Louise Bourgeois, Freud's Daughter is made possible by lead support from an anonymous gift, The Knapp Family Foundation, Agnes Gund, The Joan Toepfer Charitable Trust, the Robert Lehman Foundation, Toby Devan Lewis, Helen Frankenthaler Foundation, the Leon Levy Foundation, and other generous donors.

Additional support is provided by the Melva Bucksbaum Fund for Contemporary Art, the Barbara S. Horowitz Contemporary Art Fund, and the Alfred J. Grunebaum & Ruth Grunebaum Sondheimer Memorial Fund.

In-kind support is provided by Hauser & Wirth and The Easton Foundation.

Bourgeois_Donor_2p.indd 1

LOUISE BOURGEOIS, FREUD'S DAUGHTER

At Oedipus time I never had a chance. -Louise Bourgeois

Louise Bourgeois, Freud's Daughter explores Bourgeois's complex and unresolved relationship with Freudian psychoanalysis. This exhibition marks the first time the artist's psychoanalytic writings are being exhibited in the United States, alongside a selection of works of art from all stages of her career.

In the late 1940s Bourgeois (born in 1911, died in 2010) struggled to balance her ambitions as a creative artist and her obligations as a mother of three sons and wife and suffered from a host of physical and psychological ailments, such as insomnia, agoraphobia, compulsive thoughts, and aggressive and suicidal impulses. She was already in a fragile state when the death of her father, Louis, in 1951 plunged her into a deep depression. In early 1952 she entered analysis with Dr. Henry Lowenfeld, a former disciple of Sigmund Freud and, like Bourgeois, an émigré from Europe. Her analysis continued for the next thirty-three years, most intensely from 1952 to 1966, and thereafter in an onand-off fashion until Lowenfeld's death in 1985. The artist also steeped herself in psychoanalytic literature, reading Freud, Marie Bonaparte, Helene Deutsch, Anna Freud, Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, Otto Rank, Wilhelm Reich, and Wilhelm Stekel, among others. During the most intense phase of her immersion in analysis, Bourgeois effectively withdrew from the art world: she had no solo shows from 1953 until 1964, and her art making came to an almost complete halt from 1955 to 1960.

As part of the analytic process, Bourgeois started writing down dream recordings, propaper, some of which she later shared with

Lowenfeld. This vast written record was discovered in the artist's New York home in 2004 and 2010. Its existence is somewhat at odds with the fact that Bourgeois distrusted words and did not believe in the talking cure, wherein the patient speaks extemporaneously while the psychoanalyst listens and interprets. She always maintained that making art gave her access to her unconscious and that her art required no verbal exegesis or defense. For as much as the writings shed light on the linkage between her psychic life and her forms, they do not explain her art any more than her art illustrates the writing. Instead they constitute a parallel body of work that at times took the place of her visual output. The function they fulfilled for Bourgeois was multiple: they were a tool for the analytic hour; they had a therapeutic value as a means of calming her down and releasing anxiety; they gave her insight into the work she had already made and more broadly into her forms, processes, and motivations; and they enabled her to define her emotions more precisely by fixing them in time. In literary quality and historical importance the psychoanalytic writings bear comparison with the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, the journals of Eugène Delacroix, and the letters of Vincent van Gogh; along with her diaries, they establish Bourgeois's status as an artist-writer of the first rank. They represent an original contribution not only to the field of psychoanalysis—a discipline effectively cofounded by women but also to that of feminism. They provide a unique perspective on such topics as symbol formation, the family romance, maternal and paternal identifications, mourning and melancholia, and sublimation (that is, cess notes, and other texts on loose sheets of the redirection of unbound sexual energy toward cultural aims). The psychoanalytic

writings attest that for Bourgeois art making and psychoanalysis were not distinct activities but points on a single continuum, so that at times it is hard to define where one ends and the other begins.

