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RE: PAIRING LOUISE BOURGEOIS

Sculpture and Psychoanalysis in the Years 1946 – 1969

by Andy Cohen

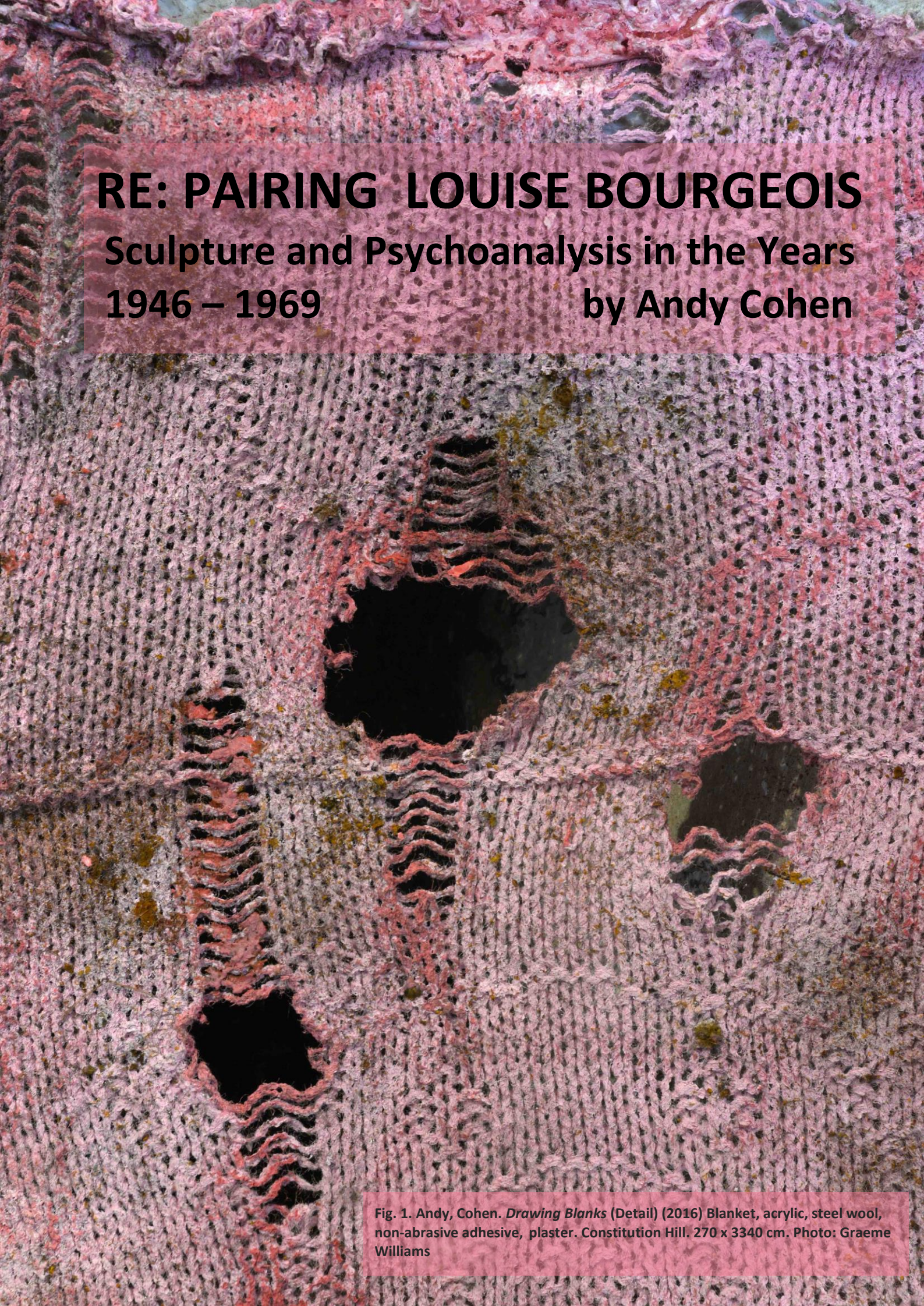


Fig. 1. Andy, Cohen. *Drawing Blanks* (Detail) (2016) Blanket, acrylic, steel wool, non-abrasive adhesive, plaster. Constitution Hill. 270 x 3340 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams



FINAL SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

Faculty of Humanities

Wits School of Arts

Submission of MA Dissertation by Research

Andrea Cohen ("Andy Cohen")

Student Number: 9903743X

Keywords: Fine Arts; sculpture; psychoanalysis; Louise Bourgeois; Melanie Klein; depression; Andy Cohen; reparation; repair

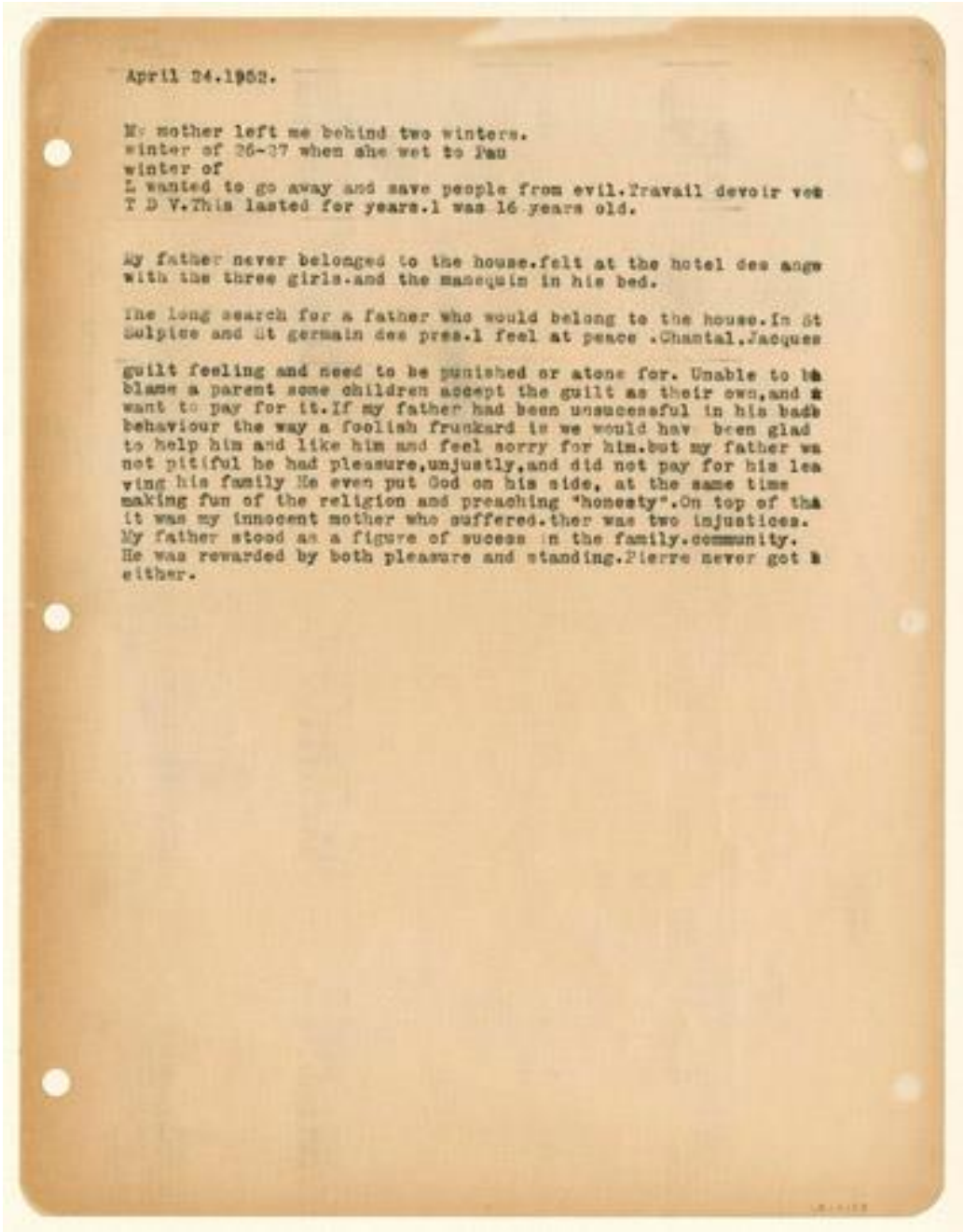
Name of supervisor: David Andrew

Discipline: Fine Arts

Associate Professor

School of Arts

For Mom



April 24.1952.

My mother left me behind two winters.
winter of 26-27 when she wet to Pau
winter of
I wanted to go away and save people from evil.Travail devoir vet
T D V.This lasted for years.I was 16 years old.

My father never belonged to the house.felt at the hotel des ange
with the three girls.and the manequin in his bed.

The long search for a father who would belong to the house.In St
Sulpice and St germain des pres.I feel at peace .Chantal.Jacques

guilt feeling and need to be punished or atone for. Unable to bl
blame a parent some children accept the guilt as their own,and w
want to pay for it.If my father had been unsuccessful in his bad
behaviour the way a foolish frunkard is we would hav been glad
to help him and like him and feel sorry for him.but my father wa
not pitiful he had pleasure,unjustly,and did not pay for his lea
ving his family He even put God on his side, at the same time
making fun of the religion and preaching "honesty".On top of tha
it was my innocent mother who suffered.ther was two injustices.
My father stood as a figure of sucess in the family.community.
He was rewarded by both pleasure and standing.Pierre never got h
either.

Fig. 2. Bourgeois, Louise. LB-0128. 24 Apr. 1952. Louise Bourgeois Archive, Easton Foundation. Louise Bourgeois: Psychoanalytic Writings. Ed. Philip Larratt-Smith. London: Violette Editions, 2012. 8. Print. Loose Sheet.

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Acknowledging the Good Objects

According to the Melanie Klein Trust website (2016), the 'good object' is defined as the following:

> The term 'internal object' means a mental and emotional image of an external object that has been taken inside the self. A complex interaction continues throughout life between the world of internalized figures and objects and in the real world (which are obviously also in the mind) via repeated cycles of projection and introjection. The most important internal objects are those derived from the parents, in particular from the mother or breast into which the infant projects its loving (life instinct) or hating (death instinct) aspects. These objects, when taken into the self, are thought to be experienced by the infant concretely as physically present within the body, causing pleasure (good internal part-object breast) or pain (bad internal part-object breast) (Burton and Graty n. pag.).

In the chapters that follow, the psychoanalytic frame of this research will detail the projective quality of my research and practice and draw on the above notion of the psychoanalytic object. With this in mind I would like to begin by acknowledging my good objects who have aided in bringing this document into being and who have profoundly contributed to the development of this project:

When I first met Prof. David Andrew I was a prospective undergraduate Fine Arts student. Over the years, David has been privy to important evolutions in my life and practice, culminating in the supervision of this dissertation. With this in mind I would like to thank him for his tireless insight, his open mind and constant support. Above all I must thank him for his kindness, which has made all the difference in not only completing this project but also in realizing it as a significant life experience. My analyst has also been integral to this process, and while we are only at the beginning of this process, already I understand this to be a profound relationship with life long affect. My psychoanalytic experience is embodied in this research and I could never have completed it without her 'goodness'. In a different way, my husband Ryan has not simply tolerated my research, he has embraced it and I

would like to thank him for allowing me to become more of myself through my relationships with my objects.

As an adult, I now understand how being a parent is also very much about being a child as well. To my daughter Chloe (whom I see so much of myself in) my hope is that our mother-daughter experience will be strengthened through this process, my research and my practice. Above all in the future, I hope that she will turn to her innate creativity and sensitivity to later repair that which I may have missed. I must also thank my parents, Karen and Louis, for raising me to ask the right kinds of questions and to express myself freely. My late father (who I carry within) proves what psychoanalysis professes, that so much of life, is about living with death. My mother has always placed great importance on lineage and family and in this way so much of her presence is central to this dissertation. Similarly I would like to acknowledge my grandparents Woolfe and Alida Milner, Bernice and David Fine, Len Miller and my only living grandmother Tina Miller, for doing your absolute best with what you had and for providing me with the resources to think about our collective history in new and meaningful ways. This will almost certainly effect future generations.

I would also like to include those who have been part of the many conversations and drafts leading up to this process: Barnaby B. Barratt whose insight has assisted in taking my research to a deeper psychoanalytical level. Dr. Hayley Berman and Luke Lamprecht, who first introduced me to the psychoanalytic art world in an experiential way as well as photographer Graeme Williams for poignantly capturing my exhibition and Clinton Van Der Walt who presented at my exhibition opening. I would like to extend specific thanks to Clinton for this thoughtful address, for allowing me to include excerpts of his words in the final chapter of this dissertation and ultimately for bringing another level of collective experience to my exhibition. Finally on this note, I would like to acknowledge my audience and the reader, who I recognize as being a powerful presence in the transmitter of meaning and an object of equal importance and value.

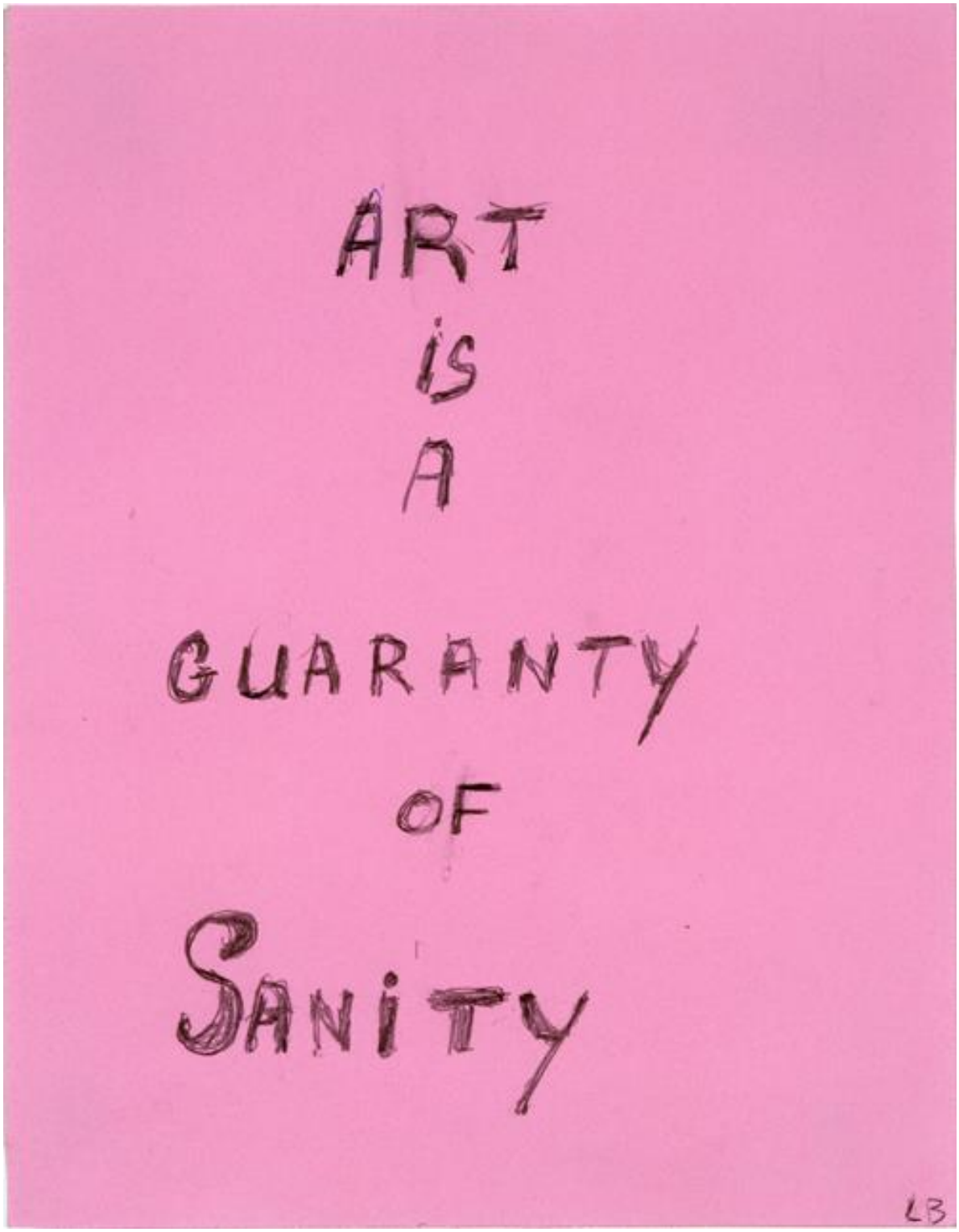


Fig. 3. Louise Bourgeois *Art Is a Guaranty of Sanity* (2000) Pencil on Pink Paper. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. 27,9 x 30,5 cm. Photo: Christopher Burke

The statement "Art is a guaranty of sanity" appears in Bourgeois work in varying forms over the course of her career; notably in *Cell I* (1991) on an embroidered cloth appearing above one of the beds. It also appeared on a welded circular metal band holding together wooden elements of *Precious Liquids* (1992), as well as in a suite of lithographs from 1999.

Chapter 1

"I carry my psychoanalysis in my work" (Bourgeois qtd. in Cooke n. pag.).

This research is concerned with how the sculptor Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) interplayed art making with psychoanalysis for the primary purpose of gaining self-knowledge and repairing repressed memory. The argument will be centered on the supposition that Bourgeois' former years as a young immigrant and artist were overshadowed by an ever-threatening depression and although she was already investigating the therapeutic sensitivities often considered the privilege of artists, sculpture as a device alone was not enough to understand and contain her anxieties. It was only once she entered into psychoanalysis with Dr. Henry Lowenfeld in 1952 that she could really begin to address the very early origins of her depression in relation to her practice. The argument rests on the premise that psychoanalysis and artistic process share a common interest in the unconscious and if addressed in a particular way, with precise boundaries and relationships in place[1], has the power to symbiotically reconcile unthinkable loss (which according to psychoanalytic thought, is an underlying cause of depression). This positioning dominated Bourgeois' artistic persona and when an anthology of free-associative writings came to light in her later years (highlighting her reflections of years in psychoanalysis) her words "I carry my psychoanalysis in my work" (Bourgeois qtd. in Cooke n. pag.) were illuminated by a compendium of evidence (supplementary to her artworks and interviews) suggesting that her artworks existed as transmitters of a self-awareness, an understanding that was primarily developed in psychoanalysis. This research will focus on selected artworks and free-associative writings created between (and as a result of) these years in psychoanalysis and will contemplate Bourgeois' interplay of 'talking' and 'making' as a method of repairing past relationships and maintaining sanity[2]. Thereafter, I will discuss my MA exhibition *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis*, as a critically reflective device to consider the projective dimension of this research project. By addressing this area of

[1] Each of these will be discussed at length in the chapters that follow.

[2] Full quote is "art is a guaranty of sanity but not liberation. It comes back again and again" (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori). Insight into this quote will be developed at length in Chapter Two.

interest within a psychoanalytic framework, I will also foreground my own emotional "dis-ease" (Hay 8), and by exploring my own artistic practice in relation to my personal experience in psychoanalysis, I hope to better understand how this therapeutic dyad can also provide me with self-knowledge and self-repair.

The Artist, The Daughter and The Object

I will begin this enquiry by highlighting a primary concern with the complexity of the mind, and introduce how psychoanalysis and sculpture are compatible techniques used to unearth conscious understanding of an indefinable psyche. The mind's elusiveness is due to the psyche's atypical retention of information and so in order for us to understand the anomaly more clearly, Sigmund Freud turned to metaphor as a way to illuminate this ever-intangible concept: In 1925[3] he compared the psyche to the Mystic Writing Pad - an ancient Roman writing tablet comprised of a plastic - type sheet laid over a thick waxen board. The user could write onto the top layer using a pointed stylus and the act of pressing through the layers would create dark marks on the surface, recording the words or imagery. Freud noted how the wax layers had the ability to record information, but then similarly how one could simply lift the top layer to erase what had last been written - this is its mystical or magical quality. However even once this had been done, the undermost waxy substrate would always retain faint traces and indentations from previous activity long after the legibility has been erased, and in this way even if the slate *had* been cleaned, it still held suggestion of memory (207-12). Freud's symbol provides a clue to the psyche and how what our conscious mind chooses to forget is always held (in some form) by our unconscious mind. This memory, though indescribable, exists in the unconscious behind all

[3] At this juncture I would like to point out that the referencing system I have selected for this research is the MLA system. I found that this referencing system best served the needs of this research, which includes a diverse range of non-traditional academic sources. One key draw back of this citation method, however, is that the standard method of in-text citation precludes the need to add date of publication, which might do the research certain disservices. So where I felt it particularly useful for the reader to understand the year of publication, I have included this information in the body of text. Please note however, that in the absence of such information, the literature review does highlight the year of publication for key texts, and of course the balance can be found in the 'works cited' and 'bibliography' section.

conscious activity and effects how we experience the world. In this way it retains suggestions of fragmented information indefinitely. The Mystic Writing Pad brings with it associations of drawing, making marks and a certain typographical sovereignty afforded to artists. It is as if physically making a mark and the qualities of the material, offers new opportunities to access layers of the psyche through metaphorical thinking and symbol formation. And it is this tendency to identify with a material object (as a means to understand), which will be investigated at length in relation to Bourgeois' artistic practice and psychoanalysis - by specifically considering the ways in which she brought her artwork into the internal conversation between the conscious and the unconscious. In a sense, her early artwork and professional activity were the most discernable layers of her Mystic Writing Pad but these inscriptions were actually unconsciously governed by the illegible scuffs and abrasions etched onto the deepest under-most layers of her psyche. In order to appreciate this, I will begin by crystalizing Bourgeois' experience within a psychoanalytic framework, which is key to appreciating these relationships and behaviors.

Psychoanalysis is a therapeutic approach defined by a set of theoretical tools, specifically engaging with repressed unconscious mental and emotional activity. It has origins in the treatment of the mentally ill and is thus closely related to attitudes about sanity. Freud discovered[4] this theory at the turn of the century via a particular methodology including verbal free-association and dream analysis and following his death in 1939, other psychoanalysts have gone on to develop his theories, building on his knowledge, and evolve the sector to include a dense literature underpinning the complexities of the mind and associated pathologies (illness'). This dissertation will focus on a broad spectrum of psychoanalytic theory, particularly on Freudian theory concerned with structures and tendencies of the mind in specific relation to early ruptures with primary caregivers. This will interplay much more closely with Child Psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's theory on the creative reparative drives that evolve out of infantile trauma, as well as British Psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion's[5] theory of the 'Container-Contained' in relation to the

[4] Psychoanalytic thought frames Freud's contribution as the "discovery" of psychoanalysis, meaning that he did not invent it, but rather was the first to notice (and document) how the psyche functions. It is not to say that his theories have remained unchallenged (which they have been in numerous ways over the past century), but rather the choice of this description is merely to recognize his contributions as groundbreaking in his time.
[5] Prominent British Psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion was president of the Psychoanalytical Society from 1962-1965.

psychoanalytic model, and ultimately the re-parenting [6] arising from this type of therapeutic engagement. In other words, I have gathered evidence of psychoanalytic theory in relation to primary creative tendencies as a way to understand how the mind works, why certain early experience is unthinkable and therefore repressed, and how psychoanalysis brings these things into consciousness in order to understand and overcome them. Since psychoanalysis' inauguration into the Twentieth Century, psychoanalytic thinking has evolved, spilling over from a purely clinical[7] application to influence other fields such as Mythology, Literature, Sociology, and the primary focus of this dissertation, Fine Arts. All these fields (to some extent) are also concerned with the human experience, a common nucleus shared with psychoanalysis. In this way, psychoanalysis is an important application within the Humanities - the academic study of human kind. Adams (1993) points out how these two fields first officially came together in 1910 when Freud published the first psychobiography about Leonardo Da Vinci – documenting the first formal meeting of art and psychoanalysis (1). By centering my research on Bourgeois I hope to extend this kind of pairing in an effort to contribute to the formal bridging between Fine Arts and Psychology: Two academic disciplines, which although collectively fall under the Humanities still seem (to my mind) to remain all too disconnected. At the heart of this research is a wish to bring these two disciplines even closer together – to facilitate fraternization and perhaps even procreation.

With this in mind a key part of this introductory chapter will contextualize Bourgeois' work (and responses to her environment) within a story of Modern Art and then build on these traditional readings in order to demonstrate how her work can be located within a Modernist[8] zeitgeist fixated with psychoanalytic maternal instincts and understanding the self. To understand how we get there, let us look at Bourgeois' layered professional history: Following a brief stint at the Sorbonne studying mathematics and geometry, Bourgeois went on to a classical Fine Arts training at Montparnasse and Montmartre with artists including Paul Colin, André Lhote and Fernand Léger. She also studied art history at the

[6] 'Reparenting' is a form of psychotherapy that involves the patient temporarily taking on a new set of parental figures, symbolically and emotionally, through the treatment with the psychotherapist, in order to correct defective early parenting.

