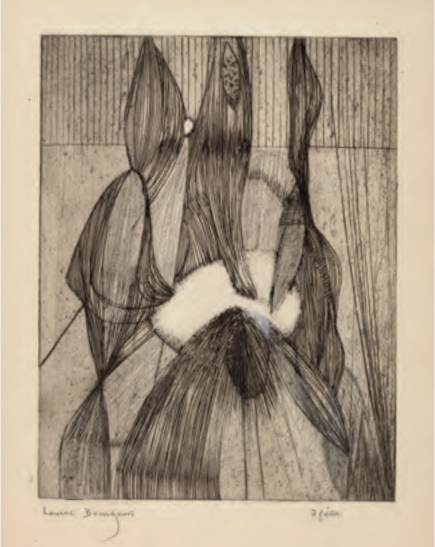
After her mother died, Bourgeois returned to her interrupted studies. She began in mathematics and philosophy but eventually turned to art, studying painting with a number of artists in the studio training system of Paris. Letters to a friend at the time indicate that she was an eager young student and artist, enjoying the various exhibitions and films around town.[26] In 1938, her father cordoned off a section of his tapestry gallery on the Boulevard St. Germain to provide Bourgeois with an area of her own in which to sell prints, drawings, illustrated books, and paintings by a range of well-known artists, and to earn a living. Her early interest in the rarified field of prints and illustrated books was likely nurtured by her father, a dedicated collector and bibliophile. She actively attended auctions around Paris to build up her inventory. Early receipts enumerate purchases of posters and prints by Pierre Bonnard, Théophile Steinlen, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and others.[27] And it was in this gallery that Bourgeois met her future husband, Robert Goldwater, who stopped in to browse. They married just three weeks later, which might seem plausible for the volatile Bourgeois, but perhaps not for the more staid Goldwater, a young American art historian from New York. Nonetheless, that is how it happened, and Bourgeois moved to New York City in October 1938, and would live there for the rest of her life.

The early years in New York seem to have been happy and fulfilling for Bourgeois. She quickly enrolled at the Art Students League, where she continued her studies in painting and also took up printmaking for the first time with League printer Will Barnet, who was master lithographer there.[28] She depended on Barnet as a printer for several of her earliest prints. This new direction is not altogether surprising, given her familiarity with the medium. She also began creating prints as annual holiday greeting cards. Her first one, *St. Germain* (1938; FIG. 5), made after only three months in America, depicts her trip from Paris to New York.[29] She would eventually submit prints to competitions at the Print Club of Philadelphia, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Library of Congress. The decade from 1939 to 1949 represents the first of two phases of printmaking in Bourgeois's career; sixty-nine compositions resulted, with numerous evolving states and variants that bring the total to some 250 printed sheets in all.



Although Bourgeois must have been drawn to the Art Students League for the sense of community it provided, especially being new to New York, she also made prints at home. She taught herself linoleum cut and woodcut (FIG. 6), which are relatively simple, but she also sought out instruction for the more complicated techniques of etching and aquatint.[30] She came to favor intaglio,[31] especially the “endearing”[32] scratching of metal for drypoint and the “muscular”[33] digging with the burin in engraving. “You give the burin its power,” she once said, and it was “an effective way of directly converting antagonism.”[34]

During the early 1940s, Bourgeois had three children: she and Goldwater adopted a four-year-old orphan, Michel, from France; he arrived in New York less than two months before the birth of their first biological son, Jean-Louis, in July 1940. Their son Alain was born sixteen months later. Bourgeois decorated Michel’s room with colorful French popular prints known as Images d’Épinal, purchased at auction.[35] Although clearly very busy with family chores, she kept up with her painting and her printmaking. (She had not yet taken up sculpture.) She describes creating a very diluted form of acid for her etchings and aquatints so it would not endanger the children.[36] She eventually acquired her own small printing press. Her prints and paintings of that time display a simplified and abstracted realism with flattened forms that relate to the late Cubist-inspired style of Purism (FIG. 7). The subjects relate mostly to her everyday life of the time, including scenes of her husband reading, and of herself serving a meal at the family’s country house in Easton, Connecticut.[37]



Bourgeois was thrust into the New York art world through her husband: Robert Goldwater was a respected art historian who traveled in scholarly and critical circles of the highest order. Her appointment diaries of the 1940s are filled with the names of prominent cultural figures who came to social gatherings at their home, or whom she met at openings and other events. Among those mentioned are noted art historians Millard Meiss and John Rewald, literary critics Alfred Kazin, Philip Rahv, and Lionel Trilling, art critic Clement Greenberg, and established art dealers Julien Levy and Pierre Matisse—and the list goes on. She also sought attention as an artist, cultivating gallery owners, not always successfully. Among her artist friends were Louise Nevelson, whom she saw frequently, and photographer Berenice Abbott, as well as others who are less well-known today. All these art-related activities can be traced in her diaries, between notes about the children’s temperatures when they were sick, their various activities and shopping needs, and all the run-of-the-mill tasks required for a busy household.

FIG. 7
Pierre, state V of VI. 1939.
Soft ground etching and drypoint. PLATE: 9 11/16 × 6 7/8" (24.6 × 17.5 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: the artist. EDITION: 8 impressions of all states and variants.
Gift of the artist

FIG. 8
Les Trois Fées (The Three Fairies), state V of VIII. 1948.
Engraving, with gouging and hand additions. PLATE: 6 13/16 × 5 7/16" (17.3 × 13.8 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: the artist at Atelier 17, New York. EDITION: 8 impressions of all states.
Gift of the artist

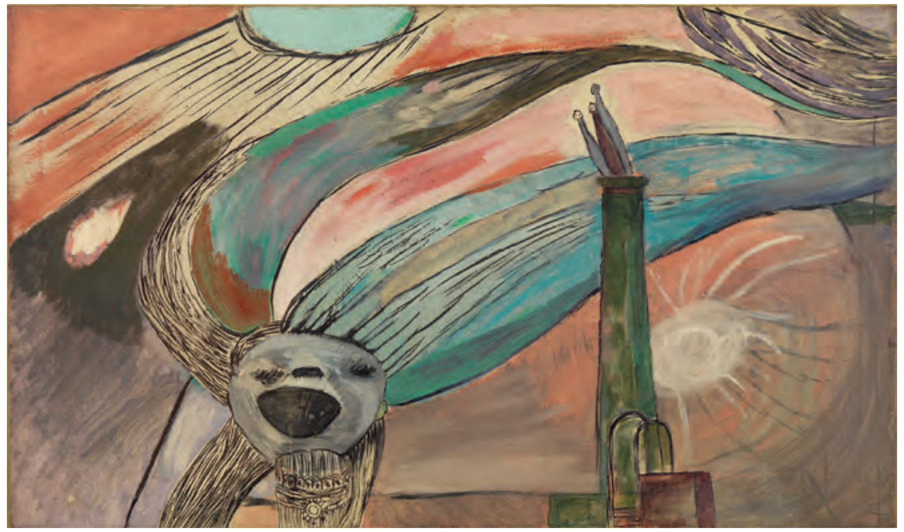
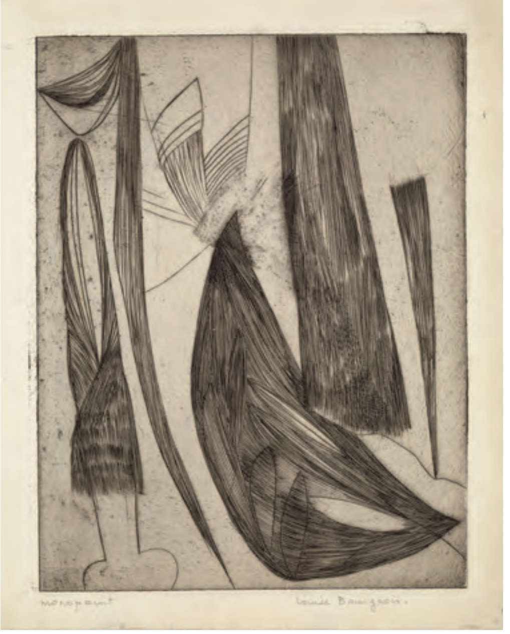


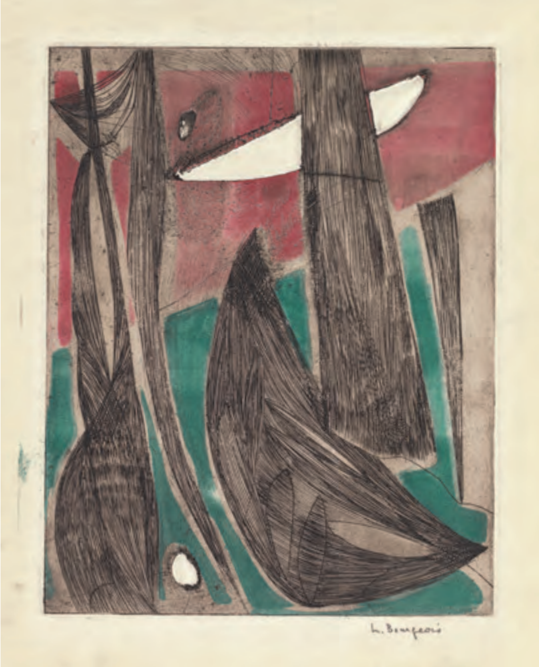
FIG. 9
Untitled. 1946–47.
Oil on canvas. 26 × 44" (66 × 111.8 cm). Collection Artist Rooms Foundation, United Kingdom

In 1945 Bourgeois had her first solo show of paintings, at the Bertha Schaefer Gallery, and then another in 1947 at the Norlyst Gallery. Her paintings and prints included gridded constructions, a visual device she had in common with other New York artists at this time (PLATE 149). She also took part in group exhibitions with Adolph Gottlieb, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and others in the burgeoning New York School, as well as in the Annual Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, precursors to today’s Whitney Biennials. She seems to have been in the thick of things, in contrast to the more isolated figure she would become. At the same time, by the later 1940s, Bourgeois began to have anxiety and self-doubts, and psychological strains were coming to the surface. Notes about insomnia, depression, anger, and panic started to appear in her diaries.[38] Remembering this time, she later said: “There I was, a wife and mother, and I was afraid of my family. I was afraid not to measure up.”[39]

In this period, Bourgeois’s imagery began to exhibit Surrealist overtones. Her earlier flattened, stylized forms morphed into something resembling dream spaces. The subjects were mysterious. This invented space permeated both her prints (FIG. 8) and her paintings (FIG. 9). It is difficult to pinpoint what precipitated the change. In 1939, she had written positively about Picasso and negatively about Surrealism in her diary: “All movements painted by Picasso have been seen and felt; he is never theatrical. The Surrealists are theatrical. New York painting, the painting that wants to be or is fashionable, is theatrical.”[40] Yet theatricality, with its implied drama and narratives, would become fundamental to Bourgeois’s sensibility. Did the Surrealist mood permeating New York finally take hold of her? The art world was filled with exiled artists fleeing Europe, and prominent venues like the Art of This Century gallery were Surrealist gathering places.[41] With its attention to the unconscious, and to psychological content generally, Surrealism seemed a natural vehicle for exorcising Bourgeois’s demons. While she never acknowledged a debt to this movement—and in fact denied that there was any—it seems clear she began to see art as an outlet for her despairing states of mind.[42] Later, when she talked about her art of this period, she invariably interpreted it in emotional terms.[43]

An important Surrealist-oriented venue in New York at that time was Stanley William Hayter’s print workshop, Atelier 17, which had transferred operations from Paris during the war. Hayter had brought the Surrealist method of automatism—a mode intended to release unconscious thought through art—to the realm of printmaking. At New York’s Atelier 17, American artists sat side by side with a range of international figures, including such celebrated Surrealists as Max Ernst, André Masson, Roberto Matta, and Yves Tanguy.[44] Bourgeois must have been impressed when an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in 1944 celebrated prints from the workshop.[45] She began to participate herself in 1946, and befriended Joan Miró there the next year.[46] Her diaries indicate that Hayter was a presence in her life throughout the next few years, up until 1950, as she sought out the





FIGS. 10, 11
Ascension Lente (Slow Ascent), states V and XII of XIV. 1949. Engraving. State XII with gouging and stencil additions. PLATE: 8 3/4 × 6 7/8" (22.2 × 17.5 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: the artist at Atelier 17, New York. EDITION: 20 impressions of all states. Gifts of the artist

companionship and the collaborative spirit of his workshop. She remembers particularly that her ability to speak French gave her special status there as she could help with communications.[47]

Hayter introduced a method of rotating the printing plate while engraving with a burin, offering a new freedom to the process; he also stressed experimentation with intaglio techniques. Although Bourgeois did not adopt Hayter's automatist approach, the Surrealist elements in her prints of this time—with their indeterminate spaces and strange figural presences, and with the technical effects of gouging, soft ground textures, and occasional color—reveal his influence. But Bourgeois was no favorite of the master printer and that seemed to bother her, ever the student eager to please the teacher. Decades later she would write of a "recollection of Hayter outburst" and "the dangerous Hayter."[48] She claimed he did not like women, although perhaps it was more about his not liking *her*, since statistics confirm that nearly half the artists at Atelier 17 were female.[49] She was certainly miffed not to be represented in his 1949 book, *New Ways of Gravure*.[50] Regardless, when he returned to Europe, she stopped going to Atelier 17, saying she did not take the workshop seriously any longer.[51]

Printmaking Achievements

Getting out of the house and sitting among the other artists at Atelier 17 must have relieved some of Bourgeois's feelings of isolation. Also printmaking lent itself to cooperating with others, particularly her friend the artist Kenneth Kilstrom, who helped by bringing her plates into the acid room, a task that frightened her.[52] Kilstrom also assisted her in pulling impressions of prints at home on the press in her studio. She completed a range of printed compositions at this time, all with an otherworldly, Surrealist tone and subjects that suggest natural phenomena, enigmatic figures, and anthropomorphic architecture (PLATES 4, 31, 151). Her printmaking was not a pursuit of standard editions, but rather another opportunity to experiment (FIGS. 10, 11).

With growing confidence in her skills, Bourgeois seemed to accept the challenge posed by the group of dedicated printmakers around her. She set about creating an illustrated book, a format with which she was intimately familiar, and this time planned for its distribution. This ambitious undertaking took an enormous effort, belying the fact that depression and anxiety held her back. In 1947 she issued *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*, with nine plates and accompanying parables she wrote herself (PLATES 13–21). She had carefully studied portfolio construction in local print rooms, and her volume is housed in a beige linen cover equipped with interior folding flaps to comfortably hold the unbound prints and text pages. She also sought advice about her parables, reaching out to her admired friend Alfred H. Barr, Jr., founding director of The Museum of Modern Art. For the introduction, she enlisted Marius Bewley, a respected poet and classicist who had also been the director of the Art of This Century gallery. She then set about attempting to market the volume, sending copies to bookshops and critics, and printing postcard order forms.[53] She said her goal in this endeavor was to become better known, but the book was not a success and she ultimately assembled far fewer than the announced edition of fifty-four examples. Yet its fame grew much later, in the 1970s and 1980s, when Bourgeois was gaining more widespread attention. *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* now occupies pride of place in all her major exhibitions. In 2011 a group exhibition of contemporary art based on it was mounted in the Netherlands, bringing together related work by a range of artists in all mediums.[54]

Bourgeois's parables here allude to isolation, frustrated attempts at communication, and anger. They are at once poignant, ironic, and droll. In his introduction, Bewley states that he wants "to avoid any psycho-inquisitorial session," but acknowledges that the texts "are all tiny tragedies of human frustration."[55] Most plates in the book portray skyscrapers that stand in for figures, or other quasi-architectural elements inhabiting surreal vistas. In one plate, floating ladders are trapped in a room and attempt escape. The sequencing of plates results in a cinematic sense of action, with Bourgeois's lonely "figures" waiting, shifting, encountering one another, and getting into predicaments.

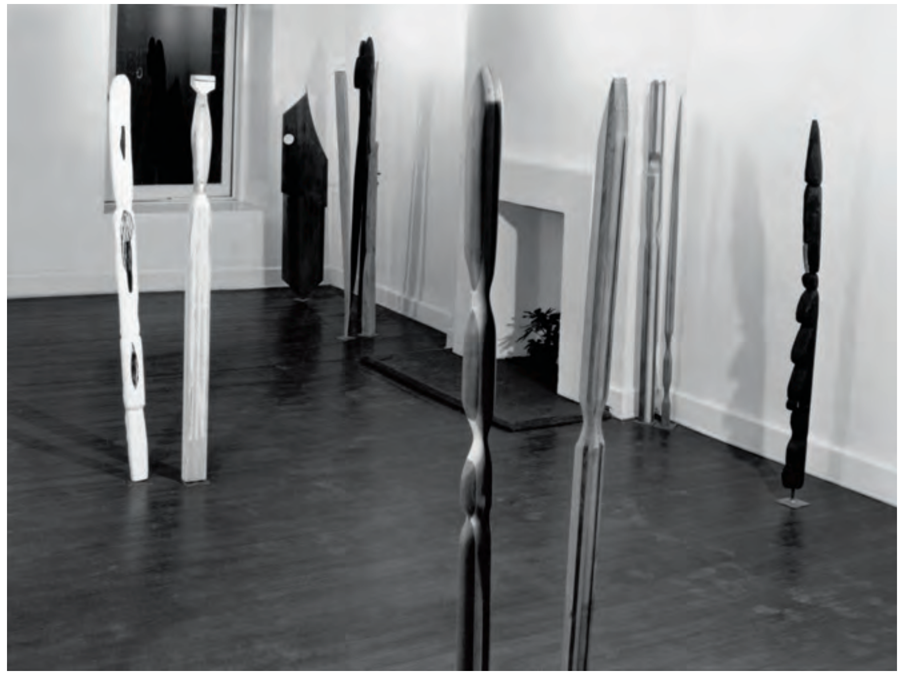


FIG. 12
Installation view of *Louise Bourgeois: Sculptures* at the Peridot Gallery, New York. 1950. Photograph by Aaron Siskind

The configurations in *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* call to mind the totemic wood pieces that Bourgeois would soon exhibit in her first solo shows of sculpture in 1949 and in 1950, and seem to provide a transition from her painting to this new sculptural direction. She was no longer satisfied with painting's "level of reality," she said. "I could express much deeper things in three dimensions."[56] These early wood pieces were clearly figurative, however abstracted, and she deployed them around the gallery space so viewers could walk around and among them (FIG. 12). Some of their titles give away the fact that the sculptures were stand-ins for people left behind in France but, more generally, they represented isolation and fragility. After this turn to sculpture, Bourgeois stopped making prints and paintings. But while she left painting permanently behind, she returned to printmaking many decades later. The intervening years would be formative for her emerging artistic sensibility.

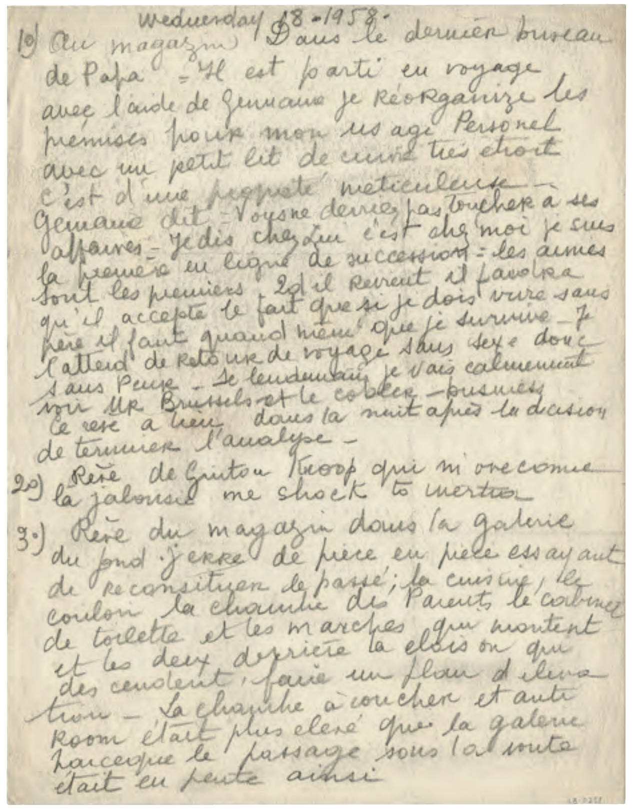
A Long Interruption

After showing her work in two exhibitions devoted to sculpture, and now nearly forty years old, Bourgeois seemed to have reached a certain level of maturity as an artist, and it might have been expected that she would continue expanding upon her unique vision. But intimations in her diaries reveal the depression, anger, and bouts of insomnia that would become debilitating. In 1951 her father died suddenly when she and her family were in France for her husband's Fulbright fellowship. Her father's death seemed to be a psychological breaking point for Bourgeois. She entered psychoanalysis late that year, continuing that process intensively through the mid-1960s, and then intermittently until her analyst died in 1985. By the mid-1950s she had virtually stopped making art, with only a few attempts at developing her wood sculpture up to that time. After a final show at Peridot Gallery in 1953, primarily of drawings, she would not exhibit a new body of sculpture again until 1964.

To be sure, there were trends in the New York art world that did not favor her personalized sculptural vocabulary. Critical attention had turned, in particular, to abstract forms in welded metal. She was hurt and disappointed not to be included in the 1951 MoMA exhibition *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*, organized by curator Andrew Carnduff Ritchie, who with his wife were among the closest of family friends.[57] Alfred Barr, however, had purchased one of her wood pieces for the Museum and installed it in a *Recent Acquisitions* show around the same time.[58] But trends were going in another direction. A symposium held the following year, titled "The New Sculpture" and led by Ritchie, featured Herbert Ferber, Richard Lippold, Theodore Roszak, and David Smith.[59]

Bourgeois fell into a deep depression. It prevented her from working but she did carry on, for better or worse, with family responsibilities and also participated in art world activities. But the fact that she was deeply unhappy is evident in writings that she pursued daily — if not several times a day — and that eventually filled approximately a thousand documents during the course of her analysis. She detailed her dreams (FIG. 13), described her suffering, attempted to mitigate her anger and understand her despair. One such sheet painfully describes her sense of self during these years:

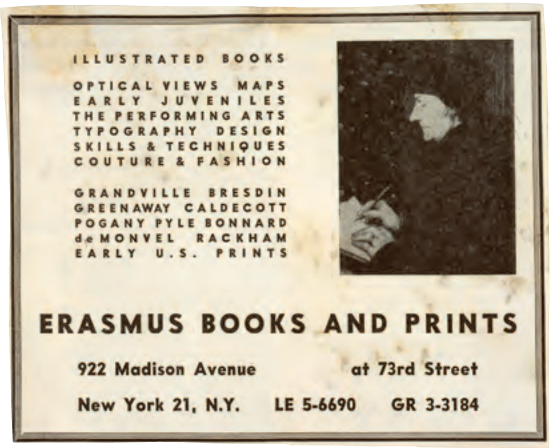
I have failed as a wife
as a woman
as a mother
as a ~~home~~ hostess
as an artist
as a business woman
and I am 47 —
as a friend —
as a daughter
as a sister —
I have not failed as a
truth seeker
lowest ebb —[60]



Wednesday 18-1958
1) Au magazin) Dans le dernier bureau
de Papa – Il est parti en voyage
avec l'aide de Germaine je Réorganize les
premises pour mon usage Personel
avec un petit lit de cuivre très etroit
c'est d'une propreté méticuleuse –
Germaine dit – Vous ne devriez pas toucher à ses
affaires – Je dis chez lui c'est chez moi je suis
la première en ligne de succession – les aimés
sont les premiers 2d il Revient il faudra
qu'il accepte le fait que si je dois vivre sans
père il faut quand même que je survive – J
l'attend de Retour de voyage sans sexe donc
sans Peur – Le lendemain je vais calmement
voir Mr Brussels et le cobeer – business
Ce rêve a lieu dans la nuit après la décision
de terminer l'analyse –
2o) Rêve de Gaston Kroop qui m'ovecome
la jalousie me shock to inertia
3.) Rêve du magazin dans la galerie
du fond j'erre de pièce en pièce essayant
de reconsituer le passé; la cuisine, le
couloir la chambre des Parents le cabinet
de toilette et les marches qui montent
et les deux derrière la cloison qui
descendent, faire un plan d'eleva-
tion – La chambre à coucher et autre
Room était plus élevé que la galerie
parceque le passage sous la voute
était en pente ainsi

This previously unknown cache of writings was discovered in two batches, in 2004 and in 2010, just before Bourgeois died.[61] She sanctioned their study and also asked that they be read aloud to her. As a group and individually, these sheets constitute a remarkably articulate testament of a person in crisis. They are now being scrutinized not only by scholars and curators with an interest in Bourgeois's art, but also by those in psychoanalytic fields.[62] And, most important for a new understanding of the full measure of Bourgeois's achievement, her writings, generally, are receiving literary attention.[63] Her art of the 1950s may in fact have been the written documents of this period. She noted the creative energy they required, even though she herself would not deem them an art form. She wrote: "Why did I need so long with L [Dr. Henry Lowenfeld, her analyst] — ask him if [it] is customary to have to write down dreams + recall like these pages. It is very time consuming but it gives me the 'joy of creation' that I used to have after working beside[s] I build up strength. The result is not 'art' useless except as a catharsis — "[64] Later she would recognize exorcism, catharsis, and the pursuit of self-understanding as motivators of her art.

FIG. 13
One of approximately a thousand documents of personal writings by Bourgeois related to her psychoanalysis. Loose sheet, June 18, 1958; LB-0258



ILLUSTRATED BOOKS
OPTICAL VIEWS MAPS
EARLY JUVENILES
THE PERFORMING ARTS
TYPOGRAPHY DESIGN
SKILLS & TECHNIQUES
COUTURE & FASHION
GRANDVILLE BRESDIN
GREENAWAY CALDECOTT
POGANY PYLE BONNARD
de MONVEL RACKHAM
EARLY U.S. PRINTS

ERASMUS BOOKS AND PRINTS
922 Madison Avenue at 73rd Street
New York 21, N.Y. LE 5-6690 GR 3-3184

FIG. 14
Advertisement for Erasmus Books and Prints, Louise Bourgeois's shop during the late 1950s

Although her earlier sculptures, and a few new pieces, were exhibited in group shows during these years, and she kept a studio in Paris when the family was there, she admitted that she was no longer producing art. She even canceled a scheduled exhibition at the Fachetti Gallery in Paris in 1953. But she did try to pull herself out of this chasm by asserting herself in another direction. She began to make plans to open a rare book and print shop, like the small operation she had within her father's gallery in Paris before she married. At places like the Swann and Parke-Bernet auction houses, she added to her inventory of prints and to the books she had inherited from her father's collection,[65] just as she had searched out auctions in Paris in the early years.[66] In 1956, she finally opened Erasmus Books and Prints on East 11th Street, opposite the historic Webster Hall event space, in what was then New York's neighborhood for antiquarian books. It is remarkable that she had the energy to embark on this venture.

Erasmus was not a success on 11th Street, nor was it when it moved uptown to a second location on Madison Avenue near 73rd Street (FIG. 14). But the rarified, elite world of the bibliophile and master print collector surely provided Bourgeois with a satisfying intellectual and highly respectable activity during this low point in her life. The shop got her out of the house — although, according to her diaries, on some days leaving home was difficult. It gave her a sense of agency. And from a feminist point of view it gave her the legitimacy of a job. Later she noted: "Motivations for Erasmus . . . have a 'job' because Robt has a job — if you have 'a job' you leave in the morning you come home at night . . . people respect you, you do what men do — "[67] Although the shop closed in 1959, it was in operation — perhaps not always at full speed — for nearly four years.[68] "The house is a trap," she said. "You look for a refuge and Erasmus I was one and that is what you need."[69] Running a shop, however imperfectly, was not a small accomplishment. It seems another example of the very strong survival instinct in this small, fragile woman.

New Materials and a New Vocabulary

Bourgeois's intensive psychoanalysis continued into the 1960s, along with the contingent written component. Her jealousy, anger, depression, despair, and recurring insomnia did not disappear but, as she wrote: "I do not have to say that I used to be under anxiety twenty four hours a day — but now there are breaks in between — "[70] She had found a way to better understand herself, realizing even more explicitly that art could be an outlet the more closely it was tied to her emotions. While her instinctual expression of states of mind had begun with paintings, prints, and wood figures of the late 1940s, psychoanalysis gave her an even clearer path.

Bourgeois had just turned fifty-two when her first exhibition of new sculpture in many years opened at New York's Stable Gallery, in 1964. Her work was now comprised of organic configurations, molded from fluidly yielding materials — quite the opposite of her wood totems. In plaster, she explored forces of nature with hanging nests and cocoons, and twisting

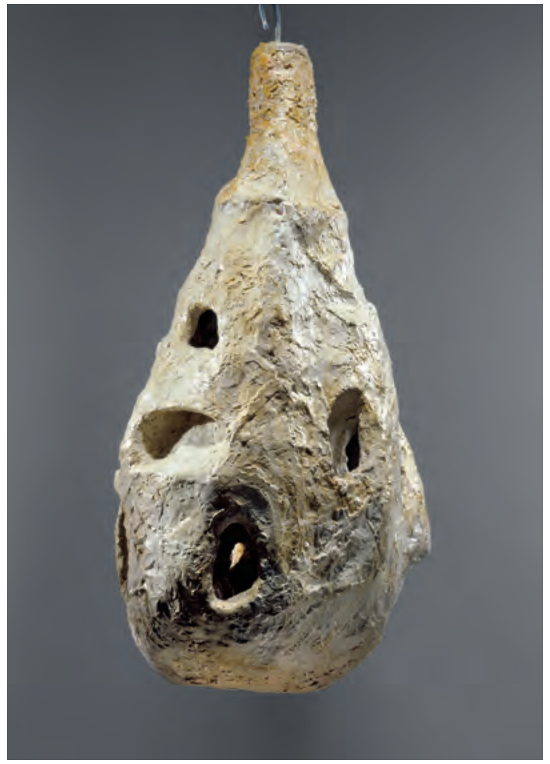


FIG. 15
Fée Couturière (Fairy Dressmaker). 1963.
Plaster. 39 1/2 × 22 1/2 × 22 1/2" (100.3 × 57.2 × 57.2 cm). Collection The Easton Foundation

forms that suggested germination and growth (FIG. 15). Some foreshadowed the explicit sexuality that would emerge in her works of later in the decade (PLATE 62). She also introduced rubber latex pieces, with forms bordering on the repulsive.

In 1967 Bourgeois made the first of many trips to the quarries of Italy, where she took up work in marble, a more traditional and permanent material for her sculpture. In Italy she began collaborating with specialist stone carvers whose skills she admired. “These craftsmen,” she said, “are interested not in the tool itself, but in their power over the tool.”[71] New forms emerged that alluded to rounded landscapes, but with an overall topography that also suggested breasts. The shapes embedded in other pieces resembled penises. But it was latex she turned to for one of her most blatantly sexual works, *Fillette*, of 1968 (FIG. 16).

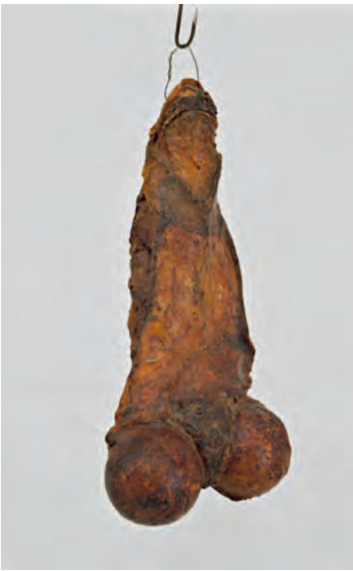


FIG. 16
Fillette. 1968.
Latex over plaster. 23 1/2 × 11 × 7 1/2" (59.7 × 28 × 19.1 cm). Gift of the artist in memory of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

This range of directions certainly did not contribute to a signature style, which was expected in the art world; nor did her work fit comfortably within formalist trends. But Bourgeois was prescient in her approach. The strict grip of formalist modernism was loosening in critical circles as movements like Pop art, Fluxus, and Happenings emerged. Later there would be an acknowledgment that art had always been more multifaceted than midcentury critical debates allowed, and “pluralism” would become the dominant term in a new era of postmodernism. Also, artists would eventually embrace multiple modes within their practices, with no negative consequences. Bourgeois’s place within this changing sensibility became abundantly clear in 1966 when she joined much younger artists in the groundbreaking *Eccentric Abstraction* exhibition curated by Lucy Lippard.[72] Terms like *anti-form*, *process art*, and *post-Minimalism* gained currency to describe the new phenomena, and rumblings of a feminist wave in the art world were soon to be heard.

With her outpouring of highly original forms, closely aligned to emotions brought to the surface and examined through psychoanalysis, Bourgeois demonstrated a newfound confidence. She gave no thought to stylistic consistency. Hers were not forms generated from other forms, but from changing states of mind. As one art historian has noted, her work has a “psychoanalytic logic.”[73] And that logic would continue to unfold for the rest of her career. Her analysis in the 1950s and 1960s had been a process of exploration, identification, and understanding. Although it was not curative in the deepest sense, it provided a pathway. As one prominent psychoanalytic writer put it: “She may not have ‘had an analysis’; rather, she ‘used’ it.”[74] It succeeded in fueling her art by further personalizing it, and led to the startling breakthroughs of the 1960s and beyond.

