



Bourgeois at the Academie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris, 1937
Photography: Brassai

[Bourgeois at Hauser & Wirth](#)

[Bourgeois at Tate Modern](#)

[Bourgeois at MoMA](#)

[Bourgeois' Easton Foundation](#)

“A work of art doesn’t have to be explained. If you do not have any feeling, I cannot explain it to you. If this doesn’t touch you, I have failed,” commented Bourgeois in a 2001 [Art21 interview](#) in which she discussed her family background and the importance of craftsmanship in association with her black granite [Helping Hands sculpture series](#) on permanent display in Chicago Women’s Parks and Gardens in honor of feminist activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams.

In 2007, [Hauser & Wirth](#) presented a suit of new work by Bourgeois, including a new series of sculpture intertwining rubber, fabric, and bronze, as well as drawings and prints – all exploring the artist’s skill in balancing soft and hard aesthetics with themes of loss, love, and optimism. In conjunction with the exhibition, the gallery published a reprint of Bourgeois 2004-06 portfolio, [Nothing to Remember](#).

“My works are portraits of a relationship, and the most important one was my mother. Now, how these feelings for her are brought into my interaction with other people, and how these feelings for her feed into my work is both complex and mysterious. I’m still trying to understand the mechanism,” Bourgeois reflected in a [2007 interview with The Guardian](#) in which she discussed sexism, spiders, and structure.

[The Guggenheim’s eponymous 2008 retrospective](#) was the most comprehensive survey of Bourgeois’ career to date. [The show](#), organized in partnership with the [Tate Modern](#) and the [Centre George Pompidou](#), filled the entire Guggenheim rotunda and adjacent galleries, tracing 70 years of the artist’s prolific and diverse practices in creativity. In conjunction, the [Guggenheim’s Sackler Center](#) produced an exhibition of archival photographs and Bourgeois’ diaries, a habit she kept up for her entire life.

The Tate Modern [inaugurated its Artist Rooms series](#) in 2016 with a display of Bourgeois’ work. Tate director Frances Morris, and Bourgeois’ assistant Jerry Gorovy discussed the artist’s work in a [Tate Shots interview](#), interspersed with footage of Bourgeois in the late 1980s and early 1990s. “The artist has the privilege of being in touch with his or her unconscious. And this is really a gift. It is the definition of sanity, the definition of self-realization,” she reflected. In summer 2021, [Bourgeois will return to the return to the Tate’s gallery](#).

Bourgeois’ lesser-known yet no less prolific printing and book-making practice was on full display in [MoMA’s 2017 exhibition](#), which showcased over 300 works highlighting the artist’s creative process and was generated primarily from the [museum’s comprehensive collection and archive](#).

From [2017 to 2019, SF MoMA displayed](#) a selection of Bourgeois’ [Spider sculptures](#), which she began crafting in the 1990s to confront childhood trauma.

Sculpture took pride of place in the [Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami’s 2018 survey](#). Inspired by a work in the museum’s permanent collection, [Untitled \(2001\)](#), the show explored Bourgeois’ interest in textiles and clothing in three dimensions.



Bourgeois, 2009
Photography: Dmitris Yeros



Louise Bourgeois (French-American, 1911-2010)
The Eternal Thread is You, 2003
Fabric, thread, glass, white oak, and stainless steel

Private Collection in Los Angeles; L2020:100.1



Over an eighty-year career influenced by childhood anguish and the upheaval of two world wars, Louise Bourgeois established herself as one of the most conceptually inventive and materially diverse artists of the twentieth century. Bourgeois acquired her first artistic skills—drawing and sewing—working in her parents’ tapestry restoration shop in Paris. After immigrating to the United States in 1938, she embraced painting, multi-media sculpture, and printmaking in striking explorations of trauma, family, and memory, sexuality, the human body, and feminine identity.

The Eternal Thread Is You is a superb example of her multifaceted career, expanding on images of confined domesticity from the 1940s and the fabric sculptures and found-object *Cell* installations begun in the 1990s. The work also speaks to Bourgeois’ artistic roots and cherished relationship with her mother, a weaver and seamstress who died when the artist was just twenty-two. Within her wood and glass enclosure, a hand-sewn female figure kneels with a glass sphere cradled to her womb, encircled by twelve spools of thread that represent the hourly positions of a clock, the stagnation and passing of time. Moving through successive shades of blue, the thread further expresses Bourgeois’ use of her practice to connect with, reflect on, and transition through her life experiences. As she remarked: “Blue represents peace, meditation, and escape.”

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