[7] This refers to application of psychoanalysis in the medical/ mental health fields.

[8] It is worth clarifying that "Modernism" refers to the art historical construction of the 'period' in Western conceptions of art history.

École du Louvre further intensifying her classic knowledge base. Bourgeois' youth and early career were flanked by two devastating World Wars – one that took (and then later returned a traumatized version of) her father and another one that she later escaped along with many other key art figures. One can only imagine the survivor's guilt living within this generation, much of which is an intergenerational trauma passed on from parent to child. Therefore if we accept that the artists within this period were products of a larger socio-political context, then we can begin to consider how art making became an important outlet for this repressed inherited experience.

In 2012, Art historian Donald Kuspit characterizes Modernism as a quest for "psychic survival" (19). He draws attention to Impressionist Colorism's concern with the unconscious power of colour and connection to one's moods. The Symbolists expanded on this by focusing on symbols and their relationship to making the unconscious conscious. The Romantics were concerned with dreams and mental illness and the Surrealists were equally fixated on the dream world as a counterpoint to conscious thought (18-19). In this way, like her male artist contemporaries and intellectuals of the time, Bourgeois was well aware of psychoanalysis and thinking about the unconscious. Through this lens it is clear that Bourgeois was living in a time characterized by an increasing inclination to go inward and understand the self; evident in how the art movements of the time were beginning to pair the act of art making with introspection, the result of which is a direct correlation between creative process in order to uncover some sort of personal meaning. In other words, the choice of materials and the ways in which those materials are engaged with, have a direct relationship with the meaning of the work, the emotional experience and impact the aesthetic of the final product. Where Bourgeois was ahead of her time, however, is that she understood art and life to be the exact same thing. She did not "hide behind a lexicon like bad dreams or light, and rather eloquently articulated the chief concern of Modernism to be the modern fragmented self" (Kuspit qtd. in Harris Williams 32).

But it took some time for these insights to become conscious for Bourgeois. As a young practising artist in New York, her early graphic works bore the imprint of Surrealism. Similarly her "semi-abstract" (Müller-Westerman 11) sculptures of the mid 1940's were

typically read as being born out of this ilk. But she was *not* a 'practising' Surrealist although I will come to discuss how she *was* greatly influenced by the male artists in this movement. She was also a member of the New York School of Abstract Expressionism and participated in their three-day forum[9]. At this point, her work is often read as being born out of these male-dominated movements. Then very importantly between the 1950's and 1960's there were great shifts in her aesthetic (corresponding to her entrance into psychoanalysis). But even though she was making work, she was not exhibiting. And so with no work on view she barely existed from a Modernist point of view over this period. But then suddenly she reemerges in the 1960's as an important persona, when art critic and curator Lucy Lippard included her work in her renowned exhibition *Eccentric Abstraction* which suddenly brought her works into a dialogue with younger artists like Eva Hesse and Bruce Nauman, augmenting her reception within a Modernist context (Müller-Westerman 11). This was a big leap from earlier reception of her work. Long-time assistant to Bourgeois, Jerry Gorovoy notes how Bourgeois' career really started to gain momentum at a time when there was a move away from formalism and abstraction, towards figuration and narrative stories about identity and sexuality (Gorovoy qtd. in Hamer n. pag.). This suggests that something very important happened during her psychoanalytic sabbatical – away from public view. It is this 'something', which will form the heart of my investigations in Chapter Two. Her first major retrospective at the MOMA in 1982 was a career-defining exhibition, establishing her complex themes and aesthetic, which at that point, refused to be categorized. In fact, over the course of her long career a succession of movements influenced the United States art scene[10]. But Bourgeois' formal investigations, which derived from deeply personal issues, at times intersected with and (in certain cases) anticipated art-historical concerns (Müller-Westerman 12). It is precisely this "intersection", which is critical to a fairly new positioning of her work- a psychoanalytic one. In other words, Bourgeois' work intercepted various criteria across Modernist, Post Modern and Contemporary movements, and has thus in many ways, transcended all classification.

Bourgeois never overtly committed to one positioning and in a sense the art world had to

[9] This forum was moderated by Alfred Barr and Robert Motherwell, and included Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning among the panelists.

[10] Namely Surrealism followed by Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art in the late 1950's and 1960's, Minimalism and Conceptual art in the 1970's.

'catch up' and recognize Bourgeois as an important voice for the various movements, one such movement being Feminism. In 2005, art historian Mignon Nixon noted how "like psychoanalysis itself, the story of Modern Art needs a theory of the maternal subject, and Bourgeois' sculpture plays a pivotal role in constructing it" (12). So while she was influenced by Surrealism, it was not in the formal, material sense of typical readings of her work. Nixon considers Bourgeois' work as Modern by studying it on an axis of Feminism and psychoanalysis, beginning with a move away from Surrealism, emphasizing how her gender informed her work, and how she psychoanalytically explored her unconscious violence and sexuality in relation to her objects[11] (2-3). Nixon goes on to point out how there has been a return to Kleinian thinking in the Humanities particularly in relation to the maternal subject and how it relates to desire and death[12] (12). In this way a Feminist frame provided Bourgeois with "a meaningful context for reworking unassimilated psychic material, from much earlier experiences involving crises of positioning both as daughter in childhood, and as a young woman in her profession as an artist in relation to the Surrealists" (Nixon cited in Rowley 1). These abandonment issues[13] begin to contextualize her work in relation to a male dominated Modern art scene. While Bourgeois was active in the heart of these Modernist movements, already deeply considering the relationship between state of mind and the art object, she enjoyed only moderate professional success and remained on the periphery socially, professionally and emotionally. So it makes sense that the Surrealists (with a dominant Freudian focus that emphasized a move *away* from the mother and *towards* the father were skewed towards a patriarchal outlook of life and art (Nixon 4). This was enacted in Bourgeois' early career: In New York, Bourgeois was socially associated with prominent figures in the Surrealist movement including Max Ernst and Joan Miró. But professionally, she was often on the sidelines, never quite fitting in and never enjoying the embrace of the associated brotherhoods. Married to Robert Goldwater, an established art historian and expert in so-called Primitive art, she often socialized with well-known artists such as André Bréton (a 'Forefather' of Surrealism). At the time Bourgeois was a young artist having just moved into the Rue De Seine building in New York, renting an apartment just above Bréton's Galerie Gradiva. But when this Avant-Garde

[11] This concept will be expanded on later in this chapter.
[12] The confines of this dissertation are focused more squarely on the maternal subject and how it relates to love, guilt and reparation.
[13] This term refers to the childhood fear of losing a primary object either through death, divorce or lack of emotional support (Psychpedia A n.d.)

heavyweight (Bréton) elected not to adopt Bourgeois as one of his protégés, it profoundly affected her and was experienced as a "stinging" betrayal (Nixon 15). From then on, Bourgeois embodied the Feminist struggle[14], consistently operating from the outside in. But according to psychoanalytic psychotherapist Clinton Van Der Walt "who we are, and how we engage with the world, occurs from the *inside* out. Experience is paramount, emotional subjectivity is primary. As human subjects we are first and foremost what we feel and what we experience" (Van Der Walt). This points to another layer of understanding Bourgeois' betrayal as the manifestation of unresolved internal issues with male domination. In many ways her work and psychoanalysis of the period echo a rebuttal against this male oppression and it is the transcendence rising out of her work, that eventually lead Bourgeois to be claimed as a "figure of transference[15]" by the Feminists[16] in the 1960's and 1970's (Nixon 1). In this way her rejection of Surrealism had to do with a combination of its rejection of her, more so than the limits of its materiality (Nixon 13-52).



Fig. 4. (Left) Louise Bourgeois and Joan Miró in New York in 1947.

[14]This was eventually cemented with her first major retrospective at MOMA in 1982. The exhibition curated by Deborah-Wye, ran from 3 November 1982 to 8 February 1983.

[15] Transference is defined as "the process by which the patient displaces on to his analyst feelings, ideas etc., which derive from previous figures in his life […] by which he relates to his analyst as though he were some former object in his life […]" (Rycroft 185).

[16] Although she never considered herself a Feminist, Bourgeois has remarked that her "Mother was a feminist and Socialist…and ferociously so!"(Bourgeois qtd. in Munroe 157). As a result of this Feminism in some form was likely to have been embodied in Bourgeois' reaction to her environment.

In later years, Bourgeois is described as refusing to be categorized by art history saying, "The question of history is yours not mine. I fit into history like a bug in a rug" (Bourgeois qtd. in Meyer-Thoss 139). If anything she only ever referred to herself as an Existentialist interested in "a return to an emphasis on the freedom and choices of the individual" (Coxon 16) which foregrounds the personal voice and need as instigator for the creation of the artwork. This paves the way for a more contemporary contextualization of her work as a "Confessional artist" (Confessional Art/ Art Confessions n.d.) calling to mind the cathartic nature of her sculpture and how present her personal life story is in the reading of the work. But this term itself feels problematic as it brings to mind religious confession and grossly distills her process down to an act of admittance for redemption. What the term fails to recognize is the deep and labored relational exchange with her objects, which will be explored at length in Chapter Two[17]. The notion of the object is important in understanding how Bourgeois is re-framed within a psychoanalytic context.

Nixon and Kuspit (and later Adams) expand on this dynamic by locating it in the notion of the object and the following paragraph expands on these ideas: Both Fine Art and Psychoanalysis, locate an enquiry into human experience through an external object: In art, the object is a physical article representing the artist's point of view, survey or outcome. In psychoanalysis, the object takes on another dimension in object-relations theory - psychoanalytic theory championed by Klein where the object refers to the development of the psyche in relation to familial relationships (Adams 1; Kuspit 20-25; Nixon 209-65). For example (and this will be discussed in depth in Chapter Two) we note how Bourgeois' *Personages* (1947- 51), wooden totem-like sculptures, appear to have acted for Bourgeois as "tangible reminders of - and substitutes for - her friends and family in Europe" left behind when she immigrated (Coxon 27). In this way, the object comes to stand in for the other, a "surrogate object" (Walsh 6), and identifies a range of potential relationships with this other. So in a sense there is an interconnection between the sculptor's physical object and the psychoanalytic investigation into how the artist relates to the world. So one can

[17] The reader however is asked to keep in mind, that the time frame of this dissertation is focused on the years 1946-1969 when these insights were only just becoming conscious for the artist (i.e. the beginnings of her experience in psychoanalysis). Essentially my interest is in Bourgeois' process, her therapy and in her individual bigger picture (as opposed to a social Modern/ Surrealist/ Feminist one). But it is important to consider her art context as the catalyst in a growing self-awareness in relation to a male-dominated world.

see how they can be considered as almost the same thing. In other words, this research is primarily concerned with understanding Bourgeois' relationship between the art object and the therapeutic object, and how the two relate and play off each other in accessing, understanding and then overcoming repressed emotional trauma. In short, the dissertation will address the primary function of the psychoanalyst as a stand-in for the patient/ artist's primary object by investigating the ongoing interplay of her objects in therapy, the objects in her studio and understand how these mirror her external relationships with her objects in the world at large (with particular focus on the years 1946 – 1969).

Framing the Repair: An Overview of Chapters

In the following section of this introductory chapter I provide an outline of the dissertation chapters: Chapter Two, RE: Pairing Louise Bourgeois, explores Bourgeois' artistic practice in relation to her pairing with her analyst Dr. Henry Lowenfeld (for her psychoanalytic treatment which began in 1952-66 and continued sporadically over the next thirty years). The chapter will then go on to consider the notion of "RE: Pair" in a psychoanalytic frame. Bourgeois' 'pairing' of different psychoanalytical constructs and processes were all done in an unconscious attempt to repair deep early experience. So it becomes important for this chapter to include discussion around the pairing of art and psychoanalysis and the subsequent connection to other psychoanalytic pairings including mother and child; father and daughter; analyst and analysand; external and internal; unconscious and conscious.

In this chapter I also present an argument for the foregrounding of materiality and how her insights in psychoanalysis mirrored external material modifications in her work which systematically evolved out of painting into etching and wood (in the late 1940's) followed by plaster, marble and then by the end of the 1960's, latex. In 2010 Coxon describes this transition as a move from "rigidity to pliability" (37). Each of these materials has their own additive and subtractive sensibilities and corresponds to emotional shifts, providing evidence of a direct (and concrete) link between her art and her emotions. The latter half of this chapter will focus on the "ray of hope"[18], namely the relationship between the analyst and analysand, which is introduced as a key factor underpinning all future meaning

[18] "Ray of hope" is quoted in Bourgeois' work *The Papillon, the Ray of Hope* (1999) no. 6 of 9, from the series *What is the Shape of this Problem*?

making, through a deep connective relationship. All this will serve to explain how art as a device alone was "useless" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 5)[19] to her as a "guaranty of sanity" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 17) and how the "psychoanalytic period" (Larrat-Smith 18) was the real foundation for Bourgeois' repaired ego and emotional release - primarily due to the pairing of Bourgeois with Lowenfeld (Kuspit 20). The concluding section of the chapter will argue that Bourgeois needed psychoanalysis and the relationship with her analyst to facilitate access to unconscious loss at the heart of her depression and anxiety and repair something primal and repressed. Thereafter, this thirty year long experience ultimately provided her with the skills to self-analyze and self-understand, a proficiency which could then be taken back into her artistic practice for further "self-knowledge" and "pleasure" (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori). The most important factor for this research is in understanding unconscious emotion as a primary generative force. Further to this, focus is on how the period 1946 – 1969 encapsulates a period in Bourgeois' life where her therapeutic writing reflects on her art and her emotion as being one and the same thing[20].

The third chapter, Lost Places: A Personal Enquiry, positions the Kleinian theoretical components addressed around Bourgeois' impulse to RE: Pair, in relation to my own life, practice and experience in psychoanalysis – which I entered into several months into my research. I will explain how I was initially drawn to Bourgeois and Klein out of an unconscious recognition of identifying aspects of their lives and work, with personal aspects of my own. This dialogue interplays between the research (and associated readings), artworks and my subsequent exhibition. This conversational aspect will be further explored with the reader via several artworks physically interlaced between chapters of this dissertation. These comprise of copies of Bourgeois' writing and artworks, overlaid with my own mark making and writing. By selecting key imagery from the artist, I have responded to them in a free-associative way, reflecting a reciprocal ongoing

[19] LB-0219 13 September 1957

[20] While Bourgeois only entered into analysis (with Lowenfeld) in 1952, I chose to include the five years prior into the study because it is important to consider the work she made leading up to her psychoanalysis. These are important indicators of her state of mind. During the first ten years of her psychoanalysis Bourgeois was in 'intense' psychoanalysis (three to four hours per week), this was then reduced to more sporadic sessions. The title of this dissertation, foregrounds the years 1946 – 1969 because I felt it important to address work made just after this 'intense' engagement to set up a 'before and after' type of scenario. The dates in some way are arbitrary though, in that they are meant to signal a period of time of intense focus on her mental health, and this research will go on to show how this is really a lifelong process.

conversation with the artist and what she represents personally to me as the artist/ researcher. In many ways, Bourgeois' evidence was selected according to a personal resonance and I would like the reader to keep this 'conversation' loosely in mind throughout their engagement with this project.

A key aspect of this ongoing dialogue is the relationship between the idea of art making as a defense and distraction and how this form of creativity can be as much about ignoring something as it can be about understanding something else. Until visiting my own defenses, through a Bourgeois-Kleinian interface, and in psychoanalysis, I was unable to recognize this tension in my body (of work). In fact, without being in psychoanalysis myself, I might never have recognized it at all. The passage into this realization is well documented in this chapter, and I invite the reader to recount the key points of Bourgeois and Klein's reparative journeys, in relation to my own work and research. Through process and psychoanalysis, my artwork looks at making amends with myself as a mother, as well as revisits my child-self through psychoanalysis, investigating my own ideas about being a mother and being mothered. In my case, my analyst is a woman, which I recognize as being pivotal in my research and my repair of my relationship with the maternal. This will be discussed (to some extent[21]) in this chapter as well.

Ultimately, my artist disposition exists to ask questions through the visual, where words and conscious memory fail. This is the focus of Chapter Four where I consider my exhibition titled: *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis*. The conversational aspect of this dissertation (mentioned above) will continue in this fourth chapter where a critical reflection on my exhibition will take the form of an imagined exchange between the artist, a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and myself, at one of Bourgeois' legendary Sunday Salons with other contemporary artists. This phantasy[22] will contextualize the projective nature of my work and provide a context for the exhibition as an engagement with lifelong relationships with my own personal objects through my sculptural objects. In

[21] It is not helpful to me to go into extremely personal detail from my psychoanalysis and as such I will only reference that which is useful to the reader in relation to the presented research.

[22] In one sense 'phantasy' refers to imagining and daydreaming. In another sense it refers to the imaginative activity underlying all thoughts and feelings. It is generally accepted in psychoanalytic thinking that all conscious activity is in some way accompanied, supported, enlivened and affected by some form of imagined phantasy (Rycroft 131). The alternate use of spelling is deliberate by Klein, in order to differentiate from Anna Freud's theories on fantasy (spelled with an 'f').

DeCOMPOSITION, the 'De' refers to the challenge of this internal construct and plays on the word 'decompose', calling to mind ideas of decay, degradation but also to fertilizer and fertility. The exhibition draws on the psychoanalytical idea of breaking down, dusting away and going deeper in search of meaning. The show took place at Constitution Hill - a living transitional space in a South African context - housed in 'Ramparts', the old reception area of the Apartheid-era prison where prisoners were incarcerated[23].

A Dangerous Method(ology)

The subtitle for this methodology section draws on the 2011 David Cronenberg film *A Dangerous Method*. The film investigates the turbulent relationship between psychoanalyst Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud and Sabina Spielrein; a woman who was initially Jung's patient and who controversially became his mistress. Spielrein later went on to become one of the first female psychoanalysts who trained several psychoanalysts and was later killed (together with her daughters) at the hands of the Nazis. The historical account investigates the beginnings of psychoanalysis and the rupture between Jung and Freud particularly in relation to their views on psychoanalyst/ analysand boundaries. With this in mind *A Dangerous Method(ology)* introduces my approach to methodology and crystalizes the risk implicit in certain subjects and fields crossing over each other, particularly art and psychoanalysis where personal becomes public and unknown becomes known. The nature of my research process and how it has evolved from inception to completion is layered and feels dangerous, particularly in relation to the decision to go into psychoanalysis as part of this process. In this way, internal research is tantamount to my research methodology.

Therefore the first methodological framework I adopted is 'A/r/tography' which "is an arts and education practice-based research methodology" (Irwin, Leggo, and Springgay 13-27). "The name itself exemplifies these features by setting 'art' and 'graphy' and the identities of artist, researcher and teacher (a/r/t) in contiguous relations" (Irwin, Leggo, and Springgay 13-27). This practice-based methodology deliberately draws attention to the 'slash' (as seen in a/r/t) as a key reference to the influential and (often elusive) 'in-between' spaces between subjects and asks that the researcher adopt and combine the multiple

[23] A more detailed history of the space is included in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

methodologies of artist, researcher and teacher - none of which are considered more important than the other and all of which have a valuable point of view. Each position offers interchangeable ways to "actively create knowledge through sensing, feeling and thinking. Through aesthetics of attunement, unfolding, and/ or surrender, we linger in dynamic in-between spaces..." (Irwin, Leggo, and Springgay 13-27). The very nature of psychoanalysis speaks to the capacity to stay in the unknown - not make definitive assessments and remain open to simply not knowing. It also shares the A/r/tographical idea that awareness is in a constant state of flux and therefore never finite. So the very nature of the area I am researching is intangible[24] which means that my model of practice and research needs to be approached with the same sense of open-endedness and variety embraced in A/r/tography. Further to this, one of the methodologies of A/r/tography is an interplay of making and writing as a research technique, and this begins to echo the process Bourgeois was working in (which I have also adopted in my own practice) as a mechanism to uncover meaning. Further to this, the very nature of my title suggests the pairing and stitching together of two seemingly different contexts - probably not a seamless join, but nevertheless bringing together different spheres that share affinities and similarities with each other. This leads on to how I have employed this 'A/r/tistic[25]' approach: As 'artist', I have drawn on my own personal experience of materiality charting the complexities and contradictions of a growing self-awareness. As 'researcher' I have investigated Bourgeois' sculptures as clues to the state-of-mind of an individual reacting to their larger context and similarly how it relates to me as a projective indicator. In order for this work to remain authentic, however, the definition of the 't' for 'teacher' needs to be reclaimed slightly. I would like to shift the established context of teaching from a didactic purpose to a developmental one and re-appropriate the 't' for 'therapist'. Initially I was approaching this dissertation as therapeutic practitioner. I have trained as a Community Art Counsellor at Lefika La Phodiso – The Art Therapy Centre. I have also recently been accepted as a candidate for psychoanalytic training with the South African Psychoanalytic Association (SAPA). With this in mind I initially intended on approaching the 't' as 'therapeutic' focusing on my own practice in this field. But this has evolved to refer to my own experience in therapy, in order to mediate all aspects of the lived and researched components. Several months into the research process, I sought out psychotherapy for

[24] 'Intangible' in that it is difficult to reach a finite conclusion psychoanalytically speaking.
[25] This is my own term and to my knowledge is not used in other sources

myself. After much deliberation I entered into psychoanalysis, finding myself on the couch, four times a week, with a local psychoanalyst. This has served as my most important method of research and has provided tangible, life-changing experience on both an experiential and academic level.

The second key methodology is an autoethnographical framing. In contrast to traditional academic research, autoethnography foregrounds the personal voice of the author. Carolyn Ellis, in the 2013 *Handbook of Autoethnography*, eloquently describes this qualitative method of enquiry:

> …Autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way about being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, reflexively. It asks that we not only examine our lives but also consider how and why we think, act and feel as we do. Autoethnography requires that we observe ourselves observing, that we interrogate what we think and believe, and that we challenge our own assumptions, asking over and over if we have penetrated as many layers of our own defenses, fears and insecurities as our project requires. It asks that we rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who we are and who we want to be. And in the process it seeks a story that is hopeful, where authors write themselves as survivors of the story they are living (qtd. in Jones 10).

This quote aptly describes autoethnography as something with a close kinship to psychoanalysis and foregrounds personal enquiry as a means of understanding the layers of our own defenses. The intention is to use the personal to include the reader in the experience and to generate empathy but also very importantly, this kind of framework (like psychoanalysis) allows for a particular kind of rigor, one that resonates from the inside out evoking change through the information uncovered. Core to this kind of interface however is a level of indeterminacy. This notion is similar to that described by William Doll in the following 1993 quotation:

> Rigor in a post-modern frame requires just this. It draws on qualities foreign to a

> modernist frame - interpretation and indeterminacy, to mention but two. In dealing with indeterminacy, one can never be certain one has it right - not even to the 95th or 99th percentile of probability. One must continually be exploring, looking for new combinations, interpretations, patterns […] In dealing with interpretation rigorously, one needs to be aware that all valuations depend on (often hidden) assumptions. As frames differ so do problems, procedures and valued results. Rigor here means the conscious attempt to ferret out these assumptions, ones we or others hold dear, as well as negotiating passages between these assumptions, so the dialogue may be meaningful and transformative (182-3).

Following on from Doll this type of research, although emotional, is rigorous. But the desired outcome, rather than being a finite one, is an indeterminate one, often achieved through a degree of vulnerability. This allows information to emerge which can thereafter be critically and curiously considered, often with an autoethnographical and therapeutic objective at play.

Between The Lines: A Review of Literature

The temptation of such a subjective research experience is to remove oneself from existing literature and focus on the psychoanalytic experience itself. Bourgeois herself noted how she did not want to "dirty" her psychoanalysis by reading psychoanalytic texts (Bourgeois qtd. in Kuspit 24). Contrary to this however, the above rigor required of the academic space exposed me to a compendium of key texts, which have deepened the personal and experiential aspect, aided in building a strong argument, and acclimatized me to the formal psychoanalytic environment. The literature and practices reviewed for the purpose of this dissertation, and from which my theoretical framing emerges, are divided into the following sections:

- Texts addressing the life and work of Louise Bourgeois.
- Texts addressing the psychoanalytic theories that will establish the primary theoretical framing for the research.
- Texts considering the relationship between art and psychoanalysis.