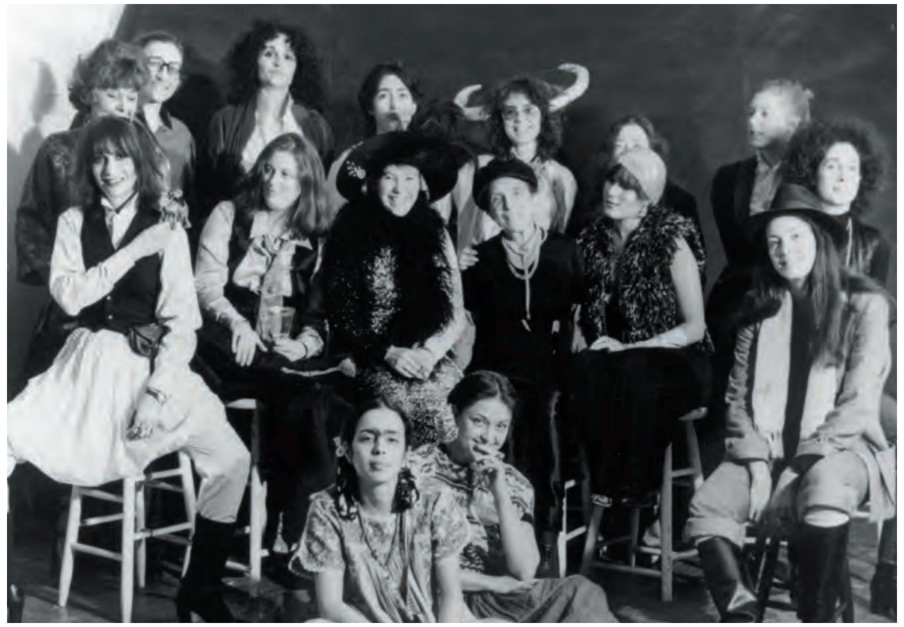


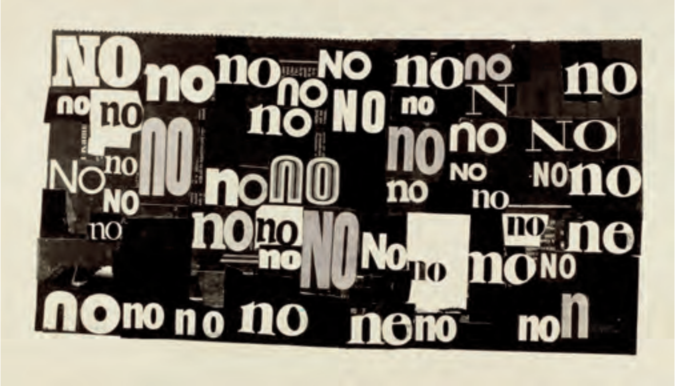
FIG. 17
Feminist costume party in honor of Louise Bourgeois, hosted by Mary Beth Edelson and Ana Mendieta. March 14, 1979. Guests dressed as their favorite artists. FROM LEFT, TOP ROW: Gloria MacDonald, Barbara Moore, Judith Bernstein, Joyce Kozloff, Mary Beth Edelson, Phyllis Krim, Poppy Johnson; MIDDLE ROW: Edit de Ak, Anne Sharp, Pat Hamilton, Bourgeois, Suzan Cooper, Hannah Wilke, Barbara Zucker; FRONT ROW: Ana Mendieta, Michelle Stuart. Photograph by and © Mary Beth Edelson

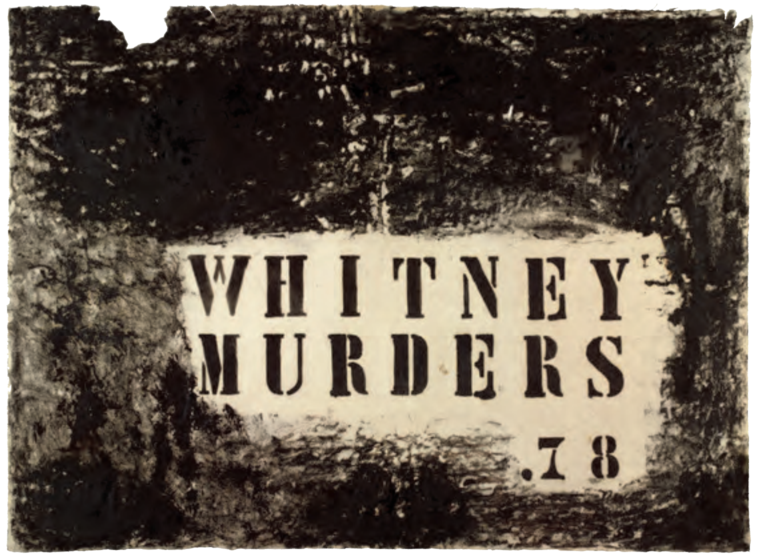
More Personal Than Political

The 1970s was a watershed decade for the art world as the long-held and constricting formalist discourse finally gave way fully to a new openness.[75] A defining force in this realignment was the women’s movement and the significance it had for the art generated and talked about at that time. It provided access to new narratives, with biography and the body as prime subject matter. Finally, Bourgeois moved to the center of discussions, particularly among younger women artists. While she was not an organizing force in the new feminist art organizations, she was a willing participant and appreciated the attention she received, even while also maintaining an engrained ambivalence about being pegged “a female artist.”[76] Thinking back about this period, she gave certain reasons for her hesitation. “The feminists took me as a role model,” she wrote, “as a mother. It bothers me. I am not interested in being a mother. I am still a girl trying to understand myself” (FIG. 17).[77] She did not fully acknowledge a feminist underpinning to her struggles. She wrote: “There is no feminist aesthetic. Absolutely not! There is a psychological content. But it is not because I am a woman that I work the way I do. It is because of the experiences I have gone through.”[78]

In March 1973 Bourgeois’s loving and supportive husband, Robert Goldwater, died suddenly at age sixty-five. To divert herself and help regain balance, Bourgeois began teaching at New York’s School of Visual Arts. Her courses were in sculpture and printmaking, even though she had left the latter medium behind years before. She ran her class like a studio rather than offering technical instruction. She asked the students probing questions about art’s meaning and purpose.[79] But this experience did not revive an interest in printmaking in her own practice. There are only two prints of note from this period, and both are unconventional. She turned to photostat as an easy method to create *No*, an expression of revolt linked to a protest march in which she participated (FIG. 18), and to stenciling and rubbing to rid herself of anger at being rejected for an exhibition (FIG. 19). But Bourgeois’s teaching experience was stimulating in other ways. The vitality of the students attracted her, and she befriended several young people whom she enlisted as studio assistants and also as companions for social activities. This circle was a far cry from the coterie of art historians, museum directors, critics, and other intellectuals with whom she had interacted with her husband. By the end of the 1970s Bourgeois was even frequenting the Mudd Club, a punk performance venue in Lower Manhattan.

Bourgeois took a crucial turn in this period as she began to assemble installations, well before the art form became established. In 1974, she mounted the eerie and cavernous *The Destruction of the Father* (FIG. 62; P. 224) at the alternative space 112 Greene Street in SoHo, and later, in 1978, constructed the encircling *Confrontation* at the uptown Hamilton Gallery of Contemporary Art (FIG. 20). Both pieces were replete with





violent overtones and narrative implications, calling to mind abandoned stage sets more than conventional sculptures. Bourgeois pursued the theatrical implications of *Confrontation* further when she staged a performance in it, with actors from among her young friends, as well as one former colleague of her husband, all dressed in outlandish latex costumes adorned with multiple protuberances (FIG. 63; P. 225).

Bourgeois was hitting her stride and enjoying the newfound attention. And it was not just recent work that was gaining notice. Her early work, much of which had never sold and was stored in the basement of her Chelsea brownstone, seemed just as relevant. As the decade closed, in 1979, gallery-goers could see the full range of her wood pieces from the 1940s in an exhibition at the Xavier Fourcade Gallery. That was followed by a 1980 show there of work from Bourgeois's "middle years," including her marble sculptures. Also her very early paintings, drawings, and prints were the subject of *The Iconography of Louise Bourgeois*, an exhibition mounted by Jerry Gorovoy, a young artist employed at the Max Hutchinson Gallery who would later become her assistant, and would retain that position for the rest of Bourgeois's life. The 1947 illustrated book *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* was also on view in several shows in this period. The art world seemed finally ready to appreciate the evocative art Bourgeois had been making for nearly forty years.

A Growing Renown

The pluralist thrust continued into the 1980s as a range of new art filled galleries and alternative spaces from uptown to SoHo to the East Village, and mediums such as photography and video began to receive increased attention. Bourgeois was now part of this mix, as were other "rediscovered" older artists — Lucian Freud, Leon Golub, and Alice Neel among them — whose concerns seemed suddenly germane in a newly expansive view of art.[80]

Bourgeois reached an entirely new level of recognition with a retrospective exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in 1982, when she was seventy years old.[81] Finally, the full range of her achievement of over four decades was available to a broad audience. While in some retrospectives, an artist's early work seems immature or dated, that was not the case for Bourgeois. In exhibitions that followed throughout the decade, her work from all periods and in all mediums was presented together.

The occasion of the MoMA show was also influential for the interpretation of her œuvre. This was the moment when she began to very publicly stress her father's unfaithfulness as the locus of her artistic motivations. His affair with Sadie Gordon Richmond, the tutor of Bourgeois and her siblings, is described in "Child Abuse," a page-project published in *Artforum* magazine during the course of the MoMA exhibition.[82] Bourgeois also put together "Partial Recall," a filmed slide show comprised of old photographs that portrayed the same incident together with her voiceover narration. The film was installed in the Museum's lobby during the exhibition as a last-minute addition.[83] This tantalizing saga, and Bourgeois's vivid recounting of it, came to dominate the critical dialogue. With biography and identity issues now legitimized as subjects of contemporary art, Bourgeois's painful past became the default starting point for any analysis of her work.

FIG. 18
No, version 1 of 5, variant. 1973.
Photostat. COMPOSITION: 9½ × 18¼" (24.2 × 46.3 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: commercial printshop. EDITION: 24 impressions of all versions and variants, and 1 multiple. Gift of the artist

FIG. 19
Whitney Murders,
version 3 of 3. 1978.
Rubbing and stencil. SHEET: 25 × 33 15/16" (63.5 × 86.2 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: the artist. EDITION: 6 impressions of all versions. Gift of the artist

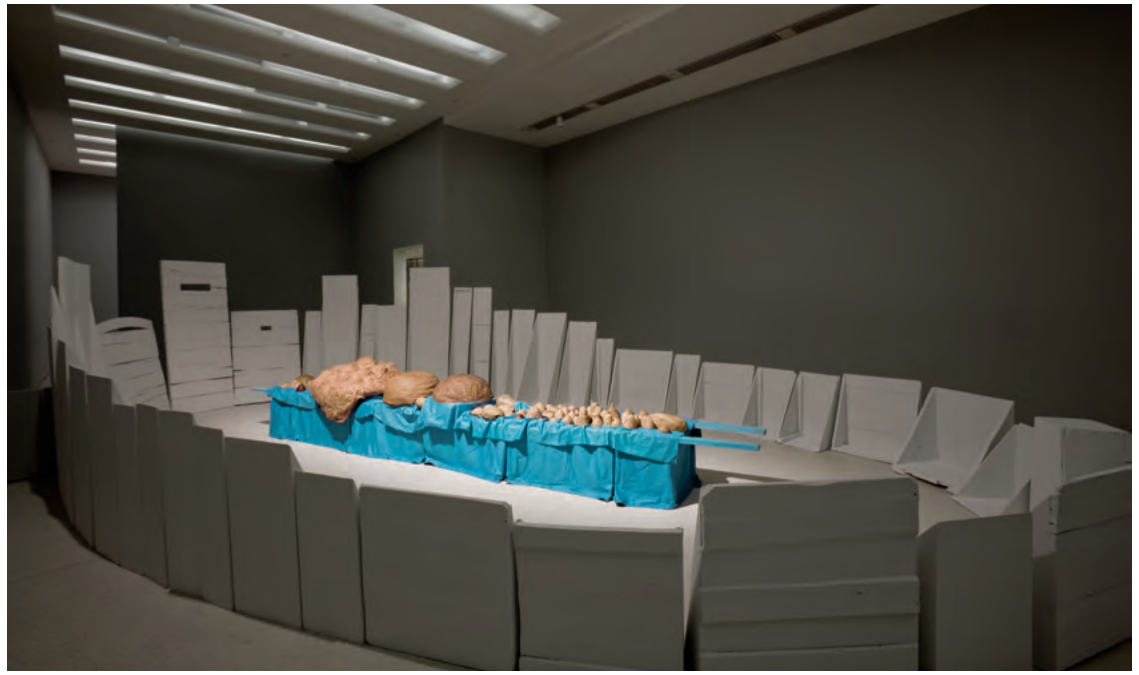


FIG. 20
Confrontation. 1978.
Painted wood, latex, and fabric. 7' 2⅝" × 30' 8⅛" × 14' 7 9/16" (220 × 935 × 445.9 cm). Collection Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

In the midst of this growing attention, two factors were especially impactful. First, in 1980, she acquired a huge loft studio in Brooklyn, allowing her to think about art on a grand scale. This certainly fostered the creation of *Articulated Lair*, of 1986, an enclosure of folding metal doors, approximately nine by twenty-two by sixteen feet in size, with a small stool placed at the center. This architecturally scaled piece, and its theatrical implications, were an extension of Bourgeois's explorations in *The Destruction of the Father* and *Confrontation* of the 1970s, and would lead to her far-reaching series of *Cells* — confined, room-size installations of differing scales and all manner of contents that began in the early 1990s. In addition, Bourgeois engaged Jerry Gorovoy, the young artist she had met through the Max Hutchinson Gallery, as her primary assistant. She had had assistants in the past (many of them former students), but her relationship to Gorovoy would be life changing. He was remarkable at freeing her up to focus on her art. He became her sympathetic daily companion and has even been referred to as her "muse."[84] His calm presence kept her on track, whatever her moods. He withstood her seemingly irrational fits of anger and kept things steady. His responsibilities continued to grow as he managed Bourgeois's celebrated place in the art world for the rest of her life, and to this day.

If in the 1980s Bourgeois's renown grew, it was in the 1990s that she truly came into her own, as the art world wholeheartedly embraced the kind of personalized content that had been her mainstay since the late 1940s. Among the panoply of ideas emanating from the galleries was one that was especially relevant for Bourgeois's sensibility. Gender and sexuality had risen to the forefront in the feminist wave, and now was adopted as subject matter for a range of male and female artists — Matthew Barney, Robert Gober, and Kiki Smith among them — who were traversing some of the same emotional terrain Bourgeois explored.[85] Suddenly, even the most transgressive bodily content was acceptable for art.[86] There was much talk about the *abject* and the *grotesque*.[87] Bourgeois's *Fillette*, so outrageous in 1968, never seemed more timely. If one may acknowledge a

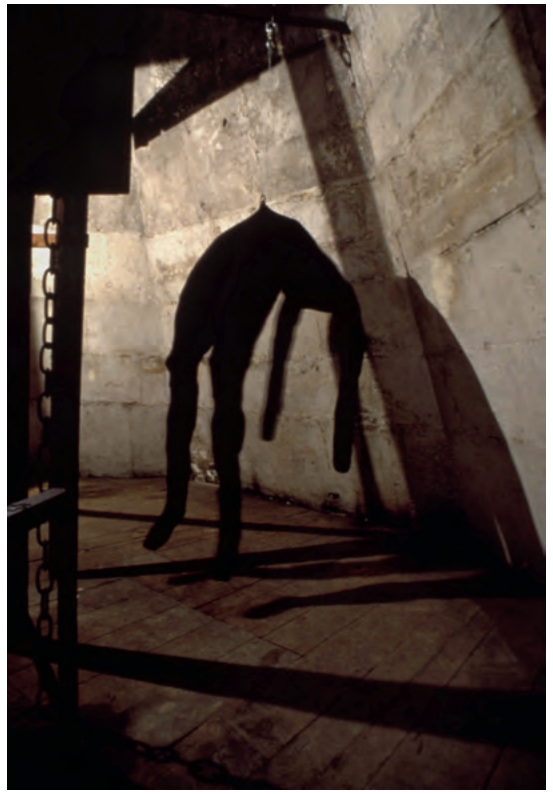


FIG. 21
Single II. 1996.
Fabric, hanging piece. 6' 8" × 42" × 30" (203.2 × 106.6 × 76.2 cm). Installed in the bell tower of St. Pancras Church, London. Collection Artist Rooms Foundation, United Kingdom

zeitgeist, Bourgeois fit perfectly with this spirit of the 1990s, and she became increasingly confident, creative, and productive. Within that decade, she debuted highly innovative bodies of work that took her in new directions: the architectural *Cells* at the Carnegie International, monumental *Spiders* at the Brooklyn Museum, and stuffed fabric figures constructed from old garments and household fabrics, at St. Pancras Church in London (FIG. 21).

Recognition of Bourgeois's achievement reached heights that would have been inconceivable in the earlier decades of her career. She represented the United States at the Venice Biennale in 1993, and then received its coveted Leone d'Oro (Golden Lion) award in 1999. Prizes and accolades proliferated. She received numerous public commissions and enjoyed the collaborations that came along with them. In 1999 she was named by *Art News* not only one of "the 10 Best Living Artists"—with the likes of Jasper Johns, Bruce Nauman, and Gerhard Richter—but also one of "the Century's 25 Most Influential Artists," joining the ranks of Picasso, Pollock, and others of that caliber.[88] Her time had come.

But as the 1990s ended, Bourgeois—now approaching her nineties—began retreating from the art world at large. She no longer attended her own openings or other art-related events. An agoraphobia that had oppressed her at various times in her life began to grip her more firmly.[89] She increasingly spent time at her home/studio, going less and less often to the Brooklyn loft. Instead, people came to her, and the townhouse on 20th Street began to have a workshoplike atmosphere. Those who came with proposals and specialized skills gave her new energy; it was not time to rest if someone was due to arrive. Curators, scholars, and journalists added to the mix. Her well-attended Sunday salons became more formalized as a growing number of artists and others in the art world visited regularly, eager to hear her comments and advice—no matter how withering—or just to be in her company.[90]

Prints as Studio Practice

It had been a long time since printmaking was integral to Bourgeois's art, but she began to approach it, tentatively, once again when she was in her seventies. Asked for benefit prints in the early 1980s, she thought of photogravure, which could easily translate her drawings. Through friends she found the congenial master printer Deli Sacilotto, an expert in that technique. She enjoyed discussions with him, always appreciating the talents of a master craftsman. Later in the 1980s, she met Christian Guérin, a French printer with a workshop and small gallery in Tribeca. She was impressed with his facility and its printing presses, and was partial to his specialties in engraving, drypoint, and etching; they soon established a creative rapport. As with Sacilotto, she hoped that Guérin might finally help her complete the full edition of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*, from decades earlier, something she had long wished to pursue. Sadly, Guérin passed away before that could happen. However, by 1990 printmaking again had a place in Bourgeois's artistic thinking.

With her now considerable renown, Bourgeois was sought after by print publishers.[91] Peter Blum, a New York publisher and gallery owner who had relocated from Switzerland, was known for issuing exciting print projects with many leading artists. He first approached Bourgeois about an edition for *Parkett*, a periodical of cutting-edge contemporary art that incorporated prints and multiples as part of its Collaborations & Editions series. Their relationship would grow over the decade of the 1990s and resulted in several notable portfolios, illustrated books, and individual prints. Bourgeois enjoyed their interactions, especially the fact that she and Blum occasionally spoke in French, and he was a like-minded admirer of books. He once delighted her with the gift of a seventeenth-century volume by a French midwife, also named Louise Bourgeois.[92]

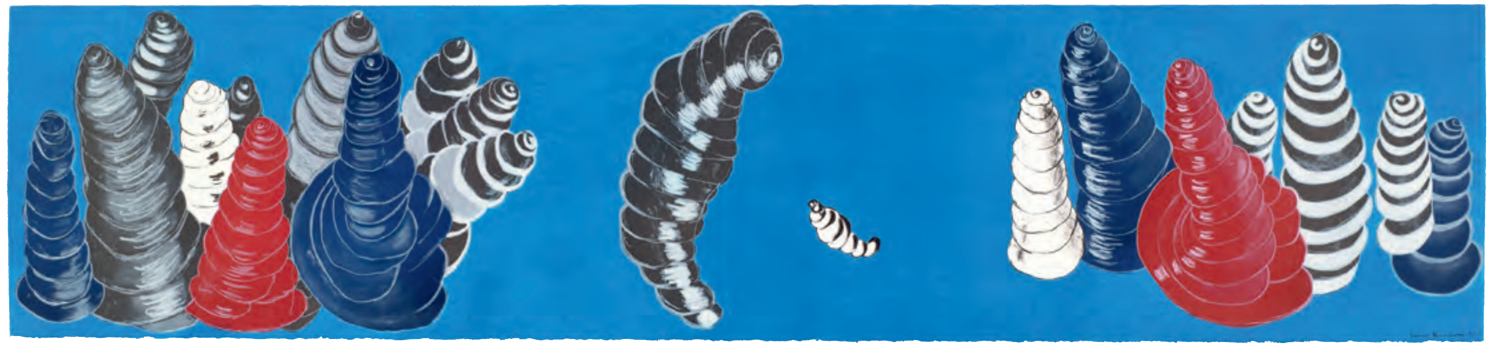
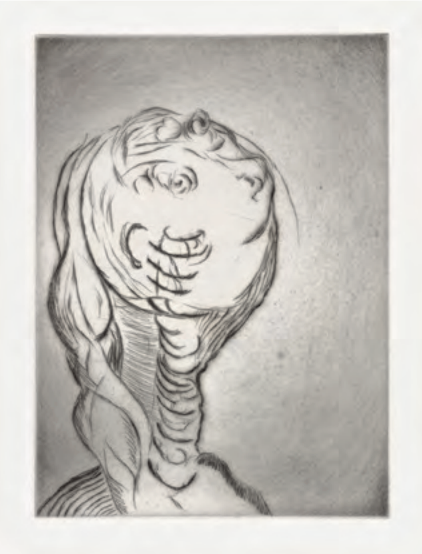
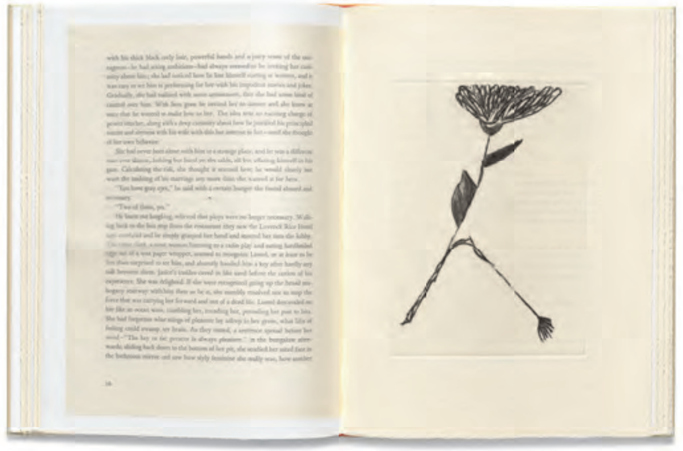


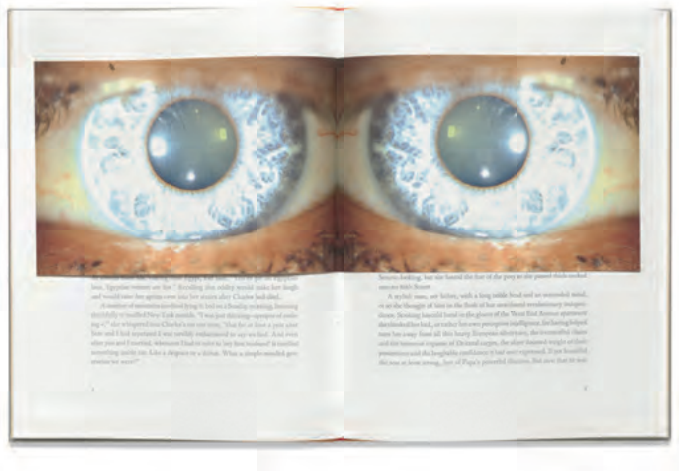
FIG. 22
The Song of the Blacks and the Blues, state II of II. 1996.
Lithograph and woodcut, with hand additions. SHEET: $21\frac{3}{4}$ × 96" (55.3 × 243.8 cm). PUBLISHER: SOLO Impression, New York, and Parasol Press, New York. PRINTER: SOLO Impression, New York. EDITION: 40. Gift of the artist, SOLO Impression, and Parasol Press

As a publisher without his own print workshop, Blum sought out printers who would be good matches for his artists. In the case of Bourgeois, he asked the advice of Judith Solodkin, of SOLO Impression, herself a master lithographer. Solodkin had been a neighbor of Bourgeois and remained a friend. She suggested the Harlan & Weaver printshop, since the printers there were expert in the intaglio techniques that Bourgeois favored. Later, growing out of the Blum projects, Bourgeois and printer Felix Harlan would establish an extremely close and long-standing working relationship. Solodkin also hoped that Bourgeois would become fully engaged with lithography, but the artist was never completely comfortable with it. Eventually, though, Bourgeois and Solodkin did complete striking prints together, including the ambitious and large-scale *The Song of the Blacks and the Blues* of 1996 (FIG. 22). Publisher Benjamin Shiff of Osiris also introduced himself to Bourgeois in the late 1980s with hopes of producing an illustrated book. He had seen an example of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* at MoMA and it had inspired him. The idea of a book certainly appealed to Bourgeois, as did Shiff's creative sensibility. Although not a printer himself, he was acutely sensitive to the potential of the medium. He encouraged Bourgeois to try a variety of technical experiments before deciding the best way forward. For printing, he depended on the Wingate Studio printshop in Hinsdale, New Hampshire. In 1990 Bourgeois issued *the puritan*, a major accomplishment in the field of contemporary illustrated books, under Shiff's Osiris imprint (PLATES 45–52).

Bourgeois's return to printmaking in the 1990s continued unabated, with many undertakings echoing the artistic concerns of her sculpture at that time. For example, the portfolio *Anatomy* (1989–90), published by Blum and printed by Harlan & Weaver, captures in printed form her exploration of the body (PLATES 116, 117). The spider motif, with a moving text by Bourgeois, fills *Ode à Ma Mère* (Ode to My Mother, 1995), a book that occupies a fitting place in the modern tradition of *livres d'artistes* (PLATES 181, 182). Exploration of abject content found expression in *The View from the Bottom of the Well* (1996), a portfolio of text and harrowing representations of the pained faces of figures trapped in a deep hole (FIG. 23). And in a 1992 collaboration with author Arthur Miller called *Homely Girl, A Life*, Bourgeois provided illustrations that veer from the poignant in volume I to the grotesque in volume II, all responding to Miller's story of beauty and blindness (FIGS. 24, 25).







The Past and the Present

Prints and books turned out to be perfect vehicles for allowing Bourgeois to revisit earlier images and texts that remained highly meaningful to her. She often responded to something from a past decade as if she had just conceived it, wanting to start up again; it seemed that she was never really "finished" with an idea. When Bourgeois reviewed her early prints with this author for the catalogue raisonné of 1994, her memories were keen and the immediacy of her feelings was startling.[93] A remark about a sculpture also makes this point: "A while ago I was looking at an early sculpture that I hadn't seen in a long time. The trembling emotions that I felt when I made it came right back."[94]

For the portfolio *Quarantania*, of 1990, Bourgeois had plates from 1942–48 reprinted. They had been saved for nearly fifty years, just as she saved most everything. Some were too corroded to use and others clearly show the passage of time,[95] but Bourgeois went forward, even insisting that the housing for the series duplicate the beige linen covering of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*, in deference to the time when the prints were first created. That early illustrated book was also still very much on her mind. After remaking certain plates with printers Deli Sacilotto and Christian Guérin in the 1980s, she finally entrusted a new edition to Felix Harlan.

Autobiographical Series, of 1994, is yet another portfolio consisting mostly of compositions from the past. This time Bourgeois based new prints on drawings from her earliest years in New York, including a touching scene of two of her young sons in the bathtub.[96] When this series came out, her sons were in their fifties. *Album*, of that same year, goes back even further, to her own childhood, reproducing more than sixty old photographs with her descriptive texts on overlaid pages.[97]

FIG. 23
Plate 6 of 9, state VIII of VIII, from the portfolio ***The View from the Bottom of the Well***. 1996.
Drypoint, with selective wiping. PLATE: 8 1/2 × 6 1/4" (21.6 × 15.8 cm). PUBLISHER: Peter Blum Edition, New York. PRINTER: Harlan & Weaver, New York. EDITION: 25. Gift of the artist

FIGS. 24, 25
Plate 6 of 10 from vol. I, and **no. 1 of 8** from vol. II of the illustrated book ***Homely Girl, A Life***, with text by Arthur Miller. 1992.
Plate 6: Drypoint, PAGE: 11 1/2 × 8 3/4" (29.2 × 22.2 cm). No. 1: Photolithograph, OVERLAY: 5 3/4 × 16 15/16" (14.6 × 43 cm). PUBLISHER: Peter Blum Edition, New York. PRINTER (plate 6): Harlan & Weaver, New York; (no. 1): Stinehour Press, Lunenberg, VT. EDITION: 100. Gift of the artist

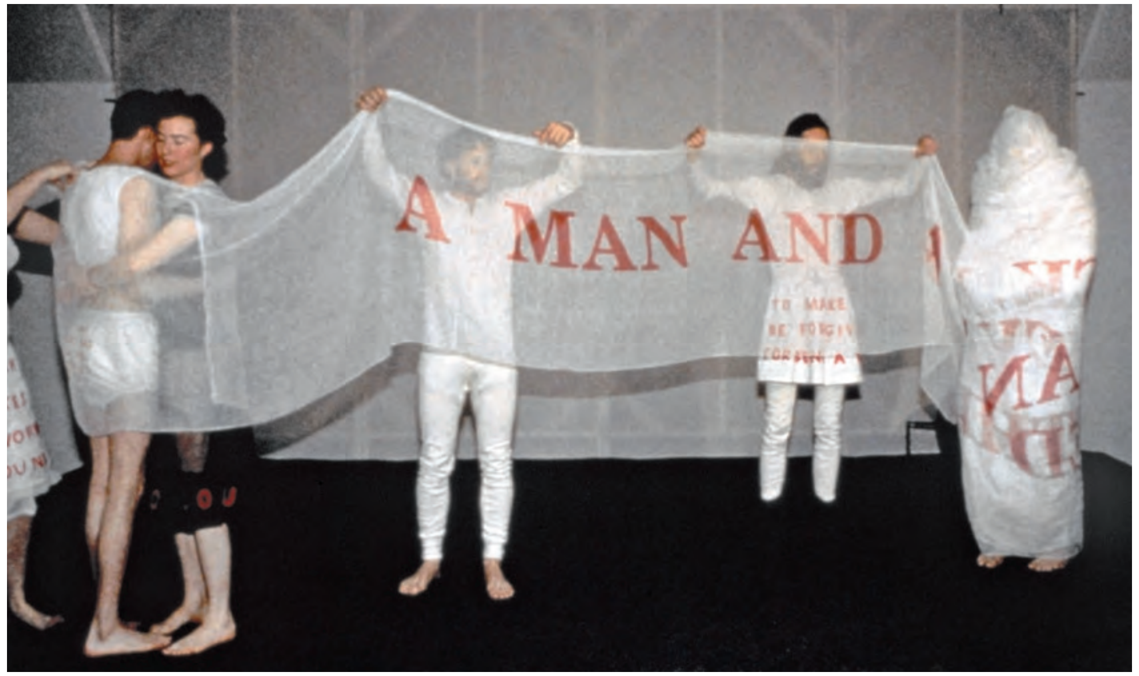


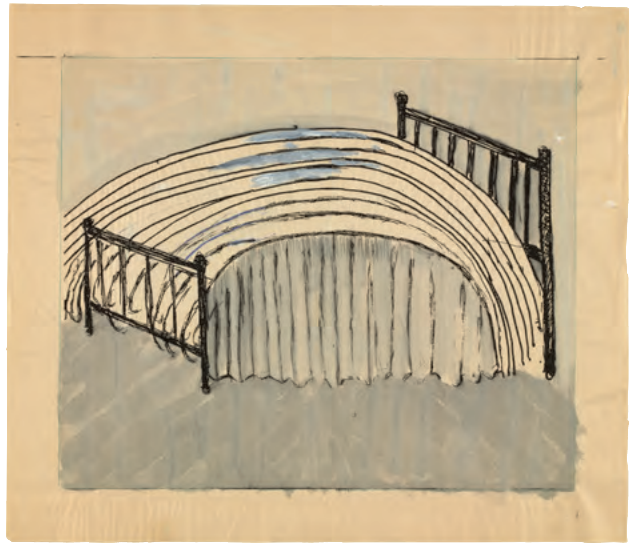
FIG. 26
She Lost It, performance at The Fabric Workshop, Philadelphia. December 5, 1992. Photograph by Peter Bellamy

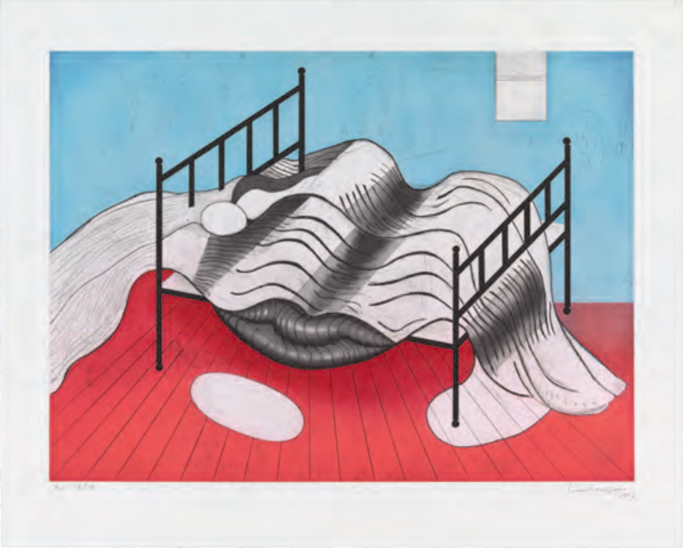
In addition to images, Bourgeois revived her writings from decades earlier. The story in the 1990 illustrated book *the puritan* is from 1947 and details her long-ago unrequited feelings for MoMA's Alfred Barr. Describing it, she said: "I analyzed an episode forty years after it happened. I could see things from a distance. . . . Instead of feeling a person drowning, I considered the situation objectively."[98] Another story from the 1940s was the basis for *She Lost It*, a project initiated by Philadelphia's Fabric Workshop in 1992. Bourgeois screenprinted the tale on a nearly two-hundred-foot-long banner, which became the centerpiece for a performance (FIG. 26). An actor (actually the critic and curator Robert Storr) appeared onstage completely wrapped in the banner, his identity and the story both invisible. Then other actors slowly unwrapped him, as Bourgeois's parable of lost love was revealed to the audience. The freed-up portion of the banner was then rewrapped around an embracing couple standing nearby. All the performers were in costumes embroidered with bits of Bourgeois's text in red.[99]

Print Processes

Prints involve techniques that often mystify even those well-versed in other art mediums. At this point, Bourgeois was familiar with woodcut and linoleum cut, lithography, engraving, etching, drypoint, and aquatint—all of which she had employed in the 1939–49 period of her printmaking.[100] While these all continued to be used in her prints of the 1990s and 2000s, she always had the highest regard for engraving and drypoint. She once called engraving a "symbolic act." She loved its assertive line on paper and felt it merited an even higher status than drypoint. But engraving requires a certain manual strength in order to push the burin through a metal printing plate; as Bourgeois said, it takes "biceps."[101] On the other hand, drypoint requires only a simple scratching stroke. She liked the gentle, almost tentative line it produced; nearly half of her total output in printmaking utilizes drypoint, by itself or in combination with other techniques. In the 2000s, she would actively turn to soft ground etching and also find an entirely new vehicle with digital printing.

Bourgeois's method often involved first choosing a drawing to transfer to a printing plate using tracing paper or carbon paper, or





sometimes screenprint; she also drew directly on plates with ink marker for a starting point. After that, her changes were indicated on proofs in a combination of pencil, ink, gouache, and watercolor, and those changes always led to more. She constantly revised her compositions, and was almost never ready to stop. She routinely went through fifteen, twenty, or more evolving states and variants. This process did not entail Bourgeois settling in at a professional print workshop for a project, which is standard practice for most contemporary artists working in the medium. Instead, those who assisted Bourgeois came to her home.

Printer Felix Harlan was the most frequent visitor. For years he came daily, or at least several times a week. This required a special rapport with Bourgeois, and Harlan's gentle, patient manner was a great asset. Bourgeois accomplished more printmaking with him than with anyone else—the total number of printed sheets they made together comes to approximately two thousand. He remembers always bringing both engraving and drypoint tools, to be ready for whatever she might want to do on a given day. He also arrived with proofs he had pulled at his shop the night before, now incorporating the previous day's changes. Bourgeois relished the unveiling of the new proofs, even closing her eyes while he arranged them for a presentation.[102] She studied them, saw what she liked and did not, and set about making still more adjustments. Bourgeois would scratch directly on the plates for changes, and at other times Harlan would follow her lines and revisions. Some proofs were pulled immediately on Bourgeois's old press from the 1940s that Harlan had reconstituted on the lower level of her house in 1995. (He would set up a second press there in 2003.) She loved that instant gratification, and Harlan said having a press handy certainly stimulated Bourgeois's printmaking. He would place fresh proofs in blotters to dry on her table so she could start immediately the next morning with more alterations with brushes, pencils, and pens.[103]

One of Bourgeois's most ambitious drypoints of this period—begun with Christian Guérin and completed with Harlan—is *Sainte Sébastienne* (PLATES 102–11), which went through numerous stages between 1990 and 1994, comprising eight studies, two versions, and some thirty-six states and variants in all, with stops and starts over that period. With this print, and others, she took advantage of photocopying to experiment with scale. *Sainte Sébastienne* changed markedly as it evolved. This progression offers an illuminating look into Bourgeois's dynamic creative process.