Louise Bourgeois, Freud's Daughter frames Bourgeois's engagement with psychoanalysis through the lens of the Oedipus complex—a child's feeling of sexual attraction toward the parent of the opposite sex and enmity toward the one of the same sex both the cornerstone of Freudian psychoanalysis and the traumatic kernel of her psychic organization. The artist's work is often told from the point of view of a young girl, and she often said that she did not go through the rites of passage. The psychoanalytic writings make plain the lingering hold this Oedipal deadlock exerted on Bourgeois, in particular her eroticized and often anguished fixation on her father. The ambivalence was replayed in her subsequent relationships with men, including Freud, whom Bourgeois never met but nonetheless internalized as a father figure. Bourgeois critiqued the father of psychoanalysis for his blind spots about female sexuality and for failing to understand the creative artist. Yet her writings reveal the extent to which Freudian concepts and practices—whether directly or indirectly, whether through his own writings, those of his followers, or Bourgeois's longstanding analysis—informed and enriched her art making. To call Bourgeois "Freud's daughter" is thus to invoke filiation and resistance, likeness and dissent, and to highlight the central importance of psychoanalysis in the making of her mysterious and idiosyncratic oeuvre.

Philip Larratt-Smith Guest Curator

More than any other single event, the discovery of the unconscious laid the foundation for the development of Freudian psychoanalysis in theory and practice. The unconscious discloses itself through phenomena that, before Sigmund Freud, were often discounted as accidental, trivial, or devoid of meaning: jokes, dreams, slips of the tongue, somatic symptoms, phobias, neurotic behaviors, and acting out. In analysis, the traumas that lie repressed in the unconscious are made accessible by means of free association, transference, and interpretation. The unconscious is the repository of repressed wishes, fantasies, desires, and instinctual impulses that strive endlessly to dodge the censorship of and force their way into consciousness. This is the material that the analyst tries to bring to light by means of the talking cure.

Louise Bourgeois did not trust words and was suspicious of this verbal method; she maintained that she enjoyed direct large-format wooden vitrines Bourgeois enabled her to survive despite her traumas.

access to the unconscious via two avenues the making of a sculpture and the encounter with the other—both of which involved her body. The resistances that manifest themselves during analysis are analogous to the resistance of the material with which she worked as a sculptor. More crucially the sculptural process activated a link between her aggressivity and her libido. As the artist stated, "Violence is required for the making of a new order."

The Freudian dictum holds that where id was, there ego shall be. In Bourgeois's terms, the successful realization of a sculpture functions to make conscious what was previously unconscious—that is, repressed and inaccessible—and discharge unwelcome or unmanageable instinctual impulses. Her symbolic forms, like the symptoms of the neurotic, are compromise formations between a wish and a defense.

made in the last five years of her life. On the left, five spools of thread of different colors are linked to a hanging teardrop, which has been form-cast in blue rubber. The delicate threads symbolize the timelessness of the unconscious. The number five in Bourgeois's work represents the family: she was the middle daughter in a family of five in Paris, and she and her husband had three sons in New York. The stacked fabric progression on the right is an image of rational order and constructive activity and hence of the conscious mind.

This dynamic interplay between conscious and unconscious is mirrored in Couple III, in which two black fabric figures are locked together in an embrace. For the artist, black was the color of mourning and melancholia. One of the figures has a prosthetic limb, which lends the work a sadomasochistic touch. Bourgeois also saw the prosthesis Conscious and Unconscious is one of four as a symbol for her art—an instrument that

In Freudian psychoanalysis, the motherchild dyad is of crucial importance because it sets the template for all future relationships. The mother is the child's primordial later for abandoning her by dying. love object, and the maternal breast is a continuation of the infant's life-giving connection to the maternal body that began in the womb. Every child must learn to negotiate the separation from the mother as a first step towards the recognition of the not-I that is external reality.

Louise Bourgeois's mother, Joséphine, fell ill in 1917, a condition that steadily worsened until her early death in 1932. The adolescent Bourgeois essentially became her mother's nurse, a reversal of roles complicated by the young girl's own awakening sexuality. She later revealed that she took a vow to give up sex if her mother survived. Through her analysis with Dr. Henry Lowenfeld, the artist gradually became aware of repressed which coexisted with her conscious devotion. a body "like a wicker basket."