Louise Bourgeois' artwork:

For the purposes of this dissertation it is important to understand how Bourgeois' work has been read to date. *Louise Bourgeois: Tate Modern Artists* (2010) by Anne Coxon aided in establishing the groundwork for how Bourgeois' work has typically been read to date with a strong focus on materiality in relation to emotional content. This publication looks more particularly at the materiality of the works produced by Bourgeois but also contextualizes her life and work within key art historical traditions. In relation to this, *Fantastic Reality: Louise Bourgeois and a story of Modern Art* (2005) by Mignon Nixon introduces a new way of reading Bourgeois' work in relation to Modern Art and psychoanalysis by investigating her work on an axis of Surrealism, Psychoanalysis and Feminism. This text focuses on the artworks in relation to the psychosocial and political movements of the time and affords insight into Bourgeois actual experience in psychoanalysis. This is crucial as core to my argument is how Bourgeois engaged physically with psychoanalysis and not just intellectually. With this in mind the central texts for my research are contained in *Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed, Psychoanalytic Writings* (2012) edited by Philip Larratt-Smith with essays by other academic writers. This extensive publication highlights the enduring presence of psychoanalysis as a motivational force for the artist and is contextualized within eight extensive essays by art historians and psychoanalysts. I have made specific reference to the following: *Sculpture as Symptom* and *The Return of the Repressed* by Phillip Larrat-Smith. *The Child, the Container and the Claustrum: the artistic vocation of Louise Bourgeois* by Meg Harris Williams, *The Sublime Jealousy of Louise Bourgeois* by Juliet Mitchell and *L.* by Mignon Nixon. Furthermore, I have also referred to *Symbolizing Loss And Conflict: Psychoanalytic Process In Louise Bourgeois' Art* and *Louise Bourgeois in Psychoanalysis with Henry Lowenfeld* both by Donald Kuspit. Each of these are discussed in relation to selections from eighty previously unpublished free-associative writings, providing a specific psychoanalytic frame to a key aspect of Bourgeois' life and work (as outlined in each of their titles). From a literature point of view, this publication has been invaluable in providing psychoanalytic insight into Bourgeois and her practice.

There is extensive video footage of the artist, which has provided me with exposure to her

"prickly character" (Kuspit 17). The 2008 film *Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine* directed by Amei Wallach and Marion Carjori provides a visceral experience of her flamboyant and confrontational character and helped deepen 'my sense' of her character in an attempt to align this with the art she made. Further to this, *Louise Bourgeois Destruction of the Father / Reconstruction of the Father: Writings and Interviews, 1923-1997* compiled in 1998 by Louise Bourgeois and co-edited by Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans-Ulrich Obrist provides a collection of published and unpublished letters and interviews by the artist. These represent a key resource for the dissertation in that I refer to the letters, writings and interviews over the period 1947-1969 in order to get first hand accounts of her state of mind as well as her approach to psychoanalysis and her artistic practice. This will be considered in direct relation to the more recently published Larrat-Smith texts, which will offer alternative psychoanalytical insight into the artist's unconscious.

The second body of texts relate to psychoanalytic theories pertaining to the artist:

Klein's 1921 essay *Love, Guilt and Reparation* is another important text because the idea of reparation is central to my question. This text offers insight into the psychoanalytic concept of the infantile forces of admiration and guilt, which drives the need to repair relationships with the other (Klein 306-43). Bourgeois' works consistently reverted to childhood as part of a need to fix traumatic realizations. The research amplifies this aspect of her work through the Kleinian theoretical framework. *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought*, *Melanie Klein Today Volume 1 and 2* edited by Elizabeth Bot Spillius and *The selected Melanie Klein* edited in 1998 by Juliet Mitchell, offers a grounded understanding of Klein and her post-Freudian theories of infantile phantasies, depressive position, object relations, play, mother and father and depression. This is also believed to be a source Bourgeois was exposed to (with her interest in child psychotherapy).

Of course, core to my literature review is the study of Bourgeois' artworks[26]. It is also

[26] I should note that although my thesis focuses on a particular time period (1946 – 1969) I need to reference artworks and events that fall outside of this period. This relates directly to the afore-mentioned spiral motif and because time-travel is so elusive and integral to the artist's process it would be impossible not to acknowledge other time-bound examples. The time frame in the title really refers to the "analytic years" (Larrat-Smith 2012), a loose term applied to the years she was in intense ongoing analysis- a period that

important to note that during the completion of this dissertation I was able to embark on a research trip to New York to visit Bourgeois' works (at Dia: Beacon and MOMA). Where possible, most of the work I discuss in Chapter Two has been 'experienced' first hand and not only through reproductions. These works will be indicated in the footnotes. While I was able to view most of the discussed works, there are some whereby the study has taken place via secondary texts and reproductions. This is challenging in the sense that materiality is a key aspect of my research and thus 'experiencing' the work is such a crucial component. I acknowledge that photographs and video can only go so far in accessing this materiality.

The third body of texts, while referred to only in a peripheral sense includes a body of literature that explores a formal pairing between art and psychoanalysis. Over the past century, there have been many important authors and academics who have expanded on the relationship between art and psychoanalysis positioning the work by key artists as embodying psychoanalytic themes; namely Walsh (2013), Gosso (2004), Adams (1993), Wright (2009), Knafo (2012) and Handler Spitz (1985). These texts are not expanded on further in this literature review, as while they succeed in broaching the subject in an in-depth way, many of their themes and theories extend beyond the scope of this dissertation. That said they are worth mentioning as an important body of literature that frames this particular research project.

The Personal, The Processed and The Relational

The following section addresses practices that have informed this creative research project. As mentioned, in my non-artist capacity I practice as a Community Art Counsellor, which is a psychodynamic group counselling practice, based in psychoanalytic theory and art therapy. While the scope of this dissertation does not allow for the investigation of Art Therapy as a discipline, what is important to understand for this project is that my instinctive approach to art lies in three fundamental components: the process, the personal and the relational. In this way I am firstly predisposed to artwork where the process, which brought the work into being, is *as* important as the final form on display.

provided incredible insight to the years pre and post analysis which will also be discussed.

Furthermore, I am deeply curious as to how that processed object then provides insight into, or meaning for, the person who created it. It is also then layered with a subsequent relational engagement with an audience. And in this way I am concerned with how a third party (the artist or the artwork) is able to facilitate this symbiotic exchange of communication. This reading subsequently forms a frame in which to contextualize and appreciate my own body of work, as well as to inform and extend my own practice. It is also important to note that all the female artists (discussed below) share a common thread, whereby their creative output primarily embodies a deeply emotional experience. Their work carries an implicit reparative significance, which (to my mind) far outweighs a classic formal appreciation of their practices. As mentioned above, these practices can be divided into three fundamental components: the process, the personal and the relational.



Fig. 5. Rachel Whiteread. *Boathouse* (2010) Gran, Norway. Concrete. 200 x 400 x 600 cm.

A core component of this relational exchange is located in materiality and its meaning - the vehicle for this conversation - and in this way I am interested in artists who use materials to signify that which cannot be seen, only felt. An example would be British contemporary artist Rachel Whiteread's ability to infuse material with memory, eliciting a tension around a penetrated lived experience, and drawing on what is inaccessible to the conscious mind. In a very different way, American 'Outsider' artist Judith Scott, a deaf woman born with

Down Syndrome, has found ways to communicate through the building and binding of objects. It was only in her twenties that she was exposed to material affinity while working with an Art Therapy group in a home for the mentally disabled. But what becomes most intriguing is how eventually through her objects, her non-impaired twin sister was able to connect with her sister for the first time, eventually championing her subsequent career and providing twin-sisters with lost common ground.



Fig. 5. Judith Scott working at Creative Growth Art Centre in 1999. Photo: Leon Borenztein



Fig. 6. Judith Scott *Untitled (*1989) Fibre and found objects. The Museum of Everything, London. Fibre and found objects 114,6 x 55,9 x 25,4 cm. Photo: Sylvain Deleu



Fig. 7. Lyndi Sales *R5 Note* (2006) Mixed Media, 6 x 12 cm

In contrast to Scott, South African artist Lyndi Sales strives to give her audience a bodily experience through object-based installations that deal with loss. In her work she intervenes with artifacts in order to investigate the conspiracies of the tragic Helderberg plane crash of 1986. It is less common knowledge that her father was actually killed in this fateful accident and so my immediate association (aside from my own projected interpretations of a daughter who *also* lost her father in *another* plane crash) is that I am increasingly curious about how her objects and her process, aid in connecting Sales with her lost object. Similarly, Mary Kelly works with artifacts and process in a "pseudo-scientific" way. In *Post-Partum Document* (1973 – 1979) she investigates the psychoanalytic separation of mother and child, through the "juxtaposition of found objects and commentary […] with a series of diagrams which are not simply about child development. But are rather an effort to articulate the mother's fantasies, her desire, her stake in that project called 'motherhood'" (Kelly XVII).

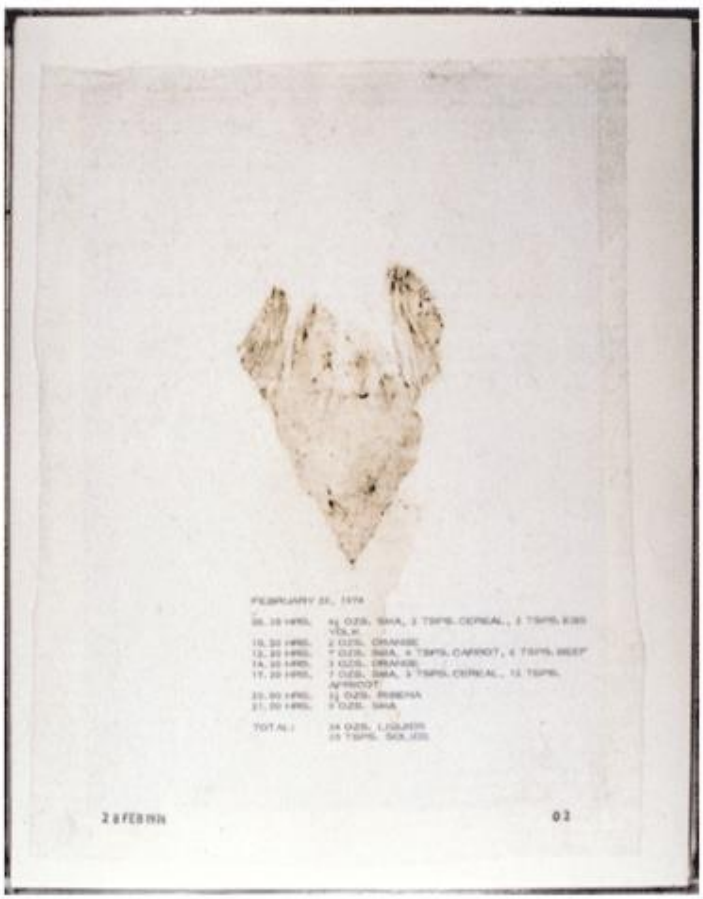


Fig. 8. *Post-Partum Document: Documentation I Analysed Fecal Stains and Feeding Charts* (Detail) (1974) Perspex units, white card, diaper linings, plastic sheeting, paper, ink.
Photo: Mary Kelly

Looking closer at these two components - the process and the personal - I am particularly drawn to British sculptor Cornelia Parker's *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991). Here this idea of process becomes central to both the reading and appreciation of her work. The viewer is presented with the twisted temporal aftermath of an explosion but this work came into being with a dangerous process that began long before the work was assembled in the warehouse space for the Chisenhale Gallery in London: With the help of explosive experts, the artist orchestrated the blowing up of a small shed (filled with related memorabilia) on an army base. Once demolished, her team combed the landscape for all the remnants, which were later re-composed in a delicately suspended grid, in the gallery space. The mangled shards, reanimated in their 'final resting place', were now completely transformed in the spot lit gallery. In Parker's words (2013) "the light inside the [final] installation created huge shadows on the wall, so that the shed looked as if it was re-exploding or perhaps coming back together" (Parker qtd. in Blazwick 50). In this way the history of the object (in a sense, its *own* experience) is core to understanding it. Much like the person, the object tells the story and vice versa. Hence the appreciation of the work lies in layering an experience which brought that work into being: right from the earlier versions where the artist experimented with smaller wooden explosions and how these signified a connection to traumatic memory of London in the 1980's and 1990's where Parker lived with the daily threat of IRA bomb explosions. This unfulfilled anticipation of this imminent invisible threat is strikingly captured in a blast in limbo. Furthermore the original object (a shed) speaks to superfluous emotional storage (Parker cited in Blazwick 50).



Fig. 9.1. Original explosion in preparation for *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991)



Fig. 9.2. Cornelia Parker *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991) Blown up garden shed and contents, wire, light bulb, Installation view at Chisenhale Gallery, London. Dimensions Variable.

Similarly, in *Thirty Pieces of Silver* (1988) Parker steam-rolled found, borrowed and bought silverware. The title has its origins in a bible verse that refers to the thirty pieces of silver that Judas received and is thus synonymous with disloyalty (Parker cited in Blazwick 37). Once flattened, the pieces were then once again collected and reassembled in symmetrical suspension in the gallery space, very importantly within a very pressurized time frame. Parker muses how the work was a response to another harried memory of a ten-year threat of being evicted from her home, due to plans of its demolition to make way for a motorway development. The interplay of the steam-rolling, the objects and their reconstitution - under a pressured time frame in the gallery space - brought this memory of deep community betrayal into consciousness. When I installed my own exhibition I wondered about this work, empathizing with the pressure Parker must have been under for this, her largest installation (to date at that point) at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. Perhaps her need to release emotional tension, so that she could professionally perform, lead to the creation of this work. But then it also bled into other stressful memory flattened (repressed - pressed) in her past. In both of her discussed works, Parker's process is foregrounded as an integral experiential component. This emphasizes how the work could not exist without this influential experience bringing its creator's process and memory into the present reading of the work. This is an aspect, which is integral to my own body of work as well as my approach to researching Bourgeois.



Fig. 10. Work in progress: Silver-plated objects being flattened by a steam roller in preparation for Cornelia Parker's *Thirty Pieces of Silver* (1998).



Fig. 11. Cornelia Parker *Thirty Pieces of Silver* (1988 – 1999). Silver-plated objects, wire. Dimensions Variable

Columbian sculptor Doris Salcedo is another key influence with particular reference to how she acts as a mediator of psychosocial trauma. I am particularly interested in how she uses her objects to tell the untold stories of others. As a therapeutic practitioner I am deeply curious about other's stories but core to this is my facilitation of new meanings. Similarly, Salcedo's process involves the close interaction with victims who are the collateral damage of large-scale socio-political injustices like genocide, war or gun violence. In response to these engagements she painstakingly intervenes with objects like her "dysfunctional furniture"(Finkel n.pag.) – formerly belonging to bereaved families – which are filled with cement (and in some cases embedded with bone or fragments of clothing) rendering them useless, at least in their original sense. In *Disremembered* (2014), the artist sews bent needles into fine silk coats to comment on the scathed skin of mothers who have lost their children to gun violence in Chicago and in *Plegaria Muda* (2011) she intervenes in the space by introducing grass and earth, to a series of stacked tables, reincarnating coffins and lost



Fig. 12. Doris Salcedo *Disremembered II and III* (2014) needles, silk. Photo: Nathan Keay

lives. Published criticism of Salcedo's work rejects it as "almost tipping into the sentimental[27]" (Baker qtd. in Finkel n.pag.). But Julie Rodrigues Widholm, a curator at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art praises this sort of intensity. "I think her work signals a return to feeling in contemporary art — it's O.K. to have emotions in front of an artwork," she said (Finkel n.pag.). Similarly, in my practice, emotional content is tantamount to its creation and I am therefore grateful to artists like Salcedo who embrace this dimension, by providing her audience with the space to feel something. The way she achieves this is through another core quality - empathy. Interestingly (in stark contrast to Bourgeois) there is very little personal information available on Salcedo, who rarely gives personal details of her own life, preferring to foreground her work as the "witnessing" (Salcedo qtd. in Finkel n.pag.) of others. In fact she reported that she has never lost someone to gun violence and that [here] she is "absorbing the losses of strangers, almost as if they were relatives, transforming her empathy into art" (Salcedo qtd. in Finkel n.pag.). My instinctive psychoanalytic assumption is that while she may not have lost someone by these means, (to my mind) Salcedo carries enormous psychic loss, scalable to the environments that her sizable interventions traverse. Her reference to her subjects as "relatives" suggests that ultimately her works actually speak to a loss belonging to Salcedo, which can only be accessed (and addressed) through the stories of others.

In this way Salcedo's work touches on another important psychoanalytic dimension (one I would argue is present in all practising artist's work); which is that that her audience is carrying something of her internal world that she may not, or will not consciously know. Similarly in my own practice the audience fulfills a psychoanalytic component that is yet to be demystified. I do realize that I am unsatisfied with practising art in privacy, and in a sense I empathize with the generalized view of a Fine Artist's *need* for an audience's reception, understanding that their presence will bring something else into the conversation. In a sense, the audience is an inflated version of the artist's object. Thus the telling of other's stories, or inviting others to layer their own perception onto my own (via an exhibition) is just another signifier of something unconscious that needs to surface.

[27] In the words of the San Francisco Chronicle critic Kenneth Baker

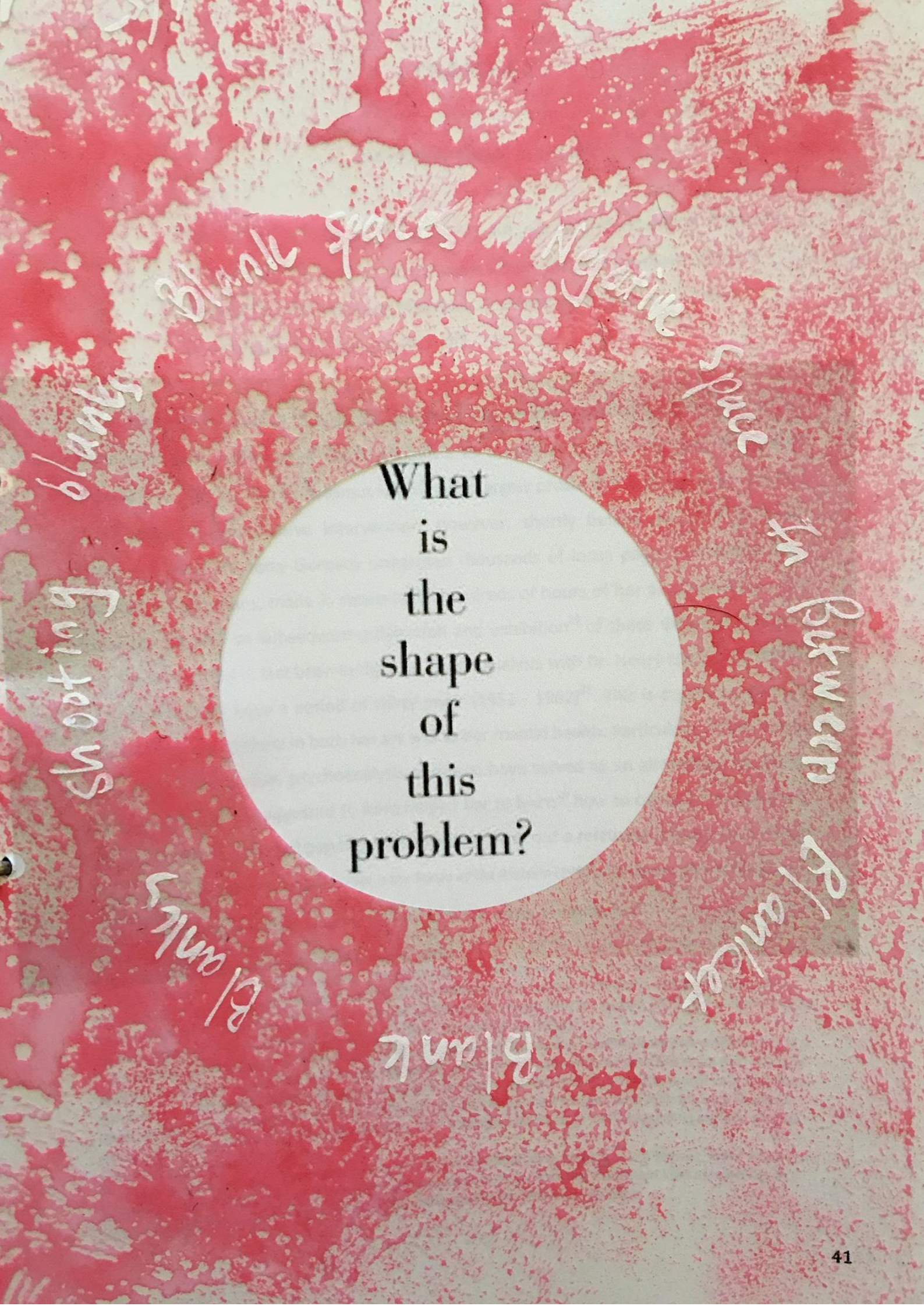
Fig. 13. Doris Salcedo, *Plegaria Muda* (Detail) (2008–2010.) Wood, concrete, earth, and grass in 122 parts, dimensions variable. Photo: Alexander and Bonin



Fig. 14. In an online article for *The Art Studio*, Mr. Brandt notes how "Art injures 15 (and counting) at Tate. The article refers to Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth* at the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2007.

The audience carries this important (albeit unpredictable) dimension. Similarly I refer to Salcedo's *Shibboleth* (2007), an intervention directly into the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall floor, rupturing it with large chasms that ran the length of the space. The work, in that space and time, asked difficult questions about racial and social classification. Salcedo dismissed the media coverage of the work, which was dominated by reports of visitors tripping on the crack, as "distracting" (Salcedo qtd. in "Unilever Series: Doris Salcedo: Shibboleth" n. pag.). She responded to this coverage by saying that "it's easier [for them] to deal with *that* than to really deal with the meaning of the piece" ("Unilever Series: Doris Salcedo: Shibboleth" n. pag.). In this way I am interested in how my own work is received and what conversation is generated around it. That said, this idea terrifies me and I am increasingly grateful that I am in psychoanalysis so that I can then debate these fragments and decide what is mine and what belongs to my audience.

So if the audience is a relational device for the artist, then surely the research subject becomes equally important in how meaning is made? With this in mind these core components of the person, their process and the relational exchange with their objects personally come together in the deep examination of the artist central to my research, Louise Bourgeois: An artist who was courageous enough to let the world see her, and somewhere in this reception, she could finally come to terms with who she was.



What
is
the
shape
of
this
problem?

CHAPTER 2

RE: Pairing Louise Bourgeois

> The work of art is limited to an acting out, not an understanding. If it were understood, the need to do the work would not exist anymore…Art is a guaranty of sanity but not liberation. It comes back again and again (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 7)[28].

This statement by Louise Bourgeois positions her artistic practice as having a direct relationship with her mental health. Sculpture as a form of psychic mending dominated Bourgeois' existence and throughout her life, was largely presumed to be her only method of therapeutic and creative intervention. However, shortly before she died in 2010, Bourgeois' assistant Jerry Gorovoy unearthed thousands of loose pages containing free-associative reflections, made in response to hundreds of hours of her psychoanalysis. The discovery (as well as subsequent publication and exhibition[29] of these writings) revealed that Bourgeois had in fact been in rigorous psychoanalysis with Dr. Henry Lowenfeld (1900-85) intermittently over a period of thirty years (1952 - 1982)[30]. This is suggested to be a highly influential process in both her art and to her mental health. Particularly at the height of her depression when psychoanalysis seems to have served as an alternative to artistic practice, and is also suggested to have helped her to learn[31] how to continue to make art. In this way the discovered psychoanalytic writings flesh out a relatively unknown period (in

Fig. 15. (Previous page) Louise Bourgeois *What is the Shape of the Problem* (1999). Lithograph. Photo: The Easton Foundation.
Overlay: Andy Cohen *A Void a Shape* (2016). Transparency, acrylic, correction fluid.