Another composition with dramatic changes across developing states is *Bed* (1997), which went through three source drawings, three versions, and twenty-four states and variants, while also incorporating color (FIGS. 27, 28).[104] Color printmaking, though, was not a natural fit for Bourgeois at this point. She found its technical complexities off-putting and held a more traditional view of printmaking as a black-and-white medium.[105] She preferred adding color with hand additions, which gave her optimal control. On occasion she tried red or blue printing inks with plate tone, or colored chine collé for accented backgrounds. And her choice for the numerous benefit prints she contributed to social, political, and arts organizations was usually color, since it has such wide appeal.[106] Later, in the 2000s, screenprinting and digital printing made working with color much easier.

FIG. 27
Bed, version 1 of 3. 1997.
Screenprint, with hand additions. SHEET: 20 11/16 × 23 13/16" (52.5 × 60.5 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: Harlan & Weaver, New York. EDITION: 1 impression of version 1. Gift of the artist

FIG. 28
Le Lit Gros Édredon (with lips) (The Big Bed Quilt [with lips]), version 3 of 3: state XI of XI. 1997.
Soft ground etching, aquatint, drypoint, and engraving. SHEET: 25 1/16 × 31 1/2" (63.6 × 80 cm). PUBLISHER: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. PRINTER: Harlan & Weaver, New York. EDITION: 100. Gift of the artist

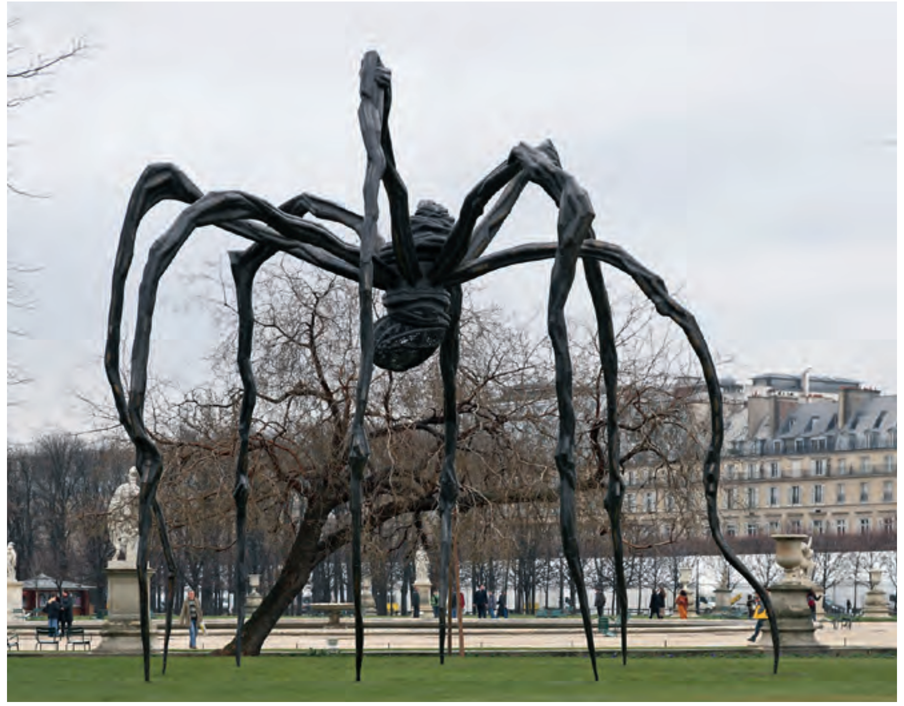


FIG. 29
Maman. 1999.
Bronze, stainless steel, and marble. 30' 5" × 29' 3" × 33' 7" (927.1 × 891.5 × 1,023.6 cm). Installed in the Jardin des Tuileries, Paris, 2008. Collection The Easton Foundation

As the 1990s unfolded, Bourgeois's 20th Street home/studio was increasingly busy and productive. Print people came and went. Harlan might be downstairs on the press, joined there by the seamstress Mercedes Katz, who became crucial to Bourgeois's work with fabric pieces. As always, Bourgeois appreciated the expertise of these professionals. "I have the greatest respect for technicians," she said; "I give credit to people who are related to a certain tool, a certain craft." "I do get along very well . . . because I admire them. I am a client to them, not a rival."[107] The house-workshop environment harkened back to her mother's tapestry-restoration atelier. "I want to hire workers to imitate my mother," she wrote in her diary. ". . . I want to recreate, recreate the past."[108] The social dimension of all this activity helped distract her from bleak moods. When she knew someone was due at the house—a fact she recorded on a blackboard near the front door—she rose to the occasion. Not that she was always in the best frame of mind when he or she arrived. Most of those close to her, including this author, were at points subjected to her fits of anger. Those could be frightening, indeed. But for the most part Bourgeois was thoroughly engaging and inspiring; the people around her felt lucky to be there.

Bourgeois's prints began to attract attention and were exhibited widely at this time. She was surely gratified when two of her illustrated books were part of a 1993 exhibition at Manhattan's Grolier Club, the distinguished bibliophile society.[109] In 1994, this author organized a full print retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of the publication of a catalogue raisonné of her prints to date, co-authored with Carol Smith.[110] That catalogue brought together some 150 compositions, spanning from 1939 to 1993, with approximately six hundred states and variants. Also in the early 1990s, Bourgeois decided to donate an archive of her prints to MoMA, including all the proofs in her possession and a promise, going forward, of one example of each new print with its numerous states.[111] This new attention to her printmaking acted as a further stimulus for Bourgeois, and for the additional printers and publishers who sought her out.[112] The 2000s would bring yet another outpouring of prints, one that served the aging artist well in the last years of her life.

A Flourishing Production of Prints

In Bourgeois's last decade — the 2000s — the artist reached her nineties. She was remarkably active during these years, even as health issues arose and she grew increasingly fragile. Her agoraphobia took hold completely, and she was housebound for most of the decade.[113] But this was not housebound in the sense of being an invalid with an ever more constricted life. Her home/studio was filled with activity and visitors of all kinds, including President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, who came in 2008 to bestow on Bourgeois the French medal of Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur (FIG. 71; P. 229). Her Sunday salon was still a major attraction. And, most importantly for this study, she continued to be stimulated by producing an undiminished stream of print and book projects, and by the various collaborators involved with them.

The decade opened with a major commission for Turbine Hall, the vast entry space of London's new Tate Modern. Her mammoth spider, *Maman*, completed in 1999 and first installed there in 2000, is more than thirty feet tall. After its debut, it would be seen around the world — appearing in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, France (FIG. 29), Germany, The Hague, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Qatar, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, as well as locations in the United States — most prominently at Rockefeller Center in New York. There were many more commissions for public spaces during these years. Bourgeois also continued to enlarge her growing body of *Cell* sculptures. Continued undertakings in fabric demanded the full-time assistance of her seamstress, who sat at a worktable surrounded by plastic boxes of materials sorted by color and texture. In addition to fabric heads and figures, Bourgeois created fabric totems and collages. She began incorporating fragments of old tapestries into her work.[114] And fabric also began to play a role in her prints.

Overall, the decade of the 2000s was remarkable for Bourgeois's printmaking practice. Nearly 60 percent of her total body of prints and books was created during this period, representing some nine hundred separate compositions. The decade was also noteworthy for her embrace of new print techniques and concepts, alongside efforts in more traditional modes. After working on *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* in fits and starts with Felix Harlan since 1993, she finally reissued the volume in 2005.[115] Its themes of alienation, anger, and despair still resonated, even as she mellowed.[116] Now she added subtle new touches to the plates — particularly color additions she had planned for a special edition in the 1940s but never completed (PLATES 25 – 28).

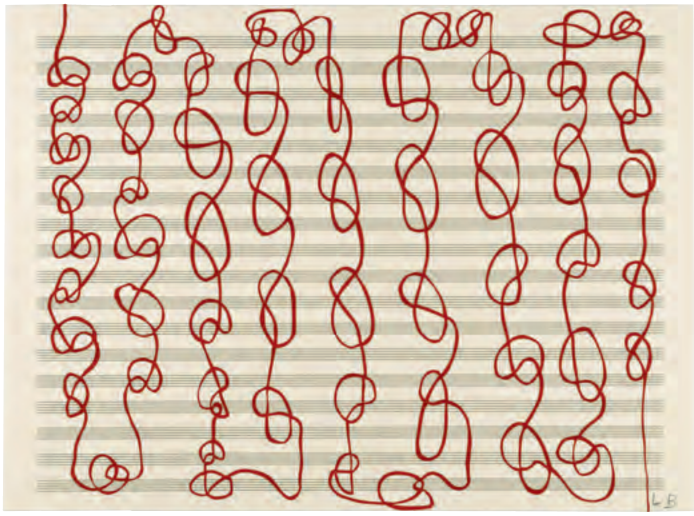


FIG. 30
No. 7 of 19 from the portfolio ***Fugue*** (detail). 2003.
Screenprint and lithograph. SHEET: 11 13/16 × 16" (30 × 40.7 cm). PUBLISHER AND PRINTER: Procuniar Workshop, New York. EDITION: 9. Gift of the artist

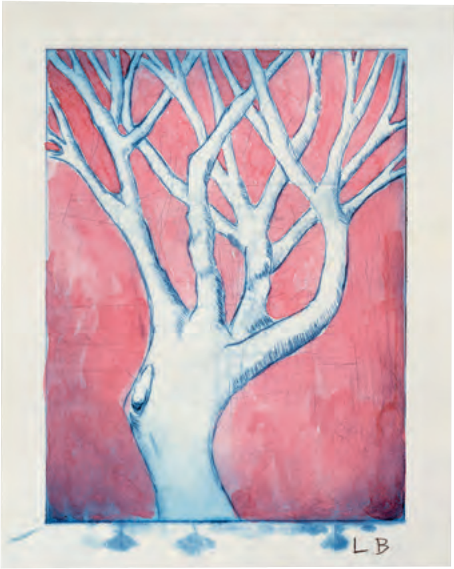


FIG. 31
Untitled, state IV of IV in ***Les Arbres* (3)** from the editioned series of portfolios ***Les Arbres*** (The Trees). 2004.
Drypoint, with hand additions. SHEET: 11 3/4 x 9 3/8" (29.8 × 23.8 cm). PUBLISHER AND PRINTER: Harlan & Weaver, New York. EDITION: 6 portfolios. Private collection

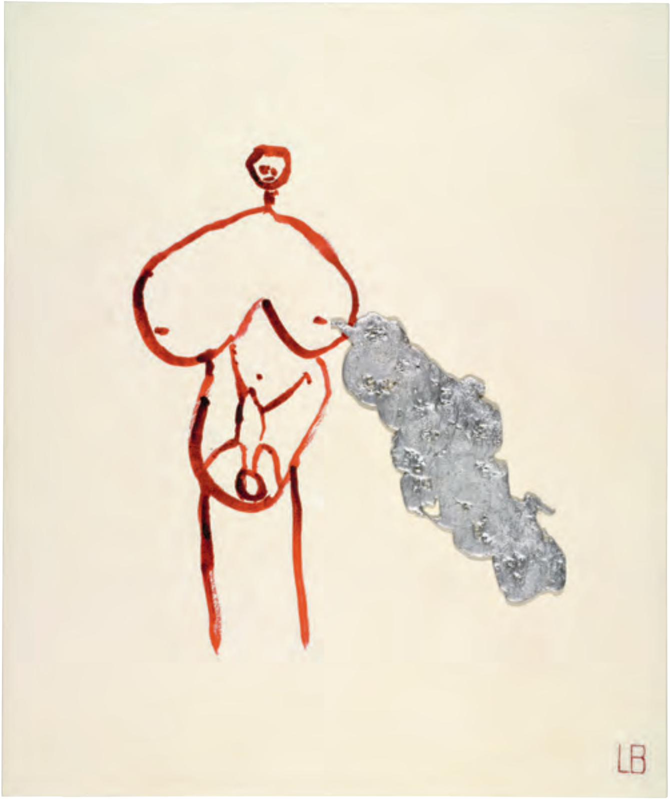


FIG. 32
The Good Mother. 2008.
Digital print on fabric, with aluminum collage. OVERALL: 31 1/8 × 26 × 1/4" (79 × 66 × .6 cm). PUBLISHER: Carolina Nitsch Editions, New York. PRINTER: Dyenamix, New York. EDITION: 9. Gift of the artist

Innovations

Bourgeois's fabric prints and books were great innovations of the 2000s. The old clothes and household fabrics she was reconstituting for sculpture were filled with memories — scorches and stains testified to their histories — and she decided to try printing on some of the items. Harlan began with a plate that had been finalized for a more standard edition on paper, and she liked the result very much. This experiment led to more prints on fabric napkins, tea towels, handkerchiefs, dish towels, and other odd remnants (PLATES 74, 76 – 81, 83 – 86). She then began to construct fabric books, aided by seamstress Mercedes Katz. The thirty-five-page *Ode à l'Oubli* (Ode to Forgetting, 2002) is a seminal achievement of the period (PLATE 82). First she had Katz sew together old linen hand towels from her trousseau, assembling "pages" and a "binding." Bourgeois then filled the pages with fabric collages constructed from all sorts of old materials. The book's sequencing constitutes an exhilarating visual journey as the patterns and textures conjure up reminders of Bourgeois's past. The overall bulk of the book suggests a soft and comforting pillow. Bourgeois went on to edition *Ode à l'Oubli* in 2004, making it available to a wider audience and fashioning the binding so the individual pages could be detached and framed as a set. Two old friends took up this challenge with her: Peter Blum as publisher, and printer Judith Solodkin of SOLO Impression as the wizard who succeeded in transforming the unique object into an edition of twenty-five examples.[117]

During this period, Bourgeois was encouraged to work more earnestly in screenprint by printer David Procuniar, who became friendly with the artist after attending countless meetings of her Sunday salon.[118] Several print publications were the result, including *Fugue* (2003), which allowed Bourgeois to expand on one of her many sketchbooks (FIG. 30). She also became involved with digital printing in the 2000s, first through the challenges of printing on fabric for the editioned *Ode à l'Oubli*. For that project, she found Raylene Marasco of Dyenamix through a friend in the fashion industry; Marasco specializes in the dyeing and printing of textiles. The digital process she introduced eased the way for Bourgeois's expanded use of fabric — a printing surface with more tactility than paper. She preferred it for many of her late prints and books.

A transformative advance in Bourgeois's printmaking of the 2000s was the adoption of an expanded notion of the medium, one that combined traditional editioning with one-of-a-kind features. She had always used hand additions to elaborate on trial proofs, and from time to time added touches of color to completed prints. But in her last years, the unique print became central to her practice. One prime example is the Harlan & Weaver publication *Les Arbres* (The Trees, 2004; FIG. 31), an editioned series of six portfolios, each different in terms of its contents and in the hand coloring throughout. Yet *Les Arbres* also maintains some traditional elements of the portfolio format: it deals with

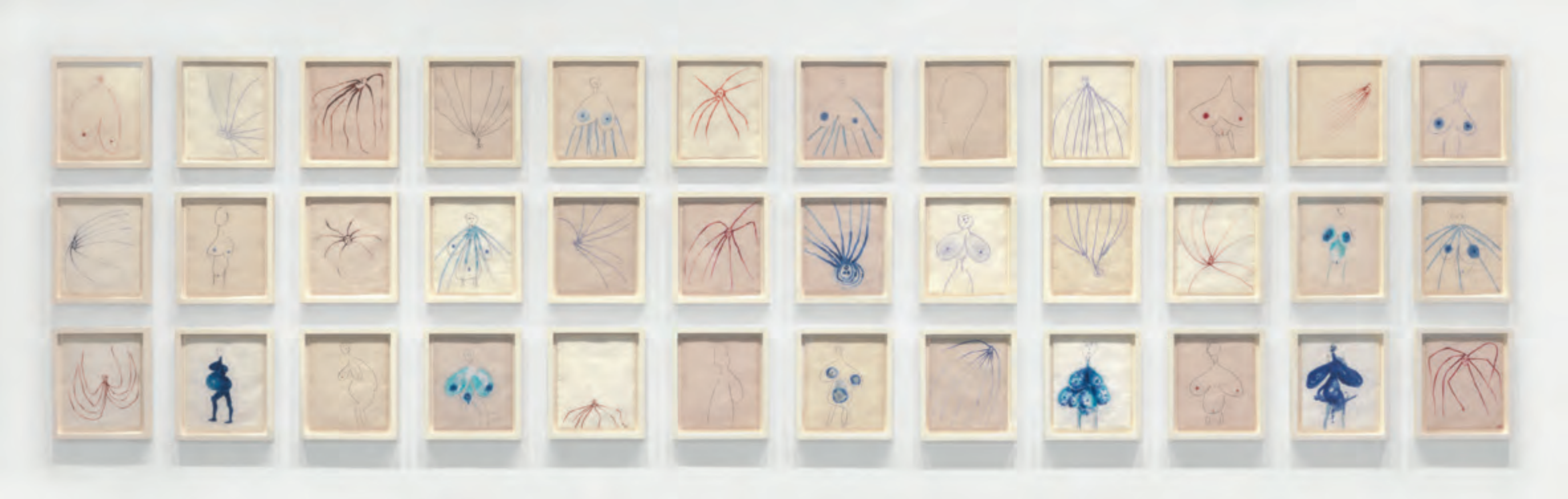


fig. 33
The Fragile. 2007.
Series of 36 compositions: 29 digital prints and 7 screenprints, 30 with hand additions. sheet (each): 11½ × 9½" (29.2 × 24.1 cm). publisher: Carolina Nitsch Editions, New York, and Lison Editions (Louise Bourgeois), New York. printer: Dyenamix, New York. edition: 7. Gift of the artist

a specific theme — here, trees and other natural phenomena — and it depends on sequencing to establish drama. But while most portfolios bring together loose prints and sometimes include text and a colophon page, *Les Arbres* is comprised simply of prints, and occasional drawings, mounted on bound pages, with no textual element. The result is a hybrid of the traditional book and portfolio that provides Bourgeois with an armature for a mesmerizing visual exploration of the natural world.[119]

In this period Bourgeois began to work with New York publisher and gallerist Carolina Nitsch, who also served as the primary dealer for her prints. Nitsch is an advocate of the individualized but editioned print, one example being Bourgeois's *The Good Mother*, a digital print on fabric (2008; fig. 32). Here, a ragged fragment of aluminum, left over from casting a sculpture, is adhered to each print — a different one for each sheet in the edition of nine, and three artist's proofs. This print is one of many on the theme of maternity that occupied Bourgeois in this late period. She said the mother and child motif referred not to the birth of her children but to her own birth — a poignant preoccupation at this time in her life.[120]

Bourgeois's digital prints often included unique elements. Another example is the series titled *The Fragile* (2007), printed on fabric sheets and based on a sketchbook of drawings (fig. 33). Sketchbooks, at this point, were a prime vehicle for Bourgeois since they provided a firm, compact support that could easily be manipulated at her table or while sitting in bed; they also became sources for several print series. As with all her digital prints, decisions about *The Fragile* involved extended discussions about inking, colors, sizing, and specific fabrics. Jerry Gorovoy served as the conduit for the project, bringing samples to Bourgeois for feedback and otherwise managing logistics. After *The Fragile* was printed, with some sheets in screenprint, Bourgeois used special dyes to make hand additions on individual compositions within the series, varying them across the edition of seven sets and three artist's proof sets. She thereby produced an editioned print project, but with each set being unique.

Since compositions can be generated at various sizes and in different orientations with digital printing, the technique also offered new creative possibilities for Bourgeois, especially with the numerous figural works she was creating at that time with gouache on dampened paper. These figures, many depicting pregnant women, and men with erect penises, were printed and then assembled by Bourgeois in diverse combinations, mostly as couples. Some sixty new compositions — each unique — emerged from these individually printed figures (fig. 34). Others found their way into the 2009–10 portfolio of digital prints titled *Do Not Abandon Me*, made with artist Tracey Emin, and into the illustrated book *To Whom It May Concern*, a collaboration with her old friend the author Gary Indiana in 2010.[121]

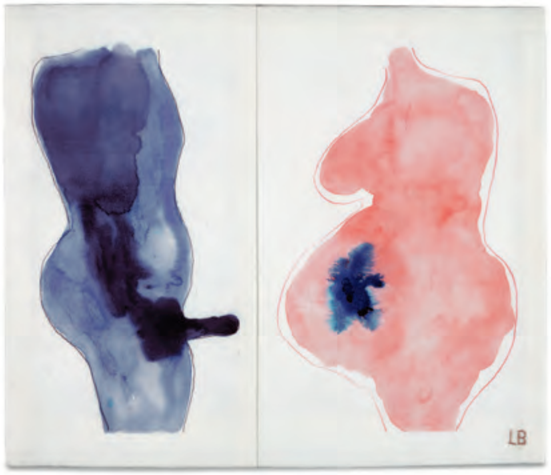


fig. 34
Couple. 2009.
Fabric collage with 2 digital prints. sheet: 9½ × 11" (24.1 × 27.9 cm). publisher: the artist. printer: Dyenamix, New York. edition: unique. Collection Louise Bourgeois Trust

The hand-embellished, unique print had its most ardent champion in Ben Shiff of Osiris, who had first established a creative rapport with Bourgeois in the late 1980s and early 1990s when they published *the puritan* together. With his encouragement, Bourgeois also combined plate proofs from that volume into diptychs, triptychs, and multipanel formats.[122] After a hiatus, Shiff began working with the artist again in the 2000s. He picked up where he had left off, bringing earlier proofs and suggesting that she revisit them with hand additions. This suited Bourgeois perfectly, since she was always eager to explore her compositions anew. Prints, with their multiple impressions, lend themselves to this process since each provides a stable jumping-off point from which to go in any number of directions (plates 34–40).

By the mid-2000s Bourgeois's efforts with Shiff took yet another turn, bending the boundaries of printmaking even further. Ever responsive to her creative thinking, he decided to focus on soft ground etching, a relatively easy process for mark making. The results can closely resemble pencil drawing and these prints captured Bourgeois's distinctive, sometimes shaky hand. He brought large, narrow printing plates to her house, designed to fit the width of her worktable, and they set up a routine. Although Bourgeois was occasionally too tired when Shiff was scheduled to arrive, more often she was stimulated in anticipation of his visits. They could work for a full afternoon, as he and Gorovoy assisted her in positioning and shifting the plates as she drew. Proofing was done by the printers of the Wingate Studio. She created a large body of individual compositions with this procedure, some requiring two printing plates, side by side. For the final editions, she chose a variety of inking and wiping effects. (plates 112–14, 164–69). Shiff then brought back extra proofs for Bourgeois to enhance with pencils, pens, and brushes; she utterly transformed them (plates 145, 164, 168–70).

Shiff comes from an illustrated-book background and loves language. He has a particular penchant for combining text and image; this was among the interests he shared with Bourgeois. Thus they continued to produce books together, this time incorporating the new large, elongated prints into singular volumes that would surely please a bibliophile.[123] Shiff also oversaw the creation of multipanel prints, arranged in narrative sequences and often interspersed with handwritten texts (see fig. 52; pp. 178–79). Another innovation was room-scale printed installation sets, such as *10 AM Is When You Come to Me* (2007): an edition of ten sets comprised of soft ground etchings, all with hand additions (fig. 35). For each composition, Bourgeois arranged her own hands and arms with those of Gorovoy — who arrived at her house each morning at ten o'clock — and Shiff traced them. After printing, Bourgeois thoroughly reenvisioned the compositions, primarily with red watercolor additions. She then undertook the traditional task of sequencing, but here the order and orientation of individual compositions vary from set to set. When installed, *10 AM Is When You Come to Me* produces an almost filmic experience, as well as an emotional testament to the attachment Bourgeois felt to her devoted assistant.

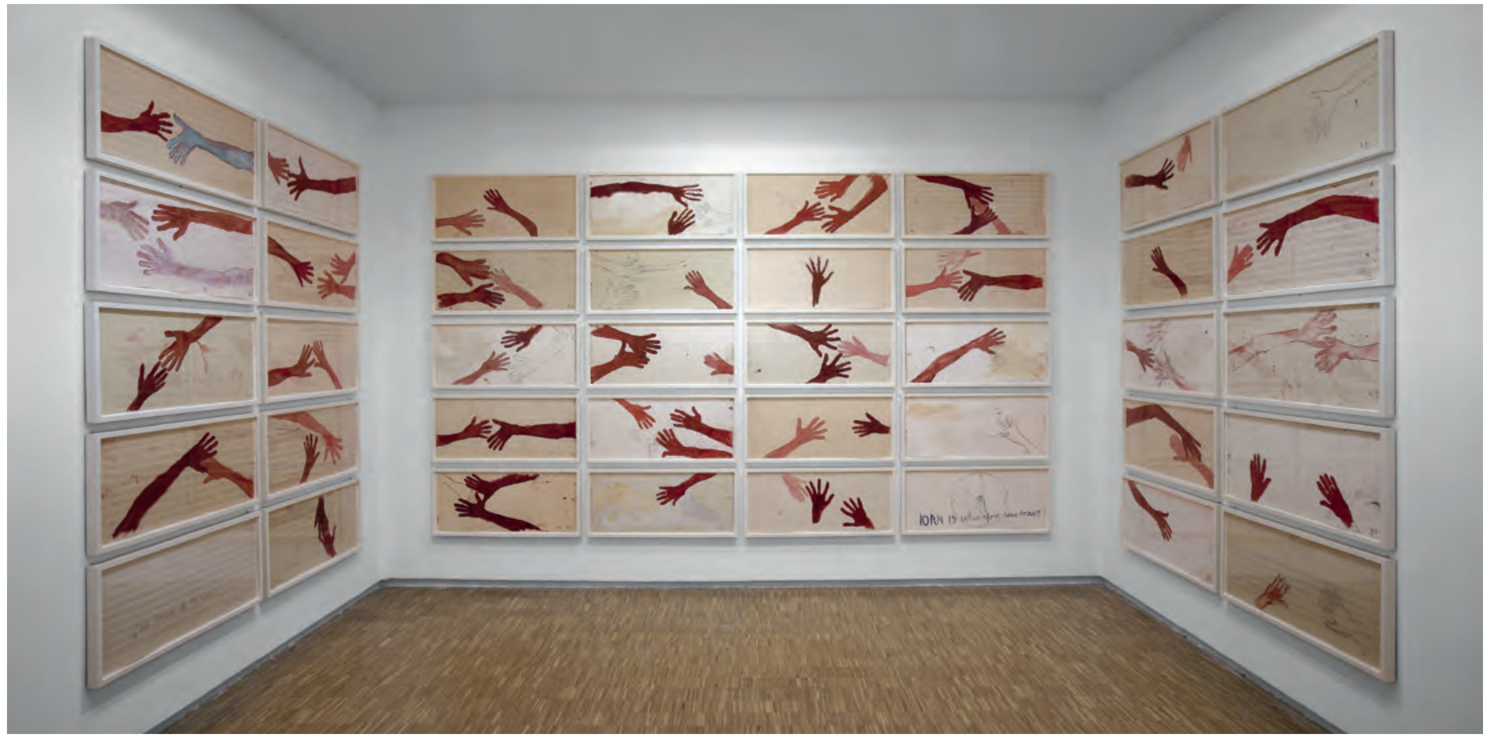


FIG. 35
10 AM Is When You Come to Me (set 9), from the series of installation sets. 2007.
Installation set of 40 sheets: 35 soft ground etchings, all with hand additions, 4 drawings, and 1 handwritten text. SHEET (each approx.): 15 × 35¼" (38.1 × 90.8 cm). PUBLISHER: Osiris, New York. PRINTER: Wingate Studio, Hinsdale, NH. EDITION: 10 sets. Private collection

Shiff also brought partially printed proofs to Bourgeois that led in still further directions. Sheets with only printed fragments turned out to be additional spurs to her imagination. *À l'Infini* (To Infinity, 2008; PLATES 185–98) is an extraordinary series that began with partially printed proofs of *Love and Kisses* (PLATE 184). In this series, the printed elements—diagonal, twisting, veinlike fragments—are almost obscured by Bourgeois's additions in watercolor, gouache, and pencil. But one discerns them subliminally when the series is installed; they provide a kind of rhythm from sheet to sheet. *À l'Infini* is a prime example of the kind of unique print project that became integral to Bourgeois's way of working at this stage of her life. Its swirling, elemental forms constitute one of her most important achievements of this period in any medium, as well as a striking example of the potential of printmaking and of the collaborative process.

In her late nineties, Bourgeois's health declined further. Her eyesight suffered to a degree, perhaps leading to her more frequent use of red, although the color always had symbolic resonance for her. She responded positively to the large sheets of paper Shiff provided, again probably because she could work more easily with them from a visual standpoint. The intimacy of small printing plates and sheets was now more difficult, although she remained engaged to some degree at that scale. Bourgeois also had mobility issues due to arthritis, and her insomnia was severe—sometimes she went for days with little or no sleep. According to Gorovoy, this sleeplessness drastically affected her mood and her ability to work, as she went from hyperactive to thoroughly drowsy. But her creativity remained; her printmaking is a tribute to the late phase of her work. She never stopped employing art to express her emotions and to understand herself and her world. Even in the hospital, just before she died, Bourgeois asked for paper and pencils. As Gorovoy says: "She wanted her life back. She wanted to continue what we always did together."[124]

The words *time stopped, time remembered, time recreated* in the title of this essay are from Louise Bourgeois, in "Time" (Paulo Herkenhoff notes, May 8, 1997), in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate, 2007), 288.

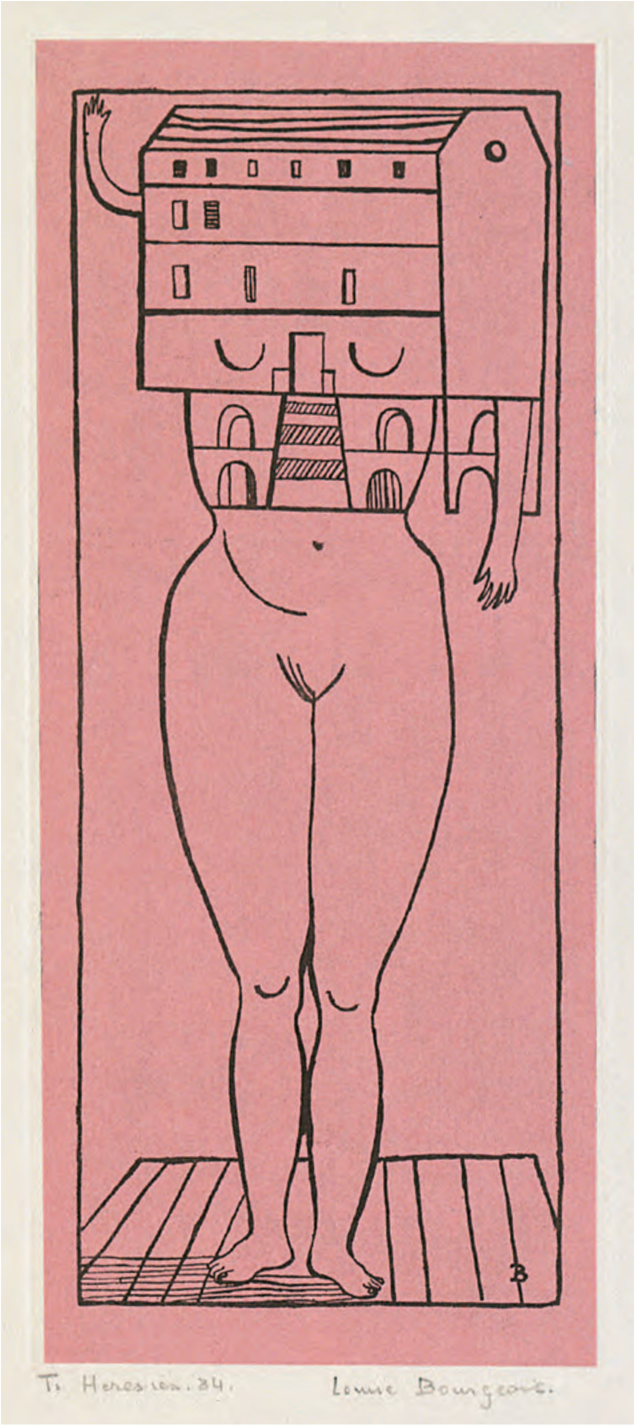
Themes and Variations

The motivations that led to Louise Bourgeois's art were unwavering over the seven decades of her long career: it was emotional struggle that fueled her process. In seeking to understand and cope with painful memories, anger and jealousy, depression and despair, she created sculpture, prints, drawings, and, early on, paintings. Art was her tool of survival, her "guaranty of sanity."[1]

In giving form to her emotions, Bourgeois returned again and again to particular motifs that served as visual metaphors; together they offer a thematic framework for her work. While varying from architectural forms to the growth and germination of nature, from the human body and sexuality to motherhood, and even to a symbolic abstraction, such imagery and concerns appear in all her mediums, and sometimes overlap in individual works.

The following discussion of the themes and variations in Bourgeois's art explores the artist's creative process, with a focus on her prints and illustrated books and the evolving states and variants that trace the development of her imagery. It also includes examples of related sculpture, drawings, and paintings, demonstrating that Bourgeois saw no "rivalry" between them. "They say the same things in different ways," she maintained.[2] Finally, corresponding works from different periods are brought together. This organization emphasizes overarching relationships within Bourgeois's practice and a remarkable consistency in her aims over the course of her lifetime. She fully acknowledged this ongoing process when she said: "to be an artist involves some suffering. That's why artists repeat themselves—because they have no access to a cure."[3]

NOTE TO THE READER:
In the plate captions, dimensions are cited with height preceding width (for sculptures, height precedes width, which precedes depth). For prints, dimensions generally refer to the plate size or the composition size; if a full sheet or book page is shown, those dimensions are cited instead. Most prints are on paper; those on fabric are so indicated. This volume's Checklist (PP. 231–39) provides additional documentation: full dimensions for all sheets and pages; publishers, printers, and edition sizes; credit lines; accession numbers for works in MoMA's collection; and the MoMA online catalogue raisonné numbers for all prints and books. All works are in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, unless otherwise noted.



1. ***Femme Maison***
(Woman House).
1984. Photogravure, with pink chine collé. PLATE: 10 1/16 × 4 7/16" (25.6 × 11.2 cm)

Bourgeois's *Femme Maison* is among her most potent feminist subjects. It appeared first in paintings and drawings of the 1940s, in various configurations, and was later reprised by the artist in marble and in fabric. This version, returned to in 1984, had become a symbol for women artists in the 1970s, appearing on the cover of a now classic book by critic and activist Lucy R. Lippard, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (1976).

"The sky, the building, and the house, knew each other and approved of each other." LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Architecture Embodied

In the pursuit of emotional balance and stability, Louise Bourgeois frequently rendered architecture as a symbolic presence in her sculpture, prints, drawings, and early paintings. "As the architectural consciousness of the shape mounts," she said late in her life, "the psychological consciousness of the fear diminishes."[1] These forms were invariably personified, with structures exhibiting poignant vulnerabilities and, occasionally, assertiveness. Figural works took on architectural features, molded enclosures became refuges or, conversely, traps, and roomlike constructions were sites of personal drama.

