

GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE AG



Louise Bourgeois, *New Orleans*, oil on cardboard, 1946,
66 x 55.2 cm / 26 x 21 1/4 in

LOUISE BOURGEOIS

December 19, 2020 – extended until March 30, 2021
Opening: Tuesday, December 29, 2020, 11 am – 7 pm

Galerie Karsten Greve AG is delighted to present its third solo exhibition of works by Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) in its St. Moritz gallery space. Twenty-three distinctive pieces created during a period of six decades (1946-2007) are on show. The exhibition pays homage to one of the most significant artists of our time, reflecting thirty years of close collaboration between Galerie Karsten Greve and Louise Bourgeois. Following the artist's first retrospective in Europe, shown at Frankfurter Kunstverein in 1989, Karsten Greve organized his first solo show of works by Louise Bourgeois in his recently opened Paris exhibition space in 1990. On the occasion of the opening of his gallery in St. Moritz in 1999, Karsten Greve dedicated a comprehensive show to the artist, followed by presentations in Paris and Cologne.

Born in Paris in 1911, Louise Bourgeois grew up in a bourgeois family in Choisy-le-Roi near Paris, where her parents ran a workshop for restoring tapestries; at an early age, she made the drawings for missing sections in tapestry designs. After dropping out of mathematics at the Sorbonne, she completed her art studies, between 1932 and 1938, at the École des Beaux-Arts and selected studios and academies in Paris, taking lessons with Fernand Léger, among others. In 1938, she was married to Robert Goldwater, the American art historian, and went with him to New York. She continued her studies with Vaclav Vytlačil, a teacher at the Art Students League of New York, until 1941, while being on friendly terms with European artists such as Joan Miró, André Breton, and other Surrealists in New York. In 1982, Louise Bourgeois was the first woman to be honored with a major retrospective staged by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which marked the beginning of the artist's international fame. In 1989, she had her first European retrospective at Frankfurter Kunstverein. The show travelled to Munich, Lyon, Barcelona, Bern and Otterloo. Her participation in *documenta IX* in 1992 and the *Venice Biennale* in 1993 brought her international recognition. She was the recipient of several awards and prizes. Her works are included in the public collections of international institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the National Gallery of San Francisco, Tate Modern in London, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Fondation Beyeler in Riehen/Basel, or the Samsung Museum of Modern Art in Seoul.

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Examples of the artist's early work on show include *New Orleans* (1947), a painting dominated by a female figure in profile holding a bunch of olive branches. A white bird seems to hover over the scene – probably a dove of peace. *Woman with a Secret* (1947) from the *Personnages* series of works, created between 1945 and 1955, is a stele reminiscent of figures from African and Oceanic art. The sculptures reflect Louise Bourgeois's relation to people she had left behind in France or met in her new environment in America. While the *Personnages* represent her own past, the fabric steles made of elements from tapestry remains stacked on top of one another, are reconstructions of her own past. Body parts such as a head, torso, hands, chest and phallus are much in evidence in the sculptural work of the artist; no mere images, these are symbols of the universal, emblems of complementary forces in nature. The floating bronzes *Janus* (1968) and *Janus in Leather Jacket* (1968) each represent two phalli joined together to form a new organism. *The Welcoming Hands* (1996), a bronze with polished silver nitrate patina, shows three hands shaped so as to express gestures of greeting, protection, and affection. The figures depicted in the hanging piece *The Couple* (2003), made of polished aluminum, seem to hold on to each other forever. Created in pink fabric, the doll figure known as *Arch of Hysteria* (2000) is suspended backwards in the air, attached to a rope, as if in an acrobatic act. "Horizontalité is a desire to give up, to sleep; verticalité is an attempt to escape. Hanging and floating are states of ambivalence" – Louise Bourgeois commented on the symbolism of her standing, lying, or floating sculptures. In addition to sculpture, drawing remained the most important artistic medium of expression for Louise Bourgeois. She referred to her drawings in ink and pen, pencil, charcoal, ballpoint pen, or watercolor on paper as "Pensées plumes" – "feather-light thoughts." She used these "visual diaries" primarily to record painful memories. The drawings made in red ink in the mid-1990s show lines and pairs of lines that not only depict the gentle waves of a landscape or a river bed but have various meanings. The artist's mature work is represented by drawings from 2007, whose forms multiply and take on a life of their own. In her oeuvre, the artist gives a specific form to that which cannot be adequately put into words, allowing the outside world to participate in her inner life. Apart from being rooted in her own biography, many of her works are related to ancient or cult symbols.

Two books on Louise Bourgeois published by Galerie Karsten Greve are available:

Louise Bourgeois, text: Robert Storr, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, 2009, 50.00 euros.

Louise Bourgeois, texts: Louise Bourgeois, Barbara Catoir, Mary Jane Jacob, Galerie Karsten Greve, Cologne, 1999, 80.00 euros.

ABOUT GALERIE KARSTEN GREVE

Karsten Greve has been a successful art dealer for fifty-one years. He opened his first gallery in 1973 with a solo exhibition of Yves Klein in Cologne. He then opened additional premises, one in Paris (Rue Debelleye) in 1989 and one in St. Moritz (Via Maistra) in 1999. Galerie Karsten Greve ranked from the beginning as a leading gallery worldwide and is regularly represented at international art fairs such as the ART BASEL shows, FIAC and TEFAF. The gallery organizes important individual exhibitions of renowned international artists such as Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Joseph Cornell, Willem De Kooning, and WOLS. Its program is determined by the owner's personal contact to artists of the international post-1945 avant-garde, such as Cy Twombly, Louise Bourgeois, Jannis Kounellis, John Chamberlain, and Pierre Soulages. Karsten Greve's long-standing collaboration with artists such as Gotthard Graubner, Pierrette Bloch and Leiko Ikemura has contributed significantly to them achieving worldwide recognition. The gallery, which is representing about thirty artists, is constantly expanding its portfolio to include rising young artists like Georgia Russell, Claire Morgan, Gideon Rubin, and Raúl Illarramendi. Galerie Karsten Greve is equally well known for its solo exhibitions and its highly ambitious accompanying catalogue productions published by the gallery.

PRESS CONTACT

Dr Cornelia Manegold
Tel. +49 (0)221 2 57 10 12
c.manegold@galerie-karsten-greve.de

We are happy to provide you with images of the works shown in the exhibition.