[28] Bourgeois in conversation with Jerry Gorovoy c.1992
[29] The exhibition titled *Louise Bourgeois: The Return of the Repressed,* curated by Phillip Larrat-Smith showcased Bourgeois' psychoanalytic texts at the following institutions: Fundaciòn PROA in Buenos Aires (March 19 – June 19, 2011), the Instituto Tomie Ohtake in São Paulo (July 8 – August 28, 2011) and the Museu de Arte oderna in Rio de Janiero (September 2016 – November 13, 2011).
[30] According to Donald Kuspit in his essay *Louise Bourgeois in Psychoanalysis with Henry Lowenfeld* in her first year Bourgeois saw Lowenfeld sixty times, suggesting she was in 'depth analysis'; the following year she saw him twenty-eight times suggesting she was in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and in the fourth year only four times, suggesting to Kuspit that there was enough ego strength to self sustain, with maintenance sessions alone. She then saw him twenty-three times in 1973 and eighteen times in 1975 suggesting periods of crisis requiring ongoing attention (17).
[31] I use the word 'learn' loosely here. I must clarify that psychoanalysis cannot help a patient 'learn' to do anything in the direct sense. But I want to keep this term as an indicator of a different kind of learning; an understanding about something that can elicit change and affect learned behavior.

the artist's life) between 1951 and 1964 establishing the crucial role played by psychoanalysis in her personal and artistic development (Larratt-Smith 8). The discovery of these papers positions the artist's deep preoccupation with psychoanalytic thinking as a mode for reparation[32] and reconciliation of internal relationships. The most notable of these relationships being her relationship with her mother and her father; both real and imagined[33]. Bourgeois did not adopt the language of psychoanalysis out of pure academic curiosity: she only really engaged with psychoanalysis in her forties when her father died and out of necessity to address deep unresolved depression, she entered (as a patient) into psychoanalysis in 1951 with Dr. Leonard Cammer. Shortly afterwards, in 1952, she switched to Dr. Henry Lowenfeld (a second generation Freudian, trained in Berlin by Marxist analyst Otto Fenichel) and who immigrated to New York in 1938[34]. Essentially her entry into psychoanalysis was triggered by a physical loss, but signified a much older emotional one.

As identified in the title of this dissertation *RE: Pairing Louise Bourgeois* […] I will specifically consider the notion of "repair" and "pairs" in relation to the artist: Firstly, by considering the crucial 'pairing' (as in combining) of particular social and conceptual relationships directly relating to the afore-mentioned 'pairs' themselves i.e. art and psychoanalysis; internal and external; analysand[35] and analyst; mother and child; father and daughter. It will also be necessary to address selected Freudian principals relating to conflict arising from early sexual development that emerge in her works around her father and her unfulfilled wish to 'pair' with him. Not to mention the impossible conflicting feelings associated with this taboo. Secondly, these will be considered in relation to a mostly Kleinian reading of her compulsion to 'repair' (as in reconcile) early ruptures with primary caretakers affecting the child's (now adult) inner representational world.

[32] This will be discussed later in the chapter in relation to Klein's essay *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (1939)
[33] The psychoanalytic theory will investigate how these relationships are constructed through a combination of real and imagined infantile experience.
[34] This is the same year Bourgeois immigrated to New York. It is not clear exactly why she changed analysts but there are diary entries that suggest a discomfort with Leonard Cammer.
[35] This is a term referring to the patient in analysis.



Fig. 15. A young Louise Bourgeois c. 1912. Photo: The Easton Foundation

Her artworks, journals and free-associative writing uncover how in her early years, a young Bourgeois unconsciously 'paired' specific painful events with particular meaning and associated action as a psychological protective defense. These defense mechanisms, which are normal psychic devices, subsequently integrated into her unconscious, manifesting as particular personality traits and behaviors, the most notable being her decision to become an artist. In her conscious life, Bourgeois was first introduced to 'making' as a form of "cathartic sublimation" (Kuspit 24) as a child, in her parent's tapestry atelier where she would help mend damaged tapestries. This was the first experience she had of fixing something valuable which was broken and so from an early age she not only understood the difference between order and disorder in a material sense, but she also might have imagined that through these creative processes she felt in control of restoration, and enjoyed the feeling of self sufficiency in this regard. Throughout her life there are multiple accounts of addressing her status as an artist as a privilege and a choice (Larrat-Smith 8) offering insight into why Bourgeois became an artist in the first place:

> The decision was made for me by the situation of my family. My parents made their living in the arts - they repaired tapestries - so I was born into it. In a very practical way I had to make myself useful around their atelier. But there is a more basic motivation. I was the third daughter of a man who wanted a son. So to survive I had to create ways of making myself likable. It was the only way of escaping depression, which came from feeling superfluous – from feeling abandoned. Having been privileged with a native energy I switched from a passive role to an active one, which is an art I have practiced all my life - the art of fighting depression (emotional dependence) (Bourgeois qtd. in Miller 103)

This extract points to the conscious decision of becoming an artist - to being proactive in reconciling depression directly relating to feelings of abandonment. It also begins to support a Freudian reading of her work fueled by references to the paternal relationship. In this above instance the quote suggests the conscious action of a little girl who never felt like she was enough for her father because she was not born a boy. This is something fundamental over which she had no control but which would preoccupy her throughout her adult life. Therefore she adopted the role of artist - an active and in-control character.

This conscious real life experience belonging specifically to Bourgeois exists parallel to a universal unconscious one which according to Freud, is experienced by every girl around the age of three. Freud's theory on "penis envy" (Freud cited in O'Neill 132) and the ambivalent unconscious feelings present in a little girl who realizes she is missing (out on) something explains how the negation deeply affects how valued she feels in the world. The absence or presence of a penis is linked equally to ideas around power as it is to ego strength[36] and identity and will form an important part of a child's stabilizing identity. When the little girl realizes that she will never be the opposite sex, she then resigns to adopt a feminine identity, but will forever be defining herself in relation to what she is not or does not have. This certainly seems to be the case for Bourgeois. With this in mind the act of making something that is not there is the ideal directive for an artist as if her desire to produce something is born directly out of the negation of something else. There is also evidence that her drive to become an artist is in many ways a defensive one as well. So while on the one hand, she creates in order to gain approval, in the following excerpt we see how she also becomes an artist specifically to rebel against her father:

> Why don't you Walk like that Girl my father would say. You never took the trouble to learn How./ Don't you ever look at yourself, why don't you take the time to study yourself/ My father would say. He then would buy me a fur. I have given the fur away I used to hate every thing he bought me. I thought it always was a show off and not of my type. It always was for a tramp. He wanted me to look like a tramp. I wanted then to look the contrary of a tramp that is to say a student or an independent woman or an artist or a saint (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 25[37]).

In her writing, the object of dissatisfaction (her father) takes the form of a fur pelt – a skin she rejects, like he rejects her - and instead chooses an alternative membrane more befitting of an 'artist'. Surely an artistic cover would offer her the impartiality she was seeking? I cannot help but consider how this fur feels like a hide, and perhaps her new choice of cover, becoming an artist, was as much about hiding away as it was about seeking

[36] Ego refers to the structural description of the psyche, specifically the organized part of the mind which is susceptible to common sense and which may be influenced by the external world. This is contrasted with the id, which contains the psyche's uncontrollable passions (Rycroft 43).
[37] LB-0466 November 27, 1951

something. 'Hiding' also references her father's denigration/ beating down on her. She was made to feel undesirable. The idea also brings to mind pelvic 'fur' so there is basis here to suggest an unfulfilled sexual desire between father and daughter relating to Freud's Oedipus complex. Here once again, she turns to art to resolve the conflicting desire and detest for her father and all the impossible feelings about (and towards) him.

In 1958, the fur symbol arises again when Bourgeois records an "atrocious dream" that describes her father's young mistress Sadie, wearing a "head to knee" fox fur. In the dream she goes into a rage about the affair, which has "made [her] unfit for married or professional life". In the dream she notes how her father is shocked at her mentioning sex and she suddenly feels ashamed for blaming him for that which is unconscious to him. In the dream Bourgeois goes onto describe how as a result of Sadie's jealously (which appears faintly) Bourgeois' commits suicide at the hands of what she describes as "impotence…castration terror" because she "cannot do anything" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 80)[38]. This dream is another example of how her hostility to her father is a "screen for her love" and how the loss of this love object and fear of abandonment is experienced as castration. This is seen in her work in the evolution into phallic symbols in the late 60's (Larrat-Smith 11). Bourgeois echoes this in her explanation of her practice in "the art of fighting depression" and how it is linked to feelings of abandonment, which would have likely affected all emotional attitudes extending into other relationships. And while the specifics of what was discussed in her analysis remain formally undisclosed, it becomes apparent through her work and writing that something very sad lived in this artist; partly due to predictable issues arising from 'normal' psychic development and partly owing to a deep-rooted 'real' experience of not being wanted in the world. Psychoanalysis would have provided her with a different kind of insight into these issues and drives. Here it should be noted that she used art to feel 'useful' and literally make[39] herself 'likable'. As Bourgeois writes in 1958 "I do not have to live in an empty world/ world of a vacuum […] I can only create/ my own artist world of omnipotence + fantasy/ I have to control space because I cannot/ stand emptiness […] (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 73[40]).

[38] LB-0449 from 10 October 1958

[39] This is a play on words: The artist literally uses her artistic ability to 'make' herself into something else. As if she IS the sculpture.

[40] LB-0272 from 29 January 1958



Fig. 16. A fur-draped Louise Bourgeois (with *Fillette*) photographed by Robert Mapplethorpe in 1982.

This needs to be considered in relation to a mostly Kleinian reading of her compulsion to 'repair' (as in reconcile) early ruptures with primary caretakers affecting the child's (now adult) inner representational world. In *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (1939), Klein discovered that the early relationship between the child and the mother holds important evidence for certain proactive and reparative drives in adulthood: The infant, believing itself literally to be part of the mother, experiences a profound loss when it experiences its first separation from her (e.g. the mother does not come the minute the baby cries). The infant does not yet possess a widespread range of emotions to rationalize this scenario and feels this event as an overpowering pendulum that swings between love and hate. To punish the mother for leaving, the infant phantasizes about killing her, but as the infantile mind is not yet able to distinguish between phantasy and reality, the infant then believes that it has actually killed its mother, which produces an overwhelming sense of guilt for committing such a vengeful act towards its love object. Thereafter, the infant spends the rest of its life trying to repair the damage done by these repressed feelings of murderous guilt (306-11). It is this drive to repair this repressed memory, which builds the layers of the psyche, and it is only later in adult life that the unconscious mind is able to bring these events into consciousness, re-think and renovate that repressed experience.

By 1965 Bourgeois is starting to come to terms with her aggression and she writes:

> When people run away from me, avoid me/ it is certain that I will have difficulty not feeling / the anger surge […] a dog bites the one who runs away from it, the one who is afraid of it, / but is there not a lesson - if people run away from you / avoid you […] / examine thyself - / Because escape is not aggression, however / I have entered this morning the "violent" period I have / worked very very well see the notes and drawings of (21 February 65) (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 149[41]).

When examining her concurrent work created over this "violent" period, the guilty aggression come alive in sculptures like *The Quartered One* (1964-5)[42]: Here a metal cable strings up a bronze carcass. The suspended mass is blackened, meaty and cold. It gives the appearance of something solid but then upon inspection it is actually hollow. The

[41] LB – 0401 from 21 February 1965
[42] This is a work that I visited at Dia: Beacon, as discussed in the introduction.

experience of the work is theatrical, and walking around it leads to discoveries of unexpected cavities and crevices. This is reminiscent of what the three-dimensional experience of psychoanalysis might bring - as if walking the circumference of the work is like walking around a memory, re-entering it, re-experiencing it and maybe being surprised by it. In *this* memory, it feels like something terrible has happened, something has been killed for consumption or burned at the stake, it feels merciless, dangerous and dead.



Fig. 17. *The Quartered One (1964-5).* 158.1 x 61 x 50.8 cm. Photo: Döirte Biri

But then circling reveals a cavity in the belly of the beast which now feels like a hive or nest, as if something might hatch, live and thrive inside there, perhaps one of her spiders that she would create later on. So this is a place to hold life, but it is also a dead thing and in one moment the work is all about love and hate, containment and bereavement. Nixon points out how her poured sculptures from the 1960's are born out of what Klein was attempting to understand: "what is it like at the beginning of life" and similarly the tensions of the life and death drive where inside and outside are the same thing and how for the infant devoid of psychic maturity, this negotiation is the "stuff of nightmare" (Klein qtd. in Nixon 187). In a work like this, the artist would have likely been trying (once again) to make amends with an internal mother in an external way. Revisiting this primal memory in psychoanalysis would have been doing something very similar.

The above established analytical model, exists on one level as a sort of frame of reference but then in a addition to this, Bourgeois' own unique lived experience, as a daughter, must be understood parallel to this narrative. *The Quartered One* (1964-65) sheds some light on the artist's complex relationship with her mother Josephíne Valerie Fauriaux Bourgeois. Louise was very close to Josephíne who "protected" her and who was like a "best friend". A little Louise looked up to Josephíne describing her as:

> […] A tapestry woman, and like a spider, a weaver…she was very clever. Spiders are friendly presences that eat mosquitoes. We know that mosquitoes spread diseases and are therefore unwanted. So, spiders are helpful and protective, just like my mother (Bourgeois qtd. in "Tate acquires Louise Bourgeois' giant spider Maman" n.pag.).

But did Josephíne really protect her child the way she needed? As it turns out Josephíne was a conflicted character - sick both mentally and physically, with abandonment issues of her own and there is evidence to suggest that a young Louise with her self-diagnosed "native energy" (Bourgeois qtd. in Miller 103) was in fact the protective one in the relationship. Her father Louis, went to war when Louise was a child, eventually returning due to injury. It was around her pre-teens that Louise discovered that her father was having an affair with her beloved governess (Sadie Gordon Richmond), who was

subsequently moved into the house, so the affair could continue (ignored by her mother) and *this* experience is continuously recounted by Bourgeois as one of her deepest betrayals. So much of Bourgeois' accounts blame her father, but what is completely sidelined is the anger towards a mother who allowed this to happen. One can only wonder what a young girl, already lending her skills to help the family business, was not maybe trying to use her artistic ability to keep something else together - like her parent's marriage. Sadie was practically Louise's age so there was a very complicated sexual ambivalence present in her pre-teen home.

When we then consider how Josephine battled depression, had a husband who abandoned her (first for War and later for a younger woman) we start to understand how these factors might have contributed to a damaged mother and a broken daughter. When Josephíne contracted Spanish Flu in 1921, Bourgeois' mathematics education was interrupted so that she could return home and take care of her mother. Mathematics, Bourgeois' first expressive love was rooted in her love for rules as she wrote in 1958 "[…] In geometry there cannot be violence because/ all cases are considered – no surprises one can be / calm […]" (LB - 0267). But in 1932, her mother died and calmness came to an end, plunging the artist into a deep depression. It is at this point that she abandoned her studies in mathematics to study art. If mathematics could not help her fix her mother, perhaps art could? In 1965 she writes about drawings representing "the udders of the mother. Perhaps the/ refuge in the mother after the disappointment provoked by the father […]" (LB – 0181). So when we see udder-like elements in *The Quartered One* – a symbol of birth and sustenance but also death and demolition one can begin to understand on multiple levels, how and why Bourgeois might be trying so desperately to fix things.

Klein observed that when a young child is raised, she internalizes that experience of the mother, and eventually the physical experience of the mother becomes an internal symbol (Burton and Graty n.pag.). This forms the basis of 'correct' emotional development. So if this experience has additional ruptures (like a depressed mother who is not able to care for the child) then that symbol is incomplete. The child will then have to, as an adult, reconstitute this symbol through some kind of reparative activity. In Bourgeois' case, her sculpture was part of this process and the creation of this kind of artwork sets up a role-

play between the artist and her symbols, correlating directly to the analytical engagement between the psychoanalyst and analysand in psychoanalysis. Presumably the interplay between enactment and verbalization of symbols like these would fix the 'broken mother' and neutralize the primal hold they had on her unconscious mind.

For many years however, her "suffering" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 71)[43] went undiagnosed as anything more than depression: a vague anxiety with no tangible understanding attached to it. Then when her mother died the loss suddenly became concrete, and the depression emerged. But in actual fact she lost her mother many years earlier, symbolically, because as we now know, she had to assume the role of active caregiver way before her time and presumably with a mentally ill mother, the assumption becomes that Bourgeois never really got to experience being a child at all. So when we see the below excerpt written in the time leading to her father's death we start to understand why dealing with a bereavement would provide some solace but not all. And fifteen years later, there is *still* something Bourgeois cannot access: In 1947 (four years before entering analysis) she wrote:

> I know you do not/ See that I am talking to you/ I know that you do not hear my voice and that you/ Do not know my 2/ languages french and/ english because you/ would have too much to do to/ to understand all the/ languages of all the/ countries/ but I know you will under-/ stand, my statue,/ because it does not make/ any noise, it does not/ bother you, it does not smell/ bad, it is not/ possible that it/ bother you/ or offend you-/ If I make one two, three,/ four statues on one/ series/ it is because I/ must repeat myself, to be/ sure that my message/ reaches you, if/ you want/ ten of them I will make ten, a hundred/ an infinity I will never/ tire, we/ will have an/ accumulation of/ statues like the grains/ of sand on the shore./ You/ do not need to/ elect me, but do not abandon/ me it is all I am/ asking do not get/ angry/ do not kill me by mistake/ I will continue working/ For you, even if you/ ask me to take care / of my brothers and sisters./ For you I will let them/ Give me hell. I swear to you/ that I will not harm/ them - I cannot offer you/ more (Bourgeois qtd.

[43] LB – 0181 from 29 may 1965

in Larrat-Smith 23)[44].

It sounds as if Bourgeois is talking to her own unconscious in this excerpt, trying to access a part of herself that feels abandoned and judged - the part of herself that was not adequately parented. There is a distinct feeling that the part of herself she is speaking to is removed and inaccessible, even threatening ("do not kill me by mistake"). There is a sense of desperation in her tone like an ex-girlfriend begging to get back together with a jilted lover ("you do not need to elect me, but do not abandon me…"). There is a reference to other languages and countries suggesting a foreignness that requires translation and then she talks about her statues and how they might be understandable in ways that words cannot. In contrast to the established idea of the object, which is alive, "statues" suggests a calcified and lifeless relationship. In 1947 Bourgeois already understood art making to provide an alternative language to decipher that which words could not. Then almost in desperation, she offers these statues in perpetuity as a kind of sacrifice to alter. In this passage, like in so many of her writings, there is an overarching sense of labor and burden, a primal need to explain herself clearly and reveal meaning artistically in order to be loved. This laborious undertone is very significant and I understand this to mean that her artwork was being created out of harassment and was not necessarily always successful in helping her repair whatever negation she felt - as she says in a later passage "…there is a secret and I cannot get at it…" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 26)[45] but try she did. And a key method of accessing this "secret" was by engaging with different materials to unlock it.

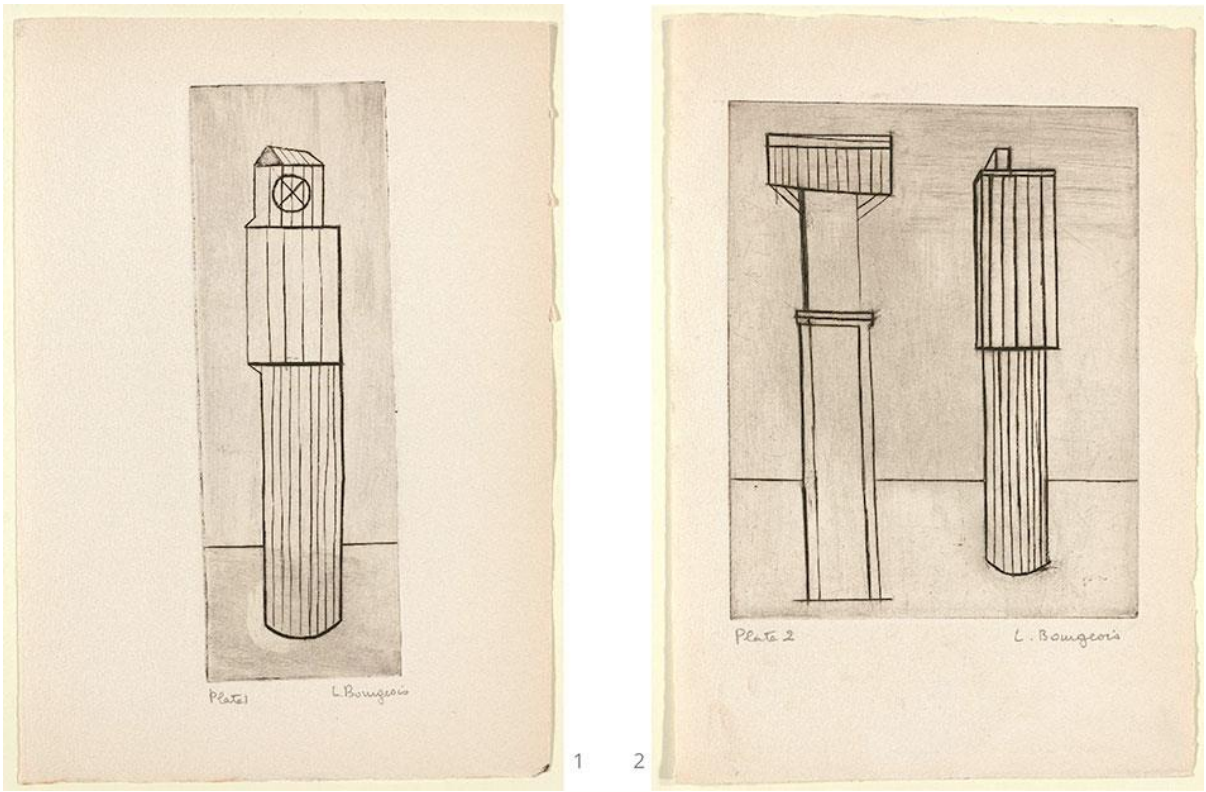
With this in mind, when investigating her imagery and materials of the period, they stand in stark contrast to each other and begin to track a rigorous internal process. When examining her work in the late 1940's in relation to those produced in the late 1960's (materials that redeploy from etching, into marble, bronze and eventually latex) her work dramatically evolves out of the two dimensional plane and into the third dimension, growing into tactile and robust stratospheres. Surely these external shifts mirror an intense inner process that becomes more and more palpable as her access to her internal world deepens? Put in another way, it is as if her whole life, Bourgeois had been a farmer, working the surface of the land, relentlessly ploughing, planting and plucking. What

[44] LB-0689 from c.1947
[45] LB – 0454 from 3 December 1951

analysis would do however is provide an alternative to working above ground (Lamprecht n.d.): she would now become a miner, with access to new unchartered depths; a dark place, with minerals and ores hidden between layers of rock and dangerous pitfalls. But if excavated meticulously, with the right safety systems in place, would hold unlimited potential and break new ground.

When comparing a portfolio of nine engravings with text, *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947), materiality as an acute indicator of an internal reconfiguration of relations between Surrealism and psychoanalysis emerges (Nixon 83-117). Nixon goes on to discuss how Bourgeois' interest in cutting into the surface of the metal plate, mirrors an interest in going deeper in search of a greater level of reality in which she could express "much deeper things" (Bourgeois qtd. in Wye 18). Furthermore, 'cutting' becomes a further metaphor for Nixon in the way Bourgeois 'cuts' herself off from Surrealism in the inclusion in this work's narrative of an image from Bréton's account of a waking dream published in his 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism*. A key difference between Bréton's fantasy is that it is surreal appearing in the mind's eye, versus Bourgeois' phantasy which is a bodily unconscious materialized as the action of physical cutting in the process of engraving (Rowley 2). Furthermore Nixon points out how while Surrealism's interest was in Outsider art (in the work of psychiatric patients), Bourgeois' focus on a Kleinian approach to the same subject, draws psychosis into everyday life. A core theme in *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* is Nixon's reading of this work as an allusion to Klein's case study of a child-patient Dick, who is so inhibited by his own fear of aggression that he cannot play or speak. Eventually, he is able to act out his aggression through the cutting of small pieces of black wood from a toy coal cart with a pair of scissors, which is an action which evokes the inking and engraving in the printing process (Klein cited in Nixon 102). Nixon points out how creating this body of work in the late 1940's (pre-psychoanalysis) signals a psychic precursor to an unconscious phantasy. Like Dick, she did not want to become overcome by anxiety, and this case study (and artwork) provided her with a clue to how a psychoanalyst might later help her escape a brewing depression through art and exchange. Dick and Klein represent a layered use of object-relations as it includes actual objects as embodied in Klein's play-therapy/ child-analysis technique (102). This is contrasted with Bourgeois' actual psychoanalysis where (presumably) she would have been on the couch, talking,

without actual objects in the room. This is an element she introduced later herself, in the studio, further emphasizing how Bourgeois was working with her child-self in psychoanalysis.



1 2

Fig 18.1 Louise Bourgeois *He Disappeared into Complete Silence, Plate 1* (1947) engraving in black on woven paper, 25,4 x 35,6 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Photo: The Easton Foundation.