Bourgeois's attraction to architecture was rooted in her youthful study of mathematics, which she appreciated for its reliability — it provided her with a sense of calm and security. Thinking back on her time as a young student, she wrote: "I enroll in Mathematics at the Sorbonne with the idea of strengthening my analytical mind — there is nothing I enjoy more than a demonstration by a + b — It has the beauty of Rockefeller Center — it makes me feel safe."[2]

Bourgeois later turned to art, and then met and married American art historian Robert Goldwater in Paris; she moved to New York in 1938. Some of her early paintings and prints show architectural interiors of places where she lived with her young family. By the second half of the 1940s, when Bourgeois found her distinctive artistic voice, she began to feature buildings prominently in her paintings, with eerie, surrealist overtones and narrative implications (FIG. 36). Her works titled *Femme Maison* (Woman House; PLATES 1, 6, 7) exemplify her gendered depiction of the realities of a young mother confined at home with inescapable responsibilities.

Bourgeois's illustrated book *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947; PLATES 13–21) depicts buildings in various guises, many calling to mind the skyscrapers she admired in her adopted home. She had romanticized these buildings even before she arrived, writing from Paris to her new husband (who returned to New York before her): "I dreamt about you, we were running one after the other in a street full of skyscrapers."[3] At the same time, the images in her small book suggest a range of human emotions: loneliness, stoicism, fear, aggression, despair, and defeat. One enigmatic composition includes two windowless buildings set in a barren landscape; Bourgeois's accompanying parable mysteriously identifies a single New York City landmark and gives it a clearly human dimension: "The solitary death of the Woolworth Building" (PLATE 14).

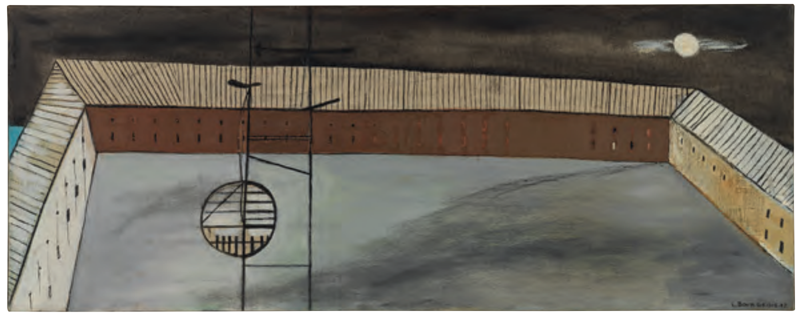


FIG. 36
***Regrettable Incident in the Louvre Palace*.** 1947.
Oil on canvas. 14 1/8 × 36" (35.9 × 91.4 cm). Collection The Easton Foundation

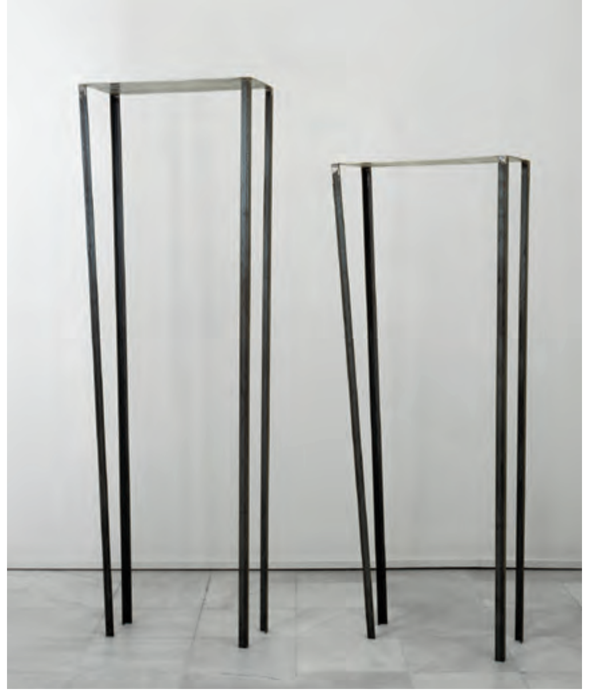
It was in this period that Bourgeois left painting and printmaking behind and turned definitively to sculpture. Many of her early wood totems suggest figures — including family and friends she missed in France — but others merge figural and architectural elements. Titles include *Pillar* (PLATE 5), *Rear Façade*, *Captain's Walk on Irving Place Building*, and *Figures Qui Supportent un Linteau* (Figures Supporting a Lintel).[4] When she exhibited these wood sculptures, she took advantage of the gallery's architecture to add drama to her installation by arranging the pieces as an environment, which encouraged visitors to walk among them (FIG. 12; P. 17).

Around the time that Bourgeois introduced this architectural imagery in her work, she and her husband were interacting in social circles that included several prominent architects — Paul Nelson, Josep Lluís Sert, and Le Corbusier among them. Bourgeois befriended Le Corbusier in particular, and associated with him at the Atelier 17 print workshop. The celebrated stiltlike "pilotis," a distinctive feature of his modernist architecture, are suggested in several of Bourgeois's works (see *Portrait of Jean-Louis*, 1947–49; PLATE 12; and Plate 6 of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*, 1947; PLATE 18).[5]

In the 1960s, after a long period of psychoanalysis, Bourgeois's artistic vocabulary turned from the earlier rigid wood figures to pliant forms made of plaster and latex, as she began to explore the emotional ramifications of spaces referencing nature rather than the built environment. Her hanging "lair" sculptures, especially, imply safe dwellings, cocoons, and nests shaped by creatures of the natural world (see for example *Fée Couturière* [Fairy Dressmaker, 1963; FIG. 15; P. 20]). But Bourgeois recognized them as places not only of safety and refuge, but also of entrapment. "When you experience pain," she said, "you can withdraw and protect yourself. But the security of the lair can also be a trap."[6]

In this regard, it is noteworthy that Bourgeois suffered from bouts of agoraphobia throughout her life, with her last decade spent nearly completely housebound. The security of the home and the fear of the outside world were linked. When she owned a small bookshop in the late 1950s, it sometimes took an effort to get herself out and to the shop. But being there also afforded a kind of security. Once, after rearranging the furniture, she reflected: "I was conscious of the walls and I was constantly leaning against them and feeling their strength."[7] Rooms and buildings offered safety, or at least a controllable environment in her life, and they recur time and again in her art.

In the 1970s, Bourgeois created the cavelike tableau *The Destruction of the Father* (1974; FIG. 62; P. 224), as well as the oval assembly of wood boxes titled *Confrontation* (1978; FIG. 20; P. 23). Each had the quality of a stage set where Bourgeois could reenact a vividly recalled event, or conjure up an imagined scenario. Yet even as this theatrical, installation-based vocabulary developed further in her work, Bourgeois still explored individual frailty within an architectural framework. Her *Maisons Fragiles* (Fragile Houses, 1978; FIG. 37) give form to tenuous human emotions and potentially unstable relationships, yet in strictly geometric terms.



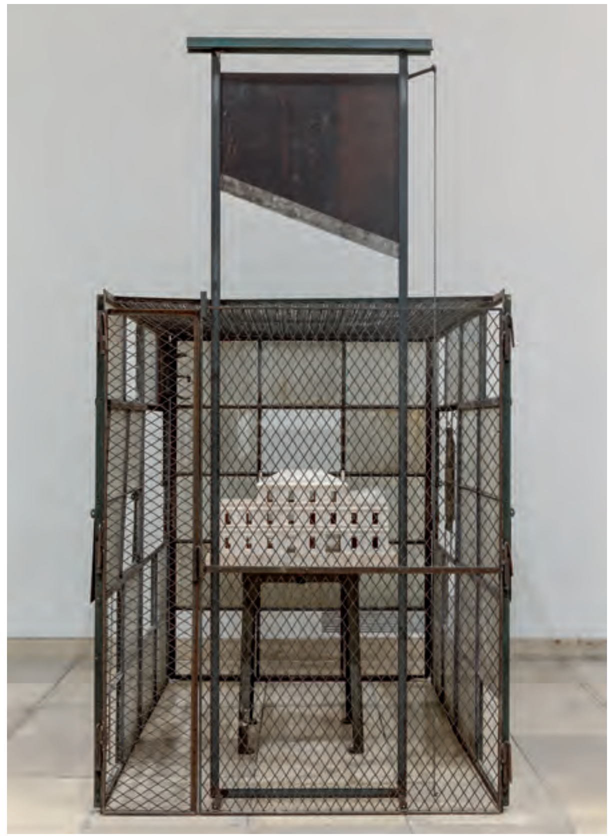


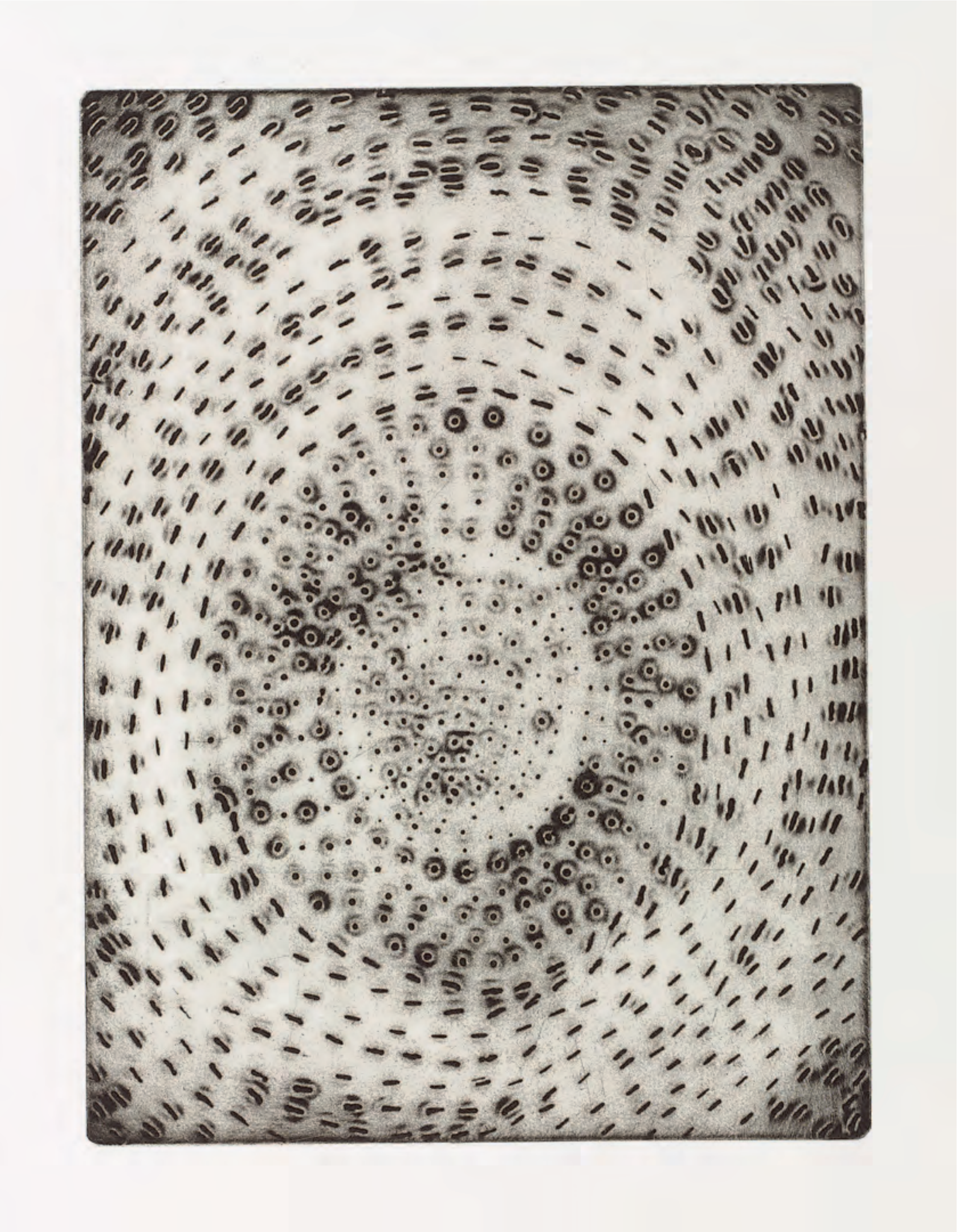
FIG. 37
Maisons Fragiles
(Fragile Houses). 1978.
Steel. UNIT 1: 7' × 27" × 14" (213.3 × 68.6 × 35.5 cm); UNIT 2: 6' × 27" × 14" (182.8 × 68.5 × 35.5 cm). Private collection

FIG. 38
***Cell (Choisy)*.** 1990–93.
Marble, metal, and glass. 10' 1/2" × 67" × 7' 11" (306.1 × 170.2 × 241.3 cm). Collection Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD

Bourgeois presented the first of her ominously titled *Cells* in 1991. This eventually led to sixty-two of these architectural sculptures, which she produced up until the last year of her life in 2010.[8] Each can be viewed as a chamber, whether assembled from a circle of old doors or fabricated with steel mesh. Some are small and meant for a single inhabitant (such as *Cell VI*, 1991; PLATE 32, FIG. 66; P. 226), while others are large rooms filled with assemblages of found objects, old clothing, and various sculptures by her, which together generate an affecting poetic resonance. One *Cell*, titled *Passage Dangereux* (Dangerous Passage, 1997) is the most elaborate in its architectural implications; it is made up not of a single room but of a series of them laid out one after another and connected in the fashion of a railroad-style apartment. The provocative contents of each room may be contemplated through the structure's porous mesh walls.

Each of Bourgeois's *Cells* is different — some suggest violence, others are forlorn or memorializing, but all are strangely haunting. In *Cell (Choisy)* (1990–93; FIG. 38), Bourgeois makes a direct reference to her past with a detailed, pink marble model of her childhood home in Choisy-le-Roi, a suburb of Paris. The hovering guillotine may be interpreted as a dramatic cry echoing back through the years of Bourgeois's own life, but viewers can also respond to this scene on their own terms, without knowing that the artist lived in that house from the time she was one until she was six.

With the *Cells*, Bourgeois found a vehicle — the confined architectural space — for isolating her thoughts and emotions and grappling with them. One cannot help but draw a parallel between these enclosures and the home/studio she restricted herself to in the last decade of her life. There, she was surrounded by her books, old posters and photographs, sculptures from all periods, and many personal belongings that were eventually transformed into works of art. At the end of her life, containment within the walls of 347 West 20th Street was a psychological and, eventually, physical necessity, though Bourgeois never ceased recalling all the other places she had lived in her long life.[9]



44. ***Tornado***.
1991–92. Drypoint, with selective wiping.
PLATE: $17\,{}^{15}/_{16} \times 13\,{}^{5}/_{16}$"
(45.5 × 33.8 cm)

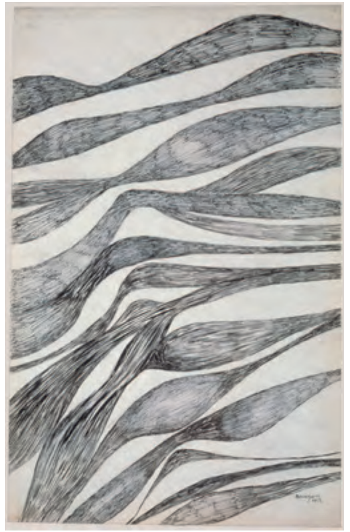
This ominous abstract image gives form to the whirling wind suggested by its title. It was created by hammering a nail and screwdriver into a thin sheet of copper. Flickering lights and darks resulted from ink catching on the edges of the indentations. Bourgeois once referred to a print from the 1940s, similarly titled *Tempête du Vent* (Tornado; PLATE 146), as "an exorcism of the fear . . . of being blown away and demolished."[1]

> "This theme of symbolic abstraction, through the creation of forms that suggest both the structure of geometry and human individuality, has been a consistent preoccupation of my work." LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Abstracted Emotions

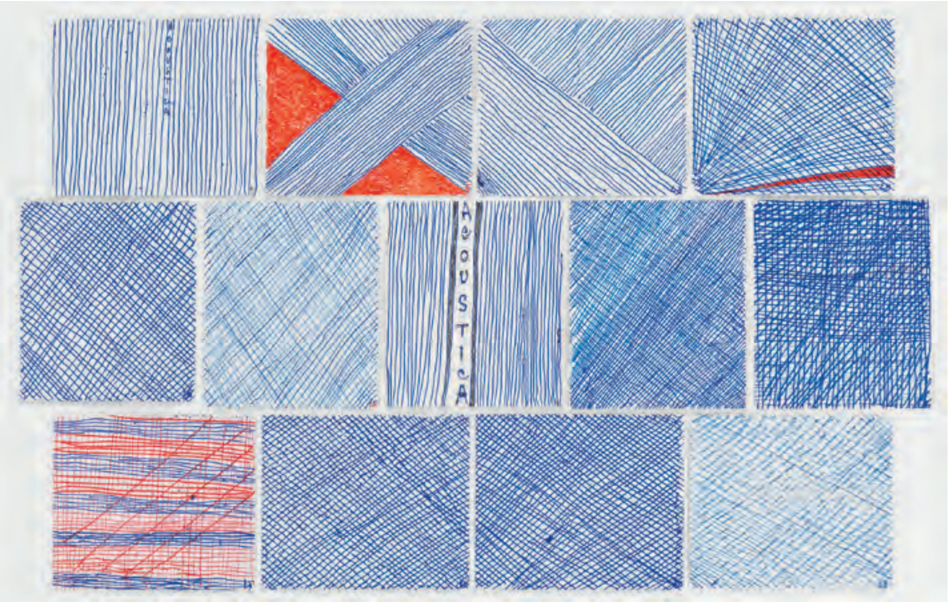
Louise Bourgeois's most recognizable sculptures are surely her provocative figures and body parts, and her monumental *Spiders*, all representing a personalized realism that issues from deeply felt emotions. She once noted that realistic drawings signify the "conquest of negative memory, the need to erase, and to get rid of it," while "the abstract drawings come from a deep need to achieve peace, rest and sleep."[2] Abstraction, in fact, was integral to her practice, though not often fully acknowledged in critical accounts.[3] It provided a tool for ordering and analysis — giving Bourgeois a sense of control and calm — but could also express anger and tension. The range of her abstraction veers from the resolutely geometric and biomorphic to the more overtly suggestive, with references to the human body or elements of nature. In the midcentury period, when formalism was ascendant in art circles, Bourgeois wanted that aspect of her work to be regarded as paramount. Asked about its clear erotic content, she demurred: "I am exclusively concerned, at least consciously, with the formal perfection."[4]

Bourgeois's explorations of abstraction reach back to her early wood sculptures, among them Untitled (*The Wedges*) (1950; PLATE 56) and *Spiral Woman* (1951–52; PLATE 59). Bourgeois's attraction to such systemized shapes has its roots in her early study of mathematics. "In geometry," she said, "there cannot be violence because all the cases are considered — no surprises, one can be calm."[5] Here, the strict posture of Untitled (*The Wedges*) is inflected with personalized touches: the sizes and colors of the linked segments vary, and the work's arrowlike thrust conveys determination and stability. *Spiral Woman*, on the other hand, is comprised of parts that can move, giving the figure an air of responsiveness and implying that it can adapt to its surroundings. Both of these sculptures rely on repetition, which is a significant compositional strategy in Bourgeois's practice of abstraction. The methodical, almost ritualized act of threading wood segments onto metal rods would have been comforting for Bourgeois. It approximated the act of stitching, and sewing always carried with it a link back to her mother's work in tapestry restoration, as well as the satisfaction of repairing. Repair, on a symbolic level, also extended to reparation and making amends in her personal relationships.



Bourgeois's pen strokes on paper could also be repetitive and mesmerizing. Many drawings from her early years display curving and meandering lines that call to mind strands of her own long hair, or the skeins of wool and bobbins of thread that were touchstones of her youth (FIG. 39). The solace that drawing on paper offered her was a constant throughout Bourgeois's long life. In her last years she filled sketchbooks with repeating lines and shapes, sitting quietly at her table or propped up in bed when plagued by insomnia. Her markings are seismographic: tracking the slightest waverings of her hand, but also her unending resolve. The title of the group constituting *Acoustica* (2003; FIG. 40) suggests that these sheets might have been filled as she listened to music to help pass the time at night. Also in this late period, Bourgeois created room-size installations on paper that feature replicating abstract printed forms overlaid with drawing. In *À l'Infini* (To Infinity, 2008; PLATES 185–98), whirling compositions seem to depict a state of metamorphosis.

Abstraction in one guise or another shows up at all points of Bourgeois's career. While her organically shaped plaster and marble sculptures of the 1960s are in marked contrast to her earlier segmented wood totems, they similarly rely on recurring elements. *Labyrinthine Tower* (1962; PLATE 62) seems to sprout up in stages, suggesting a plant growing out of the earth in springtime. But this twisting sculpture also hints at imagery of the penis, which would become more explicit in her works later in that decade. Bourgeois's plaster *Lair* (1962; PLATE 61) is also built up through duplication, here with modular steps that conjure up an eccentric hive or perhaps an architectural structure from some ancient time.



Certain of Bourgeois's abstract forms may be considered "signature" aspects of her artistic repertoire. The hairlike strokes of her early ink drawings are in this category, as are tiny trembling circles that cluster together across fields, also found in her drawings. Other signature motifs include her *cumuls*, an allusion to cumulous cloud formations. But the *cumuls*, which first appear in Bourgeois's marble sculptures of the 1960s, suggest rolling hills or breasts as much as cloud-filled skies. Bourgeois made many variations on the *cumul*, giving it monumental proportions in *Partial Recall* of 1979 (FIG. 41), an altarlike wood construction that is a landmark of abstraction in Bourgeois's œuvre. Yet its serene presence issued from an emotional realm. "*Partial Recall*," she noted, "has to do with forgiveness and with integration. . . . It is difficult to recall forgiveness, one needs to be blessed at the moment. Aggression is very easy to recall."[6]

FIG. 39
Untitled. 1953.
Ink on paper. 22 ½ × 14 ¼" (57.2 × 36.2 cm). Private collection

FIG. 40
Acoustica. 2003.
Suite of 13 double-sided drawings, ink on paper. SHEET (each): 9 ⅜ × 8" (23.8 × 20.3 cm). Collection The Easton Foundation

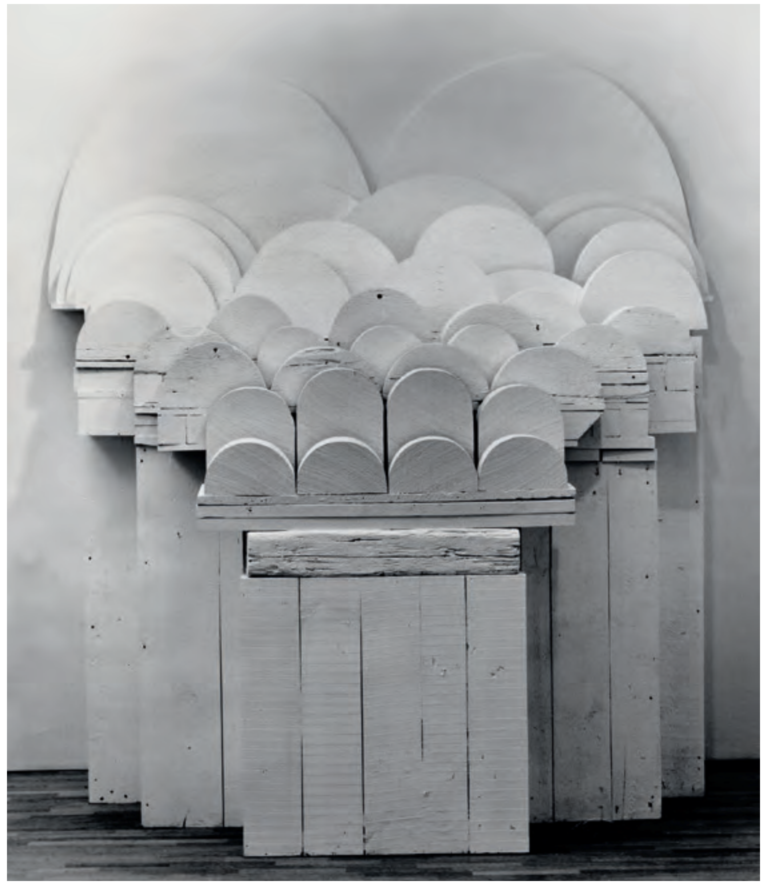
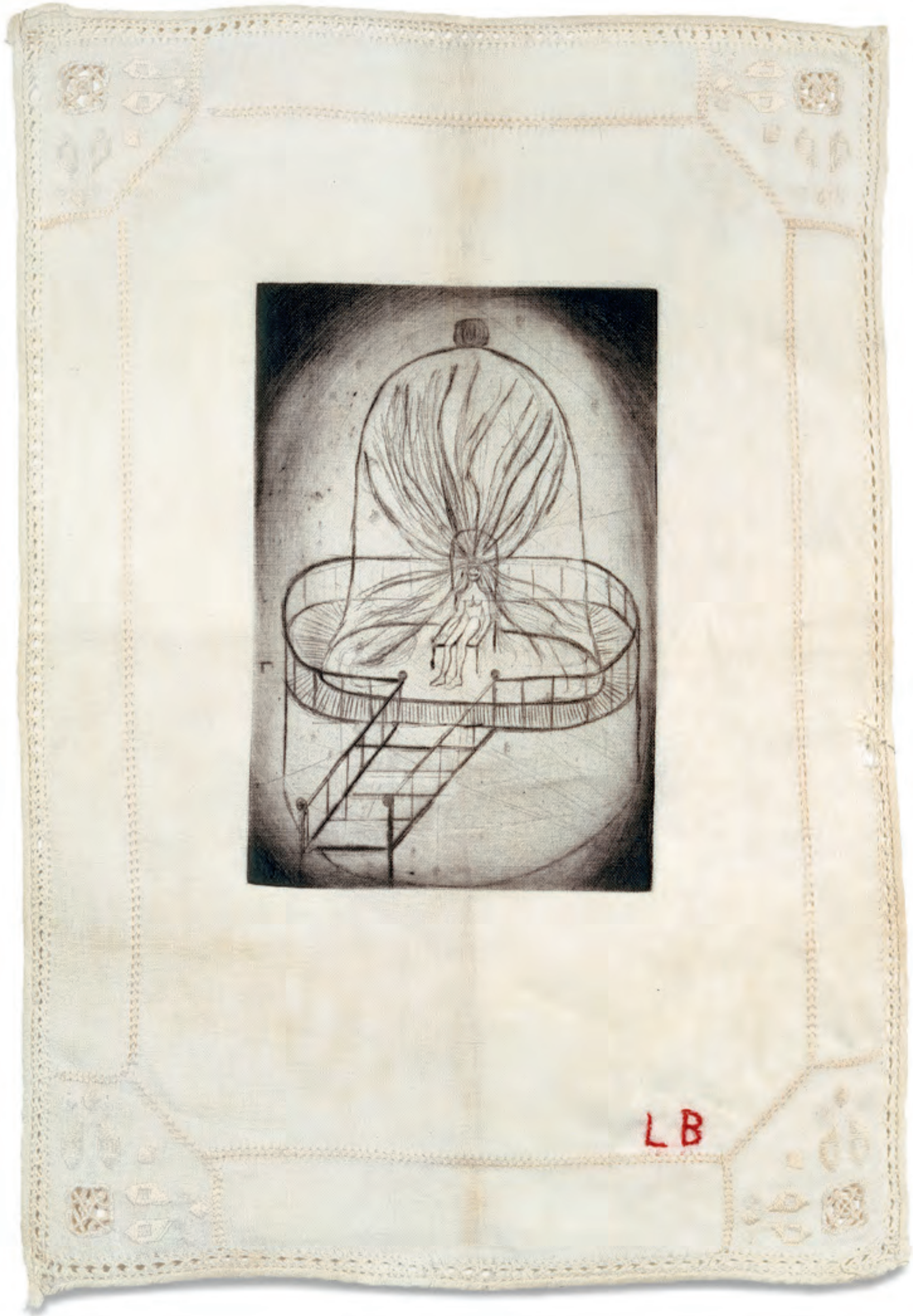


FIG. 41
Partial Recall. 1979.
Painted wood. 9' × 7' 6" × 66" (274.3 × 228.6 × 167.6 cm). Private collection

The delineation of a strict geometry—without a clear indication of something outside itself—is somewhat rare for Bourgeois but finds its way into her 1990 book *the puritan* (PLATES 45–52), illustrating a text she wrote decades earlier about her friend Alfred Barr, the founding director of The Museum of Modern Art. In describing the visual mode she chose for re-examining those reflections, she says: "Geometry was a tool to understanding . . . it was a pleasure . . . there was order."[7] These elegant engravings, with their sharply defined structures, are a particularly apt evocation of Barr, the celebrated champion of modernism. Geometry also permeates Bourgeois's fabric collages of the 2000s, a fact that is underscored when she selects materials already printed with abstract patterns. In certain of her fabric illustrated books (PLATES 82, 87), Bourgeois succeeds in evoking a storyline simply through color, shape, and pattern.

Another way Bourgeois created an overarching visual narrative was with the format of the series. *Lullaby* (2006; PLATE 53) comprises twenty-four whimsical screenprints on backdrops of musical staves—an abstract visual foil that occurs again and again in her later prints and drawings. *Lullaby* reverberates with an unmistakable rhythm across the whole, while individual plates bristle with signs of sexuality. Bourgeois favored the presentation of such a series in a stabilizing grid. Describing that abstract framework as it appeared in her early paintings, she said: "The grid is a very peaceful thing because nothing can go wrong . . . everything is complete. There is no room for anxiety . . . everything has a place . . . everything is welcome."[8]

While lines, curves, circles, grids, and a wide array of biomorphic formations were highlights of Bourgeois's abstract language, the spiral holds a singular place in her œuvre. It originated with the plaster pieces of the 1960s and became a primary motif, even with figurative implications, as in *Spiral Woman*. Bourgeois compared the turns of the spiral to the twisting and wringing out of tapestries as they were washed at the river when she was a child. In one fit of anger, she wrote: "The spiral, means squeeze out of, wring the laundry, wring dry—spin dry—twist your own idiot, twist his arm to make him do or talk or give, squeeze him, here is then the message of my spiral. . . ."[9] Yet the spiral afforded a variety of expressive possibilities. It might convey coiling tension, as in Untitled (1991; PLATE 60), or allude to a gathering storm (*Tornado*, 1991–92; PLATE 44), but it may also foster a peaceful serenity (*Progression*, 1990; PLATE 67). All of Bourgeois's imagery—abstract or figurative—emerged from a complicated psychological domain. As she vividly declared: "It is not an image I am seeking. It's not an idea. It is an emotion you want to recreate, an emotion of wanting, of giving, of destroying."[10]



74. ***Hair*.**
2000. Drypoint and engraving, with selective wiping, on fabric. SHEET: 16¾ × 11¾" (42.5 × 29.8 cm). Collection The Easton Foundation

In 2000, after working for a number of years with fabric in her sculptures, Bourgeois asked printer Felix Harlan of Harlan & Weaver to experiment with printing her copper plates on old household items, including napkins, placemats, and handkerchiefs. Pleased with the results, she added small editions on fabric to prints that were also issued in larger editions on paper. *Hair* was among the first, with six examples on various fabrics.

> "... mountains of unusable clothes, buried under torn clothes. I cannot renounce the past. I cannot, do not want to forget." LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Fabric of Memory

Louise Bourgeois's origins are intimately linked to fabric—to the tapestries that were the focus of her family's business. Her childhood memories were filled with the washing, restoring, and selling of these historic textiles. She keenly remembered the workshop women on their knees at the river, washing and wringing those heavy objects, herself drawing in missing fragments of imagery, and her mother with a needle and thread, mending. "My mother would sit out in the sun and repair ...," she remembered. "She really loved it. This sense of reparation is very deep within me."[1] A lovely letter of 1929, from mother to daughter, reminds the young Louise as she travels: "On your return I am quite delighted to do tapestry together. You must not neglect that."[2] The association with her mother is clear, even though her father was also involved in the business through sales at the family's gallery in Paris.

Bourgeois's interest in the craft of weaving found an art context in the mid-1940s, when she exhibited her own woven textile designs at The Museum of Modern Art.[3] She may even have considered business opportunities in designing textiles.[4] But those exhibited works were an exception in her art career. As for sewing, that skill was mainly relegated to her own clothing—making garments, repairing and altering them. Fashion, however, was something of a preoccupation from the time she was very young, and her parents enjoyed dressing her in stylish outfits. She never discarded any of her clothes, admitting: "The pretext is that they are still good—it's my past and as rotten as it was I would like to take it and hold it tight in my arms."[5] But the time came when she was ready to transform these items—not throw them out. This was true also for a range of fabric items amassed over the course of her life—towels, handkerchiefs, bedding, and the like.

The occupation of sewing, long demeaned as "women's work," began to be supported as a legitimate art form with the feminist revivals of the skill in the 1970s. But sewing and fabrics first made an appearance in Bourgeois's art in 1991, with *Cell I*, the architectural structure that initiated one of her most important series. The focus of the assemblage of objects filling that eccentric "room" was a metal bed fitted out with fabric bedding constructed from such items as old pillowcases and postal mailing bags from France (FIG. 42). Most were embroidered in red with phrases Bourgeois often wrote in her diaries or on the backs of drawings, among them: "Pain is the ransom of formalism," and "Art is the guarantee of sanity." Fabric elements were soon found in subsequent *Cells*. And such aphorisms would later be printed on fabric items with lithography (PLATES 83–86), and in fabric books through digital processes (PLATES 89–95).

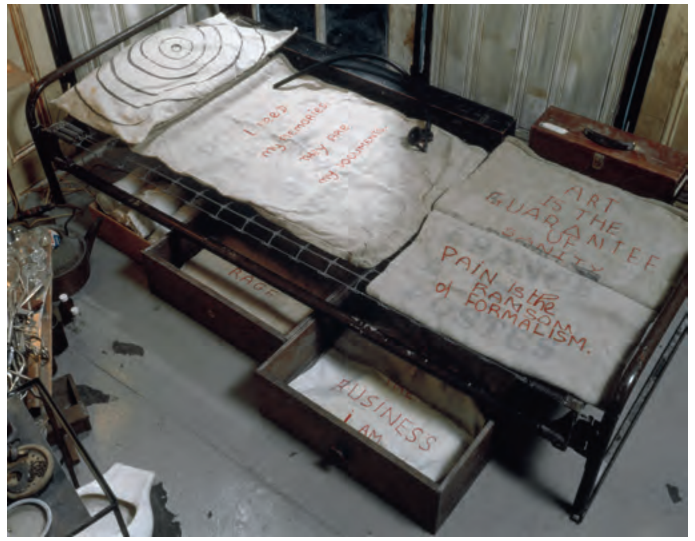


FIG. 42
Cell I (detail). 1991.
Painted wood, fabric, metal, and glass. 6' 11" × 8' × 9' (210.8 × 243.8 × 274.3 cm). Collection Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD

A significant embrace of fabric in Bourgeois's printed work came about in 1992 with *She Lost It*, a project created at The Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia.[6] There she printed variously colored silk scarves with a tale she wrote in the 1940s, and then expanded it onto a nearly two-hundred-foot-long white banner screenprinted with red text. Bourgeois incorporated that banner into a labyrinthine installation that visitors walked through while reading the text, and also made it the centerpiece of a performance in which it was wrapped and unwrapped around her actors. For that event, she also made costumes embroidered with her pithy statements (FIG. 26; P. 27). Such words were occupying a more prominent place in her work generally.

