

NEWS

from the Worcester Art Museum

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IMMEDIATE

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM CELEBRATES NEW ACQUISITION BY LOUISE BOURGEOIS

(WORCESTER, Mass.) – Worcester Art Museum is pleased to present *Louise Bourgeois: The Woven Child (in context)*, on view Saturday, October 21, 2006—Sunday, February 25, 2007.

At 95, Louise Bourgeois, who has been making art since the 1940s, continues to be one of the most innovative and influential artists of our time (she has been referred to as “the oldest of young artists”). Her career has spanned Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, feminist art and installation art, but her work always has remained distinct from any singular style or movement. Over the years, Bourgeois experimented with a range of materials (including marble, plaster, bronze, wood, and latex). In the late 1990s, she embarked on what has become an extraordinary body of sculptural and two-dimensional works in fabric. This late-in-life chapter of her career is especially significant because it brings Bourgeois back to her “original aesthetic impulse”—working with textiles. At the age of 12 she began to work at her mother’s side in the family business of restoring Medieval and Renaissance tapestries in Antony, France. She assumed the role of ‘dessinateur,’ redrawing the sections of the missing parts of the antique tapestries, which would then be rewoven.

The Worcester exhibition focuses on a group of Bourgeois’ fabric figures and books (from 1996-2004), and includes the **U.S. premiere of a major fabric sculpture, *The Woven Child* (2002), recently acquired by the Museum.** The project introduces what is new in this artist’s prolific career while it also demonstrates the continued relevance of textiles to Bourgeois. Cloth remnants recycled into figures, columns, and books, have become an ideal medium for recovering and exorcising aspects of her childhood and family life.

“The bond between a mother and a child is important. It is from here that our relationship to others and the world begins.” -Louise Bourgeois

Although rooted in her lived (and gendered) experiences as daughter, wife, and mother, the content of Bourgeois’ art is primarily archetypal and explores the psychological and emotional effects of human relations,

the intimacies as well as the anxieties. In *The Woven Child*, Bourgeois reinterprets a subject found throughout the history of art—the mother and child. However, she consciously chose to construct the figures out of fabric (including remnants from garments, linens, and towels she owned), a fragile material not typically used for sculpture but laden with human associations such as warmth, intimacy, and vulnerability. In another departure from tradition, Bourgeois created a mother who is headless and limbless, a patchwork torso of crudely stitched scraps that neither embraces nor gazes upon the perfect little infant curled upon her belly. A glass and steel vitrine both protects and imprisons this vulnerable pair.

Bourgeois has said that she is “interested in the portraiture of a relationship...the effect people have on one another.” In *The Woven Child*, she engages a dialectics of self and other, estrangement and intimacy, awkwardness and tenderness, inadequacy and promise. Bourgeois was born in Paris in 1911, and moved to New York City in 1938 where she has since lived and worked. She is the first woman to be given a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1982), and will be the subject of an internationally touring retrospective in 2007 being organized by Tate Modern in London. She is represented in New York by Cheim & Read.

EXHIBITION CREDIT LINE

This exhibition is generously supported by the Don and Mary Melville Contemporary Art Fund. Other generous support provided by WICN Public Radio 90.5 FM, New England's Jazz & Folk Station and Worcester Magazine.

C'est le murmure de l'eau qui chante © Les Films du Siamois, France

RELATED EVENTS

Film

C'est le murmure de l'eau qui chante (2002)

A portrait of Louise Bourgeois directed by Brigitte Cornand, will be screened during Museum hours throughout the course of the exhibition.

Gallery Talk

Thursday, January 18, 6:30pm

Join Susan Stoops, Curator of Contemporary Art, for a walkthrough of the exhibition.

Free with Museum admission

Gallery Talk and Reception

Sunday, January 28, 2:00pm

Judith Solodkin, Master Printer & Founder of Solo Impression, New York, talks about printing Louise Bourgeois' fabric and color lithograph book, *Ode à l'oubli*.

Free with Museum admission

Members' Tour and Supper

Thursday, February 8, 5:30-8 pm

With Susan Stoops, Curator of Contemporary Art

\$25 per person, guests welcome

Reservations: 508.799.4406, x3122

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum, which opened to the public in 1898, is world-renowned for its 40,000-piece collection of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, photography, prints, drawings and new media. The works span 5,000 years of art and culture, ranging from ancient Roman mosaics to Colonial silver, Impressionist paintings and contemporary art. Dedicated to the promotion of art and art education, the Museum offers a year-round studio art and art appreciation program that enrolls over 6,000 adult and youth students each year. Public tours are offered Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m., September through May. Audio tours are also available in English and Spanish.

Museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11am-5pm, Third Thursday's of every month, 11am-8pm, and Saturday, 10am-5pm. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and full-time college students with current ID, and FREE for Members and all youth 17 and under. Admission is also FREE for everyone on Saturday mornings, 10am-noon (sponsored by The TJX Companies, Inc. and National Grid). The Museum is located at 55 Salisbury St., Worcester, Mass., easily accessible from the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), Route 290 and Route 9. Free parking is available near entrances on Salisbury, Lancaster and Tuckerman streets. For more information, call **(508) 799-4406** or visit the Museum web site at **www.worcesterart.org**.

Electronic images available.

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