

LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Lower Belvedere

2 September 2023 to 28 January 2024

Discover Louise Bourgeois's early paintings as part of the Belvedere's three-hundred-year jubilee. In 2023 the Belvedere will dedicate a major solo exhibition to an artist who, like virtually no other, has shaped the art of today.

Presented in the Baroque galleries of the Lower Belvedere, Louise Bourgeois's paintings from the 1940s will be placed in dialogue with a selection of sculptures, installations, drawings, and prints from all periods of her storied career. In an oeuvre which covered a wide range of formal and material experimentation, Bourgeois succeeded in expressing contradictory impulses and binary oppositions – figuration and abstraction, male and female, conscious and unconscious – within a single work. By the 1990s, she had won global renown for her artistic achievements, becoming famous for her monumental spider sculptures and room-sized Cells. But it was in her oil paintings made between 1938 and 1949 that the French-American artist first developed the formal vocabulary and defined the thematic concerns that she would continue to explore over the following six decades.

The exhibition represents the first time these paintings will be exhibited as a body of work in Europe, and it is the first major exhibition of Bourgeois's work in Vienna in a generation.

Louise Bourgeois (b. Paris, 1911, d. New York, 2010) is one of the most influential artists of the past century. Although she lived and worked in New York from 1938 until her death in 2010, much of her inspiration was derived from her childhood in France. Using the body as a primary form, Bourgeois explored the full range of human experience. From intimate drawings to room-sized installations, and in a variety of materials (including wood, marble, bronze, and fabric), she physically manifested her anxieties in order to exorcise them. Themes of love, fear, guilt, abandonment, and reconciliation are at the core of her complex oeuvre.

Bourgeois was named Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French minister of culture in 1983. Other honors include the Grand Prix National de Sculpture from the French government in 1991; the National Medal of Arts in 1997; and the French medal of Commander of the Legion of Honor in 2008. She represented the United States at the Venice Biennale in 1993, and in 1999 was awarded the Biennale's Golden Lion for a living master of

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contemporary art. Bourgeois's work has been the subject of several major traveling retrospectives, including those organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Kunstverein, Frankfurt; Tate Modern, London; the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Haus der Kunst, Munich. Recent solo exhibitions have been on view at the Jewish Museum, New York; the Hayward Gallery, London; the Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Curated by Johanna Hofer and Sabine Fellner

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