Ideas engaging fabric and sewing began to inspire a range of Bourgeois's art in the 1990s. She created several tall, vertical pole pieces, such as *Sutures* (1993), in which a hanging black rubber form is pierced by sewing needles that are threaded from multiple bobbin cones. During this period, Bourgeois also made life-size figures in fabric, hung her old clothes in *Cells*, and created sculptures displaying garments (FIG. 43). Her dresses, blouses, slips, camisoles, and coats were all on view; there is a poignancy and a vaguely memorializing quality to the loosely hanging attire in these works. Concurrently, this was a moment when clothing was being explored by a range of contemporary artists, many of whom were investigating issues of identity, as opposed to memory.[7] Bourgeois, now in her eighties, rarely left the house at this point. As she emptied her closets for her art, it was as if she were closing a chapter of her life. She no longer needed to dress up to attend social occasions, and wore simple outfits at home in her studio. But her former wardrobe provided a way to look back and remember events. "You can retell your life and remember your life by the shape, the weight, the color, the smell of the clothes in your closet," she said.[8]

The act of sewing had symbolic resonance for Bourgeois, but also a soothing effect. She once wrote: "I feel depressed . . . fighting depression. . . . If I go to bed, I cannot sleep, only sewing will restore me to a balance."[9] She initially sewed her fabric sculptures with a rough stitch that lends those works a vividly emotional quality (see for example Untitled, 1998; PLATE 75). But as her fabric work increased, she began to rely on a full-time seamstress. Mercedes Katz, whom she hired in 1999, eventually became a daily presence at Bourgeois's 20th Street home/studio, sitting at a sewing table on the lower level with plastic boxes of fabric remnants stacked nearby. She was an active member of Bourgeois's atelier, occupying a place near the presses where printer Felix Harlan worked. At this stage, Bourgeois generally cut and arranged her fabrics with pins, then basted them together as she shaped her compositions. She turned over final construction to Katz, whose professional stitching she actually preferred. Katz's presence also served as an instigating factor for Bourgeois's fabric pieces. When the artist knew she was about to arrive, she eagerly prepared projects for her to work on.

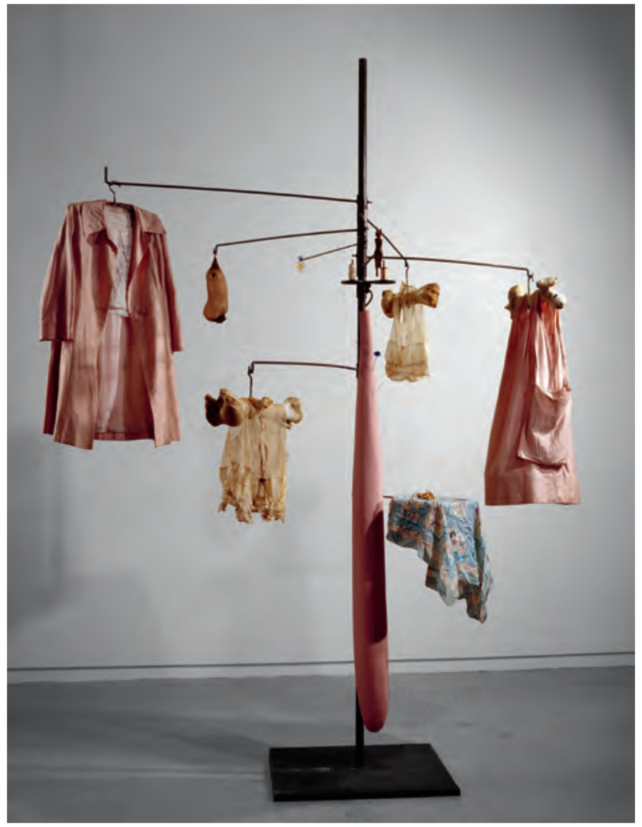


FIG. 43
Pink Days and Blue Days. 1997.
Steel, fabric, bone, wood, glass, rubber, and mixed media. 9' 9" × 7' 3" × 7' 3" (297.2 × 221 × 221 cm). Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

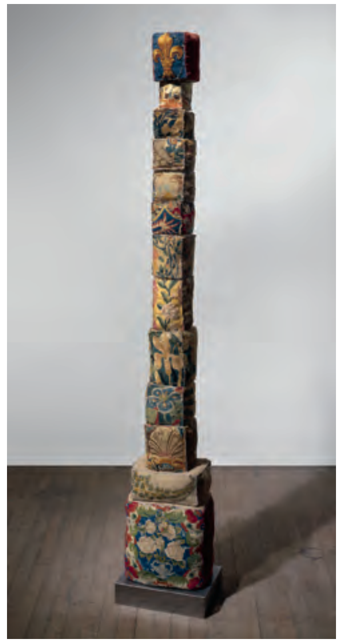
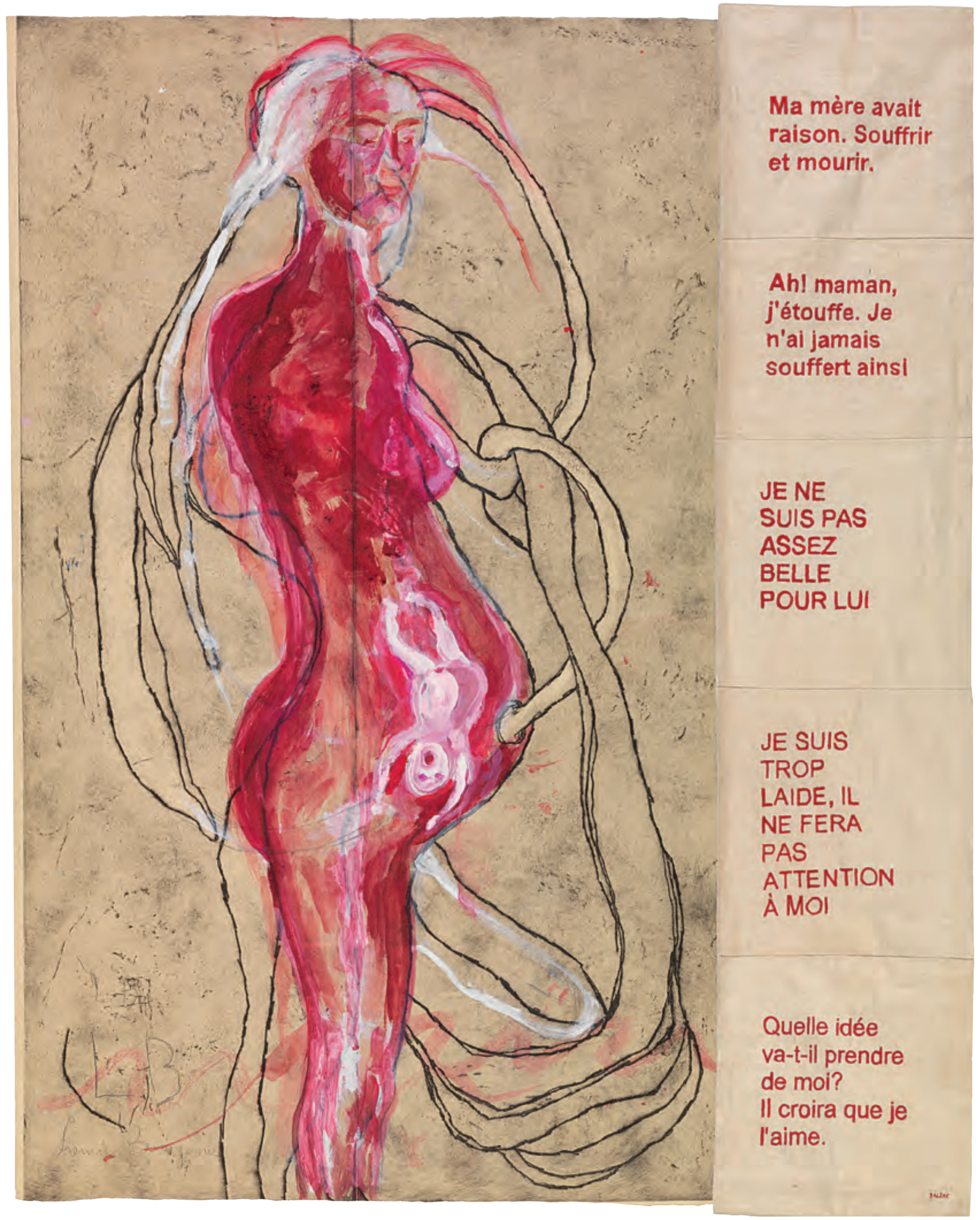


FIG. 44
Untitled. 2001.
Tapestry and stainless steel. 6' 2½" × 12½" × 9" (189.2 × 31.7 × 22.8 cm). Private collection

In 2000, Bourgeois began printing on fabric after handing Harlan some of her handkerchiefs and other linens and asking how her copper plates might print on them. He experimented on the printing press downstairs in her house. She liked the results very much and made small fabric editions of many of the surrealist images that were preoccupying her at that time (PLATES 76–80). Not long after that, Bourgeois saw potential in the linen hand towels from her trousseau. It was clear that each towel could be folded to form four "pages." Perhaps thinking of the cloth children's books she once collected, she asked Katz to sew a batch of folded towels together to make the binding for *Ode à l'Oubli* (Ode to Forgetting, 2002; PLATE 82), and then filled the pages with collages made from bits of colorful silk, linen, chiffon, tulle, nylon, and rayon from her old garments. Some materials exhibit stains, scorch marks, and even cigarette burns, suggesting their histories.[10] More fabric books and prints followed, as she also continued with fabric sculptures, some incorporating tapestry, with its associations to her family (FIG. 44). In fact, fabric was a primary material of Bourgeois's last decades. Indeed, when she took up digital printing in the mid-2000s, it was for the ease with which she could print on fabric. It superseded paper as her preferred printing surface; she liked its tactile qualities and the way it absorbs ink. Her last two print projects were a series made in collaboration with artist Tracey Emin (*Do Not Abandon Me*, 2009–10), and a book with author and friend Gary Indiana (*To Whom It May Concern*, 2010), both compilations on cloth.[11] Fabric had followed the arc of Bourgeois's life and art—from childhood to very old age.[12]


Ma mère avait raison. Souffrir et mourir.
Ah! maman, j'étouffe. Je n'ai jamais souffert ainsi
JE NE SUIS PAS ASSEZ BELLE POUR LUI
JE SUIS TROP LAIDE, IL NE FERA PAS ATTENTION À MOI
Quelle idée va-t-il prendre de moi? Il croira que je l'aime.

96. ***My Inner Life (#5)***.
2008. Soft ground etching, with gouache, watercolor, and pencil additions, and stitched text on fabric. SHEET (overall): 60 1/8 × 48 1/2" (152.7 × 123.2 cm). Collection Dominique Lévy, New York

This large-scale figure was conceived in soft ground etching (as seen in PLATE 112), and then reenvisioned when Bourgeois embellished seven impressions with hand additions. This example has a specific subject, identified by an inscription on the back citing Eugénie Grandet, the long-suffering eponymous heroine of an 1833 novel by Honoré de Balzac. Bourgeois identified with Grandet, who was dominated by an oppressive father.

> "This figure I feel pushed to make is going to dissolve or appease my anxiety." LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Alone and Together

The human figure, and specifically self-portraiture, are integral to Bourgeois's art in all periods of her career and in all mediums. *Bosom Lady* (1948; FIG. 45), a figurative engraving and drypoint, encompasses many of the concerns the artist grapples with again and again, in terms of both subject matter and visual strategies. At this early point in her artistic career, her work had evolved from a stylized realism to a more dreamlike realm, influenced by Surrealism. But combining features of both modes — the real and the imagined — became central to Bourgeois's vision. In *Bosom Lady*, an indeterminate space and a figure juxtaposing a female body with the wings and feet of a bird are signal devices of the irrational world conjured by the Surrealists. Yet the female's head is recognizably Bourgeois's own, as indicated by the hairstyle she wore at that time. When describing this print, she pointed to three shapes in the bowl on the shelf, saying: "These are her three eggs . . . her three children . . . her three jewels. The bird will take care of the eggs . . . but the bird can also escape by flight."[1] This is a self-portrait of Bourgeois as mother, conveying the rewards and responsibilities she felt in that role. In succeeding decades, the urgency of her changing moods and fears would dramatically affect her sense of herself, her body, and her relationships with others, and that in turn would shape the meanings of her figurative art.

When Bourgeois turned definitively to sculpture in the late 1940s, her first exhibitions of life-size, abstracted wood totems referenced human figures — whether symbolizing actual people (as in *Brother and Sister* of 1949), or giving form to perceived hostilities (as in *Persistent Antagonism* of 1946–48). Later, after an intensive period of psychoanalysis in the 1950s and 1960s, the role of the figure in her art gave way to a preoccupation more specifically with the physical body. After an endless exploration of dreams and previously unspoken thoughts and desires, Bourgeois acknowledged this newly discovered realm of feelings in her art through explicit imagery. Works with obvious sexual references appeared in the late 1960s, including the rather shocking *Fillette* (1968), a two-foot-long latex penis sculpture that she hung from an ominous hook (FIG. 16; P. 20). Bourgeois also, on occasion, cradled this disturbing sculpture like a baby in her arms, adding a touch of irony and humor, and perhaps thinking of the sons she had raised many years earlier. With this and other works, the body fragment became firmly entrenched in her vocabulary of forms (as in *Janus Fleuri* [Flowering Janus], 1968; PLATE 118), and led to further

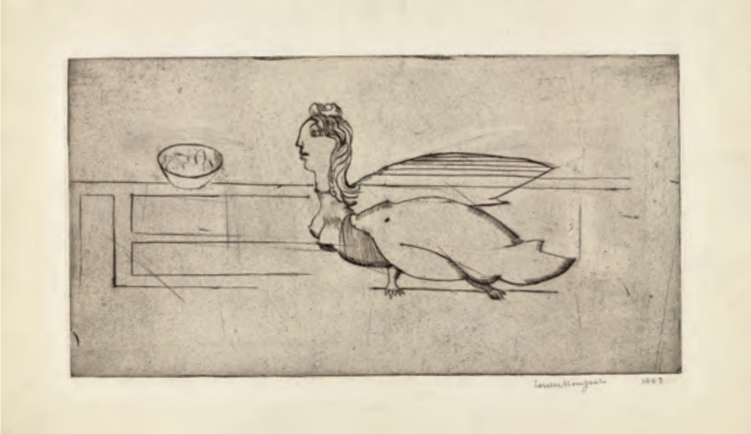


FIG. 45
Bosom Lady, state IV of V. 1948.
Engraving and drypoint. PLATE: 7 7/8 × 14 7/8" (20 × 37.8 cm). PUBLISHER: unpublished. PRINTER: the artist at Atelier 17, New York. EDITION: 4 impressions of all 1948 states. Gift of the artist

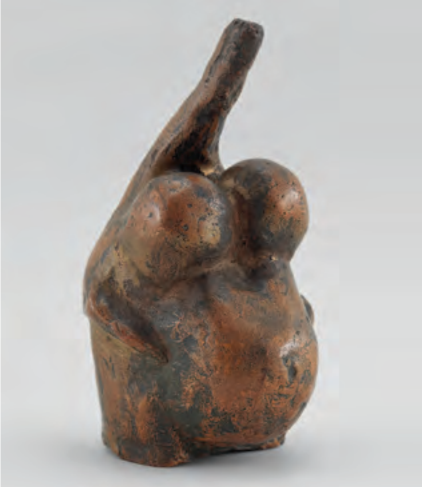


FIG. 46
Fragile Goddess. 1970.
Bronze, gold patina. 10 1/4 × 5 5/8 × 5 3/8" (26 × 14.3 × 13.7 cm). Collection Louise Bourgeois Trust

provocative creations. In *Fragile Goddess* (1970; FIG. 46), the swelling belly signals pregnancy, but the head of the figure has morphed into a defensive weapon. She can take care of herself and protect her unborn child. But Bourgeois understands the precariousness of this position. Here, she recognizes “a determination to survive at whatever fragile level you can achieve.”[2]

Bourgeois’s body imagery shifted from the merely suggestive to the overtly sexual to the surreal throughout the rest of her career. But the 1990s and 2000s witnessed a heightened level of realism, particularly with full-scale figures, some cast from models (as in *Arch of Hysteria*, 1993; PLATE 143) and others constructed in fabric. The diminutive *Do Not Abandon Me* (1999) also displays a graphic naturalism, while *Couple I* (1996) combines elements of the real and the surreal (FIGS. 47, 48). The figures in *Couple I* are approximately life size, making it easy to identify with them, yet the embrace it depicts is nightmarish. Individual identities nearly disappear as the two figures cling to each other—as if hanging on for dear life. Bourgeois explores comparably fraught relationships in prints, as seen in *Triptych for the Red Room* (1994; PLATE 144), where aspects of reality and dream merge. Here, the struggles and dependencies of male and female, and parent and child, are conveyed across panels that unfold almost cinematically. Yet the pain is unmistakable: gaping mouths scream, ribs burst through skin, and hysteria convulses adult and child alike. As Bourgeois succinctly noted: “The subject of pain is the business I am in.”[3]

Psychic pain—anxiety, fear, jealousy, anger—invariably affects the body, and Bourgeois renders this in her art through the scrutiny of bones, muscles, intestines, and bodily fluids (PLATES 112–13, 115–17). “With the emotions there is always the physical reaction—the heartbeat, breathing, perspiration,” she noted.[4] But the response can go deeper: “Depression set in, and paralyzing fears. Somatic ailments.”[5] One late series of prints titled *Extreme Tension*, from 2007, intersperses its compositions with handwritten text panels that call out pains, cramps, and hot flashes, and the effects of tension on the scalp, shoulder blades, stomach and esophagus, intestines, and rectum.[6] Bourgeois first listed these ailments in her writings of the late 1950s and then revived the text nearly fifty years later for this print series.[7] Stress was a constant problem and she charted its consequences: “When we are in a tense state, our muscles tighten; when they relax and the tension goes down, a liquid is released,” she observed.[8] These fluids became the subject of a major *Cell* sculpture of 1992 titled *Precious Liquids*, in which the usually private excretions of the body—urine, sperm, milk, tears—are the focal point.

While the effects of her own moods and emotions preoccupied Bourgeois, so did intense feelings provoked by her relationships with others. As noted, sexuality and desire were never far from her thoughts, and this continued into very old age. With the hanging figures of *The Couple* (2003; PLATE 120), the embrace is warm and comfortable, rather than anxious, and the female figure flaunts such gendered accoutrements of allure as long flowing hair, a necklace like one seen on the artist in a 1960 photograph,[9] and prominent high-heeled shoes—all of which recur in Bourgeois’s imagery. A certain playfulness pervades the sexual encounters in the 2003 illustrated book *The Laws of Nature* (PLATES 138–42), where the male holds a commanding position at the start of the sequence, but the action flips and the female is ultimately firmly in charge. Bourgeois was endlessly fascinated by the male/female relationship. “There is the desire,” she said, “the flirtation, the fear of failure, vulnerability, jealousy, and violence. I’m interested in all these elements.”[10]

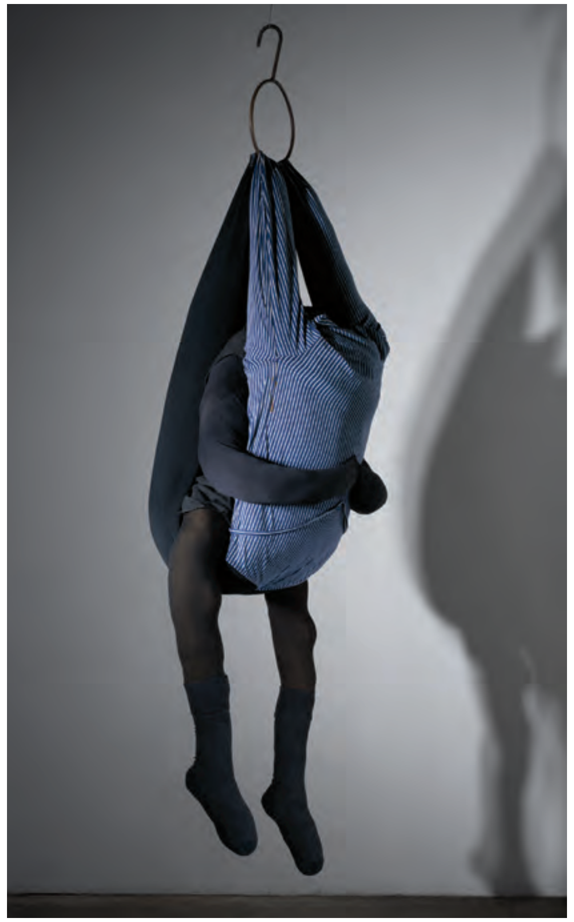


FIG. 47
Couple I. 1996.
Fabric. 6' 8" × 27 × 28" (203.2 × 68.6 × 71.1 cm). Collection Artist Rooms Foundation, United Kingdom

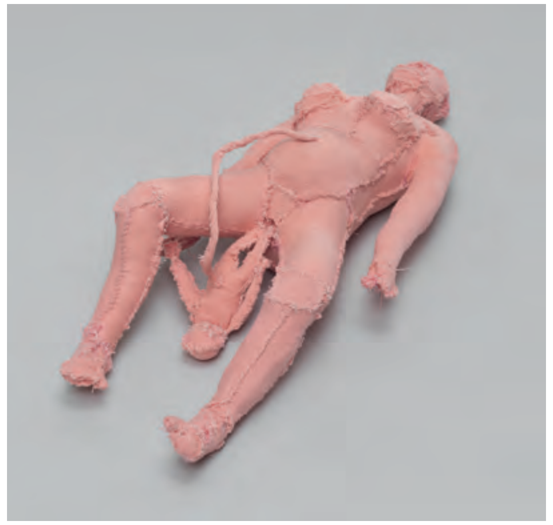
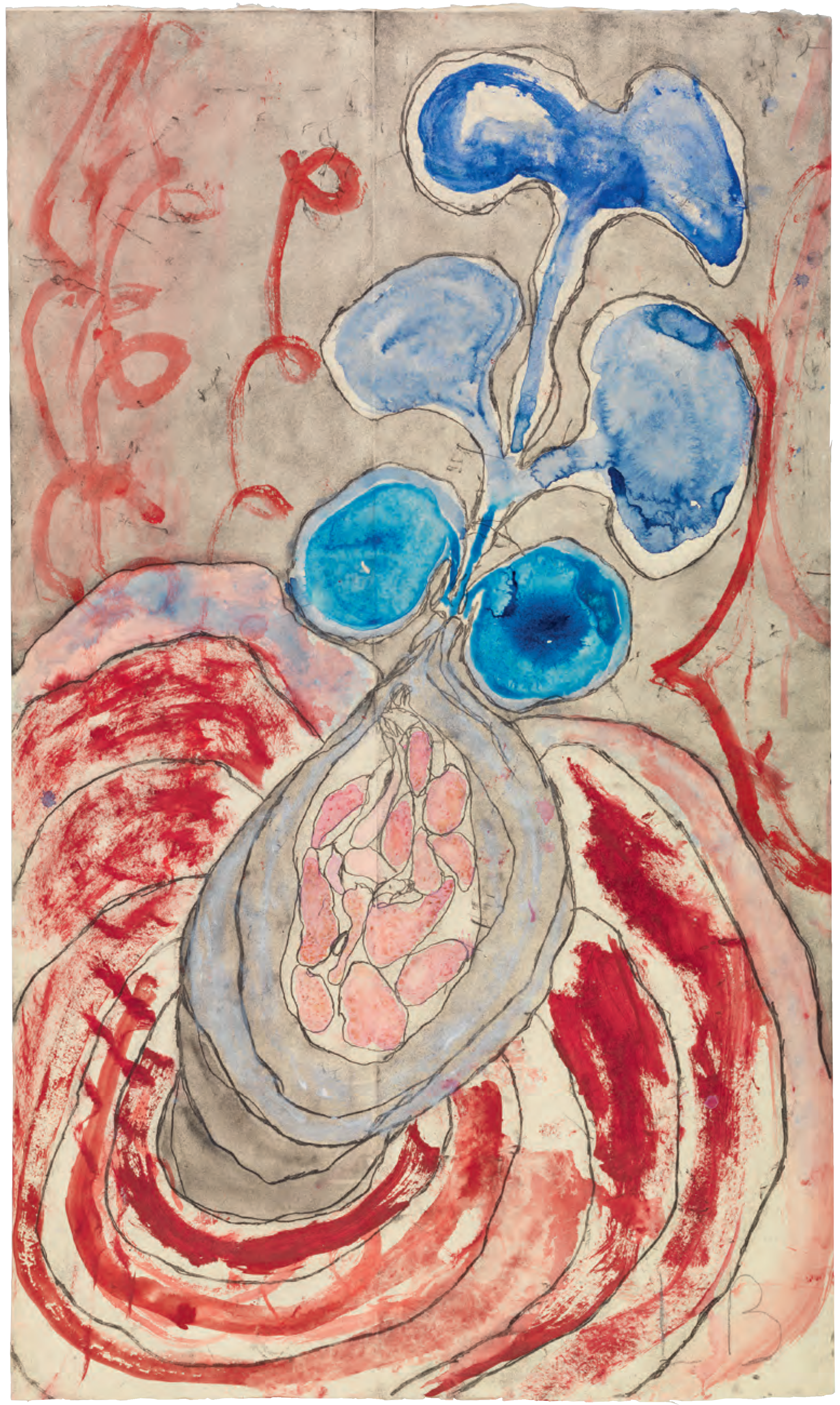


FIG. 48
Do Not Abandon Me. 1999.
Fabric and thread. 4 3/4 × 20 1/2 × 8 1/2" (12.1 × 52.1 × 21.6 cm). Collection Ursula Hauser, Switzerland

While sexual body parts and sexual relationships are pervasive subjects in Bourgeois’s work, other personal relationships engage her imagination as well, particularly motherhood. The birth of her son Jean-Louis in 1940 spurred the emblem of family unity seen in an untitled work of the same year (PLATE 97), with mother, father, and son entwined. The interdependence conveyed there still affected Bourgeois some fifty years later when she revived the earlier image for her 1990 print *Self Portrait* (PLATES 98–100). Motherhood, and a never-to-be-cut umbilical cord, are also subjects of the drypoint *Do Not Abandon Me* (1999–2000; PLATES 123–27), which relates to the sculpture of the same provocative title. But in the print, Bourgeois adds an enclosing glass bell jar, conjuring up a surrealist dream state or, more darkly, suggesting that this relationship will be suffocating.

Images of motherhood fill Bourgeois’s final years, when she fashioned simplified forms to depict pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding, by brushing red gouache onto dampened paper (PLATE 129). These subjects—so essentialist in feminist terms—also recur in her late prints (PLATE 130).[11] However, they now refer to her *own* birth, not to the births of her sons.[12] As Bourgeois approached the end of her life, she looked back to the beginning, to her mother’s womb and breast, for the reassuring safety and security they represented. Even at this late date, the figure served as a probing vehicle for understanding, as it had in so many guises throughout Bourgeois’s career. “Content,” she said, “is a concern with the human body, its aspect, its changes, transformations, what it needs, wants and feels—its functions.”[13]



145. ***Swelling (#3)*.**
2008. Soft ground etching, with watercolor, ink, gouache, and pencil additions.
SHEET: 60 1/8 × 35 1/2" (152.7 × 90.2 cm). Collection Louise Bourgeois Trust and Osiris, New York

"The metaphors in nature are very strong . . . nature is a mode of communication." LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Forces of Nature

From the time she was a child, Louise Bourgeois was a keen observer of nature. She and her siblings tended garden plots and had an intimate knowledge of plants, flowers, shrubs, and fruit-bearing trees. Years later she recalled tall boxwoods, shaped by topiary trimming, which smelled "so sweet"[1] when it rained. "When I went into the garden at night," she said, "it was as if friendly presences populated the landscape."[2] That tendency to humanize natural phenomena would be fundamental to her thinking as an adult artist. In 1941, when she and her husband purchased a country house in Easton, Connecticut, she took the opportunity to teach her young sons about their surroundings. "Nature was one of the ways I communicated with the children," she said, "both through the animals and the plants. . . . If we observe life in the garden, we share the same love. It makes you very close."[3]

As a young painter and printmaker, Bourgeois often chose motifs of flora and fauna, analyzing and systematizing them through the device of the grid (PLATE 149). She also hinted at primordial fears and mythic powers embodied in the landscape through such paintings as Untitled of 1945 (FIG. 49), where trees, roots, and layers of sediment are cloaked in foreboding. In prints, she represented wind and dangerous storms, as well as seeds, fecundity, and processes of germination (PLATES 146–51).[4] When Bourgeois turned definitively to sculpture in the later 1940s, her prime concern was abstracted figures, but she continued her practice of drawing with black ink, many of the resulting images calling to mind plants and landscapes. When a group of those drawings was part of a solo exhibition in 1953, critics noted the resemblances.[5] The sculpture *Forêt (Night Garden)* (PLATE 163) was also on display. A wood piece comprised of separate elements clustered on a shallow base, set close to the floor, it immediately conjures up plantings and growth; shrouded in black paint, it emanates mystery. Discussing this piece, Bourgeois remembered past experiences: "I have looked down at the plants crowded together . . . the darkness that surrounds those plants near the ground has always seemed to me attractive and frightening . . . my approach to nature is a very subjective one and it revolves around the idea of security or danger."[6]

When Bourgeois exhibited an entirely new body of sculpture at New York's Stable Gallery in 1964, she traded her upright, rigid wood totems for works of organic and biomorphic contours, incorporating plaster and rubber molds to create her shapes. She introduced the motif of the "lair,"

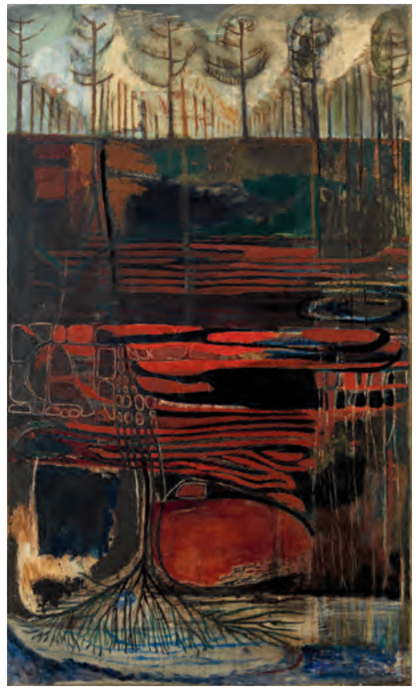


FIG. 49
Untitled. 1945.
Oil on canvas. 43$^{1}/_{2}$ × 26" (110.5 × 66 cm). Collection The Easton Foundation

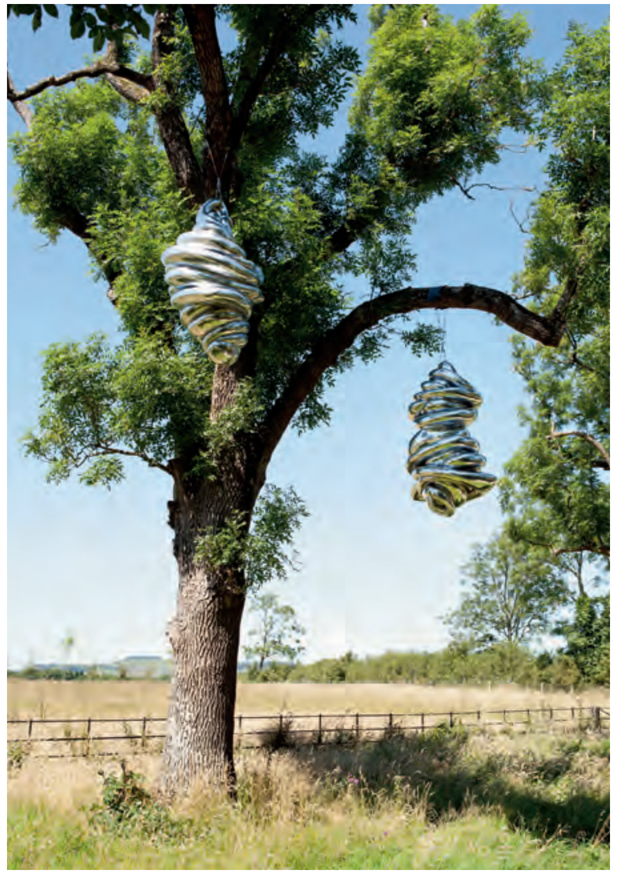


FIG. 50
Both **Untitled.** 2004.
Aluminum. LEFT: 6' × 42" × 46" (182.9 × 106.7 × 116.8 cm). RIGHT: 65$^{1}/_{2}$ × 42 25" (166.4 × 106.7 × 63.5 cm). Installed at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, United Kingdom, in 2012. Both private collection

a bulbous, nestlike sculpture with a hollowed-out interior. *Fée Couturière* (Fairy Dressmaker, 1963; FIG. 15; P. 20) was one of two pendulous lairs hung from the ceiling in that show. The next year, Bourgeois exhibited it in a garden, suspended from the branch of a tree.[7] She revisited that idea years later, in 1995, for a public park in Choisy-le-Roi, the town where she spent her earliest childhood years. Commissioned for a sculpture, she created *Les Bienvenus* (The Welcome Ones), two hivelike aluminum nests that hang from a tree.[8] Some years later, a similar pair was displayed in Somerset, England (FIG. 50).

In the late 1960s, Bourgeois devised yet another sculptural strategy from ideas based in nature. She fashioned a series of "landscapes," with forms that suggest hills and mounds, but that may just as easily be interpreted as breasts or other shapes of the body. (For example, see *Soft Landscape II*, 1967; PLATE 155). Such likenesses led one critic to characterize her imagery as a reflection of "the robust sexuality of things under and upon the earth."[9] Most importantly, these sculptures, shaped in marble, bronze, and plastic resin, represent mutability, with forms seeming to transform from the bodily to the earthly right before one's eyes. "They are anthropomorphic and they are landscapes also," Bourgeois said, "since our body could be considered from a topographical point of view as a land with mounds and valleys and caves and holes. It seems rather evident to me that our own body is a figuration that appears in Mother Earth."[10] Bourgeois placed some marble examples of these sculptures in the sand dunes of Bridgehampton, Long Island, for a time, where they settled in among the sea grasses as if they had grown or nestled there on their own.[11]

This idea of metamorphosis became integral to Bourgeois's iconography of nature. In prints from the 1990s and 2000s, faces, torsos, and legs emerge from the roots, trunks, and branches of trees. While tree trunks might be considered symbols of strength and stability, in Bourgeois's Surrealist-inspired world they can conjure up nightmare scenarios. In one composition, trunks grow feet outfitted with shoes (PLATE 175), and in another, a tree's branches are submerged in the earth while its wild root network flails aboveground, transformed into a figure's waving arms (PLATES 173, 174). In a small bronze (PLATE 172), a body fragment regenerates itself, not by growing a new head but by sprouting branches topped with birds. All such juxtapositions call to mind the very early imagery of Bourgeois's *Bosom Lady* of 1948 (FIG. 45; P. 116), in which her own head and torso are grafted onto the body of a bird.

