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Press Release

Louise Bourgeois Papillons Noirs

Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz

28 December 2018 – 10 February 2019

Opening: Friday 28 December 2018, 6 – 8 pm



On 28 December 2018, Hauser & Wirth inaugurates its St. Moritz gallery with 'Papillons Noirs', an exhibition of works by renowned French-American artist Louise Bourgeois (1911 – 2010). On view until 10 February 2019, the exhibition spans two floors of the gallery space on Via Serlas facing the Palace Hotel, where Hauser & Wirth has made its home.

Comprising a selection of works from the last decade of Bourgeois's life, 'Papillons Noirs' includes a series of black fabric heads alongside late experimental works on paper that belong to the artist's collection. The fabric heads were created roughly between the years of 2000 and 2003, when Bourgeois was in her late eighties and early nineties. The title of the exhibition, 'Papillons Noirs', is drawn from one of Bourgeois's 'psychoanalytic writings', a group of texts written while she was undergoing intensive psychoanalysis. Penned on a loose sheet of paper dated 31 January 1966, the phrase is an old French metaphor for melancholic thoughts, and references her depression and anxiety. She often referred to colour as representative of emotional states; for her, black was symbolic of mourning, despair, regret and guilt.

Bourgeois layered hand-sewn scraps of black terry cloth, tapestry, and fragments of her own clothing to form the features of her fabric heads. In these works, she reveals a deep identification with her mother, who died when Bourgeois was twenty years old. Her mother and maternal grandparents originated from the French town of Aubusson, famed for its textile industry, and her mother ran a tapestry restoration workshop – thus, Bourgeois came to associate sewing with the act of reparation: 'I've always had a fascination with the needle, the magic power of the needle. The needle is used to repair the damage. It's a claim to forgiveness'. Employing

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familial techniques from her childhood, Bourgeois confronted her past literally and metaphorically, stitching together scraps of old fabric to gain a semblance of understanding and reconciliation. For her, art was inextricably entwined with personal experience – it was a channel through which she explored the depths of her emotions. In her art-making, Bourgeois fused the intensity of the moment with memories of events and people from her past.



Beginning in 1991 Bourgeois began employing the Cell as an archetypal structure, which she described as 'environmental sculpture', to represent themes of trauma, memory, and architecture. She played on the linguistic meaning of 'cell' to reference the biological unit that constitutes the body, as well as the idea of isolation or imprisonment. The Cells on view here comprise a distinctive subgroup of the series, called 'Portrait Cells.' They are composed of steel mesh, glass, and wood, with the black fabric heads either sitting at the base or suspended from above. In 'Cell XXIV (Portrait)' (2001) three heads, each with two faces, are bound together at the neck and hang from the top of the mesh enclosure. Adjustable mirrors are situated at the base of the vitrine, further multiplying the heads and their double faces in the reflected space.

Bourgeois was not concerned with traditional portraiture or an image of any one individual, but instead with the effect that the individual can have on another, and the emotional dynamic played out by the encounter with the other. With her fabric heads, she explores a range of psychological expressions and complex emotional states – love, sexuality, suffering, and death – through the heads' features and the ways in which they have been constructed and sewn. The maternal, feminine, and familial aspects of fabric provide a sense of tenderness. With these deeply intimate forms, Bourgeois revealed many facets of the human experience, and conceived a beautifully haunting language that extends far beyond her life.

'Papillons Noirs' is curated by Jerry Gorovoy, who worked closely with Bourgeois from the early 1980s until her death in 2010.

About the artist

Louise Bourgeois has exhibited widely across the globe. A major survey, 'Louise Bourgeois: The Eternal Thread', is currently on view at Long Museum in Shanghai through 24 February 2019, the artist's first large-scale museum exhibition in China. The presentation will travel to Song Art Museum in Beijing in March 2019.

Solo exhibitions of Louise Bourgeois include: 'Louise Bourgeois: To Unravel a Torment', Glenstone Museum, Potomac MD (2018 – 2020); 'Louise Bourgeois: The Empty House', Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany (2018); 'Louise Bourgeois Spiders', San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco CA (2017); 'Louise Bourgeois: An Unfolding Portrait', Museum of Modern Art, New York NY (2017); 'Louise Bourgeois: Twosome',

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Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2017); 'Artist Rooms: Louise Bourgeois', Tate Modern, London, England (2016), which travelled to Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, Scotland in 2017; 'Structures of Existence: The Cells', Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2015), which travelled to Garage Museum, Moscow, Russia (2015), Guggenheim Bilbao, Bilbao, Spain (2016), and Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2016); 'Louise Bourgeois. I Have Been to Hell and Back', Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2015), which travelled to Museo Picasso Málaga, Málaga, Spain in the same year. Bourgeois's work is included in some of the most important museum collections worldwide including the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Gemeente Museum Den Haag, Hague, Netherlands; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York NY; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; and Tate Modern, London, England.

About Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz

In the heart of the Engadin Valley, Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz is a natural extension of Hauser & Wirth's activities in its native Switzerland. The gallery occupies the Palace Galerie in the centre of St. Moritz. The over-400 sq metre exhibition space spans three floors of a building owned by Badrutt's Palace Hotel. Architect Luis Laplace oversaw the interior remodelling of the site. Laplace has worked on numerous Hauser & Wirth projects, including the interior design of Le Vieux Chalet in Gstaad, and the restoration and conversion of Hauser & Wirth Somerset's 18th-century farm buildings into a series of contemporary exhibition spaces.

Engadin has long been an enclave of creativity, and Hauser & Wirth presents an annual programme of exhibitions focused upon the contemporary artists and 20th century masters it represents. The surrounding area was home to the Giacometti family and Alpine painter Giovanni Segantini. Over the course of the past two centuries, a range of cultural and intellectual figures have visited and been inspired by the Upper Engadine region, from philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, writer Thomas Mann and dancer Vaslav Nijinsky, to a host of artists including Gerhard Richter, Julian Schnabel, Richard Long, and Joseph Beuys. Legendary connoisseur Bruno Bischofberger was the first gallerist to establish a space in St. Moritz in 1963, and the region is now home to a number of modern and contemporary galleries.

The gallery is open to the public Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am – 7 pm. A series of events and educational activities accompanies the exhibitions.

About Hauser & Wirth

Hauser & Wirth was founded in 1992 in Zurich by Iwan Wirth, Manuela Wirth and Ursula Hauser, who were joined in 2000 by Partner and Vice President Marc Payot. A family business with a global outlook, Hauser & Wirth has expanded over the past 26 years to include outposts in Hong Kong, London, New York, Los Angeles, Somerset, Gstaad and St. Moritz. The gallery represents over 75 artists and estates who have been instrumental in shaping its identity over the past quarter century, and who are the inspiration for Hauser & Wirth's diverse range of activities that engage with art, education, conservation and sustainability.

For additional information, please contact:

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Hauser & Wirth St. Moritz

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Gallery hours:
Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am – 7 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

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Untitled
2002
Fabric and wood
61 x 35.6 x 35.6 cm / 24 x 14 x 14 in
Steel, stainless steel, glass and wood vitrine:
177.8 x 76.2 x 76.2 cm / 70 x 30 x 30 in

Untitled
2003
Fabric and stainless steel
39.4 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm / 15 1/2 x 12 x 12 in
Stainless steel, glass and wood vitrine: 177.8 x 60.9 x 60.9 cm / 70 x 24 x 24 in

Cell XXIV (Portrait)
2001
Steel, stainless steel, glass, wood and fabric
177.8 x 106.7 x 106.7 cm / 70 x 42 x 42 in