The psychoanalytic writings demonstrate that she unconsciously blamed Joséphine for keeping her from her father, Louis, and

In her art Bourgeois oscillated between maternal and paternal identifications. Broadly speaking, her work up until the late 1980s was made under the sign of the father and as a negative reaction against him. Around that time a change in the artist's motivations became evident: in 1990 she made Ventouse (Cupping Jar), a sculpture that heralded a decisive shift toward the mother. A lowslung black marble block is studded on top with cupping jars and lit from within. Bourgeois had once treated her mother with cupping jars like these to alleviate her pain. The stone thus becomes a kind of torso, though it is also reminiscent of a sarcophagus or tomb. The artist often associated her mother with death in her writings: in a 1959 dream feelings of Oedipal rivalry toward her mother, recording, Joséphine appears as Death with

In the mid-nineties, Louise Bourgeois began using her own clothes and textiles as raw material for her sculpture. The processes of sewing and binding together not only allowed her to act out a maternal identification (her mother, Joséphine, managed the tapestry restoration workshop of the Bourgeois family business), but also to symbolically ward off the fears of separation, deterioration, and death. Her writings expose a powerful need for forgiveness, understanding, and reparation, which is derived from intense feelings of guilt.

herself as the infant child in need of a mother. In the sculpture *Untitled*, the maternal body

is at once abject and monstrous. An umbilical cord, piled on top of the belly of a stained torso, implies a postpartum scene, though according to the Freudian concept of the uncanny, the image of the return to the womb is a harbinger of death. In La Mère À Couper Le Cordon (Mother Cut the Cord), images of cutting and severing reconfigure birth as the originary separation and abandonment (as the artist writes, "I am the waste / I am the cutting") and the mother as a castrating figure. Child Devoured by Kisses probes the unconscious erotic character of In her late work, Bourgeois imagines aspects of the mother-child relationship, such as cleaning, wiping, breastfeeding, kissing, and cradling.

The centerpiece of Freudian psychoanalysis is the Oedipus complex, which establishes the pattern for the psychosexuality of the individual. Sigmund Freud first discovered it during his self-analysis and found it corroborated in the analysis of his patients. It is named after the Greek myth of Oedipus, who unwittingly killed his father and married his mother. In Freud's view, this myth gives expression, albeit in a simplified form, to a universal compulsion that must be mastered in the course of normal psychosexual development.

Freudian psychoanalysis established a model of developmental stages—the oral, the anal, and the phallic—with the Oedipal complex held to occur during the phallic stage, between three and five years old, and then again in puberty, when it must be overcome. The resolution of the Oedipal complex leads to the formation of the superego, the psychic agent of internalized guilt, prohibitions, and injunctions. As such, its resolution is synonymous with submission to parental and societal authority and is key to socialization and education.

According to Freud, boys and girls alike must pivot from the mother to the father, but, whereas the boy must come to submit to the threat of castration by renouncing his must exchange the active aim of loving the mother for the passive objective of being loved by the father. Where there is a disturbance in the individual personality, this process provokes conflict and resistance.

Passage Dangereux (Dangerous Passage) is the largest and most complex of the Cell installations that Louise Bourgeois created from 1991 onward. Its structure has been compared to that of a cathedral—with six symmetrical bays off a central navelike axis—though the wire-mesh cage also has the atmosphere of a prison. Each bay, like a cell itself, is an episode in this story of psychosexual development, which is narrated through discrete orchestrations of symbolic objects, both found (and for the most part belonging to the artist) and created. Bourgeois's original intention was to permit the viewer to enter and move through the work, to experience it from inside as a claustrophobic enclosure, an unforgiving causality.