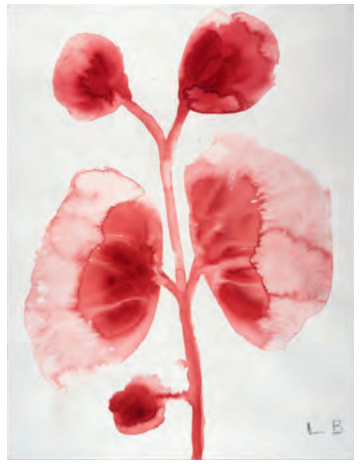


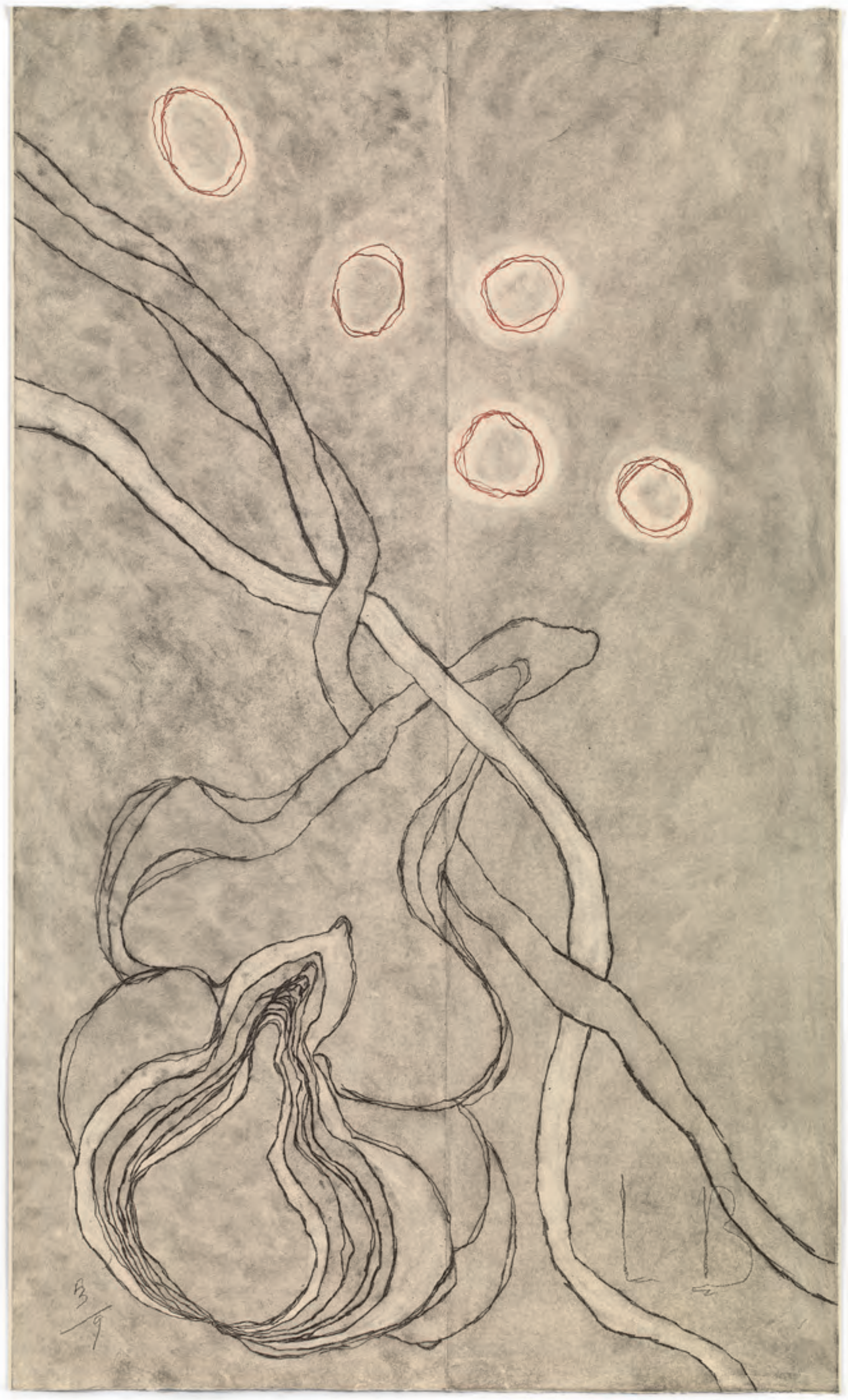
FIG. 51
Les Fleurs (The Flowers). 2009.
Gouache on paper. 23$^{1}/_{2}$ × 18" (59.7 × 45.7 cm). Private collection

In the 1990s, living creatures made a dramatic entrance in Bourgeois's work when she exhibited her first *Spider* sculptures. She also created a range of prints with this same eerie motif (PLATES 179–82), familiar from the iconography of late nineteenth-century Symbolist art. By identifying the spider with her mother, and associating the spinning of a web with the mending and restoring of tapestries, Bourgeois again brought together the spheres of the natural and human worlds. In addition, she appreciated the cleverness of the arachnid, remembering how it caught mosquitoes that plagued her family during summers in Easton. "The crafty spider, hiding and waiting, is wonderful to watch," she remarked. "The spider is a friend."[12]

Natural motifs regularly appear in Bourgeois's work in her last decade. The rivers she lived near had always been potent symbols: the Creuse and the Bièvre for memories of her childhood, the Seine for its centrality to Paris, and the powerful Hudson for its proximity to her 20th Street home in adulthood. "Each had a different character," she said, "but all could be unpredictable and dangerous."[13] In 2002 she constructed an illustrated book of fabric collages called *Ode à la Bièvre* (Ode to the Bièvre), memorializing that river's waters; she later editioned the volume (PLATE 87). She also conceived *La Rivière Gentille* (The Gentle River), a room-size installation of soft ground etchings with hand additions where imagery approximating the lapping rhythms of water moves from sheet to sheet.[14] In yet another group of soft ground etchings, Bourgeois devised large-scale compositions that comprise a visual compendium of seedlings, blossoms, leaves, vines, hanging fruits, and nests (PLATES 164–70). Along with those, she made a corresponding group that investigates the human body (PLATES 112–14). When shown together, these two sets of prints underscore Bourgeois's dual preoccupations.[15]

At around this time, Bourgeois was also producing a large number of works that layered red gouache onto dampened paper. One group of these compositions, addressing motherhood—pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding—was exhibited in Edinburgh at the Royal Botanic Garden, alongside nineteenth-century botanical drawings from the garden's archives. A striking synergy arose between these two aspects of germination and procreation.[16] Other red gouaches portray flowers. A poignant beauty is expressed in *Les Fleurs* (The Flowers, 2009; FIG. 51), and it is tempting to interpret its two leaves and three blossoms as symbols of the five members of both Bourgeois's childhood and adult families. Nature, in these late years, could be a source of affirmation and solace, as evidenced by a text from a 2006 illustrated book:

> Renewal
> Reconciliation
> Sunrise
> Buds on tree branches
> Birds return.[17]



184. ***Love and Kisses***.
2007. Soft ground etching, with selective wiping. SHEET: 59 7/8 × 35 15/16" (152.1 × 91.3 cm)

This composition was formed from two tall, vertical printing plates, placed side by side. Selective wiping of ink created highlighted areas and an overall mottled-gray plate tone. Bourgeois issued *Love and Kisses* in an edition of 9, but did not stop experimenting. She went on to generate sheets for *À l'Infini* (PLATES: 185–98) by printing only the twisting, veinlike elements of the composition.

> "Never let me be free from this burden that will never let me be free."
>
> LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Lasting Impressions

The concept of a "late style" as the capstone of an artist's life has long been a subject of study in relation to those major figures who lived to advanced ages.[1] A romantic notion of the work produced in this period presents it as a source of profound meaning and rare insight. No matter the artistic era or the circumstances of particular artists, similarities are observed even among artists whose "late styles" transpired at very different ages — such as Titian (who died at eighty-six) and Rembrandt (who died at the much younger age of sixty-three). For painters, loose, spontaneous brushwork is frequently a hallmark, as is a tendency toward abstraction, with content interpreted in terms of spirituality and transcendence. Even when certain effects may be linked to physical ailments attendant to old age — such as the vision problems that afflicted Monet, or the dementia suffered by de Kooning — late style as a phenomenon continues to intrigue scholars of art. The late work of Picasso, who lived to be ninety-one, has been the source of recurring study and evaluation since his death, although its brash paint handling and bold subjects evoke struggle and haunting dissonance more than transcendence.

What should be made of the late work of Louise Bourgeois? Her long life stretched well past that of many of the major artists who have been subjects of analysis. When would this late period have begun for an artist who lived to ninety-eight? Was there a definitive change at a particular time? In a rare essay devoted to the subject of Bourgeois's late style, art historian Linda Nochlin chose to contrast the artist's soft fabric sculptures with a marble architectural piece, although Nochlin acknowledged that it was "impossible to summarize the work of her latest years in any coherent way."[2] In fact, for much of the first decade of the 2000s — Bourgeois's final years — she continued to expand upon innovations that first emerged in the 1990s, with *Spiders*, fabric sculptures and collages, and *Cells*. At the same time, new directions appeared in her works on paper, particularly a return to the subject of motherhood with vivid imagery brushed in red gouache (PLATE 129), as well as copious line drawings filling sketchbooks. Those latter pages — mostly drawn on both sides — are assembled in suites and exhibited together as grids (FIG. 40; P. 64), many wall-filling in scale; Bourgeois's repetitive strokes are mesmerizing to contemplate.

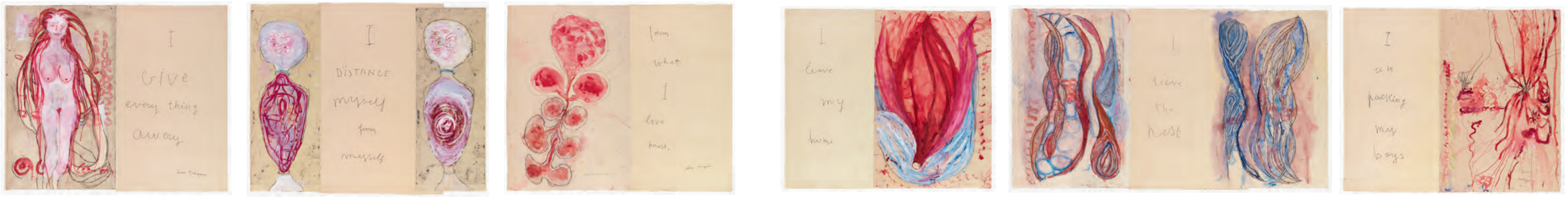

I Give every thing away
I DISTANCE myself from myself
from what I love most
I leave my home
I leave the nest
I am packing my bags

FIG. 52
I Give Everything Away. 2010.
Series of 6 compositions, all soft ground etchings, with extensive hand additions and handwritten texts. sheets: no. 1: $59\frac{7}{8}$ × 71" (152.1 × 180.3 cm). no. 2: 60" × 6' 1" (152.4 × 185.4 cm). no. 3: $59\frac{3}{4}$ × $69\frac{5}{8}$" (151.8 × 176.8 cm). no. 4: $59\frac{3}{4}$ × 70" (151.8 × 177.8 cm). no. 5: 60" × 8' 10" (152.4 × 269.2 cm). no. 6: $59\frac{3}{4}$ × 69" (151.8 × 175.3 cm). publisher: Osiris, New York. printer: Wingate Studio, Hinsdale, NH. edition: unique. Collection Glenstone Museum, Potomac, MD

Just as Picasso produced a dazzling array of prints in his late years, facilitated by printer friends who set up a nearby workshop especially for him,[3] Bourgeois's printmaking flourished near the end of her life. With a new printer and new publisher, she explored the full potential of digital printing. She also carried on with intaglio projects in collaboration with her longtime printer and friend, Felix Harlan, of the Harlan & Weaver workshop.[4]

While this work proceeded steadily, there was also a significant change in 2005, when the publisher Benjamin Shiff of Osiris moved to an apartment in Bourgeois's Chelsea neighborhood. She was ninety-three years old at this point but had long before developed a creative rapport with Shiff, often investigating new possibilities for unique prints. But their proximity now greatly simplified arrangements and accelerated the work they accomplished together.

Bourgeois began to eagerly pursue a direction that tapped into her natural inclination for experimental printmaking; she had always relished working and reworking states and variants as her moods changed, rather than focusing on the end result of standardized editions. But with Shiff, she now embraced an entirely new level of freedom in her creative process and produced an extensive body of work that not only expands conventional notions of printmaking but also constitutes a finite whole that can be considered within the art historical framework of "late style."

Bourgeois started with a repertoire of inventive new imagery in an extended series of large-scale compositions from tall, narrow printing plates approximately five feet in height and from ten to twenty inches in width, some joining two plates side by side. Her forms, while straddling the line between abstraction and representation, continued to reference long-standing themes of the human body and nature (plates 112–14, 164–69). After issuing many of these as editioned prints, with variations in inking, wiping, plate tone, and paper, Bourgeois kept the process going. She went back to extra proofs, reimagining the existing imagery with extensive embellishments in gouache, watercolor, and pencil (plates 96, 145, 170). Shiff and her longtime assistant, Jerry Gorovoy, were there to help, rolling the paper under the table as she worked down its surface, holding the prints up for her inspection, and arranging them on the floor to dry, all so Bourgeois could remain seated while she worked, which was necessary at that point.

Bourgeois was thoroughly energized by this process, working on as many as four or five prints in a single session. As Shiff described it: "I think when you work in the most spontaneous possible way, and you work with principles—not by premeditating or trying to force anything to a vision, but letting the vision inform itself—all these beautiful connections happen, all over the place."[5] Many of these projects exhibit the traditionally defined characteristics of late artistic styles, including loose and brushy handwork, spontaneous markings, and a tendency toward abstraction—all with an overall impact of mystery and beauty that approaches the elegiac and sublime.

The 2008 series *À l'Infini* (To Infinity), an installation set made up of these reenvisioned compositions, epitomizes Bourgeois's late printmaking practice (plates 185–98). This work began with variant printings of *Love and Kisses* (2007; plate 184), in which only fragments of the composition appeared. One such fragment sparked Bourgeois's imagination: the interlocking elements that extend diagonally across the sheet from top left to bottom right. She turned her partially printed sheets to a horizontal position and then proceeded to freely brush on red gouache and watercolor, and add lines and scribbles with pencil. Each sheet is a unique visual experience, but the twisting printed forms echo from one to another. This intuitive method calls to mind the free-associative automatism of the Surrealists, where the artist's hand was ostensibly prompted only by the unconscious. Here, Bourgeois's scrawls, washes, painterly strokes, and dabs come alive on one sheet and then dissolve on the next, as a sense of movement ripples through the series. Occasionally, representational details appear—babies floating in amniotic sacs or a couple embracing—but overall, this pulsating world operates on what seems to be the cellular level of an elemental domain. *À l'Infini* can be interpreted as a meditation on life's primordial beginnings or perhaps an expression of the boundless universe identified by its title, both typifying "late style" content.

Bourgeois combined other such hand-colored and reworked prints into a variety of multipanel works and series, several of which became room-size installation sets.[6] Others were bound into unique books in which she wrote texts in pencil, her handwriting itself becoming a poignant feature.[7] In fact, it was the combination of words and texts with printed imagery that first brought Shiff and Bourgeois together in 1989, resulting in the publication of *the puritan* (1990; plates 45–52), an illustrated book with many unique offshoots. Now, the artist and publisher again collaborated on works that encompassed their shared love of art and language. In *I Give Everything Away* (2010; fig. 52), their last large project together, Bourgeois matched eight of her transformed compositions with a moving text that seems like a final good-bye:

I Give everything away
I Distance myself from myself
from what I love most
I leave my home
I leave the nest
I am packing my bags.[8]

Working Relationships

A long-standing notion of artistic creation features the artist working alone in the studio — and indeed, it may be the case much of the time that artists work in solitude. But production sometimes requires collaborators who bring particular expertise to the art-making process. That is clearly true for certain sculptural endeavors, and for projects like public commissions, which often require a team of contributors. Printmaking is an artistic undertaking that is primarily collaborative — often involving publishers, as well as skilled specialists, and dedicated equipment found in print workshops. Those shops are lively and supportive places, where artists and printers form unique bonds based not just on skill sets but also on personal chemistry.

In her early phase of printmaking, in the 1940s, Louise Bourgeois worked on her own at home, and taught herself relief printing as well as drypoint, engraving, etching, and aquatint. She even acquired a small printing press. That was a practical arrangement for a young mother with small children. But Bourgeois also took advantage of the expertise in lithography and the printing facilities offered at the Art Students League in New York, which she had begun to attend in 1939. As a new arrival in the city from Paris, she must have welcomed the chance to participate in the creative community the League provided. By 1946, she had also found her way to Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17, the communal workshop that had been transferred from Paris to New York during the war years. Artists frequented that shop to use its printing equipment and to share knowledge about techniques and process.

In Bourgeois's second phase of printmaking, beginning in the late 1980s, circumstances had changed. Her fame had begun to grow, and now publishers sought her out. Their invitations were stimulating in and of themselves, prompting a renewed engagement with the medium. She then began to work with various printers, but not at their workshops. She preferred her home/studio on 20th Street, where they came to collaborate with her, returning to their shops for printing or making use of the two presses in the lower level of her house. She looked forward to these visits. That anticipation, and then the work done together, could dispel the despairing moods that plagued her. She appreciated the social dimension of these relationships but they were also creatively energizing. Bourgeois became an avid printmaker in the final decades of her life.

The following interviews are with three of Bourgeois's primary collaborators. They were conducted between September 2016 and January 2017.

Jerry Gorovoy

Assistant

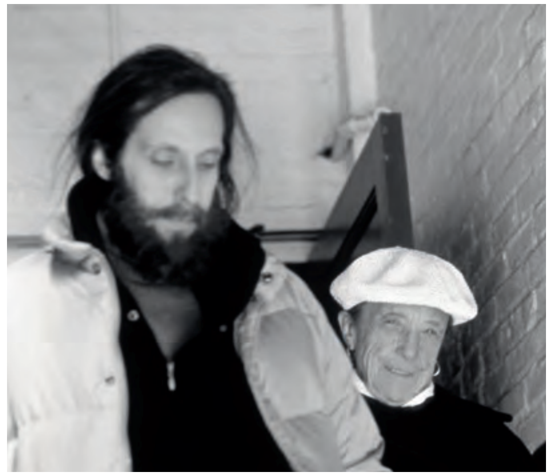


FIG. 53
Jerry Gorovoy and Louise Bourgeois leaving Bourgeois's Brooklyn studio. 1993. Photograph by and © Vera Isler

Jerry Gorovoy, President of The Easton Foundation, established by Louise Bourgeois, first met the artist in 1980 when he was working at the Max Hutchinson Gallery in New York. He included her work in a group show there, and then mounted a solo exhibition of her early paintings, drawings, and prints. He started to assist the artist periodically and eventually came to work with her full-time, handling all logistics related to her work and career and also becoming a trusted companion and close friend. Gorovoy continues his work with The Easton Foundation, fostering the artist's legacy through exhibitions, publications, and related projects.

Deborah Wye: I have a couple of thoughts about how printmaking functioned within Louise's overall practice. I'm particularly interested in the effects of collaboration, which is basic to printmaking. It seems that her collaborative relationships were very stimulating for Louise, and in fact helped counteract her recurring depression and despair.

Jerry Gorovoy: Everything was very much tied to the emotional intensity of the moment. Louise's mood affected who she wanted to see and the way she interacted with them. Her immediate feelings would determine what kind of work she needed to make, what level of concentration or skill it required, and what she needed from the other person.

Usually, appointments were made in advance, and she rarely canceled. She felt she had to take advantage of the technical assistance. It was almost like a work ethic: "Someone is coming here, and I've got to be prepared. I have to do my homework. I have to be ready, and not lose my chance."

Her collaborators were involved in the technical realization of ideas and images that for the most part Louise had already elaborated in her creative solitude. Yet the resistance of the material could also force changes as she went along. She always used to say: "What I want and what I get are two different things." After she tweaked the image, the result would sometimes trigger something in her unconscious that could bring about further changes. Chance and even mistakes played a role in shaping the print. This is what she meant when she said that making art for her was a search, a voyage without a destination.

Louise couldn't work with just anyone. Encountering strangers could provoke fear and anxiety: "What does this person want, what if I cannot deliver, oh, they want too much from me." With printmaking, she only worked with a few people. She established relationships with Felix [Harlan, of Harlan & Weaver], and with Ben [Benjamin Shiff, of Osiris], and Judith [Solodkin, of SOLO Impression], and with David Procuniar [of Procuniar Workshop]. How Louise felt about each of them affected what she produced. All the printmaking people represented different personalities, but consistency was important.

DW: But you were the number one person who provided consistency.

JG: Well, I was the middleman. I served as a conduit to those who were coming and going. She referred to me as "the pacifier." I could calm her down and patch things over, as she had a tendency to break things and relationships.

DW: Since you were the ultimate facilitator, or in fact the ultimate collaborator—or middleman as you put it—how would you characterize your own relationship with Louise?

JG: I was Louise's companion, her friend. We spent almost every day together. We shared other interests outside of just art and the studio. We went to movies, the theater, openings, dinners. We talked about psychoanalysis.

I was in a position to see how self-destructive she was, how fragile her relationships with others were, even with those she was closest to. A person could say one thing and Louise would react violently and go on the attack: "That's it, finished, the day is over, go home." "These people are asking too much of me!" she would say. She would attack out of fear. Her claws would come out. She would break relationships, even with her family and close friends.

My role was to figure out how to keep her stable, what she needed, what she was afraid of, and what she was trying to achieve. Sometimes I had to talk to people in advance, to explain what Louise wanted, or ask them not to mention certain things. I would try to coach them on how to deal with her, what to do, what not to do. But Louise also needed to work in isolation, with total concentration. She had a lot of respect for the skill and knowledge of her collaborators, but her primary creative process was solitary. Her image making came from deep inside her. The technical aspects came later.

DW: I remember, way back, if I was planning to come over in the afternoon, I'd call you to find out how things were going, to get fair warning.

JG: Sometimes she'd say I was "in cahoots" with people. She'd create triangles with me and other people. I had to be careful. I didn't want her to think it was two against one. Sometimes it got crazy, and we had fights where I would have to profess my loyalty. It was especially bad when she was under pressure. She would take it out on me. Or she'd say: "I want to destroy the work. I don't need the work." I tried not to let her destroy things. But certain works did get pushed over, cracked, broken, torn up. I always knew the rage would pass. After she calmed down, it was as if nothing had happened. I don't think most people understood how psychologically fragile she was.

It really was like a storm, you just had to ride it out. If you tried to engage her and be rational, it was just adding fuel to the fire. I would go silent. Then she'd say: "Oh, you're like Robert [Goldwater, Bourgeois's husband of thirty-four years, who died in 1973]. He disappeared into complete silence." Or something like that. At times, it was almost as if she craved some sort of confrontation.

DW: Did that continue as she got older?

JG: These rages were physically exhausting. They came pouring out. No one can sustain that. As she got older, I think she was happier. She reduced her life to her work and a few people around her. She wasn't going out of the house anymore. There were no longer those social pressures. She just gave herself to her work, and that was the one thing that kept her in balance.

DW: I'd like to ask about the routine Louise had when printer Felix Harlan came to the house.

JG: Felix was very calm and easy to work with, very reserved. Louise really loved him. They did amazing things together. He was a printmaker in the classical sense.

If Felix was expected to arrive the next day, she would prepare an image that she wanted on the plate. At other times, she had plates that she had worked on ready for him to proof, or proofs that she had reworked by hand. There was always preparation, both physically and mentally, for the visits. But her working methods could also be more intuitive: "Oh, Felix, can you cut a circle in that plate? I really want to have a circle in copper." Of course, Felix wasn't prepared to cut a circle then and there. But he would stay calm and say: "Next time, Louise, I'll bring you a circle."

Louise also liked immediate gratification when she was working. So with prints, she wanted a proof right away, from her press downstairs. But for larger-scale works she sometimes had to accept delays in the process, and that interrupted her creative flow. That's why she liked it when Felix came back the next day and the day after that. "Oh, Felix, can't you come back tomorrow?" she'd say. When he couldn't come, there was a break in the rhythm. But sometimes that break could be productive, because then she had time to look at the image with fresh eyes. It all had to do with a flow, a sort of energy.

Also, when working at home, she liked that the house had different rooms. If she wasn't in the mood to deal with someone, she could say: "Felix, can you go downstairs and put this on the press . . . ?" Or I might say: "Felix, why don't you make a few proofs." I knew that would get her excited, to work directly on new proofs. So I tried to juggle things and keep things on an even keel. That's what I felt I was doing, not just with printmaking, but with everyone.

When I traveled abroad, Felix would block out a week and come to the house every day to work with Louise. I felt more comfortable knowing he was there. When I called, I could speak to Felix. I knew they were working. I knew things were okay. They were so productive when I was away.

DW: How did it work with Felix on making changes and corrections to images?

JG: Well, sometimes Louise would work on the plate herself, making corrections. Other times she'd say to Felix: "Oh, it's too light," and then Felix would engrave deeper to make a line darker. She'd also ask Felix to take lines away that she didn't like. He would have to scrape and burnish parts of the plate. But once the line is deep, it's not always easy to remove.

DW: Did Carol Weaver [partner in Harlan & Weaver] ever get involved, or it was mainly Felix?

JG: It was mainly Felix, working directly with Louise. What Carol did was great. She often printed the editions. But she only came to the house once in a while. She'd bring the prints to be signed. Felix worked next to Louise at her table.

DW: Sometimes you would run down to the press yourself and make a proof, if Felix wasn't there, right?

JG: Yes, I would try, because Louise wanted that immediate gratification. But I'm not a printmaker. With the old press, you had to get the pressure right. I would make proofs that weren't dark enough, because I hadn't wiped the plate correctly, or didn't have the pressure right. But sometimes the results were surprisingly good, particularly with the fabric prints.

DW: Was it the same when she worked with the stonecutters in Italy? What were those dynamics like?

JG: Louise always liked to make adjustments in marble, and sometimes she'd have trouble with the technicians, who preferred making exact copies. They'd have big fights that I would have to iron out. Once the stone was cut, the damage was done. With printmaking, she could always work on another proof.

She didn't want to be asked: "What are you doing? What does this mean?" She liked things to remain technical, for the technician to say: "I can achieve what you want in the following ways."

DW: In the 1970s and early '80s, Mark Setteducati [who had been a student of Bourgeois's at the School of Visual Arts] was Louise's assistant. He once told me that he was a success with Louise because he didn't say much. If she asked him to saw something in two, he never asked why.

JG: Mark had the perfect temperament for Louise. And that was a very particular time in her life. Robert had died in 1973. She was just getting out socially again, she was teaching printmaking at SVA. Mark was really pivotal, at that point. There were other people around too, wilder people, like Suzan Cooper [a singer and performer], but Mark was very stable.

DW: How were things different when you came along?

JG: I was a young artist, working in a gallery, and she could see that I loved her work and that I was visually oriented. I also was thinking of becoming an analyst. And she saw that I could possibly help her professionally. At that time she hadn't been exhibiting that much. It was a transitional time in the art world. The aesthetic concerns of younger artists were moving closer to what Louise had been expressing for decades.

DW: You certainly recognized something in her work when you organized the exhibition *The Iconography of Louise Bourgeois* [1980 show of paintings, drawings, and prints from the 1940s that Gorovoy curated when he was working at the Max Hutchinson Gallery].

JG: I really didn't know much about her work when I did that show. Something in her work attracted me and I needed to understand the effect it had on me. That exhibition, in a way, was the beginning of my journey into understanding both her and the art she made.

DW: She had done a few major pieces in the 1970s, like *The Destruction of the Father* [fig. 62; p. 224] and *Confrontation* [fig. 20; p. 23].

JG: The performance [*A Banquet/A Fashion Show of Body Parts*] staged inside *Confrontation* [fig. 63; p. 225] really came out of her relationship with her friend Suzan Cooper. It had a lot to do with their dialogue.

DW: So Suzan Cooper can be seen as another kind of collaborator?

JG: Suzan was a performer. Louise wanted to help her get gigs. They would go out to clubs together, like the Mudd Club. I think that whole period of performance came out of her hanging out with her students and younger people. The performance orchestrated around Louise's sculpture *Confrontation* was definitely very collaborative.

DW: In terms of another collaborator, how did she work with Bob Spring [owner of Modern Art Foundry]?

JG: She really liked Bob because of his skills and his personality. Bob understood how to work with her, when to talk and when not to talk. And she challenged him technically with the complexity of her forms and imagery, wanting to cast in rubber and aluminum, and not just in bronze. He liked the challenge. Sometimes he would say something and she would hit the roof. But she came to trust him. That was a very long-term relationship, very important and very productive. She always wanted to retouch the waxes for her bronzes, making them unique, in the same way that she continuously reworked her prints.

DW: She definitely transformed things with all her evolving states and variants.

JG: There were always conflicting emotions contained within the same motif, multiple stories that could evolve around subtle changes to the form. With *Sainte Sébastienne* [plates 102–11], in one variant the woman has arrows, in another she has long hair, in yet another her face is transformed into a cat's face, and in another she has eggs in her hair that represent children. This is a motif that went through various permutations. She was constantly tweaking it, changing its meaning, changing the narrative.

DW: It's like re-mining. I remember showing her something she had made forty or fifty years before and she would respond as if she had just made it. The distance had gone away. Whatever emotion was in there, she would still respond to it.

JG: Yes, Louise had an amazing power of recall. You see in her diaries her recollection of minute details of things that happened in the '30s and '40s. Her subjects and symbolism always came out of her life. An incident would happen, and then the next day it would be incorporated in the work in some way or another. It was the retelling of the incident, or the repair of the incident. Memories were an arsenal of forms for her. The conflict between things that happened yesterday with things that happened today, or things from the past coming together with things from the present. It was all those things. It was an amazing gift. I really believe she had access to the unconscious through her work. And that explains the mystery, brilliance, and eccentricity of her forms. It was a means of self-knowledge. "Why do I feel this way?" "Why am I guilty?" "Why am I aggressive?" She was trying both to understand her feelings and to control them.

Even in her writing, there's this stream of consciousness, a total volcanic spewing out. Then she steps back and looks at what she just expressed. So it was an expression of raw emotion, and then analysis. These two things come together in her creative process.

DW: She had a gift for making forms but also such a piercing intelligence.

JG: She was very well read, very well educated, with a wide frame of reference. At the same time, she was open to any material or process. For example, when we got a fax machine, Louise wanted to make something with it. Then she'd want to blow up an image even bigger and we'd go to a Xerox place to make an enlargement. These kinds of processes offered the potential to change an image, to take it to another level or to see it in another way. She would reconfigure, recombine, and establish something new. That working process triggered something in her.

DW: What was Louise's relationship to Judith [Solodkin]?

JG: She knew Judith way before she met me. I think she tried to fix her up with Jean-Louis [Bourgeois, Louise's son]. Judith is eccentric, and she was really good with Louise. She had skills, besides lithography, that Louise appreciated. She was working in leather and fabric, and later helped with the fabric book editions. She came to the Sunday salons and wore crazy hats. Louise liked that.

DW: Could you comment on the fact that she was a female collaborator? A lot of people say that Louise didn't like women very much.

JG: She liked Judith's personality. She liked Suzan Cooper. She liked you. And don't forget Mercedes Katz, who helped Louise do the sewing for all the fabric books and editions. They worked together for over a decade. All these people had different talents, and each collaboration was very different. But, I don't know, maybe it was also a certain kind of woman that she had difficulties with. She could be jealous. More with women, but with men, too. She could be very jealous if she thought that someone was pursuing me. But probably Louise preferred the company of men.

DW: I'd like to turn to the writings Louise produced during her psychoanalysis [undergone intensively in the 1950s and '60s, and then intermittently until 1985], numbering close to a thousand documents. That's a remarkable body of work. When I read her notes and papers, and saw her struggles—it was among the most emotionally draining things I've done.

JG: Louise was barely hanging in there at that moment in her life. There was a lot of anger, guilt, and utter despair. People don't realize that when she wrote "Art is a guaranty of sanity," she really meant it.

DW: I know she would blow up at me, and that she was very complicated, but I had no idea of the depth of her torment. Those writings make me wish I could have comforted her in some way. Her pain was heartbreaking.

JG: People didn't realize the depth of the emotional chaos that gave rise to her forms. Her emotions were raw. Louise said: "My work is about my problems, and you may not be interested in my problems, but that's fine." Louise knew that her work was a sort of life raft. And who knows where she would have been without art. It really kept her alive.

DW: I know there was a constant struggle, but there was also a will to survive. Even the act of writing seemed to be part of the fierce will to keep going, to understand, to beat this thing, to tackle it. She was this little person, but so fierce.

JG: She certainly had intense emotions and anxieties. Her fears and phobias were expressed through her body and transferred into the work. Her relationship to her body was crucial, because her psychic life manifested itself in the physical realm through symptoms such as nausea, palpitations, insomnia, and the like. She'd say: "Oh, my work is my body." I see the work almost as fibrillations of a heartbeat. It's almost like the forms are coming out of her body.

A lot of art today explores the body through a political or social lens. Louise's work was coming out of her own torment. It was a body under siege, a body that's going to break apart. She had to stop the tension or she was going to kill someone, or kill herself. You have these emotions, but ultimately it was the form that she was trying to perfect—in the end, that is all that we're left with, and all that mattered to her.

DW: Can you say something about Louise's practice of picking up with a much older image as if no time had gone by?

JG: The chronology of her work unfolds like a spiral. The spiral, a form she loved, has two directions. While Louise was producing new works in the '80s and '90s, people were discovering her early work. Everything was coming out at the same time. Normally an artist wouldn't still have all that early material. But hers was unseen and unsold. We were unearthing old work at the same time that she was producing new things. That's one of the reasons why the chronology of her forms or images is like a spiral, because she was looking at the drawings from the '40s and '50s when she was preparing for a drawing show in the '80s. She got inspired again by the early images and related them to what she was feeling and making in the present.

DW: It was a discovery for us, and for her a rediscovery. The other thing was that she saved everything. So the resonance of the past was always present. She saved every photograph. And she was furious that she couldn't find the copper plates for *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* [PLATES 13–21]. She saved all those clothes and linens.

JG: Louise felt that she had been rejected, so she couldn't reject anything. If she got rid of old clothes or an old pair of shoes, she'd almost feel guilty, like she was abandoning them. That's why she held on to the old clothes of her mother, and ultimately wanted to incorporate them into her work.

DW: Let's talk about Peter Blum [of Peter Blum Edition], and how he came into the picture.

JG: Things really began when Peter approached her to make prints. That renewed her interest in printmaking. It's not to say she wouldn't have gone back to it, but having publishers propose things was a motivating factor. It affected her emotionally and psychologically, because she'd say: "Oh, I have a publisher now, who's publishing this."

DW: The invitations were a stimulus, then.

JG: She knew the project would be going out in the world. She had never had that outlet before with printmaking. The publishers offered the possibility of reengaging with a medium she loved.

Peter was involved with *Parkett* magazine and was doing a lot of printmaking. Louise was showing in Europe a little bit, and he got interested in doing a print project with her, which led to several others. She thought Peter had a very good eye, very good taste. He was connected to the international scene, and was interested in books like she was.

DW: She did the Arthur Miller project with Peter [FIGS. 24, 25; P. 26. FIG. 65; P. 226]. How did that work, in terms of collaboration?

JG: Peter initiated the project. We already knew Inge Morath, Arthur Miller's wife, and that's how Miller came into the picture. He was invited to the Brooklyn studio. Louise was working on the *Cells* series at the time, many of which dealt with the five senses and memory. He later sent a story for the collaboration, but Louise didn't really respond to the text so much. I was worried it was going to get awkward, but Peter handled it. He spoke to Inge, and Miller sent another story that he had been working on, titled "Homely Girl," about a woman who marries a blind man. Louise loved it. It related to her *Cells* and inspired her to make the series of prints, and then the second volume with photos of diseased eyes.

After that, other people started approaching Louise with ideas for projects. For book projects she usually preferred to use her own writings. There are only a few projects with other authors. There's *To Whom It May Concern*, her collaboration with Gary Indiana, whose writing Louise always loved. But that was much later. When Carolina Nitsch approached Louise about a collaboration with a writer, Louise wanted to instead use her own writings. Carolina published the *Hours of the Day* [PLATES 88–95], which contained older texts from Louise's diaries. Reading her old writings again was like revisiting her older sculpture after a long time.

DW: But the simultaneity of all that happening, the old and the new, all at once—that is so fascinating to me. The old things remained relevant and vital.

Another thing I'd like to explore is the format of the series, because it is typical in printmaking, with sequencing as another kind of storytelling.

