

## Louise Bourgeois

Fondazione Prada

Milan

16th May – 6th July 1997

For the first large solo exhibition in Italy, since she represented the United States at the 45th Venice Biennale, the American sculptor Louise Bourgeois has created new works combined with a selection of some of her most significant recent works for an extensive exhibition at the spaces of Fondazione Prada in Milan.

Taken together, these works expand her theme of sewing as a metaphor for healing and reparation. The act of mending and joining by the thread, is itself a symbol of fragility and time, to achieve a psychological inner piece and wholeness. Her new sculptures made of clothes continue her preoccupation with architecture, the body and the immediacy of memory.

The exhibition revolves around different bodies of works. A group of *Spider* (1996) of gigantic size, which meaning and function the artist identifies with the memory of her youth, are intended as an ode to her mother. *Cell (Clothes)* (1996) and *Spider* (1997) are closed architectural structures of connected doors or woven iron fences. Furnished with sculptures made by the artist and combined with objects belonging to the artist, they create territories of the “inescapable” full of psychological resonance. *Untitled* (1996) is a series of recent sculptures made of clothes, some of which date back to when she was five years old. The garments, which form a diary of her life, hang from steel poles, combining some more figurative with more abstract forms. *The Couples II e Single III* (1996), life sized figures made of cloth, continue Bourgeois’s exploration of “the one and the other”. Works such as *In Respite* (1993) and *Sutures* (1993), made of iron pole-structures, carrying big spools of thread, needles and rubber appendices, deal with memory and the continuous flow of time.

*“I am saying in my sculpture today what I could not make out in the past.*

*It was fear that kept me from understanding. Fear is the pits. It paralyzes you.*

*My sculpture allows me to re-experience the fear, to give it physicality so I am able to hack away at it. Fear becomes a manageable reality. Sculpture allows me to re-experience the past, to see the past in its objective, realistic proportion.*

*Fear is a passive state. The goal is to be active and take control. The move is from the passive to the active. If the past is not negated in the present, you do not live.*

*You go through the emotions like a zombie, and life passes you by.*

*Since the fears of the past were connected with the functions of the body, they reappear through the body. For me, sculpture is the body. My body is my sculpture.”*

(Quotation by Louise Bourgeois in Christine Meyer – Thoss, Louise Bourgeois, Designino for Free Fall, Amman Verlag AG, Zurich 1992, p. 195.)

*Exhibition info*

*Title:* Louise Bourgeois  
*Dates:* 16<sup>th</sup> May- 6<sup>th</sup> July 1997  
*Venue:* Fondazione Prada  
*Address:* via Fogazzaro 36, Milan  
*Opening hours:* Tuesday–Sunday, 10 am–8 pm; closed Monday  
*Admission:* free  
*Information:* Fondazione Prada – ph. 546 70 515, fax 02 546 70 258  
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