Like psychoanalysis, Bourgeois's art is an attempt to reexperience, and at the same time to exorcise, a trauma. The objects from her life are autobiographical signposts that trigger a recall of the past. The stack of her father's shirt cuffs, which were tailored to his body, symbolize his lingering hold on her; the tiny bottle of Shalimar, which was the arttransgressive claim to the mother, the girl ist's favorite fragrance, represents sexuality

and the desire to seduce; the dead fly in the horse-shaped bottle, which got stuck and then died in the liqueur that attracted it, concretizes the equation of sex and death. Other objects reinforce this heightened sense of reality: the wooden electric chair signifies guilt and punishment; the tapestry fragments evoke childhood innocence; and the wasps' nest stands for biology. The progression culminates in a lugubrious scene of two figures copulating on a bed—an image that could correspond to the Freudian concept of the primal scene, in which the child misperceives sex as violence and is traumatized.

The dense layering of objects embodies the logic of dreams, governed by the psychic mechanism of condensation and displacement. For this reason, Passage Dangereux has a cinematic quality, like a film told in flashback or a dream sequence in which past and present, remembered fact and unconscious fantasy, are mingled. A certain lability of repression is at work: each object may be read as positive or negative, and each is subject to the constant oscillation between maternal and paternal identifications. Passage Dangereux restages Bourgeois's Oedipal trauma as a perilous gauntlet to be run.

The Destruction of the Father is a critical and cathartic work in Louise Bourgeois's artistic development and psychic life. Completed in 1974, the year after the death of her husband, Robert Goldwater, the work is a synthesis of the soft landscapes, poured forms, and sexually explicit part objects that she made starting in 1960. It is also the artist's first installation piece and looks forward to the Cells of the 1990s.

This scene presents the aftermath of a cannibalistic feast, a fantasy of revenge against an overbearing father, murdered and eaten by his wife and children. The tabletop in the center is strewn with what appear to be bodily remains, chiefly cast from chicken legs and other animal parts, while the ceiling and floor are covered with breastlike protuberances. Bourgeois described the work as an "oral drama," and, with its lurid red light and black velvet backdrop, it is half theater of cruelty, half crime scene.

The Destruction of the Father is the expression of an unconscious fantasy that may have been provoked by the death of the artist's husband. Anxieties in the present may have triggered a regression to the oral stage and an acting out of archaic attitudes and behaviors. Psychoanalytically speaking, incorporation

is a more archaic version of the mechanism of identification that underwrites the later Oedipal situation. To devour the father is thus to assume his attributes, particularly the penis that symbolizes his power. According to Sigmund Freud, the girl enters the Oedipal phase already castrated, for which she blames her mother and seeks compensation in the form of a substitute penis, i.e., a baby from the father. The punishment she fears is therefore not the castration with which the boy is threatened, but rather retribution from the mother for stealing the father's penis. Bourgeois's work is open to multiple readings, and the recessed tableau could also be a sexual orifice or cavity—a mouth, a vagina dentata, or even a return to the womb.

At the time of her 1982 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Bourgeois made the slideshow *Partial Recall* and the photo-essay "Child Abuse" for *Artforum*, which entrenched an autobiographical narrative of infidelity and betrayal. While Bourgeois nursed her sick mother in the South of France, her father was carrying on an affair with her English tutor Sadie, who was only six years her senior. In contrast to Bourgeois's self-denying mother, her father

emerges as a figure of obscene enjoyment whose self-indulgence violates the rules of the familial game. The artist was a master storyteller, and her retelling of this episode from adolescence deeply influenced the reception of her art.

Yet this act of recall was incomplete. The psychoanalytic writings demonstrate that Bourgeois's feelings toward her father were considerably more complex. Many open expressions of hostility concealed her passionate idealization of him, while the dream recordings are full of unconscious incestuous wishes. The artist faulted her father for generating a sexualized atmosphere in the home, which perhaps accounted for her failure to fully internalize him during the Oedipal phase. (The Destruction of the Father addresses all the father figures in Bourgeois's life, from André Breton, Marcel Duchamp, and Alfred Barr to Dr. Henry Lowenfeld and Freud, all of whom represented an authority she found both seductive and problematic.) Time and again, however, her writings reveal a reluctance to relinquish the past. The coexistence of such contradictory impulses testifies to her fundamental ambivalence about her father.