

Sculpture course paper



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Donna Purcell Order 539299 22 May Louise Bourgeois 1911 – From Contemporary to Pop Culture “ Space does not exist in itself, it is just a metaphor for the structure of our existence.” This quote from Louise Bourgeois demonstrates her unconventional style in creating the large spiders that have become part of her legacy as a renowned 20th century sculpture. Louise Bourgeois, pronounced burzh-WAH, was a French born American artist. Even though her life began in the early 1900s, she has been recognized as a prominent 20th century artist. She has been renowned, as a trailblazer in the feminist movement through her sculptures that highlighted her own highly personal the sometimes disturbing psychosexual past. Her art was inspired by her traumatic past in which she struggled with themes of sex and the body, depression and violence, marriage and motherhood, and aging and childhood. She lived to be almost 100 year of age, therefore, her career spanned more than seven decades. She is best known for her series of giant spiders, which were inspired by her beloved mother Josephine, who was a weaver. Her most well known work is “ Maman” (1999), which depicts a giant spider 30-foot high with a sac containing marble eggs. The title “ Maman” is French for Mother. This sculpture has brought Bourgeois into the 20th century Pop Culture genre. Spiders are very alarming and strong figures in their effect on people. They can pull differing emotions from fear to terror, to curiosity and playfulness. The first creation of “ Maman” filled the space Bourgeois’ was given to create her piece. There was just enough room left to work around in the great Turbine Hall. This gave her room for exploration of her relationship with her mother in her characterization of the giant spider. Viewing “ Maman” can invoke fear, terror, playfulness and even awe at the size and inspiration behind the spinally figure. She has been sometimes

categorized as part of the surrealist movement, which the very unconventional artist did not like. She is known for making use of body parts, sometimes disconnected figures. It was, she said, “ an expression of her attempts to come to terms with painful episodes of her life.” When she was a young girl, her father, began an affair with Louise’s English tutor. This person was considered to be a close friend of Louise, and she was very frustrated by the affair. She would later write, “ I was frustrated in my terrific desire to twist the neck of this person.” This tremendous feeling of betrayal and dysfunction would follow her into the rest of her life, and is seen in the greatest portion of her sculptures. In 1974 she created a sculpture entitled “ The Destruction of the Father”, highlighted by a red light; the artists’ signature color. The piece depicts a man’s dismembered body spread out on the dinner table. The art critic Paul Richard of the Washington Post called her “ the queen of nerves rubbed raw.” Sometimes her art seemed like a form of therapy as she constantly sculpted themes that gave meaning to the wounds of her life. She married Robert Goldwater, a leading art critic, and moved to New York where she was introduced to many of Manhattan’s prominent artists. She has said, “ Had I remained in Paris, I’m not sure I would have even been an artist.” She cemented her reputation as a prominent female sculptor with such honors as a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Washington based International Sculpture Center in 1991. In her later years, she frequently opened up her studio to other artists for communication and critique. Even in the year 2008 she had been working on a less known series of cage-like structures she called cells. Several were included in a 2009 show at the Washington Hirshhorn Museum. Some of her later works have yet to be shown anywhere. In her last few years she reverted back to painting

watercolors in her New York City home, unable to make the sculptures. Ms. Bourgeois never promoted her legacy and is quoted as saying, “ I don’t need to be boosted by history. I have made history in spite of myself. I am just another stone in the wall.” “ Maman” by Louise Bourgeois, 1999, installed in the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris. Entire Websites: O’Sullivan, Michael, “ Trailblazing sculptor Louise Bourgeois, 98, dies; art inspired by Traumatic past.” 01 June 2010. Web. 22 May 2011. <http://washingtonpost.com/>. Influential 20th-Century Sculptors. Web. 22 May 2011. <http://fourseasons.com/>. McCrae, Trisha. “ Louise Bourgeois, Maman: from the Outside In.” Web. 22 May 2011. <http://artandeducation.net/>. Maman. Web. 22 May 2011. <http://en.wikipedia.org/>.