Fig. 18. 2. Louise Bourgeois *He Disappeared into Complete Silence, Plate 2* (1947) engraving in black on wove paper, 25,4 x 35,6 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Photo: The Easton Foundation.

Contrast this pre-psychoanalysis work with one created fifteen years *into* psychoanalysis: In the bronze *Unconscious Landscape* (1967-8) nine polished bronze bulbous forms emerge out of a blackened base of folds and crevices. The work is so much smaller than I expected[46], because in the reproductions the work has such presence and girth. The work is much like a memory, which seems insignificant but in reality is all encompassing. The staccato profiles embody a rhythmic charm and are infectious; the forms feel male and female and seem to taunt the viewer into needing to touch their swollen peaks. There is something uncomfortably sexual about their protrusions and this encounter somehow



Fig. 19. Louise Bourgeois *Unconscious Landscape* (1967 – 1968). Bronze, black and polished patina. 30,5 x 55 cm. Photo: The Easton Foundation

feels forbidden, perhaps even bad. These nipple and penile pods build on this array of recurring imagery referencing her mother and father in relation to a growing understanding of her own sexuality.

[46] This is a work I engaged with at the Dia: Beacon.

Their bronze constituent feels in direct contrast to their elicited softness and brings to mind something disobedient and insensible. The title sheds some light on this incongruence, suggesting an expansive panorama of unconscious experience, an unknown oblivion that is alluring and ensnaring, dangerous and nourishing. Together the imagery, contextualized within a time span of sixteen years of psychoanalysis, reveals a woman emerging out of a dark unconscious fold, getting in touch with her sexuality, understanding her relationship with her internal objects and more aware than ever of the depths of her own unconscious landscape. This work also begins to address the complexities of the unconscious and the potential/ potency that coexist within the drive to repair.

According to psychoanalysis, reparation is an essential component in addressing this self-fragmentation. In order to understand this, one needs to examine key psychoanalytic discoveries relating to the human psyche: The first of which is that according to Freud, consciousness is repressed. Consciousness puts into exile that which it does not want to view in order to protect us (Barratt n.d.). The function of psychoanalysis is to work with the symbols that the psyche produces, en lieu of harsh realities, and process and deconstruct these symbols in an effort to repair a painful past that exists unconsciously. To better understand this construct Freud explains that the psyche is comprised of three things: Thoughts, images and feelings, and that the only way to truly know oneself is by uncovering the meaning of these components (Barratt n.d.). Freud sets this up as a theoretical tool to explain the unconscious but incredibly, Bourgeois literally and physically engages with all three of these mechanisms - she writes her thoughts, she scrawls her images and she reflects on her feelings - and each of these traces exist to concretize fleeting moments in her psychic journey. For Bourgeois, her sculptural works were what she referred to as "pensées plumes [thought feathers] (Bourgeois qtd. in Harris-Williams 31), little sketches of psychic threads that would later become works of art "... visual ideas that she captures in mid-flight and fixes onto a highly varied range of substrates. Through drawing/ writing/ sculpting she decants the complex memories and images of her past that emerge into consciousness, called up by intense emotions" (Leoni-Fegini “Louise Bourgeois” n. pag.) It is very important to note however, that we cannot assume that something, which is quoted as a first hand account, is an accurate version of itself, because according to Freud, we deliberately delude ourselves (Barratt n.d.). The unconscious mind,

sets up defenses as a way to protect the conscious mind from what it perceives as unbearable and in this way we are not necessarily overtly truthful to ourselves. Because, these fleeting feathers are symbolic and subjective, they need to drift into psychoanalysis to be thought about with a third party, and in a particular way. This explains why the artist was unable to activate real change in her life with art alone, as if the art is alluding to something, her mind refuses to understand it. Phillips describes this perfectly by saying: "The unconscious is an artist and the conscious mind is a scientist, and [...] the analyst is a kind of third party, a referee, a mediator, a translator, the person who speaks up for collaboration when only when antagonism is on the cards" (Phillips qtd. in Milner xxiii). So there is this ongoing conversation happening between the conscious and unconscious mind. But they are deliberately protective of their own points of view and so code meaning into a variety of cryptic symbols as a protective device. The irony is that they want the same thing: peace of mind. So enters the analyst to mediate the conversation, protect both parties and decode the symbols in a safe and contained way. The coming together of the conscious and the unconscious is a kind of reunion between two long lost friends. For the ancient Greeks, the word symbolon denoted a broken ring or coin - the bearer kept the first half while the other half was given to the person leaving. The symbol here infers that if and when the two friends were to meet again, their rings would once again form a perfect whole (Kuspit 129). This speaks to an interesting concept - a yearning for a connection, which is longed for at the deepest of psychic levels. In this case the relationship between the unconscious and the conscious - the parent and the child - a unity is deeply desired here. But this journey cannot take place alone so a subsequent relationship becomes important (the aforementioned 'pairs') namely the analysand and the analyst. Herein lies the function of the analyst, to be an active (yet objective) go-between in the conversation between the patient's conscious and unconscious mind. The analyst listens to the conversation between the two entities and facilitates a meaningful reunion. Typically in psychoanalysis, this interaction is a verbal one - four hours a week - where the analyst sits on a chair behind the patient who lies on the couch in an effort to relax and allow the voice of the unconscious to emerge. Free-association is a key component of this process. The only way to hear the 'voice of the unconscious' and decrypt the symbols, is through free-association, which builds on the layers of connotation, eventually leading to a meaningful root cause.

The free-association technique was originally used by Freud as a psychoanalytic technique, born out of the hypnotic method used by his mentor and friend Josef Breuer. The idea here was to have the patient talk and respond to themselves rather than by repeating the thoughts or prescriptions of the analyst, working through their own material versus "parroting" someone else's (Thurschwell 24). In free-association, psychoanalytic patients are invited to relate whatever comes into their minds during the analytic session, and not to censor their thoughts. This technique is intended to help the patient learn more about what he or she thinks and feels, in an atmosphere of non-judgmental curiosity and acceptance. Psychoanalysis assumes that people are often conflicted between their need to learn about themselves, and their (conscious or unconscious) fears of and defenses against change and self-exposure. The method of free-association has no linear or preplanned agenda, but works by intuitive leaps and linkages which may lead to new personal insights and meanings, which psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas points out in 2009 as "the logic of association is a form of unconscious thinking" (21). The technique in psychoanalysis is one that disrupts in the temporal sense in that this kind of exploration unsettles the idea that the present is in the present. Free-association in art however, is more of a spatial exploration with the potential for a different kind of material disruption (Barratt n.d.). We can only have one thought at a time and the next one will follow in sequence. But if that thought has been brought into the light of day from the repressed, it will be aware of its many associated strands from which it has grown "like a mushroom out of its mycelium" (Freud 525); In a similar way so too will the sculpted object (or even the sequentially regarded pieces in an installation) draw on its associations to uncover root meaning (Freud qtd. in Mitchell 51).

With this in mind, art making is also free-associative by nature, but in a different way. Choice of materials and engagement with particular processes have different associations and meanings for the artist and engaging with them, can provide clues to deep emotional associations which have yet to materialize. In this case, it is also like a conversation, but instead of this being a verbal one, it is a physical one. In Bourgeois' case, sculpture is one more way of symbolizing that, which is preverbal. So she might not have words for a feeling yet, but might be able to bring it the surface by pressing, chipping or shining something

hard, soft, pliable or sticky (as examples). Free-association in art is different to free-association in psychoanalysis. They are distinctive but mutually influential modes of discourse. For example, recounting in analysis, the materials used, the process engaged in and her feelings towards the end product, would be very similar to for example, another free-association around a real-life incident: who was involved, what events transpired, how she handled them and her feelings around the result. In a way they are no different, except that the created object, has additional emotional and experiential associations, which would offer new layers of potential meaning.

So while I do think Bourgeois' access to this type of artistic association affected her psychoanalysis by offering another layer of symbolism, I do not believe the art alone was enough to keep her 'sane'. One only has to reference back to her professional frustrations in her early years to understand this point[47]. Bourgeois did believe that as an artist, her process gave her privileged access to unconscious thoughts. As she said in 1998 "The whole art mechanism is the result of many privileges […] it was a privilege also to be able to sublimate. A lot of people cannot sublimate. They have no access to their unconscious" (Bourgeois qtd. in Bourgeois 164). Symbolizing occurs through free association, and as established, in analysis this is verbal, in art making it takes on the physical non-verbal dimension. According to Lefika La Phodiso, The Art Therapy Centre,

> Art making is an innately human instinct that overcomes language and cultural barriers and is therefore a highly effective way of engaging with traumatic experience. When art materials are engaged with in a free-associative way, the process may evoke different feeling states reflecting the unconscious forces that shape one's experience" (Berman n.pag.).

[47] By this stage she had been practicing art for some time but achieved only minor professional success and continued to experience enacted tensions with her male contemporaries.

With this in mind, artworks are encrypted indications of unconscious activity wanting to become conscious, as Larrat-Smith refers to “sculpture as symptom” (Larrat-Smith 17), the object may point to an internal illness, but it does not necessarily provide the cure. The cure requires another layer of assignation - self-awareness - that is most likely to be unveiled through therapeutic discussion. Bourgeois’ remark "I carry my psychoanalysis in my work” (Bourgeois qtd. in Cooke n.pag.) is an interesting statement as it points to an inclination to bring what happened in therapy into the studio and vice versa. Bourgeois was bilingual - French and English speaking - and in her writings and in conversation she switched eloquently between the two, as if the one language better expressed what the other could not. It seems that this interplay of languages mirrors the cross-pollination of the other two expressive languages self-scrutinized during her lifetime: art and psychoanalysis.

Therefore Bourgeois’ work and process would primarily exist to embody a need or a feeling. This is evident in her materials mirroring the pairing of her internal relationship with her external world and in a sense through her materials, her art would come into being in order to act as a mirror and disrupt/ distort something in her external world. *Femme Maison* (1946 - 7) portrays peculiar images of houses as heads, and shaky architectural structures alluding to an insecure state of mind, carrying a domestic world on her shoulders and working through this consequence through art: in 1950 Bourgeois said “When you work you could run in joy carrying the house on your shoulders” (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 25)[48]. The quote references her inclination to create in order to ‘run’/ function in the world and the imagery and process provide clues to an even deeper set of affairs. The imagery of a house in dreams often

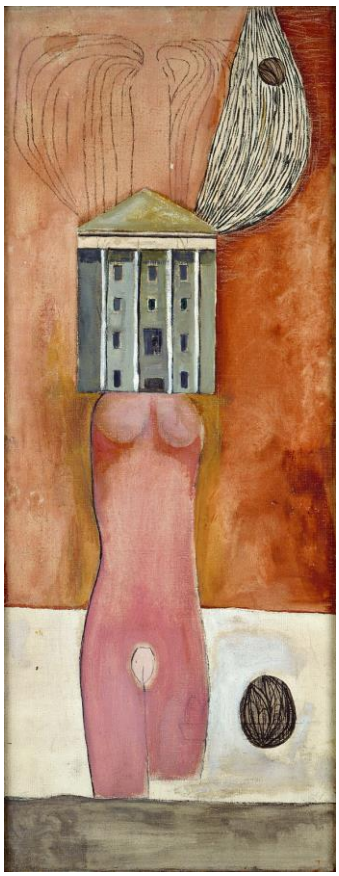


Fig. 20. Louise Bourgeois *Femme Maison (Mujer Casa)* (1946 – 1947) Oil and ink on linen. 91,4 x 35,6 cm. Photo: Rafael Lobato

[48] LB – 0466 27 November 1951

represents bodies, particularly female/ maternal ones (Barratt n.d.). This positions Bourgeois as a female artist and all the politics surrounding her femininity[49]. *Femme Maison* directly translates as 'House Wife' or 'Woman House' suggesting as Iris Müller-Westerman put it in 2005, that her house is her "limiting identity" (70). Coxon, in a chapter titled "Limits of the Canvas" notes how Bourgeois paintings from this period are characterized by images of rooftops and houses reiterating the following idea:

> […] For Bourgeois it was not only fighting the physical and mental space in which to make her art (and through its making, to take herself seriously as an artist), she was also struggling to find a medium, a language and vocabulary that would ring true to her and become her own. In the years that followed, she abandoned the practice of painting and found her freedom of expression in sculpture, extending her studio space onto the roof of the building in which her family lived. It wasn't enough to just escape the 'house styles' that she has so despised as a young artist gaining experience in the Parisian studios; she also needed to escape the claustrophobic confines of the canvas itself, and her desire for something solid led her to work in three dimensions in search of what she called a 'fantastic reality' (19).

Further to this, the house as a head begins to tell a story about a burden located in the mind, weighing down on the body and deeply affecting the way it needs to carry itself in the world. So this is association born out of a narration of the subject matter. But there is a whole other potential meaning that can be uncovered by free-association to the physical process used in these works as well - this requires one to imagine what might have been going on in the artist's mind while engaging with the process of making the work: The process utilized to create this work is painting. There is a correlation between this process and her self-understanding: the flatness references a self-understanding which is only surface. Her imagery, while wildly indicative of her state of mind, is limited to the descriptive and not the experiential. As Nixon points out, here the material execution mirrors an emotional state longing deeply for something. But as an artwork alone, it will really only ever sit on the surface of a much deeper problem, resulting in relief images of

[49] *Femme Maison* was reproduced on the cover of Lucy Lippard's influential set of essays on woman's art *From the Centre* positioning Bourgeois as a feminist artist i.e. a representation of being female and more specifically of being a woman artist.

the ‘thing’, but not quite the ‘thing’ itself (121). It was only once Bourgeois entered into psychoanalysis that this instinct could finally be imagined alongside her art, and transform into the long-term restitution she had been working towards.



Fig. 21. Louise Bourgeois in Carrara Italy, contemplating *Germinal* (1967) Photo: The Easton Foundation.

In 1968 (the same year she completed *Unconscious Landscape*) she writes:

> I want to bring to a conclusion a concern of/ many years – curved planes, as they/ existed in the industrial world of the/ molded forms cast pressed industrially/ produced – how this given/ vocabulary can be made to express/ elemental emotions and be read/ by twentieth century eyes/ The hunger/ the envy/ the disgust/ the indignation/ the violence/ the revenge/ the perplexity/ the doubt/ the will/ the quandary/ the face in the past/ expressed those emotions/ states of being/ creation of a vocabulary of forms/ even though the human figure/ is not presented/ no one can fail to be/ shaken by the emotion conveyed/ expressed (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 171)[50].

Characteristically the only evidence (to the outsider) of a successful analytical intervention would be a comparison between previous and subsequent behavior and emotional stability of the patient. What makes Bourgeois' case so fascinating is that as an artist, at some point her artworks entered the conversation. So in addition to behavioral/ emotional shifts, we have visual and written psychosomatic breadcrumbs, evidence of, and instigators in, her psychoanalytic journey. This is what she describes in the writing above, considering how she has developed a visual emotional vocabulary with unmistakable sensitivities. Kuspit's characterizes her artworks as "journal entries in permanent form" (18). Just as a journal is designed to purge deep feelings and make sense of them by externalizing, her works as mentioned are sometimes described as cathartic in nature. But a diary alone cannot necessarily fix anxiety. Talk therapy evolved in order to have a trained and empathetic listener to hear the worry, process the root concern and give it back to the patient to be re-internalized in a more digestible form.

Let us consider this idea in relation to a scenario located in a childhood memory of Bourgeois where she recounts a painful interaction with her father at a dinner gathering. He peeled a tangerine in one long skinny slice and then dangled it to resemble a body. He then joked publically how it looked like Louise, with nothing between her legs but a few

[50] LB – 0685 from c.1968

white hairs. Her response: “I took white bread, mixed it with spit and molded a figure of my father. When the figure was done, I started cutting off the limbs with a knife. I see this as my first sculptural solution” (Bourgeois qtd. in Meyer-Thoss 53). What happens in the above scenario is the child took to her creativity as a resource in order to cope with what was obviously a hideously embarrassing situation of a father making explicit public reference to his daughter’s genitals. This would have triggered feelings of deep shame associated with her female-ness (as discussed earlier). Acting the above scene out artistically was a defensive, almost desperate act to manage very difficult feelings of abandonment in that moment. She also dismembers her father in this act (drawing on the punishment in the castration complex). Her anger is a necessary feeling to resolve such a severe experience. But I would be very surprised if this actually helped in solving the dilemma for the young daughter. Now what psychoanalysis would offer is an alternative safe place (other than the dinner table) to play out this phantasy. In psychoanalysis the analysand would recount and free-associate the experience. She might verbally fantasize about cutting off her father’s legs and arms depending where the associations take her. The analyst would then reflect back, explain the hard feelings, contextualize it psychoanalytically (if helpful), link it to previous associations and over time, offer empathy and explanation for this course of action. Therefore it is this conversation, which would serve as the foundation for the reconciliation to take place. Without the reflection, understanding and being heard, all you would have… is a soggy piece of bread and an angry child[51].

Klein provided a psychoanalytic view on why the psyche turns to creativity in times of distress: Picking up where Freud left off, she recalls the ‘Primal Scene’ where the child first discovers, phantasizes, imagines and interprets the sexual act between its parents as an act of violence. Key to this psychosexual development is a vacillation between the Life and Death drives. She describes the potent relationship of these two instincts in play and phantasy and named the condition of the psyche when the destructive tendency of the Death Instinct is prevalent, as the ‘Paranoid-Schizoid Position’ and the condition of the psyche when the creative life instinct is prevalent, as the ‘Depressive Position’. Klein regarded these unconscious instincts as the driving forces of the psyche that manifest

[51] This resolution (in a sense) precludes the conscious agency on the part of the maker of the object - highlighting the unconscious agency as a primary factor.

through the id and trigger the ego, the conscious part of the psyche, into destructive and creative activity. Klein uses this theory to explain the interplay of destructive and creative activity evident in young children's play, pointing out how this interplay occurs when children have lost some contact with the good object (e.g. a father who is denigrating or uncaring): In this instance (in an effort to manage psychic discomfort) the child enters into some form of frenzied and aggressive play which may manifest as destruction, discontent and frustration. Following this engagement the child later emerges out of the phantasy having repaired and regained some sort of positive relationship with the good object. This kind of playful catharsis is necessary so that the child can once again engage positively with the world (427-8). In this way, Bourgeois' molded bread/ (first) sculpture is a form of play, designed to help her manage the situation on an unconscious level. This supports the idea of play and art as a mode to engage with deep feelings but it does not give the impression that the damage has been repaired, only managed. So it seems to have offered her some momentary release and ownership over a situation out of her control. Salcedo warns that art does not give answers, rather its value lies in the opportunity for art to ask difficult questions (Doris Salcedo Guggenheim Audio Tour). Therefore art is a start, but not a resolution in and of itself. This viewpoint offers some insight into Bourgeois' pre-analytic artistic frenzy and lack of resolution.

Similarly, the following free-associative passage, written by Bourgeois, begins to uncover how creative expression, is not necessarily always transformational, sometimes it is about survival.

> The damned up energy is terrific […] of course it is "the" reason they have become artists/ why (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 31)[52]. […] The creative energy seems to be related to that gushing of emotional/ force slightly diverted by a soothing hand. reassurance of the right/ kind. That reassurance which transforms the hate into work, may come/ from a certain amount of past success, or a "certitude" of attaining some/ may be form of being wanted,/ Sometimes it's a hydra writhing and sometimes it is a sea of lava/ In the mornings when I wake up it is right under my fingers if I touch / my heart, tense in angry silence. Any fear as tiny or unjustified/ as

[52] LB-0457 from 4 December 1951

> can be open the dam. Pouring of aggressive reproaches,/ Fatigue at the end of the day is likely to bring anxiety and break/ Down in fears. Depression set in, and paralyzing fears, somatic ailments/ Stimulant, coffee or alcohol, open up the doors too, instantaneously./ Meeting people, friends or not are exciting. Have same effect./ How to use this knowledge to make me work […] (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 32)[53].

In the above passage written in 1951, Bourgeois connects the sensitivity under her fingers to a deep-seated internal depression. A "stimulant" like a drug that "opens" doors and this "gushing" sensation must then be channeled into "work" bringing a new layer of meaning to the idea of the art*work*. Klein asserts that the infant-self (inherent in the adult woman) unconsciously perceives herself responsible for having done terrible damage to her parents and therefore this kind of creative adult expression is unconsciously geared by an overwhelming anxiety and sense of guilt, preoccupied with repair (218). In Bourgeois case, the above passage suggests that her impulse to create germinates out of an anxious, fearful disposition that lives under the surface, in a subterranean primal place, and she instinctively knows that her body will continue to re-experience it until it can be externalized and thought about. Psychoanalytically speaking, this "damned up energy" is old unresolved cellular knowledge living in the body and mind. The reason for this, as Freud discovered is that time is not linear, rather the human mind is complex with multiple strands of time, enabling the mind to travel backwards and forwards and re-experience events many times over. Laplanche coined this anomaly "afterwardsness[54]" and it is this potential for the re-experience that means that events are never behind us resulting in difficult or painful imaginings that revisit and re-traumatize year in and year out (222). But because the conscious mind perceives it to be in the past, it denies its existence and suppresses the feeling, only to have it surface in a different forms like stress, anxiety and (in Bourgeois' case) insomnia. Bourgeois wrote extensively on the revisiting of her past,

[53] LB-0455 from 17 December 1951

[54] Also translated from the German 'nachträglichkeit'. The term initially appeared in Freud's writings in 1890 with the use of the adverb "afterwards" or "deferred" (nachträglich) referring to the effects of experienced latent trauma. Laplanche later appropriates this term as he says, "Freud's concept of afterwardsness contains both great richness and great ambiguity between retrogressive and progressive directions. I want to account for this problem of the directional to and fro by arguing that, right at the start, there is something that goes in the direction from the past to the future, and in the direction from the adult to the baby, which I call the implantation of the enigmatic message. This message is then retranslated following a temporal direction which is sometimes progressive and sometimes retrogressive […]" (222).

and how even in her nineties, her childhood remained a deep source of fascination for her. Bourgeois constantly referenced her subject matter as a return to various childhood traumas referring to this psychic time-travel and the revisiting of key unconscious events as a spiral, seen in her work *Spiral Time* (2009).

In this work, this hypnotic corkscrew motif seems to be composed of one long winding strand but the wetness on the paper, and (presumably) the breadth of the brush used, causes these marks to leak and bleed into each other. The inflamed seepages resonate with the lack of control over unconscious time-travel and indicate her personal frustration with this "afterwardsness". To imagine walking this red line evokes a sense of dizziness and disorientation - another connection between memory, physical exertion and its dire consequence. Bourgeois' statement that, "[…] art is a guaranty of sanity […]" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 7) alludes to art as a tool to process and mend torturous memory and thus provide sanity. However, like the 'labyrinthine' psyche, all is not what it seems: Art is a "guaranty of sanity" not because it necessarily helps work through something, but perhaps because it might also protect the artist from looking at something that her unconscious perceives as so dangerous that it might make her mad! In this way, when produced under particular conditions, art can collude with the unconscious as a device to shield the conscious mind and can just be another way to keep hands occupied to distract the mind - a way to un-think about something - a clever psychic roadblock put in place to avoid some terrible future accident. And herein lies the guarantee of sanity and protection against losing the mind. In this way, art - making can be as much of a defense as "stimulants" like drugs, alcohol, running or working late. This is why this statement ("art is a guaranty of sanity") is so evocative, because it positions the defense in a protective shroud. But it needs to be understood from all angles before sanity can truly be maintained.

Enter the analyst: "the creative energy seems to be related to that gushing of emotional force slightly diverted by a soothing hand" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 32)[55]. This "soothing hand" and diversion to help her face the things she is most afraid of, the analyst would break down those defenses, so that her work could finally become about building not hiding. And once this transpires, then and only then, would art truly be a "guaranty of

[55] LB-0455 from 17 December 1951

sanity". Sanity refers to peace of mind and/ or rehabilitated neurosis because self-expression does not always and inevitably lead to "sanity". Williams points out how this guaranty is achieved not through the casting away of troubles but because through the process, we learn to "stand more[56]".