JG: I think the idea of working in series in printmaking probably came out of Louise's love for books and writing. All the bodies of work inform each other, whether it's sculpture informing the printmaking, or the printmaking informing the drawing, then a drawing can inform a sculpture, and so on. It's all revolving, and each one of these things allows her to articulate the same issues, but in a different medium and material. She started working a lot in suites, which I think was inspired by seeing the proofs for prints. Everything comes out of the working process. She'd say: "Oh, I like them all together. I don't want to break them up."

DW: Would you talk about Louise's relationship to publisher Ben Shiff? You were around when he first came to Louise.

JG: Ben made *the puritan* [PLATES 45–52] early on. It began as a book project and then morphed into a series of hand-colored wall suites. The images were very geometric. When Ben came back some years later, he wanted to move away from traditional books and printmaking; "Oh, Louise, I'm going to bring you a big copper plate and we can print it a different way," or "What if we try putting these plates in different combinations?" Louise was loose about it. She thought seeing all the proofs together was beautiful. She would switch the order, turn some upside-down, things like that. She liked that the scale got bigger, and also she liked working with the proofs as a series. At a certain point, her eyesight was not as good as it had been. So, working on a larger scale was better for her. With Felix, the work was on a small scale, with small plates. It was more difficult for her to see, and she'd use a magnifying glass.

Ben would say: "How about using paint? Don't worry, they can all be unique. Don't worry about the paint smearing; we can mop it up." He seemed to want to get away from printmaking, strictly speaking. It was wild. She became much looser with her gouache additions. There would be drips when she turned the sheets. She didn't wait until things dried. She started at the top of the paper and worked her way down. We helped pull the large sheets down for her to reach areas she was working on, since she needed to be seated while working. Then we'd put them on the floor to dry. Sometimes she liked the drips. If not, she'd wipe them out.

She also had this thing about wanting to get rid of the plate mark. She didn't want to be defined by the plate edge. A lot of times that was the first thing she would do on a proof, extend her marks past the plate edge of the plate. But everything depended on her mood and physical state. She always wanted Ben to come, but sometimes I could see she was too tired. She might only be able to work for twenty minutes. At other times she could work for a whole afternoon.

DW: What about the fact that Louise stopped leaving the house, that she suffered from agoraphobia? I know sometimes she feared people coming to the house, too.

JG: She had bouts of agoraphobia her whole life. It was particularly intense in the 1940s and '50s. Later in the 1950s, her son Jean-Louis would sometimes have to hold her hand to take her to see her shrink. She couldn't go on her own. In her late years, the agoraphobia came back gradually. She had loved going to the Dean Street studio in Brooklyn every morning, and she'd be up and ready on the stoop waiting for me. But slowly she became fearful of leaving the house.

DW: What about her declining health?

JG: Her health was quite good until about 2004, when she started having some recurring health issues and began to get frailer. Her mobility and stamina were affected. She suffered from terrible insomnia. But none of these things kept her from working. With her inability to sleep, she became manic and very productive, and then she would crash. It was a cycle.

DW: It seems that her collaborative relationships were energizing, stimulating. But I think getting recognition in old age was also empowering. When I first knew her, she talked to me a lot about ambition. And you see it in her writings.

JG: Early on, she was professionally ambitious, but I think in some respects she gave up. It was difficult juggling being a wife, a mother, and an artist. To be a woman in the art world in the '40s and '50s was not easy, but she actually said that being anonymous and outside the art market gave her freedom to develop her work. People ask why she wasn't that well known earlier. It was her own psychology, partially. She was very self-destructive.

DW: I remember her talking about being jealous, about having the "green disease" of envy. She'd warn me: "Don't get the green disease."

JG: She really did believe that many of her successful male peers were not that good. Then you start thinking: "Oh, the whole system is rigged, why bother to play the game?" On the other hand, when she had opportunities, she didn't take advantage. She could have a show scheduled in Paris and then cancel it. She couldn't handle the pressure. She alienated people, too.

DW: She once told me — back when I did that show at Brandeis in 1977 [*From Women's Eyes*, a group show at Brandeis University's Rose Art Museum, with a number of Bourgeois's works] and told her there would be a catalogue — "The only thing that's important is the printed word."

JG: She definitely liked people who were writers. But I think she appreciated visual people more. Being visual is rare. She always felt that, in the end, writing had the power to convince people. But if someone's not visual, can you really convince them to see?

Felix Harlan

of Harlan & Weaver, Inc., *Printer*

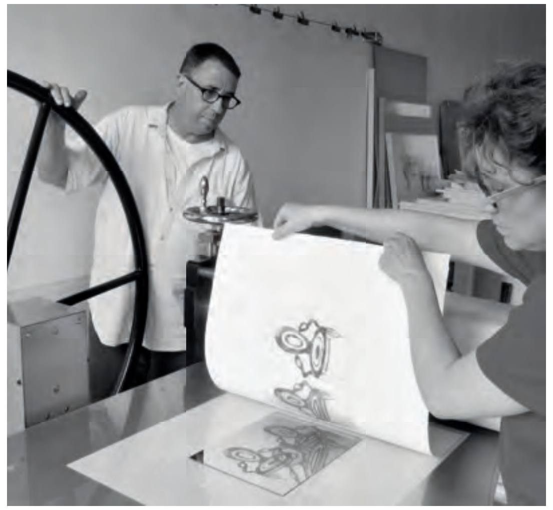


FIG. 54
Felix Harlan and Carol Weaver at the Harlan & Weaver workshop, printing Bourgeois's *Twosome*, drypoint and etching, 2005. Photograph by Johee Kim

Felix Harlan, a partner with Carol Weaver in the Harlan & Weaver workshop, specializes in intaglio printing. He began working with Louise Bourgeois in 1989–90, when she first returned to printmaking after a decades-long hiatus. He soon established an intimate working relationship with her at her home/studio. Bourgeois accomplished more printmaking with Harlan than with anyone else — the number of printed sheets they collaborated on reaching nearly two thousand. His steady, patient manner made him an ideal collaborator for her.

Deborah Wye: I know you started to work with Louise on the recommendation of lithography printer Judith Solodkin of SOLO Impression, who sought you out for intaglio printing.

Felix Harlan: We had known Judith over the years. She was working with Louise, but then Louise went off into etching rather than lithography. I think it must have been a disappointment for Judith, but they did some amazing things together, like that fabric book. Judith got in touch with us because Louise needed drypoint plates proofed.

DW: What were the first plates you worked on?

FH: They were for the *Anatomy* portfolio [PLATES 116–17]. We proofed the plates and sent them back to Judith. I stamped our address on the wrapper because I was a little concerned that they might get lost with the messenger. I think Louise got curious about who was printing the plates. She saw our address on the wrapper and called. That was a pretty exciting moment. She said something like: "I want you to come over right away." I went to meet her and she had some suggestions for how she wanted the plates printed. Jerry was away that day.

We looked at proofs together and she told me exactly what she wanted. She told me she didn't like what she called "the blotter effect," which meant that the drypoints were too full of ink. They were too fuzzy looking. She wanted them wiped a little more, so they'd be more lean. I promised her I'd do that, and we took it from there.

DW: What did you make of her at that first meeting?

FH: Oh, it was thrilling, of course, to meet Louise in her beautiful, strange little house, and to go into the back room full of books and everything else. We were pretty comfortable with each other right away. Actually, she may have seemed a little nervous, perhaps.

Then we began working with Peter Blum [of Peter Blum Edition]. We did the large spider and the spirals [PLATE 60]. Louise liked Peter. He had a lot of connections in Europe and she was excited about that. She was very happy to be working with him. His portfolios were always beautifully done.

DW: Did Louise ever come to your workshop?

FH: Louise never once came to the workshop [at 83 Canal Street, in Manhattan]. The closest she came was when she and Jerry drove back from her studio on Dean Street, in Brooklyn, usually late in the afternoon. Those were pre-cellphone days, and Jerry would pull the car up on Eldridge Street and call up from a pay phone. I'd go down with proofs and hand them to Louise through the window!

DW: I don't think she was interested in going to workshops the way other artists do. She preferred the comfort and security of being at home.

FH: I think that with all the people around in a workshop, she would have been uncomfortable. And she didn't seem to think it was important to be there.

DW: I know you picked up on a few projects that Christian Guérin [of Gravure] had started, like *Self Portrait* [plate 100], for instance.

FH: We did quite a bit of proofing on that plate. Louise was very concerned that we get it just right since it was going to be a benefit for MoMA.

DW: That blue was a little unusual for her. Is that aquatint?

FH: No. It's soft ground. Instead of doing aquatint, you can lay down a fine fabric screen for a soft ground. But if you don't look too closely, it's a lot like an aquatint.

DW: I hope we have our cataloguing right! You also took over *Sainte Sébastienne* [plate 111], and then did the two *Stamp of Memories* prints [plates 109, 110]. How did Louise come up with the idea of using sealing stamps as a kind of branding?

FH: Those are brilliant. I noticed that she had her father's stamp around and was working with it. Then one day she gave it to me and said: "See if you can print with this." Carol [Weaver] did all the stamping. It wasn't easy. There was a lot of experimentation. Then Louise did the one with the second stamp.

DW: I know you soon began to work with Louise at the house on a regular basis.

FH: Yes, but there would be breaks if I was proofing something. And I'd work around her schedule. Then, as she began to trust me, I would go when Jerry wasn't there. He was beginning to make more and more trips to curate and install exhibitions. So I would go to the house on those occasions, too — sometimes for four or five days in a row.

Louise liked me to arrive at eleven. I would stay all day and then close up. We'd have lunch together. She'd tell me what she wanted and I'd prepare it. We'd talk while we ate, but she wouldn't want to talk about artwork at that point. She wanted to know what was going on. We'd usually sit in the front room so we could look out the window onto the street. She'd comment on what was going on outside. And she'd want to know what we were up to. She was always interested in our neighborhood, in Chinatown. Then I might do some grocery shopping for her, or other little things like that. It was a long day, which was fine, except in the summer when it got very hot in there. Louise didn't seem to feel the heat.

DW: That routine seems so calm. Didn't she have her moods and blow up at you sometimes?

FH: Just one time.

DW: Oh, Felix! That's a record.

FH: Pretty good, I think. It was early on. Maybe she wasn't completely comfortable with me yet. Jerry had gone on a long trip to Europe. But he was a planner, and he thought of everything in advance. He said: "While I'm gone, it'd be great if you worked on this project with Louise." So I arrived and was ready to go with that project. But Louise didn't want to do that at all. She was not interested. So I said: "Well, Jerry wanted me to help you with this project while he's away." That really set her off. It was like I was paying more attention to what Jerry wanted than to what she wanted. That was not good at all. She blew up and called me a "bullshitter"! And pretty much said: "Get out of here!" I can't remember if I left right away. But I thought: "Well, I guess that's the end of my working relationship with Louise."

DW: Oh, no! But you knew that was just a mood, right?

FH: Well, I didn't know her well enough at that point. I just thought: "Well, that's it. I blew it." And I didn't see her again for a couple of months after that.

When it happened, I hadn't known what to do. I'm a bit slow on the uptake sometimes. I couldn't think of a good response. So I just swallowed it up. But eventually Jerry called and said: "Look, if you want to work with Louise, you'd better come over. Everything's okay now." She was a little stiff with me at first, but then we got over it.

DW: It's remarkable that only happened once in all those years working together. But how would you characterize your relationship, generally?

FH: It was very friendly, very familiar. And she never pushed me. She left me alone to work on what I needed to. I'd go downstairs to do things there. Or I'd go up to the second floor and retrieve things for her. It was a very comfortable relationship.

I was very fond of Louise. And I think she liked having me around. She did once say: "You know, you're a friend." I think it was one time when we were having lunch. It had become clear that we were not going to have just an artist-printer relationship. We could drop that and be more friendly. It was very, very special. I miss her. It was a tremendous opportunity to be able to be with her and watch her work and to work with her. It was what every printer hopes for, to have a relationship like that with an artist.

DW: How did you happen to set up the old printing press downstairs?

FH: It had been stored in the Dean Street studio and then Louise had it moved to 20th Street. It was in pretty rough shape, very dirty. It hadn't been cleaned and greased. So I took it apart and cleaned it up, and then put it back together again. It's a nice press. The wheel is nice. We bolted it down to a stand and then started using it. But that press had its limitations. It was small, with only an eleven-inch-wide press bed. And it didn't generate a lot of pressure. So I would always get better proofs when I took the plates back to Canal Street.

But the crux of it was that Louise wanted to see things right away. She didn't want to wait for me to take the plates away, print them, dry them, and bring them back. And she was very serious about printmaking again and wanted to have it going on in the house. In a way, it was like when she lived in the family apartment [on 18th Street], early on. I know the press was set up there, because Jean-Louis [Bourgeois, Louise's son] told me he remembered it.

DW: And then you added a second press, right?

FH: Yes, we had the opportunity to get another one for a little more than the cost of moving it. It was an even smaller press, but an interesting one. I felt like rescuing it. I have a bad habit of collecting presses. But Louise was fine with the idea. And the second press — a King press — had more pressure.

I remember proofing the series that ended up being both a paper and a cloth book — *The Laws of Nature* [plates 138–42] on that press, to show Louise how it worked. But then the full editioning was done on Canal Street. The original idea was for a cloth book. But at first I was a little unsure about how we would do that, since we were so much more accustomed to printing on paper. So I printed the plates on paper first, and then on cloth. We also tried those plates on silk, and on a silk scarf. Silk is so soft and prints beautifully. It's so closely woven that it takes a very nice impression.

DW: What was it like to print on fabric napkins and handkerchiefs?

FH: When Louise first asked about it, I went downstairs and just got started. That was when they were going through all her closets upstairs, pulling out all kinds of stuff that she wanted to go through. She wanted to use everything. I think she liked the random staining and the softness of fabric, and the way it drapes. I got better at printing with it. You'll notice on some of the early ones that the registration — the placement on the piece of cloth — is a little haphazard. So I was generally happier printing on cloth with our presses at the shop, because I had more control.

DW: Just one more thing about fabric. It seems that after a while she preferred it to paper, for prints.

FH: I agree.

DW: What about Mercedes Katz [a professional seamstress hired to help with Bourgeois's works in fabric]? I know she sat down there at her worktable, right near the press. How was the relationship between you two?

FH: She was really nice to get along with. It was a tight space down there. But I didn't need very much room. She was finishing prints, hemming them, backing them, embroidering the initials. So I could check in with her and see how things were going. She was there I think at least five days a week. They found a good person in Mercedes. She's very talented.

But I had a different role upstairs, too. I had to be more present there. And, you know, I'd even venture a suggestion here and there!

DW: What about Louise's use of selective wiping, which I see a lot? [See plate 127.] She even used it way back in the early period, in the 1940s.

FH: It was because of her prompting that we did it. We wouldn't normally use it at our shop. Of course, printers have different styles of printing, but they usually avoid selective wiping because it's difficult to repeat for an edition. But she was pretty relaxed about that aspect. For a printer, it is definitely more of a challenge to use it. She had first asked Jerry to do some wiping when he printed some proofs for her. She showed me those and said she liked the way it looked.

DW: That's interesting, because Jerry isn't a printer. He told me he only tried because Louise wanted to see something right away. So are you saying that it may have been his more random wiping — certainly not professional wiping — that she ended up liking? That led to more selective wiping?

FH: Yes, I think that could be true. She liked the variability of selective wiping. And I agree that, with certain images, it finished them beautifully. It seemed like a perfect way to realize the image. You could try to get that effect with aquatint, but it wouldn't be quite the same. With selective wiping, there is a lot of ink on the surface, because you are actually monoprinting. And then there's the scratchiness from the texture of the tarlatan [a fabric used in printshops for wiping ink from plates] — that shows. When you look at the print, you can almost feel the ink being pushed around on the plate. I thought it was very good for her work.

DW: I'd like to talk a little more about your process with her. How did it work when making changes? Would she do that when you were there, or after you were gone?

FH: Both. But I knew she liked to get up in the morning and look at the proofs. She had a folder — a blotter — that she kept on her table. So during the day when I was there proofing, or at the end of the day, I'd put proofs in that blotter to get them a little flatter. Then in the morning she would go into the folder and start working on them, before I got there. She had that pile of drawing materials right there on her table.

DW: Do you think she liked the security of the printed image, the fact that more could be made and she could keep on experimenting?

FH: I think that's very true. And she talked about liking etching because it was really in the metal. It had a permanence and it was repeatable. She could always get back to that place. The image wasn't going away. It was dependable. She could take off from there.

DW: When you say "etching" do you mean anything in metal — etching, engraving, drypoint?

FH: I mean anything in metal, but she always talked about engraving most of all. She wanted to go as deep as possible below the surface of the metal. But she liked drypoint, too, and used it a lot.

She also liked the fact that there was other stuff going on, on the metal, when it wasn't just a mirror finish. So she was often interested in the metal itself and the kind of effects of the metal plate. She liked the physicality of printing from copper. I think it directly related to her interest in metal and sculpture.

I remember watching the way she worked. It was just so wonderful to see her imagination being brought to bear on what she was doing on a plate. She'd add things. And I thought: "Wow. This is really going somewhere great." But I wouldn't see *all* the proofs she worked on, only the ones where she wanted changes on the plates, or she wanted to sharpen up the printing, and such. Actually, with your website [moma.org/bourgeoisprints], I've been learning a lot more about those proofs I never saw. When the plate work was finished, I'd help with the choice of papers and then do the editioning.

DW: How did it come about that you began to publish Louise's prints, as well as printing them?

FH: Well, we were invited. It was Jerry and Louise who had the idea. Harlan & Weaver was doing so much of the printing, it seemed like a better arrangement, practically speaking, to publish the projects, too. It worked out beautifully.

DW: How do you think Louise felt about the social aspects of collaboration? I've always thought that having someone come to work helped pull her out of despairing moods.

FH: I hope that was the case when I came. There were only a very few occasions when Jerry would say: "Don't come today. She's not in a good mood. It's not a good day to come." Sometimes, I would see that she was a little tense or maybe a little more withdrawn, but she always had a sort of professionalism about making the prints that came into play. "You're here. We have to do something together." Also, if she wasn't in a good mood, I could always go downstairs for a while and find things to do. With prints there is always something to do. So I'd make a proof and bring it up and show her. That made her happy. But there was definitely a social aspect to the relationship, which she liked.

DW: I've been reading her psychoanalytic papers, which are filled with despair.

FH: Do you think psychoanalysis helped her? She certainly was willing to explore stuff in her work that is still shocking. It doesn't always look like a happy event — more like a painful one. I mean, she was willing to go places with her work. There's a kind of honesty to that work that still impresses me.

DW: How did you feel about Louise's advancing age? Did that affect your work together?

FH: Things were changing by, let's say, the mid-2000s. I was still working with her. Brigitte [Cornand, filmmaker, who was Bourgeois's daily companion in her late years] was there pretty much all the time at that point. I definitely began to go less frequently. My work with Louise was tapering off.

I remember once when I was there, her energy had really dropped, but she was actually not well. I didn't realize it. I just thought: "Well, she's old and just exhausted." Once she got over that bout of illness, she came back. But I could see that her age was beginning to show and she was getting less energetic, generally. Also, her eyesight was getting worse. I think it was easier for her to work on the big plates that Ben [Shiff, of Osiris] brought. The work we did together was small.

DW: Maggie [Wright, The Easton Foundation archivist, who had worked at the Harlan & Weaver workshop] mentioned that Louise gave you a bound volume of Hogarth prints from her collection of prints and illustrated books. That seems very special.

FH: Yes, she did that. It was great. It's a little crumbly, as you might imagine, so I have it wrapped and put away. It was engraving, and we talked about engraving a lot and she knew that I'm a big Hogarth fan, naturally. It was really nice that she did that.

Benjamin Shiff

of Osiris, *Publisher*

FIG. 55
Benjamin Shiff in Louise Bourgeois's 20th Street home/studio, at her worktable. 2017.
Photograph by Deborah Wye

Benjamin Shiff first met with Louise Bourgeois in 1988 to propose a book-publishing project. In 1990 they issued *the puritan*, a major illustrated volume with text and eight engravings by Bourgeois. Later, in a second phase of collaboration in the 2000s, Shiff encouraged the artist toward a more experimental approach to printmaking. From 2005, he lived in Chelsea, near Bourgeois's home/studio, a convenience that facilitated their work together. She completed a large and innovative body of prints with him during the last years of her life.

Jerry Gorovoy, Bourgeois's longtime assistant, sat in on this conversation.

Deborah Wye: What were your thoughts when you first approached Louise for a project? I know you were inspired by *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* [PLATES 13–21].

Benjamin Shiff: Osiris wasn't really about books. It wasn't about prints. There was a different angle. There was also the idea that a writer could make the images for his or her own text, or the artist could, in reverse. Those kinds of ideas were floating around. I didn't want to think about the history of bookmaking, or printmaking, or *livres d'artistes*.

I remember Jerry was there when I first met Louise. I wasn't a printmaker, but when we were experimenting, Louise approached things as if she had no printmaking background either. To start, we worked on small plates. I asked Peter [Pettengill, of Wingate Studio] to give me materials. I remember all the spit bite [an aquatint printing technique] plates lying out on Louise's terrace after she'd worked on them.

Jerry Gorovoy: Louise worked in different ways. Sometimes she'd have a group of images ready to work on for prints. But when Ben came, things were much more experimental and loose. To be honest, if things hadn't clicked between them, that would have been it. But Louise liked Ben.

DW: Ben, could you tell that things clicked right away?

BS: Oh, totally! The mission in the very beginning was still about text, even though I didn't want to be followed around by categories.

DW: How did you settle on using Louise's own text?

BS: It happened through a discussion with Jerry and Louise. And then one day Jerry opened a drawer and said: "Look at this." It was a story on a piece of 8 ½-by-11-inch copy paper. It was the text for *the puritan*.

JG: I had been going through Louise's diaries and sheets of writings and I found that story. It was such a beautiful thing. It just made sense to use that text. But Louise changed it a little. There's something at the end, a new paragraph.

BS: She added a quote at the end. It will always remain mysterious, but it's very, very specific why she put that there, and what was going on.

DW: I don't remember that, about her adding the last couple lines.

BS: She said: "If you have a secret, you are very much afraid." [*The full 1990 postscript is: "If you have a secret, you become afraid. You are paralyzed by your desires, and are in terror of the desires still to be uncovered. The demands of love are too great, and you withdraw."*]

JG: That was in keeping with the way Louise worked. She always had to update, to contemporize. She'd tweak a text to make it relevant to the moment.

DW: Ben, did you know, at the time, that *the puritan* was about Alfred Barr?

BS: No. But I knew exactly what that last quote was about. It was so completely true. I think that is one reason that many of Louise's works are so powerful. They are so true.

DW: You eventually did more with the plates from *the puritan*, when Louise made folios, triptychs, and studies with hand additions, on extra proofs. I guess I'd call that "blurring the boundaries" between the worlds of prints, drawings, books—or maybe it's not making any boundaries to begin with.

BS: I would say, as a note, that those studies "left" *the puritan*.

DW: That kind of experimentation continued in the work you did with Louise in her late years.

JG: With Ben there was no standard production. And that suited Louise. She liked to take something and keep it alive, to keep reworking it and changing it. So that was the synergy between Louise and Ben—he encouraged her to take an image and make variations. The process was always very open-ended. Sometimes it worked. Sometimes it was more problematic.

BS: I think it always worked, and if it didn't work it never got to go public.

JG: Louise would tear things up if she didn't like them.

BS: But it's fun to destroy something and then see it somehow come out at the other end of the process as something extraordinary. I remember things going into the sink, for instance.

JG: Yes, she would wash things. Because with the gouache painted on, if it didn't work, she could wash it . . . then we'd need to take paper towels to dry it. But that was liberating for her printmaking. Compared to other materials, like stone: once you chip it, you can only go in one direction. With these prints, if it didn't work out, she would go to another proof and have another idea for that image. She liked that.

Louise always looked forward to Ben coming. And he would leave materials. "Okay, Louise, I'm leaving twelve sheets. At your leisure. . . ." Sometimes when he came back, she hadn't touched them. It depended on her energy level. At other times, he'd see that a lot had been done. Then they'd go through them together. Ben could get her to continue.

BS: But she liked to work! Honestly, the whole idea of an artist as solitary, in some cabinet—that's nonsense.

DW: But most people don't realize that those kinds of interactions can be important for an artist, can be like sparks.

JG: Ben would come every day.

DW: How long would you stay?

BS: Whatever Louise wanted. I can say this. I never called up and asked: "Louise, should I come?" and she said "no." Even if nothing happened that day. She could be very tired, or even manic, really hallucinatory. But I'd stay. Sometimes I would sit there for hours and we would say almost nothing. Sometimes, you can't help.

But there was so much going on at any given time, with various sheets at different stages. I was managing sometimes fifty plates. So, when I came over, I'd ask: "Which one of these should we do today?” I could run back and get other things. Everything was part of the mix, and because I was right next door, things were easy. The working method was never, “Okay, we’re going to take this from start to finish.” It was completely the opposite. And it took time—it could take years.

DW: So things were always coming in and out of production?

BS: They were getting patina! I’ll tell you something: the last study from *the puritan*, one of the panels . . . it was behind the washing machine for, I don’t know, seven years or something. And then when it came out from behind the washing machine, it looked pretty good!

DW: That’s so funny! That’s the ultimate “going with the flow.”

JG: But Ben did direct her. I mean, Louise knew where she wanted to go with a particular image, but Ben was good at knowing the right time to say: “Okay, let’s do another,” “Let’s try this.”

DW: When did you move so close to Louise?

BS: It was in 2005.

DW: Because I noticed the incredible boom in your work together around 2005, 2006, and from then on. So that’s when you moved close by.

BS: That was probably the best period, even though I like the early things, too. But there weren’t a lot, then.

JG: It was so great to have Ben close by, because I could say, anytime: “Ben, come on over.” It was much easier for working. He took things away to dry and flatten, and then brought them back. We’d hold them up for Louise. She liked that, looking at them close up and then from a distance. And then we’d hold up the next one. Louise would write on the backs of the sheets to keep track of her sequence.

DW: Ben, you were working with Louise when she was very old.

BS: But it was an absolutely great period. She was such a strong woman. I think that’s really what comes through. The work’s a testament. I felt like Louise was reaching out . . . keeping going. That was an inspiration. Don’t think because you’re getting old you shouldn’t surround yourself with energy and creativity, and that you shouldn’t test yourself, and you shouldn’t communicate what’s going on in your own individual life. She was really staying so alive and was inspiring young people.

I remember when Nick Serota [then director of Tate Museums, London] came, and I showed him what Louise was doing. He said: “This work has all the energy of youth, with the wisdom of the ages.”

Louise was just so giving. I would just say that she didn’t stop giving. It was extraordinary what she was able to do.

JG: Well, the work kept her alive. And she could never really relax. You know, when we went to Italy together, she had to work, work, work. And then on Sunday, there was no working, and I’d say: “Okay, let’s go to the beach.” I would drop her off and by the time I had parked the car, she’s like: “Let’s go.” It was almost like, when she was not working, there was anxiety.

DW: Ben, this must have been an incredible experience for you. I know I can speak for myself, since I feel that meeting Louise when I did in the late ’70s, and having that relationship, was one of the great things of my life. But you, and obviously Jerry, had these incredible, rich relationships. What would you say about it?

BS: I know what comes to mind. When I went off on my own, and started Osiris, I always used to say that [Robert] Ryman was the father of Osiris and that Louise was the mother of Osiris. She was so supportive. That’s a horrible word that people overuse, but it was a beautiful thing for me. Louise was the artist’s artist. She had the least ego of anyone. And I’ve worked with a lot of artists.

JG: When Louise started to get popular, a lot of people came into her life. They would come once—a photographer or a journalist, for instance. But whether it was Felix [Harlan, of Harlan & Weaver workshop] or Ben or Brigitte [Cornand, filmmaker and Bourgeois’s daily companion in her late years], or you. When Louise built up those relationships, it was like you were part of the family. That’s when good things can happen. It opens up a potential space for creative things. She always knew Ben was coming back. “Okay. Come tomorrow,” she’d say. “Come back.”

BS: But it was also a philosophy; there was a philosophical core sympathy between Louise and myself, with what I was trying to do with whatever Osiris was, or is.

So, you walk in one day and you’re talking about writers and books. . . . And then one day you walk in and say: “Okay, there are no rules.” Louise was absolutely in heaven. There was all kinds of exploratory printmaking. Some very focused, some completely adventurous, but no differentiation. It was a philosophical space we shared. “Let’s just see where this day goes.” It was totally open.

In terms of the actual printing plates, there were some that had an absolutely clean, tranquil background, with only lines. There are others where you have the miracle of what the plate captures as a memory sink. You have the patina of the plate. And then many things in between. There is lots of magic in the plates.

And then there was a range of papers, made with different pigments. All the paper was unique. So, everybody on the team—printers, papermakers—was participating. It was a philosophy we shared.

Also, I think when you work in the most spontaneous possible way, and you work with principles—not by premeditating or trying to force anything to a vision, but letting the vision inform itself—all these beautiful connections happen all over the place.

DW: Beautifully said, Ben, I must say.

BS: Louise was so many things. It was so beautiful. She could be very consistent with certain things and then that would disappear. She could get into this kind of—almost like a dervish . . . certain trances. It was part of her inner communication that she extended into the work. She would have a routine, almost like a fetish, but then also a meditation. She could spend hours on something, and then integrate it for three months.

JG: With Ben, she had no fear. Whereas when she was working in stone she’d be afraid because she knew she could cut too deep; it was forever.

BS: Well, it was the most forgiving environment that you could give. That was also part of the practice.

DW: I want to ask about *À l’Infini* [To Infinity; plates 185–98].

BS: With *À l’Infini*, it just happened. And it might not have happened. The printed elements are the consistent armature. That was, you know, in a musical sense, it was an aspect of its sonic construction. And the printing wasn’t the same every time. But you start by starting. She would work on stacks, and then let them dry. And then I’d bring them back. And then something would be pulled together out of it. But it has this web of abstraction, going in and out of abstraction and figuration; it has a really nebulous quality of the unknown—of the very beginning and the very end. It also has weaving.

JG: There’s a side of Louise, in relationship to abstraction, that’s never totally understood. Her work is not only spiders and arched figures.

BS: To expand on that—Louise had an extraordinary education. She not only knew it, but *lived* it, and very often knew the players . . . back to the Dadaists and Surrealism. And she could reach back to a formal arts education, back to the tapestries, even, which are from a completely different era. This was all something she lived with, that came with the traditions of her space, through her family in society. She was someone with tremendous culture and curiosity. And she read, while very few artists actually read.

JG: I have to say that the thing that differentiates Louise’s work with Ben was that it went beyond the usual limitations of being a publisher of prints. It was integrated with everything else, and now is integrated in all exhibitions of Louise’s work.

DW: But since I’m a print specialist, I like that printmaking was the underpinning of the projects, that it had the flexibility to accomplish this.

JG: It was the initial impulse, the spark.

DW: And as Ben says, the armature. It's built into each composition. That makes the sheets all connected.

BS: Yes, they are connected. Genetically!

DW: What about the multipanel projects with text, like *I Give Everything Away* [FIG. 52; PP. 178–79], that bring the word and image together again—which I think is wonderful?

BS: That one's got huge energy. It's storytelling on a large scale. And with the writing . . . I mean, that *was* an advantage of my coming from the book side.

JG: Louise was brought back to a lot of texts with the discovery of her psychoanalytic writings. We were reading them to her, and Ben would say: "This is really poetic—I love that sentence." She was mining her own past with those writings. But there was new writing, too.

BS: Yes, that was so fresh and from the moment, that just bubbled up. It was alive. And sometimes that's part of the action . . . a kind of storytelling, but in a different way. You see the way the words move in and out of any given series of works.

But the sense of storytelling sometimes could be with no words. That's what you're trying to get from people. You're trying to get people to really look and make up their own stories, to follow threads, to activate their hearts and their minds. Louise is just all over on a matrix of real quality and authenticity. She reaches my heart all the time.

DW: I know. Me, too, Ben. I wonder, when was the last time you saw her?

BS: The day before she died.

JG: Ben came to the hospital. Louise wanted to work.

BS: Yeah, I thought she was ready to go back to work. She was getting better. I remember I said: "Okay, but put on your riding boots. We're getting ready!"

Notes
Chronology
Checklist of Plates
Selected Bibliography
Index
Lenders to the Exhibition
Trustees of
The Museum of Modern Art

Notes

The catalogue raisonné of Bourgeois's printed œuvre is available online: Deborah Wye, ed., *Louise Bourgeois: The Complete Prints & Books* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2017), moma.org/bourgeoisprints. In this volume's endnotes, references to works in this online resource have been abbreviated thus: "MoMA cat. no. xxx: title."

Reference numbers preceded by "LB" or "LL" (e.g. "Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1968; LB-0685" or "June 6, 1973; LL-0214") pertain to documents in the archives of The Easton Foundation, which also contain the artist's diaries, correspondence, and related ephemera; the copyright for these materials is owned exclusively by The Easton Foundation. Bourgeois wrote in both French and English, and sometimes in a hybrid of the two. In the texts selected for this publication, all quotations are given in English. Translations from French to English are by Richard Sieburth and Françoise Gramet. As necessary, the punctuation of Bourgeois's quoted passages has been amended to conform to the style of the present volume. In certain instances, her original line breaks have been maintained to communicate the rhythm of a passage.

Introduction

1 See Deborah Wye, ed., *Louise Bourgeois: The Complete Prints & Books* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2017), moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

2 "Art is a guaranty of sanity" appears in several of Bourgeois's works. Bourgeois, "This is about survival . . . about the will to survive," in Deborah Wye, "A Drama of the Self: Louise Bourgeois as Printmaker," in Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 10. This essay is also available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

3 Bourgeois's remarks about her prints up to 1994 were transferred from Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* to the relevant records in the updated online catalogue raisonné, Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

4 In the 1994 exhibition *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* at The Museum of Modern Art, I included Bourgeois's remarks on many of the individual object labels. Several people told me those remarks played a role in opening them up to her work.

5 Two scholarly examples are Mignon Nixon, ed., *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no. 2 (1999): *Louise Bourgeois*, with texts by Mieke Bal, Briony Fer, Mignon Nixon, Griselda Pollock, Alex Potts, and Anne M. Wagner; and Catherine M. Burge, *Disagreeable Objects: The Sculptural Strategies of Louise Bourgeois*, PhD diss., University of London, 2005, http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1445334/.

6 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," in Christiane Meyer-Thoss, *Louise Bourgeois: Designing for Free Fall* (Zurich: Ammann, 1992), 194.

7 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1968; LB-0685.

8 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred," 195.

9 While not making reference specifically to her childhood, Bourgeois used the word *trauma* in various writings. Some examples are: "to separate from me to abandon me, the trauma of abandonment is jealousy" (loose sheet, c. 1963; LB-0383); "abandonment trauma? no, castration trauma? no, . . . spurned trauma no, preferred trauma no" (diary entry, March 4, 1985); "blue, white, black spot, this is the trauma's colors" (diary entry, March 11, 1986); "abandonment is the trauma of one" (diary entry, August 8, 1987).

10 My understanding of the long-term neuropsychological effects of traumatic situations has benefited from discussions with psychoanalyst Susan Tye, who specializes in trauma. For a discussion of trauma and its currency in contemporary art, theory, and culture, see Hal Foster, "Obscene, Abject, Traumatic," *October*, no. 78 (Autumn 1996): 107–24. For an exhibition that surveys a range of art exploring psychological states, see Susan Hapgood, *Slightly Unbalanced* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2008), with an essay by Susan M. Andersen. In Hapgood's introduction, "Slightly Unbalanced" (p. 14), she writes: "Bourgeois might be seen as the mother of all the other artists in this show—the one who has built the richest body of psychologically resonant work."

