



# Louise Bourgeois: I Have Been to Hell and Back

*Iris Müller-Westermann, Lea Vuong*

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Anyone who has stood underneath one of Louise Bourgeois' *Mamans*?her sculptures of spiders, symbolizing maternal protection?understands the singularity of her artistic approach. Stylistically, her pioneering body of work is complex: she deployed a wide variety of materials and practices?drawings, etchings, installations, works made of fabric, sculptures in wood, marble, bronze, latex, plaster and hemp?to address universal questions. This extensive monograph provides an overview of Bourgeois' artistic development, and presents a large number of works, including some that have never before been reproduced. The volume is grouped into themes that characterize her oeuvre, including memory, trauma, relationships, sexuality, fear and the difficulties of being an artist and mother at the same time. Personal photographs further document the artist's childhood and family life, with several letters and documents being made available for the first time. Born in Paris, where she studied with Fernand Léger, **Louise Bourgeois** (1911–2010) moved to New York in 1938, where her first solo exhibition was held at the Bertha Schaefer Gallery in 1945. She quickly developed a sculptural vocabulary that drew inventively and equally on Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism and psychoanalysis. Bourgeois had her first retrospective in 1982, at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. She died in May 2010.

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