In order to understand how this relationship works we need to consider some key factors: Firstly, it is important that given her volatile history in relation to her father, she selected a male analyst to help her repair this relationship. This would create a particular male-female dynamic in therapy whereby she might be able to address internal images of her father, through this particular pairing (Kuspit 17-25). Further to this, containment is a key psychoanalytic idea relevant to this neutralization. Bion focused on the importance of the individual's relationship to his environment and the importance of the mother's adaptability to respond intuitively to her infant's needs. According to his Container-Contained model (1974), the psychotic experience is caused by the mother's failure to



Fig. 22. Louise Bourgeois *Spiral* (2009) Gouache on paper. 59,7 x 45,7 cm. Photo: The Easton Foundation

[56] "Artists don't get better and better, but they are able to stand more" (Kuspit qtd. in Williams 25). She goes onto cite Bion and what he says of psychoanalysis: "How can we become strong enough to tolerate it?" (Bion qtd. in Williams 40).

contain her infant's fear of dying. The model suggests that an infant, lacking its own ego, projects its fears into the mother. The mother then modifies the anxiety and returns it to the infant in a safer form. However if the mother fails to do this, the fear is re-projected back into the infant, only this time in a much more intense form. Bion's model replays this engagement between the analyst and patient. The task of the psychoanalyst is similar to that of the mother who will confront and tolerate the patient's fears. Once this projection is reconditioned, the patient is then able to abide unease and begin thinking normally (n.pag.). In this way, the relational exchange is key for reparation to take place. This model of the analytic encounter is very similar to that of Winnicott who also saw the analyst as taking over the role of the environment-mother that first failed the child. (Winnicot cited in Glover n.pag.). At this point I want to point out why this may not have come into Bourgeois' consciousness via the Fine Arts environment alone. This is because in art this containing dimension is unlikely to be present. In this dynamic, the audience is the sole receiver of this information and for the most part, the audience is self-regarding - not necessarily there for the good of the artist, but also for themselves. Once the artwork enters the public domain it becomes shared property. However, in psychoanalysis, while an exchange does take place, the work always belongs to, and exists because of, the analysand. Herein lies a possible reason why sculpture alone would not have been enough to achieve lasting reparation for the artist.

In 1955 (three years into analysis with Lowenfeld) Bourgeois wrote:

> […] 2AM- The wish to look, the wish to kill/ the fear to be a killer, the fear to look-/ ferry boat pronounced boite/ boite container have a thing fit in a container push down a/ thing to have/ fit in a container- something is too/ big for the container- it needs force/ to force it in the container, the salmon/ in the can. how neatly and deadly / pressed it is, in that container./ the contained disappears from view, it/ has been gotten rid of, it is as safely/ out of the way as can be expected, it is/ safely dead. a/ box as the instrument of/ killer because when people are killed they/ are put in a box, when you see a box, you/ see the dead- the container the contained or/ the other way round, one does not go without/ the other, the latter without the former/ to each their box, to each their place, that/ is the way you have order,

> everything in / its place, “a place for everything, everything/ in its place” that is the way you have/ peace, that is the way, you have silence/ putting books away, make boxes for set of/ oversized volumes, kind of resistance at making/ boxes, even though I have the boards-/ I would like to put them each in a box/ To have peace at last […] (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 44)[57].

This extract considers the complexities of containment. ‘Boite’ is French, a homonym for boat and box[58]. The word play suggests the incongruence of how something, which can travel and cover great depths, can also suffocate and become coffin-like. A mother who has the potential to hold and contain her child, makes mistakes, and might fail the child, relegating all that potential for containment into the ground. This allusion also references burial and a state of mourning. Reparation is so much about mourning something that which is no longer there, it requires time to process all the associated positives and negatives, send them off like a boat off to sea, and eventually lower them into their relevant boxes in the ground where they belong and say goodbye. Then there will be “peace at last.”

But as her arduous passage suggests, all this takes time - an entire childhood in fact. And so in order to reconstruct and repair this process analysis requires a long period of uninterrupted therapeutic intervention. The fact that Bourgeois did not exhibit publically for nearly a decade (1953-64) indicates how uncontained she might have been at the time and supports the earlier reading of her broken relationship with her parents[59]. It is no wonder that she did not invite outside opinion in the form of an audience for such a long period and it seems significant that she needed to spend time internally with the works and with her analyst, before she could exhibit them externally. When she eventually was ready to show her inner world to an outer one suggests she felt contained enough to do so. This is also seen in the shift in her pre- and post-analysis subject matter: Early symbols of linear

[57] LB-0131from 29 September 1955
[58] Translators note (Larratt-Smith 44)
[59] This is an auto-ethnographic and potentially speculative claim based on my own experience in analysis, which necessitated a period of contained isolation in analysis, in order to understand the fears raised through my work and circumstance. It was only once I felt contained (via a more resolved understanding of particular issues) that I then felt comfortable enough to show my work publically. In fact I deliberately withheld certain works from my final exhibition as they were not resolved and thus it felt too un-containing to share them with an audience at that time. I touch again on this idea of the audience holding an expanded view of the audience - object relationship towards the end of Chapter 1.

rods and unstable stacks (volatile devices) are replaced by lairs, cells and cages (contained structures) and "figures collapsed into a liquid field" (Nixon 169). In 1947 she exhibited a series of wooden stacked totems, her *Personages* at the Peridot Gallery in New York. Wood as a material evokes rigidity, referencing something that was once alive but now is not - it is almost as if Bourgeois is providing a second life for these redundant boughs, now cut off from their life source. These figurines are each representative of someone important from her past and exist as the entities that enable her to "exorcise the homesickness" (Leoni-Fegini "Louise Bourgeois" n.pag.) that she experienced when she left France and her family members, so in a sense she was the branch cut off from the tree. One particular example in this series is *Quarantania* (1947-53)[60]. In this work, Bourgeois revisits a group of previous *Personages* and groups them together with *Woman with Packages* (1949) - a totem that stands in for Bourgeois with three sack-like objects hanging off her waist representing her three children. They are each made from balsa wood, an easy-to-carve medium, giving it a homemade feel. With this work it seems as though the artist is attempting to resuscitate a living thing and give it new life as a reimagined object - perhaps this suggests an attempt to re-purpose herself as a maternal figure as she repetitively remarks how she has "failed as a wife / as a woman / as a mother / as a hostess / as an artist / as a business woman" (Bourgeois qtd. Turner n.pag.). In this way, her work until this point is existing on a particular level that is directly correlating to her emotional state at the time: cut off, unstable, and dismembered. In 2010 Coxon points out how the way in which these objects were originally 'environmental' in their display (without bases so that the viewer would enter the gallery and 'meet' the objects like people) (28). She goes onto discuss a more traditional reading of Bourgeois' work as 'assemblage' and relates this to the common place side-walk scene of detritus and thrown-away objects, a typical hunting ground for New York artists at the time. Here artists would salvage these objects from the sidewalks as a "rescue mission" (Storr qtd. in Coxon 82) perhaps because they recognized the beauty in unloved objects. Perhaps they empathized with something unloved inside themselves. Coxon points out how Bourgeois' career-long use of assemblage had less to do with an attempt to reflect her external environment than with her interest in the landscape of the mind, the emotional inner-worlds that she continued to fashion and shape into 'fantastic reality' (30). The idea of the 'salvaging of these objects' brings back to mind the earlier

[60] This was a work I viewed in person at MOMA

connection between the physical Fine Art object and the imagined one in psychoanalytical objection-relations theory. Nixon points out how these works are not so much 'memorials' as they are "material residue of the work of mourning", and is evidence of the guilt of having survived the war (Nixon qtd. in Rowley 3). Nixon also explains how perhaps their literal-ness is a weakness of the works and how the works that are born out of these in subsequent years, begin to better embody the psychoanalytic drives, namely the Death Drives which will be discussed later (Nixon cited in Rowley 3). In this way, she was drawing direct connection between her external environment and an inner feeling of abandonment from early, unresolved feelings of abandonment and guilt. In this way, she identified with the discarded objects, and brought them into her process as a way of exploring her projected feelings conjured up and becoming conscious. Coxon goes on to discuss the idea of assemblage in her early sculptures and how these are something of a repatriation "using assemblage in order to gather together substitutes for and fragments of her past" (28). Bourgeois draws on another key interpretation about assemblage, in 1986 when she stated:

> Assemblage is different to carving. It is not an attack on things. It is a coming to terms with things. With assemblage or the found object you are caught by a detail or something strikes your fancy and you adjust, you give in, you cut out, you put together. It is really a work of love. But there is something else in assemblage, there is restoration and reparation. Mind you, this is what my parents did, they restored and repaired tapestries, so there is a common attitude, to repair a thing, to find something broken, to find a tapestry torn apart with big holes in it and destroyed and step by step rebuild it - making an assemblage is that. You repair the thing until you remake it completely (Bourgeois qtd. in Storr 82-5).

Coxon points out how the act of assemblage, unlike the 'spontaneous methodology employed by the Surrealists, for Bourgeois, is about something careful, considered and is an act of "slowly repairing" (31). Furthermore, she notes how this idea is contrary to the idea of the 'genius artist' chiseling and hacking away to reveal a masterpiece. Rather, she points out how the act of chiseling is "an immediate expression of aggressive or even destructive drives" (Coxon 31). So when in the early 1960's (over a decade after entering

into analysis) Bourgeois shifted her making to marble, one can apply a similar psychoanalytical reading to the body of work that followed. This material shift suggests a growing ego strength as well as a need to visually express internal sensations that former materials like paint or wood, could no longer accommodate. In contrast to her earlier two-dimensional works, marble taps into the canon of the old masters and the Renaissance works that set up a male-dominated practice in pursuit of perfection (Coxon 44). This also provides another clue to how she saw herself in relation to her Modern contemporaries (as discussed earlier). This also echoes her preoccupation with her relationship with her father, and relates to a feeling of male domination and governance at the time. As an immigrant, and a woman in a male dominated New York art scene, Bourgeois felt like an outsider (Kuspit 21). So when we then see her works in the late 1960's in marble, a medium, which requires enormous skill to be conquered[61] it suggests her enormous commitment to process, be it mastering a challenging medium or undergoing long-term psychoanalysis. Marble also alludes to Bourgeois' captivation with materials possessing skin-like qualities. In the case of marble, it is 'skin-ish' in its tonality and natural aging qualities. In a sense, the medium feels a bit like petrified flesh. This idea of calcified rock, once again calls on notions of the excavation of something buried. Bourgeois would have been aware of the Freudian comparisons of analysis to archeological digs, comparing the associative process of analysis to the careful dusting away of layers of rock with a feather, to go deep beneath sand and rock and marble... into the unconscious I wonder if she might have been feeling "petrified"... "scared stiff" of the places her mind could take her (Larratt-Smith 10)? Therefore we see a dramatic evolution embodied in her symbols from the wooden sculpture, which are bodily and external to the marble works which reference internal structures and emotional landscapes.



Fig. 23. Louise Bourgeois *Labyrinthine Tower* (1962) Bronze. 45,7 x 30,5 x 26,7 cm. Photo: The Easton Foundation.

[61] Bourgeois actually studied marble techniques in Italy, Pietrasanta, nearby the quarries (in the same place where Brancusi and Noguchi worked)

Through comparison of her materials, her evolution becomes evident and the monumental works like these (as well as her bronze and latex works) are indicators of a growing ego sturdiness (Kuspit 18). Bronze suggests monuments, memorials and the immortalizing of something. These provide a radically different experience to the works that immediately preceded these, when in 1966 she was experimenting in latex resulting in fleshy, raw, visceral objects, which embodied the 'monumental' in less obvious ways. The processes employed interplay between subtractive and additive, suggesting that the emotional content is either building her up or taking something away. She does reference how "If I am in a positive mood, I'm interested in joining. If I'm in a negative mood, I will cut things" (Bourgeois qtd. in "Louise Bourgeois at Heide" 5). Once again reinforcing her tactile affinity to the materials and how engaging with them free-associatively and experientially provides a symbolic action (Larratt-Smith 8) and insight into her own state of mind and also challenges a phallocentric world (Coxon 45). In *Labyrinthine Tower* (1962) she utilizes pouring in her process, which suggests a growing acceptance of fate beyond her control, like "eruptions of magma" and the "breaking through of rejected instincts" (Louise Bourgeois qtd. in Larrat-Smith 10). In 1962 she wrote "[…] Sculpture can/ integrate many a/ blind and shapeless/ aggression but it/ requires more than/ that – […]" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 128)[62]. This subject matter is indicative of the attunement to her process, her ability to symbolize and a deep trustworthy relationship with her analyst (Larratt-Smith 10). The stronger she gets emotionally, the more robust her material and sculpture becomes. Seen in this 1959 excerpt where Bourgeois writes:

> In terms of sculpture/ why sculpture – because – the experiences/ reached when working are the deepest and / most significant and also because the/ descriptions are concrete/ sculpture is the others/ or rather clay is the others and/ the sculptor is the ego, these are situa/tions concrete and precise (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 110)[63].

In relation to her work this references how her world is no longer a two dimensional one, but rather it is a robust, undulating form that gains volume and presence the longer she is re-parented through her psychoanalysis.

[62] LB – 0787 from c.1962
[63] LB – 0630 from c.1959

In 1990 (thirty-eight years after entering into psychoanalysis) Bourgeois wrote: “closed world of which I/ see boundaries and which I/ can control – I am at/ ease in it./ Is life passing me by?/ that is what fear does-/ establish the distance between/ the immediate + the eternal/ the evanescent + the eternal” (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 128)[64]. In this passage the artist debates binary concepts and how they relate to internal fears. She correlates boundaries with the feeling of containment and how these reduce fear of the extreme shifting emotional states, remarking how the distance between the known and the unknown is somehow reduced and therefore less scary now. Here it becomes increasingly evident that a key component of her repair lies in the debating and linking of binaries (Larratt-Smith 11). Appreciating the positives and negatives present in life, and by recognizing good versus bad and light versus dark, gives way to a new understanding that neutralizes the original hold it had on her. Her work is filled with these opposing images of lairs and cells, soft and hard, male and female, nurturer and oppressor. Kuspit calls attention to the use of binary oppositions present in unresolved conflicts and suggests that “Bourgeois’ art - her symbolic object-forms - are psychoanalytic torsade’s […] weaving together the opposites that constitute her inner world and environment” (141). Namely the opposing forces of active versus passive; analyst versus analysand; male versus female; pleasure versus un-pleasure; body versus mind; positive versus negative. It is our accountability to find these two sides equally with our mind. In this way re-pair brings together potentially opposing pairs (as described earlier in the example of the “ring symbolon”) and creates a meaningful reunion. Psychoanalysis is not a blame game, rather it is an understanding one, and the oscillation between these opposing forces serves to help Bourgeois accept that things are complicated; it provides origins, deactivating the static around the idea and allowing the psyche to forgive and function in the world. The tension of binaries (the pairs) calls to mind unresolved and irreconcilable contradictions; the past and present; the active and passive; inside and outside; pleasure and pain and how, according to Larratt-Smith, they are inseparable (11).

[64] LB – 0554 from c.1990

RE: Connection

This brings me to the final and most important aspect of her life's work: Connectivity. Reparation is essentially the bringing back together of two or more separated parts. It is making something whole that is broken open. Ultimately, this symbolizes a longing for connection of parts. Bourgeois, like all human beings, craved connection with an/other - her pair. But while her professional and social evolution is remarkable, the most important indicator of reparation is seen in her sustainable and long-time relationship with Jerry Gorovoy (Kuspit 142). In psychoanalysis, the relationship with the analyst need only be temporary in the physical sense. Thereafter the intention is that, (hopefully) with an internalized self-sufficiency, interpersonal relationships would take its place so that she might live a normal, repaired life. This longing for connection and crystalizing of this concept psychoanalytically is captured in a small work titled *The Fingers* (1968): Here tens of tiny fingertips push through two bronze bases as if reaching for something above it. They are positioned on two small slabs – mirroring and reinforcing the idea of a pair to make connections and lighten heaviness. The tips of the fingers are polished as if reflecting the sun and moving through something towards an enlightenment. Hands reference self-sufficiency and the lifting of a burden and suggests that like the pairing of the art and analysis, the analyst and the artist are scratching through the surface in a way that her early etchings and solo practice could not. Now, instead of the finger-like-scratch-marks made on the etched surface of the works in the late 1940's, the actual fingers themselves emerge in the late 1960's, now more able to proactively scratch through (as opposed to scratch on) the thing that is itching. This image can be read as a developing foundation for the real connectivity established a further twelve years later with Gorovoy:

In 1980 the two met when Gorovoy was curating an exhibition *10 Abstract Sculptures* which included her work. Their first meeting was volatile and Bourgeois was extremely antagonistic towards him, threatening to pull her work from the exhibit. Gorovoy however managed to placate her. Like Lowenfeld, Bourgeois' aggression did not frighten Gorovoy. Rather he was curious and invited her for tea. On the way to their meeting she fell and it was then that he noticed how vulnerable she was (Gorovoy qtd. in Hamer n.pag.). Some weeks later she invited him to her studio to show him some of her other works. Soon after

this engagement, he joined her weekly and finally daily, as her assistant. He remained a solid presence through various aspects of daily support, which would continue over the next three decades of her life. In fact to this day, Gorovoy still manages her illustrious estate. In an interview subsequent to her death, Gorovoy expands on the symbiosis present in their relationship describing himself as a "mediator of [her] relationships" and an "editor" (not only of her work but also) of the intense emotions that plagued her until her death (Gorovoy qtd. in Hamer n.pag.).



Fig. 24. Louise Bourgeois *Give or Take* (2002) Bronze, silver nitrate patina. 8,9 x 58,4 x 12,7 cm. Photo: Christopher Burke, The Easton Foundation.

So we have seen the finger image evolve from scratches in the 1940's to finger tips in the 1960's and then to arms in the 2000's, providing a rich embodiment of her developing object-relations. In *Give or Take* (2002) Gorovoy's hands and arms are used to model a bronze of two hands on either side of one limb suggesting co-dependence and a symbiotic relationship of the most fundamental kind. This is also suggested in the friendship image of one hand clutching, causing the other to open, like a hydraulic force. This is also akin to a relationship, which became even more crucial after her husband died in 1973 and Lowenfeld died in 1985. Interestingly, Gorovoy explains how if he had not trained as a painter himself he would have become a psychotherapist and is quoted as saying "I was interested in trying to understand what made her tick, why she had these incredible bouts



Fig. 25. Louise Bourgeois *The Fingers* (1968) Bronze. 7,6 x 31,7 x 20,3 cm. Photo: The Easton Foundation.

of anxiety and destructive impulses, and how this related to her art. Being a visual person, I could extrapolate a lot from what she produced" (Gorovoy qtd. in Hamer n.pag.). Bourgeois became extremely reliant on Gorovoy and it becomes clear that this relationship was easily one of her most significant. But in *Give or Take* (2002) we actually see how her relationship with herself and with Gorovoy meets in the middle: In the material, the subject matter and their execution, suggesting a very real connection, something sturdy and in a state of ongoing repair. It feels significant that Gorovoy unearthed all the boxes of free-associative psychoanalytic writings, and recognized their relevance and profound importance. He must have known that their friendship was forged somewhere in, on and between all those thousands of pages.



Fig. 26. Louise Bourgeois and Jerry Gorovoy in Carrara, Italy, in 1981. Photo: The Easton Foundation.

Beyond RE: Pair

Bourgeois believed that being an artist and working towards "self-knowledge" (Bourgeois qtd. in Harris-Williams 31) would make the world a better place[65] and indeed, this process did assist in changing the artist on a fundamental level resulting in her external world

[65] Full quote is the following: "Being a daughter of Voltaire and having an education in the 18th Century rationalists, I believe that if you work enough, the world is going to get better," (Bourgeois qtd. in Kuspit 47).

shifting dramatically.

> Why did I need so long with L- [owenfeld]/ Ask him if it is customary to have to/ write down dreams + recall like these pages/ it is very time consuming but it gives me/ the "joy of creation" that I used to have/ after working beside I build up strength/ the result is not "art" useless except as a/ catharsis" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 55)[66].

Her reflections on her intense years of psychoanalysis suggest that the most important thing for her was to develop the "capacity to interpret and understand herself, rather than as early journal entries indicate, simply to record her troublesome feelings (Kuspit 17). Kuspit suggests how many of her insights into her psychology in later journals came from Lowenfeld, or were inspired elaborations of his interpretations" (17), which makes sense if we accept the understanding that the point of psychoanalysis is for the analysand to ultimately embody the ego of the analyst in order to repair the deficit. The timing of the above quote is also important as it was recorded in 1957, five years into her analysis with Lowenfeld. When considering the a/r/tographical framework of this research, we now see how Bourgeois begins to be able to conduct her own personal research through a cross-pollination of fields: In Chapter 1 I contextualized the a/r/tographical methodology of this dissertation with the 'a' referring to 'artist', the 'r' referring to research and the 't' referring to 'teacher. I then re-appropriated the 't' for 'therapist'. I wonder if at this point however, the 'r' for 'research' should not be shifted to include a reference to 'relationship', as without this meaningful dynamic, external creativity combined with inner research (of this depth and magnitude) could never take place.

With this in mind, Bourgeois' art produced before 1950 existed only on a particular level, but then over the next twenty-one years of Bourgeois' psychoanalysis, there was a shift where her work was able to embody and process this deep psychological method and mirror her extreme shifts in materials and primal subject matter, existing as traces that provide important indicators of symbols, feelings and unnamable things that Bourgeois presumably dealt with in her private psychoanalytic sessions. "She internalized him

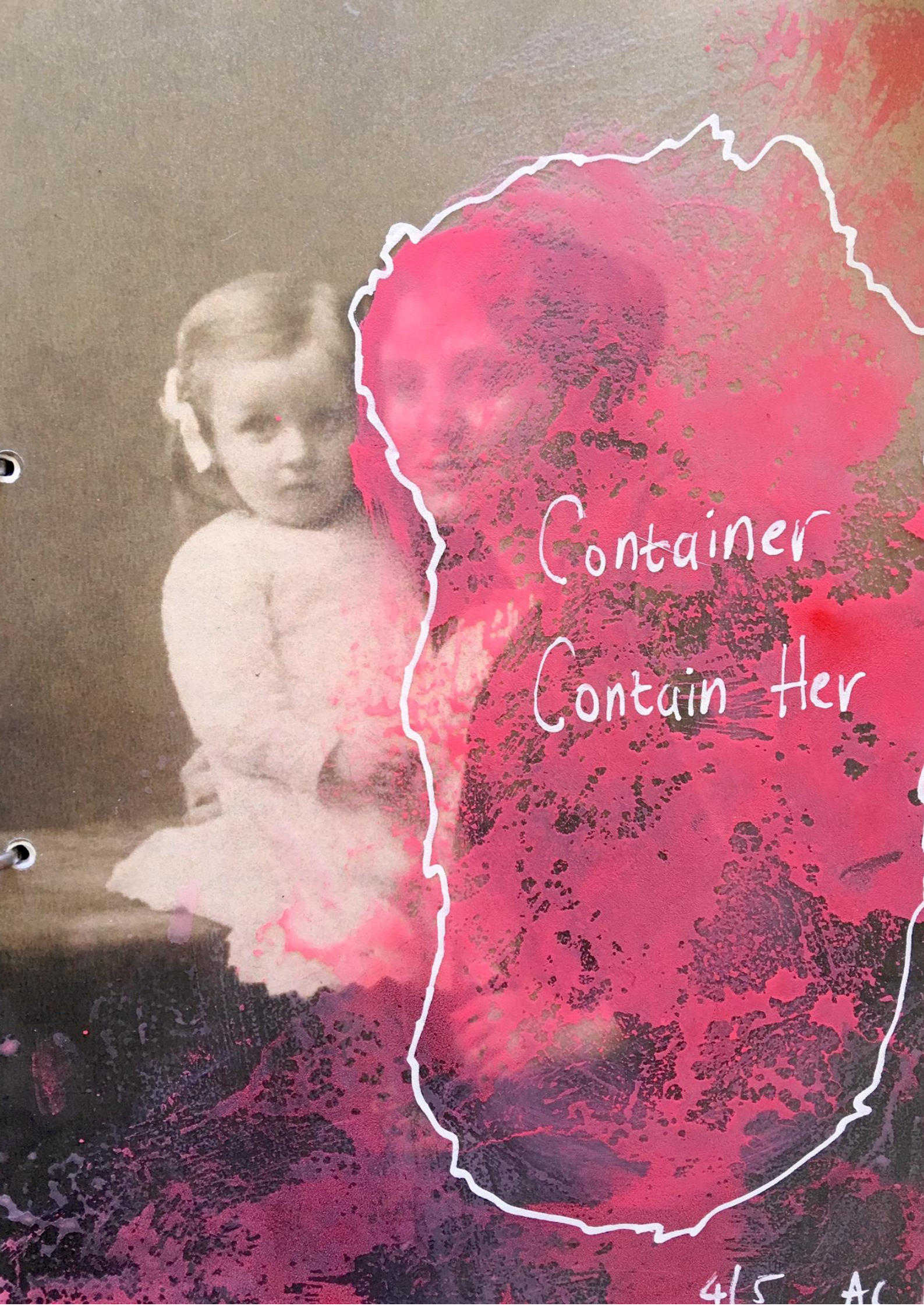
[66] LB-0219 from 13 September 1957

[Lowenfeld] and her art internalized psychoanalysis" (Kuspit 20). It was this crucial pairing of art with psychoanalysis, which served as the foundation for a profound therapeutic experience: In art making, self-expression alone is not necessarily always transformational. Creativity can be a "useless" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 55)[67] isolated act where production can very easily function as an extension of the artist's learned defensive behavior and simply encourage repetitive cycles instead of interrupting them. So instead of providing a "guaranty of sanity" rather the artist "learn[s] to stand more"[68]. So as Bourgeois discovered, the road to catharsis is by introducing a significant other into this self-reflexive conversation in order to assist in hearing what cannot be heard by the conscious mind. In this way the golden combination of a dependable rapport with Lowenfeld, bound psychoanalytical structures, together with the symbolic artistic practice, provided a contained coalition in which to access, process and shift deep internal constructs. The reality is that Bourgeois accomplished her most profound work (psychological, professional and relational) in the latter half of her life, a period of time initiated (and then overlapping) with her own psychoanalysis. With this in mind it is most likely that the psychoanalysis was instrumental in facilitating this fulfilling existence and this chapter has demonstrated how the structures and pairings in the analytical model provided Bourgeois with an experience of what it is to feel contained, held and heard and ultimately enabled the artist to re-think, re-experience, re-pair deep unconscious emotion independently. Although the psychoanalysis was "very time consuming [… it gave her] the "joy of creation" that [she] used to have" (Bourgeois qtd. in Larratt-Smith 55)[69]

That said, psychoanalysis was not solely responsible for the 're-pair'; her choice of vocation complimented the analytical process in that art is also free-associative and cathartic, and if thought about in the discussed ways, holds the potential for symbolizing, making meaning and reparation. Bourgeois asked, "What shape is this problem?" (Bourgeois qtd. in Kuspit 26[70]) echoing Salcedo's earlier suggestion that art is a catalyst for asking questions (but does not have the answers in and of itself) suggesting that art for her was a way to

[67] LB-0219 from 13 September 1957
[68] Full quote by Kuspit: "Artist's don't get better and better, but they are able to stand more" (25). As Bion says of psychoanalysis: "How can we become strong enough to tolerate it?" (33).
[69] LB-0219 from 13 September 1957
[70] In 1999 Bourgeois exhibited a set of lithographs including a work with text that asked the question: What is the shape of the problem.

symbolize and bring forth internal questions. The re-thinking of these questions requires a sort of ego strength training that psychoanalysis offered her. The “psychoanalytic period” (Larratt-Smith 10) seems to have provided the artist with the foundation of a repaired ego which would then allow her creativity to pick up where the psychoanalysis left off providing her with another reparative outlet to serve this function, when contact with Lowenfeld diminished in later years. This served as the groundwork for the very significant relationship with Gorovoy in the latter part of her life, a relationship with a man, brought together by art and the sustenance of a contained psychoanalytic foundation. So the pairing of art and psychoanalysis provided a symbiotic relationship with reparative possibilities like two hands on one limb - a kind of re-pa(i)renting. When considering the sculptures spanning the discussed periods, one might be excused for disbelieving that the same person made them due to a radical shift in subject, materiality and composition. But in a way, they *are* different people, because when we consider the works in relation to evidence of a life that encompassed primal loss, lived trauma, intense psychoanalysis, a flamboyant personality, an expressive instinct and a deep artistic predisposition, one begins to believe the effect that these events and processes might have had on each other and similarly on how Bourgeois lived, understood and then changed her life.