11 Bourgeois, quoted in "Arena" (interviews for a 1993 BBC2 documentary film directed by Nigel Finch), in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/ Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews, 1923–1997* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with London: Violette, 1998), 257.

12 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1987; LB-1389.

13 The effect of simultaneity—of Bourgeois's active involvement with old and new work at the same time—came up in a discussion with Jerry Gorovoy, the artist's longtime assistant, on September 12, 2016. See full interview, pp. 195–202 in the present volume.

14 Bourgeois, loose sheet (draft for *Art Now: New York*, on *Janus Fleuri*), September 1969; LB-1442.

15 Bourgeois's foundation, The Easton Foundation, is located in New York City, where scholars can, by appointment, have access to her archives, presently comprising more than 3,500 items, with additional material continually being catalogued.

16 Bourgeois, quoted in Wye, "A Drama of the Self," 18. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

17 In a scene in a biographical film, while fashioning a male figure from a tangerine skin, Bourgeois describes an incident when her father mocked her as a child during a family dinner. Describing this long-ago incident moved her to tears. She said: "The pain was very great. You can see that after fifty years, for somebody who doesn't cry, after fifty years, the thing is so vivid that it is as if it had happened yesterday." As seen in *The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine*, directed by Amei Wallach and Marion Cajori (New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2008), 1:18:29.

18 Some see the birth of Bourgeois's brother, Pierre, as an especially pivotal event for the artist. See Juliet Mitchell, "Love and Hate, Girl and Boy," *London Review of Books* 36, no. 21 (November 6, 2014): 11–14. Also, Bourgeois notes in 1966 that her analyst, Dr. Henry Lowenfeld, pointed to Pierre as a source of her problems: "how I failed to adjust at Pierre's birth (trauma)" (loose sheet, January 31, 1966; LB-0169). In 1946, after several breakdowns, Pierre was institutionalized at age thirty-three. He died in an institution in the southern suburbs of Paris in 1960, at age forty-seven.

19 Bourgeois, loose sheet, April 24, 1952; LB-0462, quoted in Mitchell, "Love and Hate, Girl and Boy," *London Review of Books*, 7.

20 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 683: *Horizontal Mountain Landscape*.

21 Correspondence housed at The Easton Foundation between Bourgeois's father and mother during the war continues until December 1918. Also, in 1940 Bourgeois wrote to a friend the following reminiscence: "I was very young in 1917, but I always remember Maman crying when Papa went back [to war] after he was wounded for the second time." Quoted in "Letters to Colette Richarme, 1937–1940," in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/ Reconstruction of the Father*, 37. Thanks to Maggie Wright, Archivist, The Easton Foundation for pointing out this letter.

22 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 700: *Storm at Saint Honoré*.

23 Bourgeois, "Child Abuse: A Project by Louise Bourgeois," *Artforum* 21, no. 4 (December 1982): 45. See MoMA cat. no. 987: Untitled, no. 3 of 4.

24 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 536: *La Maison d'Arcueil*.

25 Bourgeois, May 7, 1997, in Jerry Gorovoy and Pandora Tabatabai Asbaghi, *Louise Bourgeois: Blue Days and Pink Days*, with a critical text by Paulo Herkenhoff (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 1997), 5.

26 See "Letters to Colette Richarme," in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/ Reconstruction of the Father*, 23–30.

27 Ledger from Bourgeois's gallery space on Boulevard St. Germain in Paris; LB-1772.

28 Barnet was appointed League Printer in 1935 and League Instructor in Graphics in 1936. See Pamela N. Koob, *Will Barnet and the Art Students League* (New York: Art Students League, 2010), 8, 16.

29 In the 1990s and 2000s, Bourgeois began the tradition of making holiday prints again, this time not as greeting cards but as gifts for her close circle of friends.

30 See for example Louise Bourgeois, handwritten instructions for lift ground aquatint, loose sheet, c. 1940–46; LB-1833.

31 The term *intaglio* comes from the Italian word meaning "to incise." In printmaking, it is an umbrella term for various techniques involving the incising of metal plates with tools or with acid. Intaglio includes etching, drypoint, engraving, aquatint, and mezzotint.

32 Bourgeois, quoted in Wye, "A Drama of the Self," 23. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Bourgeois, diary entries, June 5, 1940, and January 14, 1943. In the diaries for her early days in New York, there are several mentions of her purchasing prints. It occurs to me that she may have planned to open a print- and bookshop like the space she had in her father's gallery in Paris, but there is no specific mention of such a plan at that time, when she was very busy with her three young sons. Later, in 1956, she opened the shop, Erasmus Books and Prints.

36 Wye, "A Drama of the Self," 26. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

37 See MoMA cat. no. 423.2: *Man Reading*, and MoMA cat. no. 425: *Easton*

38 Some examples are: Bourgeois, diary entries, September 10 and December 18, 1947; February 22, April 27, June 29, November 12, and December 3, 1949.

39 Bourgeois, "MacDowell Medal Acceptance Speech" (August 19, 1990), in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/ Reconstruction of the Father*, 200.

40 Bourgeois, "Select Diary Notes, 1939–1944" in ibid., 40. Source: Bourgeois, notebook, March 6, 1939; LB-0381.

41 Bourgeois participated in the exhibition *The Women* at Art of This Century gallery in June–July 1945.

42 Bourgeois always denied her connection to Surrealism, no matter how relevant the link seemed to others. She said: "I was not a Surrealist, I was an existentialist." Bourgeois, quoted in Paulo Herkenhoff (transcribed and edited by Thyrza Nichols Goodeve), "Interview," in Robert Storr, Paulo Herkenhoff, and Allan Schwartzman, *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Phaidon, 2003), 14.

43 Artist's Remarks on all of her prints from the 1940s are found at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

44 Atelier 17's impact has been called "catalytic." See Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 152.

45 *Hayter and Studio 17: New Directions in Gravure*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 18–October 8, 1944.

46 The first note in Bourgeois's diaries indicating a visit to the workshop is from October 1946.

47 Wye, "A Drama of the Self," 26. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

48 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1989; LB-0064.

49 Christina Weyl, *Innovation and Abstraction: Women Artists and Atelier 17* (East Hampton, NY: Pollock-Krasner House & Study Center, 2016), 3 (online catalogue no longer available).

50 Stanley William Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure* (New York: Pantheon, 1949). Bourgeois notes her "fulmination + angoisse" [anguish] over Hayter's book. "How should I object—scene, scandal (picketing) argument?? sly remarks" (diary entry, January 23, 1949); and "Great nervousness over the fact that I have not been put in Hayter's book for reproduction" (diary entry, January 24, 1949).

51 Wye, "A Drama of the Self," 28. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

52 Ibid., 27.

53 In Bourgeois's diary of March 20, 1948, she notes that she sent one volume to critic Clement Greenberg, whose formalist art criticism would not have favored Bourgeois's work. Interestingly, in 2016, Greenberg's daughter brought that copy to MoMA for examination. He had kept it all his life and his daughter inherited it when her mother died.

54 Laurie Cluitmans and Arnisa Zeqo, *He Disappeared into Complete Silence: Rereading a Single Artwork by Louise Bourgeois*, with essays by Mieke Bal, Maria Barnas, Lytle Shaw, Robert Storr, Steven ten Thije, Arnisa Zeqo (Haarlem, Netherlands: De Hallen Haarlem, 2011). In addition to the exhibition and catalogue, organizers Cluitmans and Zeqo presented nine events focusing on different aspects of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence.*

55 Marius Bewley, "Introduction," in *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (New York: the artist, 1947), n.p. Ultimately, Bewley interprets her depiction of loneliness and alienation as evoking a societal dilemma.

56 Bourgeois, quoted in Deborah Wye, *Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 18.

57 Choreographer Erik Hawkins, with whom Bourgeois was collaborating on a set design, wrote to her about the collaboration and mentioned that he had just seen the *Abstract Painting and Sculpture* exhibition. He expressed his disappointment that her work was not represented and offered to write to MoMA and complain. Letter from Hawkins to Bourgeois, January 24, 1951; LL-0189. Bourgeois wrote back that she hoped he would protest. Letter from Bourgeois to Hawkins, February 1951; LB-1761.

58 *Recent Acquisitions*, The Museum of Modern Art, February 13–May 13, 1951.

59 In 1954, Bourgeois was described by a critic as among those "artists who have found—and persisted in exploring—personal directions outside the 'movements' of modern art." Belle Krasne, "10 Artists in the Margin," *Design Quarterly*, no. 30 (1954): 9.

60 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1958; LB-0129.

61 A sample of these writings has been published in: Philip Larratt-Smith, ed., *Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed*, 2 vols., with essays by Elisabeth Bronfen, Donald Kuspit, Philip Larratt-Smith, Juliet Mitchell, Mignon Nixon, Paul Verhaeghe and Julie De Ganck, and Meg Harris Williams (Buenos Aires: Fundación Proa, 2011; London: Violette, 2012). It should be noted that Bourgeois denied more than once that she had ever been in analysis. See Henry Geldzahler, "Louise Bourgeois," in *Making It New: Essays, Interviews, and Talks* (Brooklyn, NY: Turtle Point Press, 1994), 284, for the following exchange: "H.G.: Have you ever been psychoanalyzed? L.B.: No. H.G: That doesn't interest you? L.B.: It is almost the subject of my entire work!"

62 "The revelation of Bourgeois's psychoanalytic writings . . . seems as significant a discovery for the history of psychoanalysis as for the history of art." Mignon Nixon, "L.," in Larratt-Smith, *The Return of the Repressed*, vol. 1, 85. Also, when I visited the related exhibition, *The Return of the Repressed*, at the Fundación Proa in Buenos Aires, a city considered a center for psychoanalysis, a curator at the Fundación told me there was even more interest in the show from the psychoanalytic community than from the art community.

63 Recently, Léa Vuong, a French literary scholar, has been working on an analysis of Bourgeois's writings from a poetic and literary viewpoint. I heard her present her work at the "Future Bourgeois" symposium at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, in 2014. She is also the author of the essay "Louise Bourgeois: Woman of Her Words," in *Louise Bourgeois: To Hell and Back* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 2015), 211–19.

64 Bourgeois, loose sheet, September 13, 1957; LB-0219.

65 I noticed Bourgeois's father's initials in several volumes when I perused the book collection that remains shelved in Bourgeois's house. As early as 1954, thoughts of a bookshop, and the relationship of a bookshop to her father, appear in Bourgeois's diaries: "The return of the father. His tastes, garden, his Diderot lines, his antiquarian profession—conflict of the subject of a book shop (substitute for the shop)—need of being approved of by the father. My father loves me. I long for him to love me." Bourgeois, diary entry, February 5, 1954.

66 The remaining book collection in Bourgeois's house includes the inventory from the bookshop. Eventually it will be fully catalogued. In a brief review of the collection in 2016, I found a range of works: a 1607 vellum-bound *Pastorales*; a variety of nineteenth-century illustrated literary works; an 1811 *Historic Views of Paris*; and many titles in fine leather bindings.

67 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1963; LB-0383.

68 Bourgeois's writings from these years indicate the ups and downs of running the bookshop. For example, she says: "I have wanted to know how it feels to make a buck—I find it awfully hard. But rewarding." Bourgeois, notebook, January–February 1959; LB-0496.

69 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1962; LB-1121.

70 Bourgeois, loose sheet, June 31, 1965; LB-0731.

71 Bourgeois, "On *The Sail*" (December 17, 1988, first published in *Prospect '89* [Frankfurt: Frankfurter Kunstverein, 1989]), in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/Reconstruction of the Father*, 171.

72 Lippard discovered Bourgeois's work for this 1966 show at New York's Fischbach Gallery through Arthur Drexler, then curator of architecture at MoMA. He had assisted Bourgeois with the installation of her 1964 show at the Stable Gallery. Lippard describes how Drexler showed her the latex *Portrait* of 1963, which she calls "astoundingly 'ugly' and simultaneously appealing." Lucy Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate, 2007), 114. By coincidence, in 1982, Drexler, who was at the time my colleague at MoMA, called me to his office for a surprise. He slowly pulled *Portrait* out of a shopping bag. I could not help laughing at how repellent it was. Drexler donated it to MoMA and I included it in the retrospective of the artist's work that I curated that year.

73 Mignon Nixon, *Fantastic Reality: Louise Bourgeois and a Story of Modern Art* (London: MIT Press, 2005), 3.

74 Juliet Mitchell, "The Sublime Jealousy of Louise Bourgeois," in Larratt-Smith, *The Return of the Repressed,* vol. 1, 52.

75 For a discussion about the changes of the 1970s, see "Pluralism in Art and in Art Criticism," roundtable discussion among members of the American Section, International Association of Art Critics: David Bourdon, Michele Cone, April Kingsley, John Perreault, Corinne Robins, Irving Sandler, Jeanne Siegel, A. L. Stubbs, Phyllis Tuchman, in *Art Journal* 40, nos. 1–2: Modernism, Revisionism, Pluralism, and Postmodernism (Art–Winter 1980): 377–79.

76 See Elisabeth Lebovici, "Is She? Or Isn't She?" in Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois*, 131–36.

77 Bourgeois, quoted in "Feminism," in ibid., 130.

78 Bourgeois, "Statements from Conversations with Robert Storr" (text prepared in 1985 for MIT Press), in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/Reconstruction of the Father*, 220.

79 See Wye, "A Drama of the Self," 28–29. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

80 See Kay Larsen, "Louise Bourgeois: Her Re-emergence Feels Like a Discovery," in "Artists the Critics Are Watching," *Art News* 80, no. 5 (May 1981): 77.

81 This author was the organizer of the exhibition and wrote the accompanying catalogue, the first monographic study of the artist's work. It is noteworthy that a decade earlier, in 1973, a group of nineteen female artists and writers had written curator William Rubin at MoMA, proposing that the Museum do a retrospective of Bourgeois's work. "Interest in her work is higher than ever before," they wrote. "The time for museum recognition and the widest possible exposure is as soon as possible." June 6, 1973; LL-0214.

82 "Child Abuse: A Project by Louise Bourgeois," *Artforum*, 40–47. For a full view of the project, see MoMA cat. nos. 985–88.

83 Bourgeois talked about Sadie Gordon Richmond for the first time publicly when she presented a slide lecture at the Maison Française at Columbia University in 1979. That became the basis of the filmed slide show. She did not discuss the film with me before asking that it be part of the exhibition, which was already installed. The only place to put it was in the lobby of the Museum.

84 Robert Storr, "Jerry Gorovoy," in Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois*, 152.

85 See *Corporal Politics*, with essays by Donald Hall, Thomas Laqueur, and Helaine Posner (Cambridge, MA: MIT List Visual Arts Center, and Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).

86 Bourgeois is discussed as part of a "bad girl tradition" in Marcia Tanner, "Mother Laughed: The Bad Girls' Avant-Garde," in *Bad Girls* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, and Los Angeles: UCLA Wight Art Gallery, 1994), 53, 65–67.

87 See *Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art*, with essays by Jack Ben-Levi, Craig Houser, Leslie C. Jones, and Simon Taylor (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993).

88 Ann Landi, "Speak, Memory: The Indiscreet Charm of Louise Bourgeois," in "Who Are the 10 Best Living Artists?" *Art News* 98, no. 11 (December 1999): 139; and Charlotta Kotik, "Inside Out: Louise Bourgeois," in "The Century's 25 Most Influential Artists," *Art News* 98, no. 5 (May 1999): 129.

89 There are various references to agoraphobia in Bourgeois's diaries and notes. One points back to when she was in her twenties: "After Maman's death, I started to be afraid to leave the house especially after lunch." Bourgeois, loose sheet, September 17, 1959; LB-0124. In 1986 she made this note about feelings surrounding her agoraphobia: "I cannot get out of the house, I want to, I have to. I would like to. I was planning but I give up at the last minute. It would help to be completely ready, waiting by the door, it would make things easier: some nice feelings will help, familiar friendly place to go to." Bourgeois, loose sheet, March 1, 1986; LB-0427. These words also appear in the text for *The View from the Bottom of the Well*, a portfolio of nine drypoints, published in 1996. See Publication Excerpts for MoMA cat. nos. 568–76. In the later 1990s Bourgeois became increasingly reluctant to leave home, and by the early 2000s she had ceased going out altogether. She no longer went to her Brooklyn studio but worked only in her 20th Street home/studio. For a period, she would leave home to go to the doctor, but later the doctor made house calls. At times, she would not even go out into her backyard, but she resumed doing that. (Interview with Jerry Gorovoy and Benjamin Shiff, May 4, 2011.)

90 For a sense of what Bourgeois's Sunday salons were like, see Brian D. Leitch, "Always on Sunday," *New York Times Magazine* (August 18, 2002). nytimes.com/2002/08/18/magazine/always-on-sunday.html.

91 All the printers and publishers with whom Bourgeois worked can be searched in "Printers & Publishers," at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

92 Telephone interview with Peter Blum, April 12, 2012. Bourgeois issued a modified facsimile of this book. See MoMA cat. nos. 612-15: *Recueil des Secrets de Louyse Bourgeois*.

93 As noted, all Artist's Remarks from the 1994 catalogue raisonné have been transferred to: Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

94 Bourgeois, in "Louise Bourgeois in Conversation with Christiane Meyer-Thoss," in Meyer-Thoss, *Louise Bourgeois: Designing for Free Fall*, 130–31.

95 This portfolio was published by Galerie Lelong, Paris, and printed by master printer Piero Crommelynck, Paris. See MoMA cat. nos. 533–41: *Quarantania*.

96 See MoMA cat. nos. 430–43: *Autobiographical Series*.

97 See MoMA cat. nos. 846–914: *Album*.

98 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. nos. 1072–79: *the puritan*.

99 See MoMA cat. no. 54: *She Lost It*.

100 All the various techniques with which Bourgeois worked can be searched in "Techniques" at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

101 Wye, "A Drama of the Self," in Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 23. Available online at "About the Artist" > "Essay" at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

102 Telephone interview with Felix Harlan, April 12, 2012.

103 Ibid.

104 For the full evolution of *Bed*, see MoMA cat. no. 480.

105 Telephone interview with Felix Harlan, April 12, 2012.

106 All the benefit prints Bourgeois created can be searched in "Printers & Publishers" > "Publishers and Recipients of Benefit Works" at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

107 Bourgeois, quoted in Douglas Maxwell, "Louise Bourgeois," *Modern Painters* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 39.

108 Bourgeois, diary entry, June 18, 1987, quoted in *Louise Bourgeois: L'Araignée et les tapisseries* (Zurich: Hauser & Wirth, 2014), 6.

109 See Elizabeth Phillips and Tony Zwicker, *The American Livre de Peintre*, with an introduction by Robert Rainwater (New York: Grolier Club, 1993).

110 Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*.

111 As MoMA's Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books, and then Chief Curator, this author oversaw the Bourgeois print archive and its cataloguing until 2010. This work continued after my retirement for the online print catalogue raisonné.

112 All the printers and publishers with whom Bourgeois worked can be searched in "Printers & Publishers" at Wye, ed., moma.org/bourgeoisprints, which also provides brief texts on her primary collaborators.

113 Bourgeois gave up her Brooklyn studio in 2005 as it had to be vacated for construction in the area, but she had not been venturing there for some time.

114 See *Louise Bourgeois: L'Araignée et les tapisseries*.

115 The second edition of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* was published as a benefit project for the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books of The Museum of Modern Art and includes a foreword by this author. See MoMA cat. nos. 989–99.

116 Bourgeois continued to record her feelings in her diaries. At the beginning of the diary for 2000 she writes: "Total retreat . . . the fear of fear, the fear of being devoured . . . I fear solitude, loneliness and abandon[ment]." Later, on July 22, 2000, she writes: "Rage uncontrollable. Violence. Revenge." Her diary entries taper off in the 2000s, yet on January 1, 2005, she writes: "I had a flashback of something that never existed."

117 For more about this process, see Amy Newman, "Louise Bourgeois Builds a Book from the Fabric of Life," *New York Times*, October 17, 2004; nytimes.com/2004/10/17/arts/design/louise-bourgeois-builds-a-book-from-the-fabric-of-life.html.

118 Telephone interview with David Procuniar, July 18, 2013.

119 See MoMA cat. nos. 250A–250F: *Les Arbres* (1–6).

120 Jerry Gorovoy conveyed this information to this author.

121 See MoMA cat. nos. 152–67: *Do Not Abandon Me*, and MoMA cat. nos. 168–79: *To Whom It May Concern*.

122 See MoMA cat. nos. 1072–92: *the puritan*.

123 See MoMA cat. no. 832: *Differentiate*, and MoMA cat. no. 833: *Duration and Intensité*.

124 Jerry Gorovoy conveyed this information to this author.

Themes and Variations

1 Bourgeois often used the phrase "art is a guaranty of sanity" in conversation and included it in several works of art in different mediums. See for example FIG. 2 (P. 11), no. 9 of 9 from the series *What Is the Shape of This Problem?* 1999.

2 Bourgeois, in Deborah Wye, "A Drama of the Self: Louise Bourgeois as Printmaker," in Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 12. This essay is also available online at "About the Artist">"Essay" in Deborah Wye, ed., *Louise Bourgeois: The Complete Prints & Books* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2017), moma.org/bourgeoisprints.

3 Bourgeois, "Freud's Toys," *Artforum* 28, no. 5 (January 1990): 113.

Architecture Embodied

NOTE: This chapter's epigraph is from Louise Bourgeois, "The Puritan," 1947, published with plate 2 of 8 in her illustrated book *the puritan* (New York: Osiris, 1990).

1 Bourgeois, in conversation with Jerry Gorovoy, 1999, as cited in Gorovoy and Danielle Tilkin, *Louise Bourgeois: Memory and Architecture* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1999), 15. This volume, with essays by Mieke Bal, Jennifer Bloomer, Beatriz Colomina, Lynne Cooke, Jerry Gorovoy and Danielle Tilkin, Josef Helfenstein, and Christiane Terrisse, is illuminating for its various interpretations of the subject of architecture in Bourgeois's work.

2 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1950; LB-0430.

3 Bourgeois, letter to Robert Goldwater, September 24, 1938; LB-1715.

4 Bourgeois often changed the titles of her works, and these titles from her 1949 and 1950 exhibitions, with the exception of *Pillar*, are either no longer extant or were appropriated into other sculptures.

5 For more on Bourgeois's relationship to architecture generally, and to Le Corbusier in particular, see Paulo Herkenhoff, "Architecture" and "Le Corbusier," in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate, 2007), 46–48 and 89–90.

6 Bourgeois, in Deborah Wye, *Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 67.

7 Bourgeois, loose sheet, September 16, 1957; LB-0140.

8 According to the "Catalog of the Cells," in Julienne Lorz, ed., *Louise Bourgeois. Structures of Existence: The Cells* (Munich: Prestel and Haus der Kunst, 2015), 250–71, the total number of these architectural sculptures includes five works that are considered precursors to fifty-seven *Cells*.

9 Bourgeois often made lists, and among them were several notes about the houses of her past, or the rivers she lived near. See for example her diary entry of October 8, 1989, where Bourgeois lists her residences in France; her family's country house in Easton, Connecticut; her loft studio on Dean Street in Brooklyn; the house in Stapleton, Staten Island, which she bought for her son, Michel, but which remained empty for a long time as a sculptural environment; and lastly 347 West 20th Street.

10 Bourgeois, April 1997, in Jerry Gorovoy and Pandora Tabatabai Asbaghi, *Louise Bourgeois: Blue Days and Pink Days*, with a critical text by Paulo Herkenhoff (Milan: Fondazione Prada, 1997), 108.

11 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. nos. 989–97: *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*.

12 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 995: plate 7 of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*.

13 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 540: *Thompson Street*.

14 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 1014: *The Sky's the Limit*.

Abstracted Emotions

NOTE: This chapter's epigraph is from Louise Bourgeois, "Brief Account of Career," c. 1965, in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews, 1923–1997* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with London: Violette, 1998), 77.

1 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 680: *Tempête du Vent* (Tornado).

2 Bourgeois, quoted in notes of Jerry Gorovoy, in Marie-Laure Bernadac, "The Insomnia Drawings of Louise Bourgeois," in *Louise Bourgeois: The Insomnia Drawings*, vol. 2 (Zurich: Daros, in collaboration with Peter Blum, New York, 2000), 12.

3 For an illuminating essay on the subject of abstraction in the work of Bourgeois, see Robert Storr, "L'Esprit géométrique," in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate, 2007), 21–35.

4 Bourgeois, in "William Rubin–Louise Bourgeois: Questions and Answers," in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/ Reconstruction of the Father*, 86.

5 Bourgeois, loose sheet, January 28, 1958; LB-0267.

6 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," in Christiane Meyer-Thoss, *Louise Bourgeois: Designing for Free Fall* (Zurich: Ammann, 1992), 182.

7 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. nos. 1072–79: *the puritan*.

8 Bourgeois, quoted in Deborah Wye, *Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 43.

9 Bourgeois, expressing her anger when her psychoanalyst had gone away, loose sheet, October 1, 1963; LB-0322.

10 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," 194.

11 *The Paris Review*, no. 130 (Spring 1994), cover illustration.

12 Interview with Felix Harlan, December 30, 2016.

13 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 567: *Paris Review*.

14 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 580: Untitled.

15 Bourgeois, quoted in "Arena" (interviews for a 1993 BBC2 documentary film directed by Nigel Finch), in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/Reconstruction of the Father*, 258.

Fabric of Memory

NOTE: This chapter's epigraph is from Louise Bourgeois's diary, June 6, 1994.

1 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," in Christiane Meyer-Thoss, *Louise Bourgeois: Designing for Free Fall* (Zurich: Ammann, 1992), 187.

2 Joséphine Fauriaux Bourgeois, letter to Louise Bourgeois, July 29, 1929; JVB-0025; reprinted and translated in *Louise Bourgeois: L'Araignée et les tapisseries* (Zurich: Hauser & Wirth, 2014), 87. (This catalogue documents the full range of Bourgeois's works involving tapestry fragments.)

3 *Exhibition of Modern Textiles*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, August 29–September 23, 1945. The checklist includes six works by Bourgeois.

4 According to The Easton Foundation Archivist, Maggie Wright, there are a few letters in the archives indicating that Bourgeois sent samples to possible clients, but nothing further seems to have come from those efforts.

5 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1968; LB-0202.

6 See MoMA cat. no. 54: *She Lost It*.

7 See for example Nina Felshin, *Empty Dress: Clothing as Surrogate in Recent Art* (New York: Independent Curators International, 1993); and Barbara J. Bloemink, *Dress Codes: Clothing as Metaphor* (Katonah, NY: Katonah Museum of Art, 2009).

8 Bourgeois, quoted in Paulo Herkenhoff, "Louise Bourgeois: The Unmentionable, Blades, Fabrics and Fashion" (interview with the artist, November 16, 1995), in Marie-Laure Bernadac, ed., *Louise Bourgeois: Recent Works* (Bordeaux: Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, and London: Serpentine Gallery, 1998), 104.

9 Bourgeois, loose sheet, May 28, 1963; LB-0313.

10 For a full discussion of *Ode à l'Oubli*, see Deborah Wye, "Louise Bourgeois," in Cornelia Butler and Alexandra Schwartz, eds., *Modern Women: Women Artists at The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 274–77.

11 See MoMA cat. nos. 152–67: *Do Not Abandon Me*, and cat. nos. 168–79: *To Whom It May Concern*.

12 A detailed account of the full range of Bourgeois's work in fabric is found in "Louise Bourgeois: Chronology," in Germano Celant, *Louise Bourgeois: The Fabric Works* (Venice: Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova, and Milan: Skira, 2010), 318–30.

13 See MoMA cat. no. 96: *Spiraling Eyes*.

14 See MoMA cat. nos. 61b-95b: *Ode à l'Oubli*.

15 See MoMA cat. no. 705: *Self Portrait* (on a bedspread); cat. no. 753: *The Long Night* (on a tablecloth); and cat. no. 754: *The Long Night II* (on a bed sheet).

16 Bourgeois, loose sheet, July 12, 1965; LB-0725.

Alone and Together

NOTE: This chapter's epigraph is from Louise Bourgeois, loose sheet, July 14, 1952; LB-0309.

1 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 541: *Bosom Lady*.

2 Bourgeois, quoted in Deborah Wye, *Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 79.

3 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," in Christiane Meyer-Thoss, *Louise Bourgeois: Designing for Free Fall* (Zurich: Ammann, 1992), 189.

4 Bourgeois, "Louise Bourgeois in Conversation with Christiane Meyer-Thoss," in ibid., 130.

5 Bourgeois, loose sheet, December 17, 1951; LB-0455.

6 See MoMA cat. no. 835: *Extreme Tension*.

7 For the original list, see Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1959; LB-0768.

8 Bourgeois, quoted in "Mortal Elements: Pat Steir Talks with Louise Bourgeois" (first published in *Artforum* 32, no. 1 [September 1993]: 86–87, 127); repr. in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews, 1923–1997* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with London: Violette, 1998), 235.

9 Photograph by Fred W. McDarrah of Bourgeois and Robert Goldwater at a Franz Kline opening at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, March 7, 1960, illustrated in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate, 2007), 87.

10 Bourgeois, "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," 194.

11 For a thorough analysis of the subject of motherhood in modern art, including a discussion of Bourgeois's work, see Massimiliano Gioni, *The Great Mother: Woman, Maternity, and Power in Art and Visual Culture, 1900–2015* (Milan: Skira, 2016).

12 The artist's assistant, Jerry Gorovoy, conveyed this information to this author.

13 Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 1958; LB-1187, and in "Form" (previously unpublished notes for a lecture, late 1960s), in Bernadac and Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/ Reconstruction of the Father*, 76.

14 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 545: *Self Portrait*.

15 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 504: *Sainte Sébastienne*.

16 See MoMA cat. nos. 1041–1052: *Anatomy*.

17 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 1046: Plate 6 of *Anatomy*.

18 Background, MoMA cat. nos. 350a–354a: *The Laws of Nature*.

19 Paulo Herkenhoff, publication excerpt, ibid.

20 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 1132: *Classical Figure*.

Forces of Nature

NOTE: This chapter's epigraph is from Louise Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 672: *Rayons de Soleil sur la Mer*.

1 Bourgeois, quoted in "A Memoir: Louise Bourgeois and Patricia Beckert" (previously unpublished remarks from a conversation recorded in the late 1970s), in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, eds., *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father/Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews*,

1923–1997 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, in association with London: Violette, 1998), 122.

2 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 539: *Boxwoods*.

3 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 679: *Champs de Blé*.

4 See Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 680: *Tempête du Vent*; cat. no. 610: *Ascension Lente*; and cat. no. 674: *Les Mollusques*.

5 See reviews for the exhibition *Louise Bourgeois: Drawings for Sculpture and Sculpture*, Peridot Gallery, New York, March 30–April 25, 1953: F.P. (Fairfield Porter), "Louise Bourgeois," *Art News* 52, no. 2 (April 1953): 39; and "Louise Bourgeois," *New York Times*, April 5, 1953.

6 Bourgeois (in conversation with Robert Goldwater), loose sheet, c. 1953; LB-1796; quoted in "Self-Expression Is Sacred and Fatal: Statements," in Christiane Meyer-Thoss, *Louise Bourgeois: Designing for Free Fall* (Zurich: Ammann, 1992), 184.

7 *Fée Couturière* was exhibited outside during the XVIIe Salon de la Jeune Sculpture at the Musée Rodin, Paris, in 1965.

8 Bourgeois's *Les Bienvenus* was commissioned in 1995 by France's Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication and installed in April 1996 in the Parc de la Mairie in Choisy-le-Roi.

9 William Rubin, "Some Reflections Prompted by the Recent Work of Louise Bourgeois," *Art International* 8, no. 4 (April 20, 1969): 17.

10 Bourgeois, quoted in Deborah Wye, "Louise Bourgeois: 'One and Others,'" in Wye, *Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 25.

11 See photograph in ibid., 83.

12 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 1: *Araignée*.

13 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 633: *Le Soleil*.

14 See MoMA cat. nos. 775–805: *La Rivière Gentille.*

15 Forty-three of these soft ground etchings were seen together for the first time in *Louise Bourgeois: Turning Inwards* at Hauser & Wirth Somerset (UK), October 2, 2016–January 1, 2017.

16 *Louise Bourgeois: Nature Study*, at Inverleith House of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, May 3–July 6, 2008, with an accompanying two-volume catalogue: Philip Larratt-Smith and Paul Nesbitt, *Nature Study: Louise Bourgeois and John Hutton Balfour (1808–1884)* (Edinburgh: Royal Botanic Garden, 2008).

17 Bourgeois, MoMA cat. no. 120.1: Untitled, no. 23 of 24, from the illustrated book *Hours of the Day*.

18 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 680: *Tempête du Vent*. See also: Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 610: *Ascension Lente*.

19 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 538: *The Grid*.

20 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 551: *Laurel Easton*.

21 Ibid.

22 Bourgeois, Artist's Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 606: *Sheaves*.

23 A note from the artist's assistant, Jerry Gorovoy, in Other Remarks, MoMA cat. no. 553: *Lacs de Montagne*.

24 See MoMA cat. nos. 250A–250F: *Les Arbres*.

25 See *Spider*, 1994, in Related Works in Other Mediums, MoMA cat. no. 53: Untitled (*Spider and Snake*).

26 Publication excerpt, MoMA cat. nos. 4a–12a: *Ode à Ma Mère*.

Lasting Impressions

NOTE: This chapter's epigraph is from Louise Bourgeois, loose sheet, c. 2008; LB-0516. The brief text appears as the final entry in the compilation of Bourgeois's writings in Philip Larratt-Smith, ed. *Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed*, vol. 2 (London: Violette, 2012), 189.

1 There is a specific literature devoted to this subject that can be traced back at least to the nineteenth century. Three relevant contemporary references are (listed chronologically): David Rosand, guest editor, "Old-Age Style," *Art Journal* 46, no. 2 (Summer 1987, special issue); Karen Painter and Thomas Crow, eds., *Late Thoughts: Reflections on Artists and Composers at Work* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006); and Gordon McMullan and Sam Smiles, eds., *Late Style and Its Discontents: Essays in Art, Literature, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). This subject was also addressed in the symposium "Late Rembrandt and Old Age Creativity" at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, April 30, 2015.

2 Linda Nochlin, "Old Age Style: Late Louise Bourgeois," in Frances Morris, ed., *Louise Bourgeois* (London: Tate, 2007), 189.

3 Working with his printers, Aldo and Piero Crommelynk, Picasso created up to six prints a day in the last years of his life. See Deborah Wye, "Late Work," in Wye, *A Picasso Portfolio: Prints from The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2010), 168–73.

4 See MoMA cat. nos. 364–78: *Nature Study*; and cat nos. 456–79: *Self Portrait*.

5 Benjamin Shiff, interview, January 23, 2017. See full interview, pp. 208–12 in the present volume.

6 For examples of these multipanel works and series, see MoMA cat. no. 920: unique variant 3: *Que Veux-Tu de Moi?*; cat no. 918: *When Did This Happen?*; and cat. no. 748, unique variant 3: *Les Matins Se Lèvent*. For examples of installation sets, see MoMA cat. nos. 775–805: *La Rivière Gentille*; cat. no. 944: *10 AM Is When You Come to Me*; and cat. no. 1152: *Nothing to Remember*.

7 See MoMA cat. no. 832: *Differentiate*; and cat. no. 833: *Duration and Intensité.*

8 See MoMA cat. no. 822: *I Give Everything Away*.

9 Bourgeois, quoted in Deborah Wye, "A Drama of the Self: Louise Bourgeois as Printmaker," in Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 26. This essay is also available online: "About the Artist" > "Essay" at moma.org/bourgeoisprints.