Container
Contain Her

Chapter 3

Lost Places: A Personal Enquiry

> The figure of the traumatized bereaved child enters modern consciousness early in the Twentieth Century largely through demographic, economic and cultural shifts[71]. But it is the rise of psychoanalysis that perhaps does the most to install the grieving child at the heart of modern identity. Whatever else it may be psychoanalysis stripped down to its core philosophy, is also an extended theory of child bereavement; psychoanalysis turns us all into child mourners, subjects profoundly shaped by early losses and the lifelong attempt to repair those losses. The grieving or orphaned child, already a subject of growing concern in the Nineteenth Century, becomes a figure of even greater cultural import in the Twentieth Century, the period in which traditional notions of both mourning and childhood are under considerable duress (Fuss Post 45).

This chapter focusses on a self-reflexive study of myself in the dual roles of child/mourner and mother/repairer: And how through psychoanalysis I am re-visiting repressed childhood memory as well as how via my artistic practice and academic research, I am processing the current maternal loss of a miscarriage. These personal roles are amplified through the projection of Louise Bourgeois and Melanie Klein and the following chapter will investigate notions of mourning and repair in relation to my own life, work and practice.

Fig. 27. (Previous Page) A young Bourgeois pictured with her mother Josephíne c. 1913. Photo: The Easton Foundation.
Overlay: Andy Cohen *Contain(h)er* (2016) Transparency, acrylic, correction fluid.

[71] "This includes the rise of mandatory schooling that separated children from parents, the reduction in family size that strengthened bonds of family affection, the proliferation of orphanages and experiments in foster care that uprooted and relocated children, and the coincidence of World War as a global pandemic that left large numbers of children parentless" (Fuss Post 45).



Fig. 28. (Left and right) Momento Memoris: Victorian 'Death Photographs' c. 1890 Photo: Source unknown.

To expand on the inherent discomfort experienced between these two roles (child/mourner and mother/repairer), I introduce the following mother-child portraits: On the right is a photograph of a child on her mother's lap. But the girl in this photo is dead. Her body is propped up from behind and her eyeballs have been painted onto her closed eyelids. Memento Memori's (Post-Mortem Photos) were a commonplace Victorian practice where wealthy families would pose for photos with deceased family members as mementos, providing a strange solace to the bereaved, and speaking to a bizarre mourning practice, of literally sitting with the corpse in remembrance of the lost loved one. Memento Memori translated from the Latin "Remember you must die" speaks to a transitional practice where the object and process promote management of loss. Looking at these photographs of the period you can often identify the dead from the living through the hazy outline around the living members. This is because photography (like mourning) was not instantaneous and the subjects had to sit for extended periods before the photo was captured, due to long exposure times.

However disturbing this image, it is also an intriguing psychoanalytic metaphor of how the living sits with an 'undead' mother throughout life, and furthermore how hard it is to let go

of this loved object. In this way it provides an eerie indicator of how the psyche processes loss. Taking place around the end of the Nineteenth Century, this macabre practice pre-dates psychoanalysis, but signals Diana Fuss's above 2015 description of the Modernist zeitgeist of the child mourner and the adult-child's need to grieve lost love objects. I am drawn to this relic as a courageous vestige, which calls into question 'normal' ways, in which to digest that, which is no longer, physically there. The second image (left) is of a child sitting on its deceased mother's lap and speaks to the horror of a child mourning its mother. It is interesting when this image is repositioned within a psychoanalytic framework, as a metaphor for Klein's image of the infant mourning its separation from the mother. In other words, Kleinian thinking, which foregrounds the psychic "pining" for her loved object which has […] been lost, can been viewed as a kind of process of bereavement (Klein cited in Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 112). It is in this sense, that I put forward the Memento Memori (of the child with the dead mother) as a visual metaphor of the internal mourning that takes place when the child mourns the death of the internal mother child - relationship.

These two images mirror the strange matrix I find myself in: Firstly, by re-visiting a recent miscarriage, much of my practice has involved mourning the loss of an unborn child (which occurred during my dissertation process). But then parallel to all of this I am processing the psychic infantile loss of my m/other in my psychoanalysis. The strangeness of negotiating



Fig. 29. Behind the scenes: Propping up a corpse for a Memento Memori .

all these mother/child relationships is captured in the discomfort of the Memento Memori and in this chapter I aim to reflect on how the various components of my Masters in Fine Arts has also been a catalyst for recognizing these unconscious tensions and how, together with psychoanalysis have aided in mourning my objects.

Project as Projection

It has already been established how, according to psychoanalytic theory, we experience the world through a self-inflicted psychic filter as an unconscious protective device. Like Bourgeois, my artist persona is one such filter - a way to visit my life, and process it in a way that both comforts and provides understanding. So while I initially thought I was only writing about a French-American artist and her experience of her world in relation to her artistic ability and psychoanalysis, the psychoanalytic aspect of this process has revealed that this research project has had as much to do with Bourgeois, as it has to do with me. In psychoanalysis, 'projection' (literally meaning to throw in front of oneself) refers to specific impulses, wishes or aspects of the self, which are seen to be located in an object external to oneself (Rycroft 139-40). In this way, 'Louise Bourgeois' was merely a disguise, worn by my unconscious, to invite me in (unthreateningly) in order to understand something that needed to be known. So, if this is the case, then surely there is some personal significance in the connection with Melanie Klein as well? Klein herself, experienced several bouts of depression in her life connected with significant losses: In 1914 (by the age of thirty-two) she had lost her sister, father, brother and mother. In 1925 her analyst Karl Abraham died suddenly while treating her. Her son Hans also died tragically in a climbing accident which some speculate as suicide. Furthermore, it is highly likely that her depression affected how she mothered her children as well. In fact when her daughter Melitta was just a baby, Klein suffered depression and went travelling abroad, abandoning her baby for eighteen months. The psychoanalytic projection of my academic interest in Bourgeois, holds very important indicators of self-research in relation to my need to create, and similarly my attraction to Kleinian psychoanalysis signalled that the personal aspect of this research needs to take place deep in my infantile past as well as link to my need to make objects with aspects of Kleinian notions of repair.

Personally my history is dotted with loss and depression as well: My father was killed in a plane crash in 2001, I was diagnosed with Post-Natal Depression[72] in 2012 and suffered a miscarriage in 2014. Following this loss I am currently negotiating complicated fertility issues. A core issue dealt with during this dissertation process has been reflecting on the miscarriage because with this loss (and the monthly losses attached to this scenario) came an unprecedented bouquet of suppressed childhood memories. Blum (2015) suggests "that a triad of three common, specific emotional conflicts is typical of many women who develop postpartum depression […] these are dependency conflicts, anger conflicts, and motherhood conflicts" (46-62).

The creative drive as a reparative device has been core to this research and similarly my personal experience. This is because my depression is not the type that relegates you to bed, isolated in a dark room. In a sense I am an anti-depressant - active in the depression, constantly fixing and organizing my environment. Like Bourgeois' confession, I also use "art as a substitute object" (Kuspit 24) reflecting her idea that "form is the refuge of creativity" (Bourgeois qtd. in Kuspit 24) [73]. This is how I came to explore these issues in a Fine Arts context. But from the start the experience was confusing and emotionally charged and (taking my cue from Bourgeois) I eventually decided to go into my own psychoanalysis, four hours a week (ongoing) with a female psychoanalyst. This has been the most significant development in my research process. Klein is said to have pursued a career in psychoanalysis and research as a way of filling a "devastating emptiness" (Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 86). For Klein, psychoanalysis itself came to be the object that filled that gap and convert these terrible experiences into an opportunity for creative development, whilst recognizing that her own insight played an enormous part in the development of her ideas (Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 86). Similarly Bourgeois

[72] Postpartum depression must first be distinguished from baby blues and from postpartum psychosis. Baby blues occur in the few days after birth and are characterized by sadness, tearfulness, and irritability. Although baby blues appear to be heavily influenced by the huge changes in hormone levels that have just occurred, psychological factors must always be assumed to be present as well—after all, few things change a woman's life more than having a baby. In their connection to hormonal changes, baby blues may be analogous to premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Baby blues are very common and are usually transient, but if severe or persistent, they can develop into postpartum depression (Hannah et al. n.p).

[73] LB-0007 c.1991

used art to give herself pleasure and gain "self-knowledge"[74] and I identify strongly with these impulses, believing that my dissertation and practice was manifested in an attempt to make something transformational out of something unthinkable internally.

Transitional Spaces

So while my depression was first felt and diagnosed thirty-two years into my life as a "Post-Natal Depression", psychoanalytic theory would argue that depression is internalized from infancy and has much to do with infantile maternal separation and the mourning of this process. To understand this, we should first examine Winnicott's 1962 theory on the transitional object and how early in life the baby selects an object as a symbol of being half way between itself and the mother (Winnicott cited in Rycroft 115). Thereafter this object will provide comfort to the baby when the mother is unavailable. The ability for the child to maintain an adequate inner representation of the mother in her absence, will determine the child's capacity for all future self-soothing. Eventually the child will internalize this representation and the object will become meaningless (Winnicott cited in Rycroft 115). Berzoff explains how this theory applies to loss in the way that the bereaved might select an external object to ease their separation from the love object – these objects – link the mourner to the lost object as a transitional tool towards internalizing the meaning of that loss (73). But like the Memento Memori photographs, in *Mourning and Melancholia* Freud describes Melancholia as the point where mourning has gone wrong. This occurs when the love object is not let go of in a slow and sequential manner and due to aggression, internalizes the lost object, turning blame inward, resulting in deep and dangerous depression (Freud 243) that manifests as an internal force field. So depression manifests when the subject does not adequately mourn the object (the mother). Eventually this depression exists as a void that needs to be filled. For Bourgeois it presented as a drive to create, for Klein it was psychoanalytic research and for me it was this dissertation and associated Fine Arts practice.

[74] Full quote: "The purpose of art is really to gain self knowledge" (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori).

Missing and Falling

Psychoanalytically speaking, pregnancy is deeply linked to the idea of the 'void'. Julia Kristeva refers to "gravity" and "the abyss" as metaphors to describe the gap that opens up between mother and child after birth and what she calls the "division of language" that accompanies the "division of flesh" (Kristeva qtd. in Coxon 110). This is because this "division" causes an enormous fear in the mother of losing herself; her own identity, as well as the fear of losing the child, all of which are fears shared with those who suffer Post-Natal Depression (Coxon 110). Similarly both Kristeva and Bourgeois[75] draw on maternal "spacial" metaphors of falling (Coxon 110) bringing new weight to the term 'falling pregnant' as if this state is synonymous with losing control and impending free fall. If this unconscious fear is indeed present in the pregnant mother, then one needs to consider the ramifications of this emotional force on the unborn child: Artist and psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger describes what she calls the "matrixial[76] encounter" between mother and child suggesting that human subjectivity is developed in-utero as a result of a shared psychic space and experience (Ettinger qtd. in Coxon 116). In this way, mother and child share "psychic space" from conception – at birth the child is in the mother – but then later in life the mother is internalised in the child. Interestingly, Bourgeois' birthing and pregnancy motifs only appeared when the artist was in her nineties supporting the notion of a delayed consciousness about this internal physical and psychic maternal experience. In this way, perhaps a further projection inherent in this research is located in Bourgeois' investigation into her maternal discrepancies[77]. Similarly Lucy Lippard investigates such "intentional contradictions" in Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973-9) describing this work as "an aesthetic compensation for the loss of the child" (Lippard cited in Kelly XII).

Coxon investigates this and other key maternal works, in her chapter titled "Multigravida: Pregnancy according to Louise Bourgois", contextualizing these psychodynamic maternal conflicts within a history of art. She points out how "while 'mother and child' images can be found in abundance in the history of western art, there are suprisingly few attempts to represent pregnancy – the pregnant body and especially the pregnant subject" (107). She

[75] "My early work is the fear of falling. Later on it became the art of falling" (Bourgeois qtd. in Coxon 110)
[76] "Matrix" in Ettinger refers to womb, origin and web; linking the female biology with the systems of textiles and mathematics (Coxon 116).
[77] Interestingly, Bourgeois believed she was unable to have children. Her first son was adopted, but she later fell pregnant in 1939.

suggests that the origins of this void, is partly due to the Medieval Catholic Church who considered the image of the pregnant woman as a conflict with the notion of the Virgin Mary, maintaining and building on the idea of the "cult of the Virgin" a "mysterious, sealed vessel that becomes meaningful only when it produces a child" (Coxon 107). So while western art history is dotted with "alternative discourses of pregnancy[78]" (Coxon 107) this notion *does* suggest that (in some way) there is an age-old gap in visually thinking about a pregnant mother's experience.

This 'gap' can be further explained by an account that deeply interested Klein: She was drawn to a biographical account of a woman in 1929, who was prone to depressive episodes. This woman, with a highly attuned artistic sensibility remarks how one day the painting by an important artist was removed from her wall and how this void "yawned emptily" on the wall "representing the gap inside her" (Klein cited in Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 72). The account goes on to describe how this image brought on a relentless sadness, but with some encouragement from her husband, she painted for the first time, eventually filling the walls with her own artworks and gaining acclaim as an artist in her own right. Klein was struck by how an "internal emptiness can in some way be filled with symbolic activity" (Klein cited in Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 73). The importance of this case is the artist's obsession with an empty space, and how it speaks to an internal void. Klein believed that these symbolic actions were linked to phantasies with the space inside, where babies come from "which becomes a battleground" (Klein qtd. in Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 74).

Similarly my works, speak in some way to this abdominal emptiness and "battleground": The first of which are a series of works on paper, which investigate the physical experience of a miscarriage. The following personal journal entry reveals the process that brought these paintings into being in September 2014:

[78] *Making Visible Embryos* is an online exhibition (by the University of Cambridge) which explores the visual history of the unborn from medieval art and medicine all the way through to ultrasound scans and test tube babies (cited in Coxon 107).



Fig. 30. Andy Cohen *Un-Framable* (Detail) (2016). Paper, acrylic, gold leaf, found objects, wood, nails. 185 x 90 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams

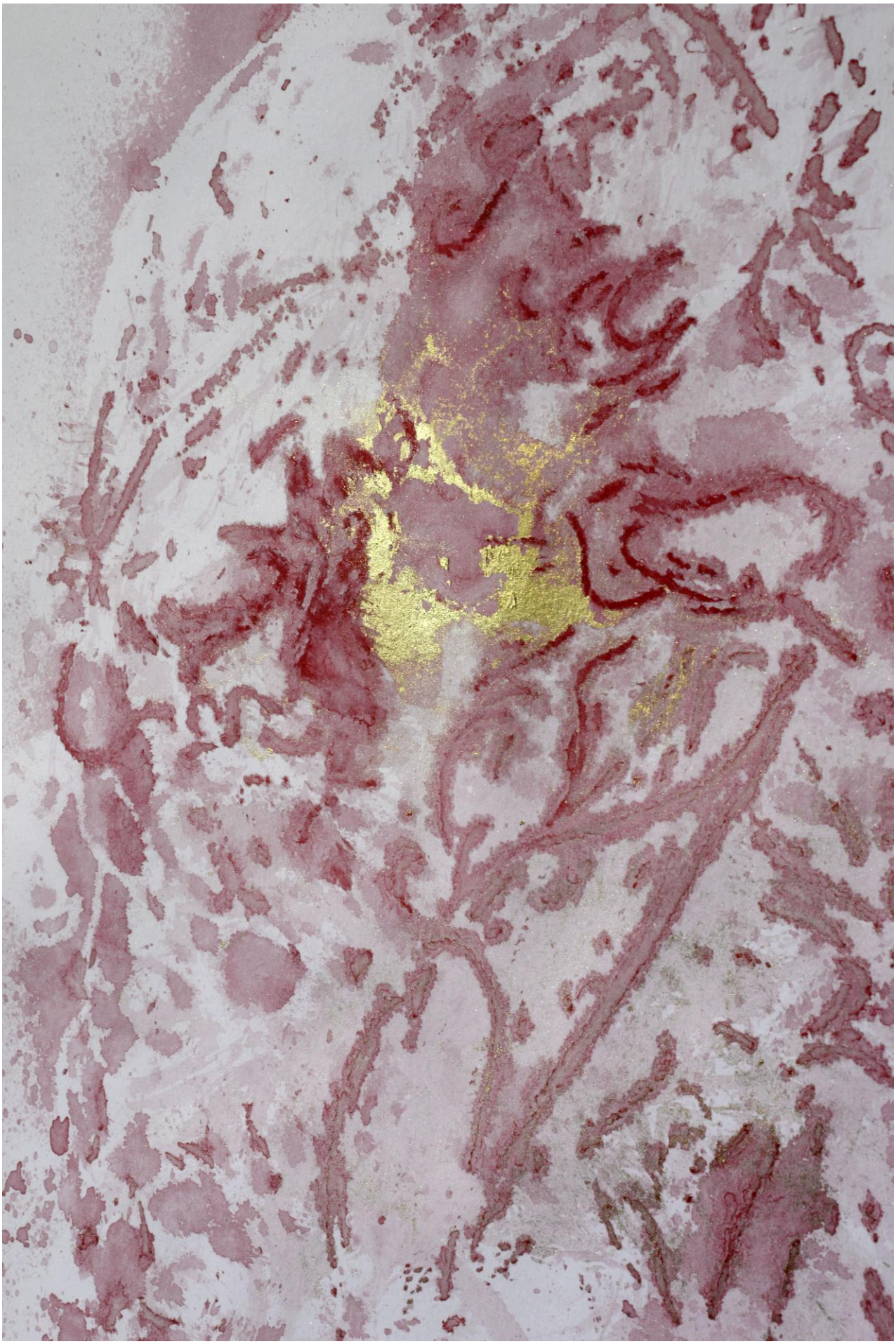


Fig. 31. Andy Cohen *Amiss* (Detail). Paper, water colour, gold leaf. 78,5 x 71,5 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

I have just fallen in but then out of pregnancy/ I'm being wheeled into surgery for a womb evacuation and I remind myself to capture this feeling and try make something of it later. How often in my life have I tried to make it through something, sculpt it through something?/ Later that day comes/ So much dripping/ Some places are very painful. Others are a little numb/ I strap a bag of red pigment to the underside of a child's table, puncture the bag and let it slowly release its contents onto the fresh paper below/ Kind of bleeding. Kind of leaking/ As the paint builds up drip-by-drip I grab an absorbent roll of wool and some found objects, and work on containing the drips in a circular motion so the paint does not run off the page/ This repetition is comforting and goes on for hours/ But now there is so much paint and water and wool that I can't see the drip hitting the surface anymore so I drop gold powder on the waterlogged surface (just beneath the drip's tipping point) and the impact of the drop on the surface causes a tiny ripple./ Tap. Tap./…Tap. Tap./ Suddenly I see the heart beat and I immediately feel sad./ Its now a week later: The heart has stopped beating./ Everything has dried. I pull it off./ Underneath is a membranous commemoration of what happened./ The gold smudges, the paper and I both feel stained when we remember what isn't there any more. Sad again (Cohen n.pag.).

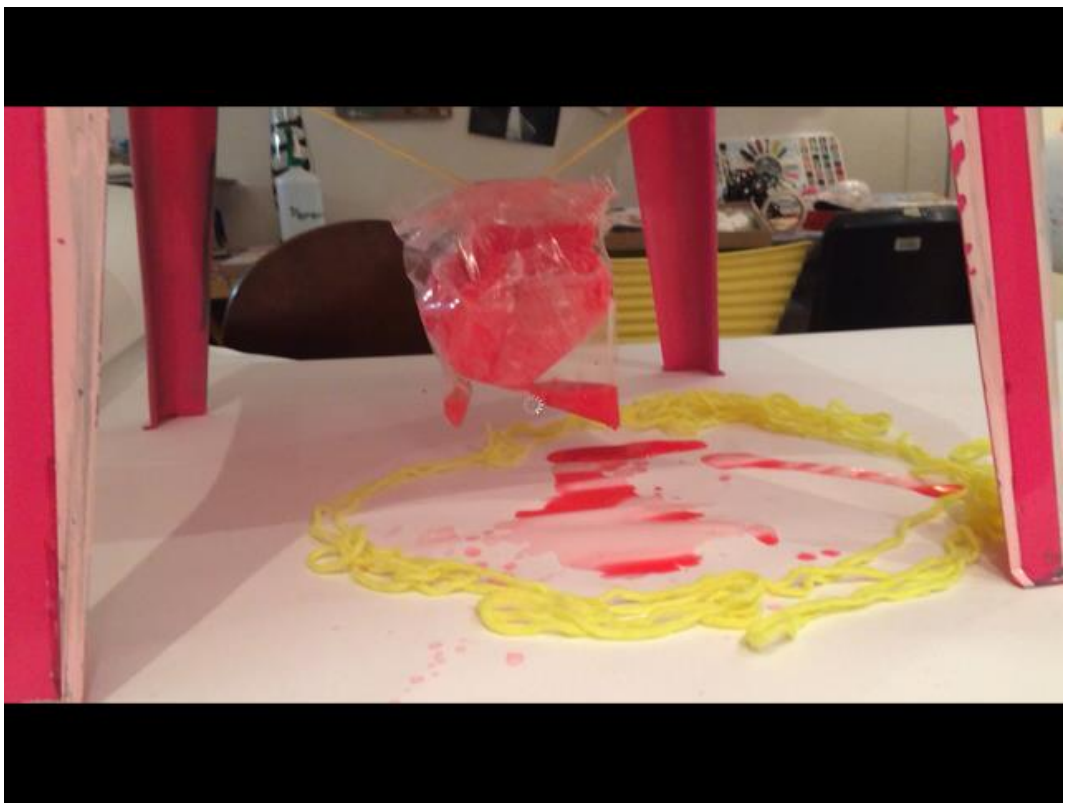
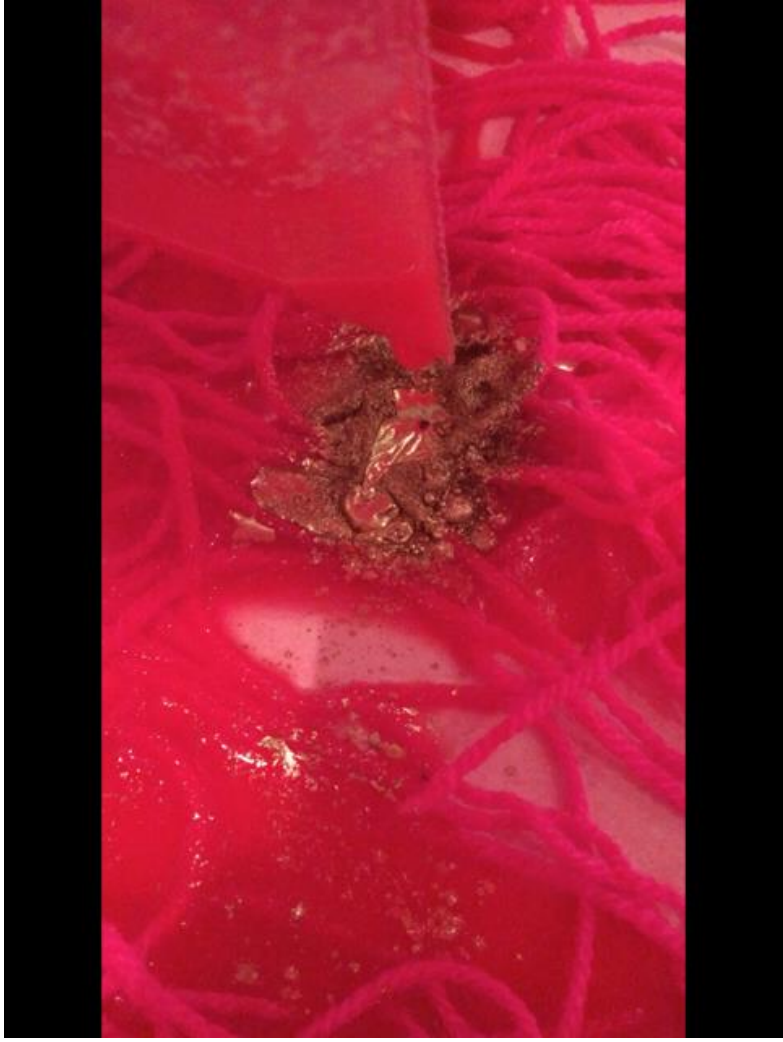


Fig. 32 - 36 are screen grabs recording the process described in the diary entry. These images capture *Beyond Repair* (2014) at various stages, as a work in progress. Fig 32 (above) shows the bag of paint being strapped to the table and left to drip.





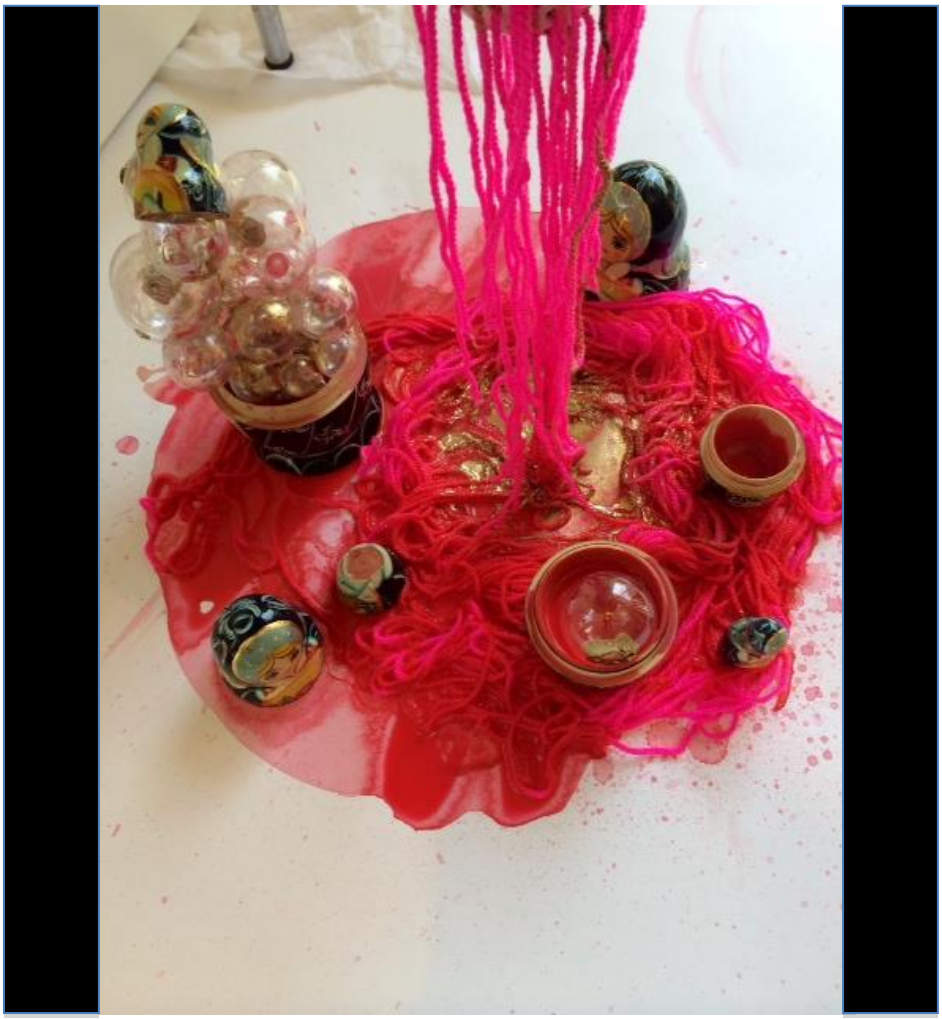


Fig. 33 and Fig. 34 (Top): Close-up of the drips hitting the waterlogged paper and gold leaf. Here the form begins to resemble a beating fetus.

Fig. 35 (Left): Found objects are placed in the paint and left to dry within the acrylic residue.

Fig. 36 (Next page): Objects are removed from the dried landscape and the final detailed image is visible in:

Andy Cohen *Beyond Repair* (2014) (Detail). Found Object, wire, paper, gold leaf, acrylic. 234 x 530 x180 cm.
This photo: Graeme Williams.
Previous photos: Andy Cohen



My experience of thinking past the procedure to the artwork I would later make, was a defensive (self preserving) act, but like the woman in Klein's account, I instinctively knew that an artwork could help me counter act the void that was about to fill me. By using instinctive materials and process, and by pairing together physical remnants and reminders of the thing I could come to symbolize and then experience a repressed emotion; like a child's table (a baby), a broken bag (a womb), red paint (blood), a suspension of some kind (the feeling, the little life) and the action of waiting and watching the drip, led to the creation of a heartbeat which reminded me of the thing I would not allow myself to connect to: sadness. I had no intention of 'making' the heartbeat when I began, all I knew was that the loss was linked to a leak/ drip - an overt physical sensation experienced during a miscarriage. As it was so early in the pregnancy I had not really allowed myself to 'feel' pregnant yet. But there was an undeniable loss: one I (at the time) rationalized as a 'loss of potential'. But I couldn't allow myself to go to anything more real than that, for fear of madness. But this experience of focusing on the physical (in this case, 'the drip') eventually recreated a heartbeat. Thus in a symbolic way, I proved to myself that something had literally and emotionally died in me that day.

In this way process and the object initiated a process of mourning. Much like in religious practice, there are rituals that assist the mourners internalize and make sense of what has happened, this artistic experience was an instinctive way to un-numb something. Gray and Lassance explain how during the first trimester of pregnancy the mother often experiences the growing baby as an extension of her, which is identified as the narcissistic phase of pregnancy and so when a pregnancy suddenly ends, in addition to the loss of maternal aspirations, the loss is internalized as a loss of self (cited in "Emotional response to miscarriage" n.d. n.pag.) This is often associated with feelings of guilt for having not protected the baby (Brier 451-64). This sense of failure can instill feelings of uncertainty around fertility and the ability to carry another pregnancy (Zucker 236-44). There are several theoretical perspectives on how perinatal loss is similar to the grieving of a loved person, but further complicated by the fact that this loved one never existed in an actual, physical way (Gerber-Epstein, Leichtentritt, and Benyamini 1-29). But the artwork provided a concrete relic of the lost object and validated my grief of an invisible thing.

Similarly, Kleinian theory is invisible: Internal objects are not actual objects, rather they are symbolic constructs developed as a way to understand the inconceivable. In a comparable way the physical object is used to understand internal associations. If this is true then surely there is a relationship between creating an artwork, creating a life and making sense of the emotional weight it carries? Making a baby is the ultimate of creative acts and if this is true, then surely acting out the creation of a heartbeat is an unconscious wish to control an inconceivable creative experience? But now the space that once held that baby is empty and something of this void mirrors an internal loss. Herein lies the shift I felt: Because beyond this physical experience I became burdened by a peculiar *dé ja vu* that I had lost something before this baby. Not my father, long before that. It was here that I began connecting the current loss as a catalyst for unconscious memory of a deep-seated childhood grief.

Working from an "Inner State"[79] in pursuit of repair

In the above works on paper, there is a distinct link between the present experience and the grief felt. But my psychoanalysis revealed that this latest loss was unearthing something much older - primal even. The nature of grief is that we re-experience it in different forms at different points of our lives and there is something in the reliving of grief that facilitates repair (much like Bourgeois' description of time as a spiral). With this growing realization my work becomes more three dimensional with *Too Much To Name* (2016). The form is life size and too large to fit in the studio. As if it is speaking to an anomaly that can no longer be contained in one realm, it had to sit outside the entrance of my home in order to be dealt with once and for all. Parallel to this, fertility treatment was investigating the reason for the miscarriage and the external object, now nest-ish, was mirroring the physical anatomical space under rigorous investigation and reconstruction. Like my psychoanalysis, the fertility treatment and the artwork were asking a plethora of difficult questions about what I can and cannot hold. Each of these pointed to the same redundant reply: certain things cannot be known right away because it is too painful and therefore repressed. Unfortunately, this aspect of my research will remain unresolved for now, as all I know at present is that my depression is linked to something unresolved in the

[79] (Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 96)

maternal and has its origins in infancy. The issues identify a maternal irregularity that can only be fixed in adulthood, suggesting that the miscarriage brought this to the foreground in order to facilitate this line of questioning via a combination of psychoanalysis and art making. Klein believed that an acute form of infantile anxiety is at the core of the depressive position, if worked through, it would lead to normal psychic development, but if these internal conflicts are not adequately resolved then severe pressures remain constantly at the root of the personality (274). The depressive position, although painful usually becomes a normal state of mind akin to mourning. In fact she recognized that the goal of life was not pleasure, as Freud believed, but the satisfaction of striving to resolve conflict (Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 8). There exists a gap between what a child needs and what a mother can give. The size of that gap varies and it is precisely this void that will drive the adult-child towards repair later in life. In Klein's case, sensitive to the impact of her absence from her own children's lives, she was committed to resolving her depression, and presented her groundbreaking paper *A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic Depressive States* in 1934 - four short months after her son's death. Reiterating her determination, which was driven by a need to understand her own bereavements and inner state (Hinshelwood, Robinson, and Zarate 72). Bourgeois echoed the sentiment that solving a problem brings "great pleasure" (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori). So this notion of repair is interconnected with resolving internal infantile conflicts later in adulthood.



Fig. 37. (Above) Andy Cohen *Too Much To Name* (Detail of child trinket) Found objects, acrylic, wax, bitumen, wire. Photo: Graeme Williams.
Fig. 38. (Next page) Andy Cohen *Too Much To Name* Found objects, acrylic, wax, bitumen, wire. 210 x 120 x155 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.



From Reconstruction to Ruins: Resisting Repair



Fig. 39. Original *Kintsugi* bowl c.1550. Photo: Source Unknown.

If, as already established, the artwork provides an opportunity to signal internal questioning, how are those questions then resolved? The answer: slowly and systematically. My experience in psychoanalysis has revealed that before something can be fixed, it first needs to be broken up into smaller digestible components, to be understood individually. In this regard I am drawn to the Sixteenth Century Japanese practice known as *Kintsugi* (translated as Golden Join): When crockery broke, rather than trying to perfectly mend it and nullify the site of the crack, instead the site of damage was mended with a mixture of resin and gold to enhance the join. This embraces the idea that disruptions and

breakages should be celebrated and highlights the cultural appreciation that the item is actually *more* beautiful for having been broken. It speaks to the therapeutic principal that it is in our suffering that meaning can be made and urges us to consider that damage has a silver (or rather gold) lining to return to a well-worn cliché. Gold is reflective and so is the psychoanalytic process providing another interesting metaphor for Kleinian repair. My earlier works began with this process, smashing up objects and then trying to repair them *Kintsugi*-style. However the works remained uninteresting as repaired objects as if the damage required them to become something else following the trauma. This is further complicated by previous insight into melancholia and how when the connection between the love object and the subject is broken (and repaired) too abruptly, depression emerges.

Perhaps the smashing of objects was reliving a severe disconnect once experienced? Like Bourgeois' *Personages* assemblage at the beginning of her sculptural career, stacking and building objects was an attempt to build the self up in the face of loss. But as witnessed with Bourgeois, no amount of stacking and binding could achieve this level of repair, as the root causes were still unconscious. It was only in psychoanalysis that the objects were internalized, deconstructed one by one and then built up to something new, rising up out of these fractures. Following this understanding I re-broke the compiled *Kintsugi* pieces – replaying the act of breaking and being broken. But now I simply separated each piece out placing them on mirrored trays to resist the urge of sticking them back together. Each fragment a "journal entry in permanent form" (Kuspit 18) to be noticed in analysis later on. Now the subject of the work shifted from 'reconstruction' to 'ruins' – a sort of 'deconstructed *Kintsugi*' reflected in my exhibition title *DeComposition: Resisting Repair*. In this way – a melancholic teapot pieced back together, cannot move on from anything but being broken – because in this state (although repaired) will never be able to hold hot water again. So now it needs to become something else, something new.



Fig. 40. This is an early version of an object included in the final work *DeComposition: Resisting Repair*. This Royal Doulton Teapot (repaired in *Kinsugian*-style with silicone and gold thread) was originally titled *Portrait of My Mother* (2014). Photo: Andy Cohen

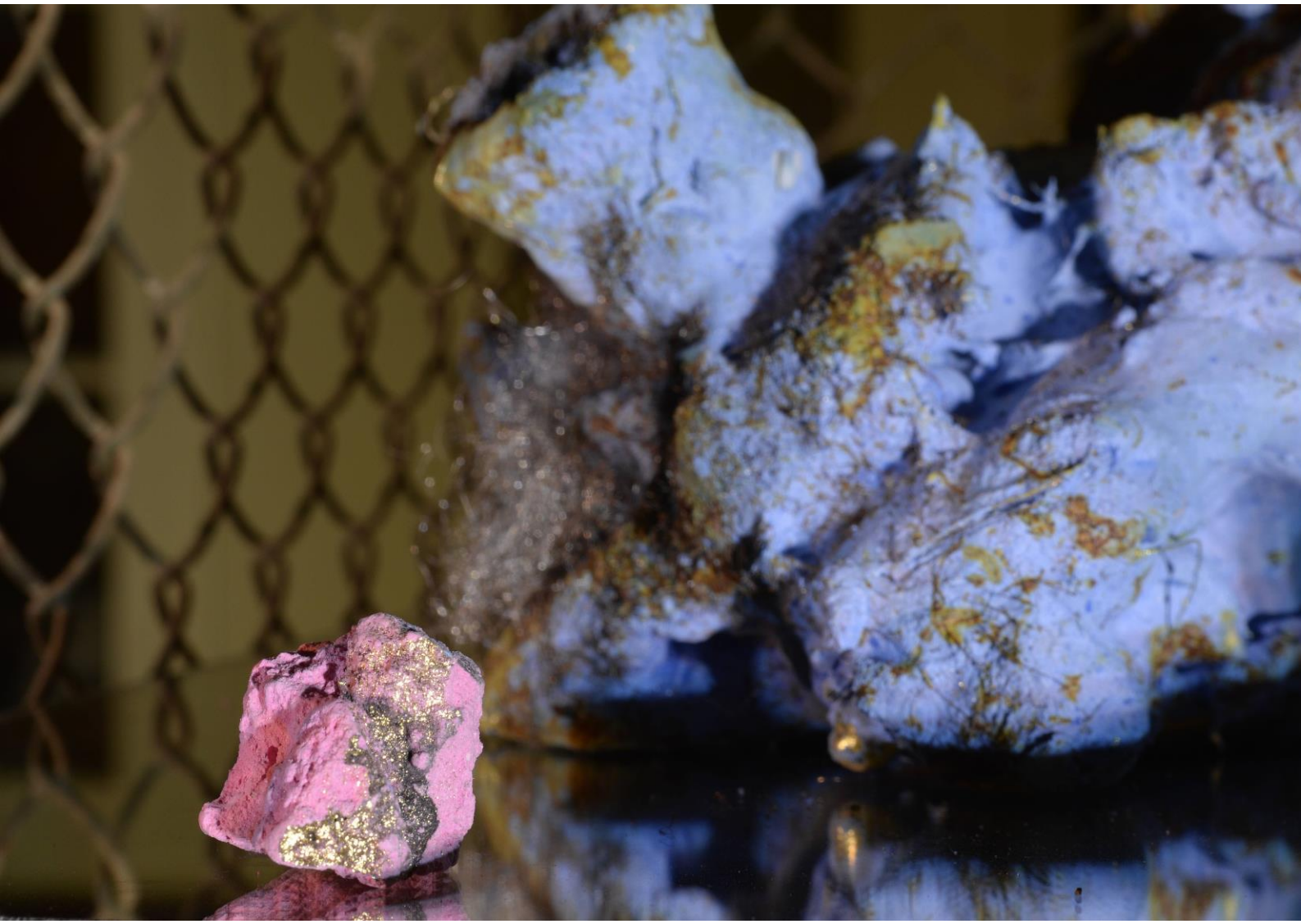


Fig. 41. The previous teapot object (Fig. 39) is eventually deconstructed and included in *DeComposition Resisting Repair* (2016). Found objects, plaster, wax, steel wool, acrylic, glue, mirror. Photo: Graeme Williams.

This sense of newness continued to develop in my other work: In *Suspicious Object: Swaddled* (2015) some of the fragments were stacked and then wrapped in an old baby blanket. Before shrouding the objects, the blanket was dipped in blue roof sealant. Once wrapped, the blanket was dripping profusely and I noticed the familiar bodily sensation again. Almost instinctively I grabbed the lid of another work, which had a bowl-like shape and positioned it below the wet blanket to catch the drips. Again, like the other drip paintings, I waited for them both to dry. The two works now sit side by side - the blanketed *Kintsugian* stack, now swaddled like a small child and next to it, the collected leak. The image of the two side by side signify a deep, connected relationship of a mother and child: The mother having held the drips, and containing the loss and brokenness. It feels calm, sad and still and begins to speak to a deep need for connection.



Fig. 42. Andy Cohen *Suspicious Object: Swaddled* (2015) Found objects, bitumen, plaster. Photo: Graeme Williams
Fig. 43. (Next page) Detail of the above. Photo: Graeme Williams.

REPUBLICA DE CUB

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AN GOVERNMENT'S WARRANTY FOR CIGARS EXPORTED

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Fig. 44. Man Ray *Enigma of Isadore Ducasse* (1920) Photo: Man Ray Trust



Fig. 45. Victorian Portrait: Mother and Child. c. 1890. Photo: The Museum of Ridiculously Interesting Things.

Decomposition: Beyond Repair

My immediate response to this image of Man Ray's [80] *Enigma of Isadore Ducasse* (1920) is of a sewing machine shrouded in an army blanked and bound with string is the following: The army blanket speaks to the battlefield, the sewing machine speaks to repair and the string speaks to binding and connections that will facilitate this. The silhouette looks human and illustrates how objects have the power to evoke a strong presence and elicit emotional tensions. This image strangely echoes another Victorian photograph of a mother and child. In contrast to the Memento Memori's, in this photograph both subjects are alive. The mother however, is draped in fabric, as a crude attempt to hide herself from view. This was another commonplace device of the time where the mother would disguise herself in the background of these photos in order to hold and contain the child subject so as to get a 'good photo' during long exposure times. Similarly, to revisit these images as a Kleinian metaphor, this speaks to a more 'healthy' version of the child - mother internalization: with the maternal figure, present yet hidden. With proper repair, the m/other is always in the frame somewhere, holding the child, for extended periods of uncomfortable exposure for the sole purpose of capturing the child's likeness and individuality. These two images represent my personal hope for my internal world and my artistic practice. Via the projection of myself into Klein and Bourgeois, this chapter has positioned me as the child/mourner and mother/repairer. By looking to Klein's life and theories I have examined recent loss as a signifier of unresolved infantile loss and similarly how the psychoanalysis and artistic process have thus provided insight into repressed experience that can only be repaired in adulthood. My artistic process is an extension of my need to understand primal grief and the purpose of the artwork and associated processes is to lead the enquiry. Between my research, my psychoanalysis and my practice, there is the suggestion that the root of my depression has something to do with inadequate grieving of my internal m/other. While I cannot definitively explain the 'whys and the 'hows', at this juncture in my practice and process, I understand that it is not possible to repair something when there are entire pieces missing. My hope is

[80] The title of this early Dada readymade comes from French poet Isidore Ducasse (1846-70) and the imagery comes from a quote in his book *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1869): 'Beautiful as the chance meeting, on a dissecting table, of a sewing machine and an umbrella'. Chance effects were important to the Dada artists, and the piece is very much in that spirit, but it also prefigures the Surrealists' interest in revealing the creative power of the unconscious (Falconer et.al. "Man Ray")

that my psychoanalysis will be able to construct these pieces where my painting and sculpture has left off.

At a certain point in the build up to my exhibition, my sculptures were not in one consolidated location: One was in my driveway, some were in storage, others at the University, a few were in my studio. A (dis)organization of objects mirroring how things are literally all over the place - like my internal world - moving around the diaspora like wondering Jews. I am not sure I will ever find one neat site to put everything back. This is not a quick fix, nor is it something I can control. The phantasy is for them to come neatly back together again and be repaired. But like the title of my exhibition *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis* suggests, resistance to repair is key. This period will focus on just separating the pieces from each other, editing down the elements and making sense of each one on its own. Each work is a fragment of the (w)hole. Thus although this dissertation is coming to an end, my own psychoanalysis will continue for a few years - culminating in the training to become an analyst myself. So in a sense, I am the *Kintsugian* object, in the midst of a reparative practice and in the process of becoming something else which lies somewhere between artist and analyst. In this way this dissertation is a departure into an unknown place that hopefully contextualizes my experience thus far, helping me to pursue a future that is self-aware, secure and having resolved this nagging compulsion to repair.

The following chapter takes the form of an imagined dialogue between myself, Bourgeois and a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. This reflection serves as the critical account of my exhibition.

Fig. 46. (Next page) Louise Bourgeois hand-written loose sheet (c.1962) Photo: The Easton Foundation Overlay Andy Cohen *Masters and Mastery* (2016) Transparency, acrylic, correction fluid.

I want to get
I want to keep
I want to say
I want to tell
I want to see
I want to learn
I want to know
I want to know
I want to control
I want to hold
I want to feel
I want to remember
I want to go
I want to want
I want to find
I want to finish
I want to forget
I want to get rid of
I want to clean
I want to be good
I want to be better
I want to do it
I want to show
I want to outdo.
I want to top it
I want to accomplish

Decompose
Compost
Compose
Composition
Position
Reposition
RE: Position
RE: Quest
request
Need
Needy
This is what I need:
To decompose
To recompose

Repair
RE: PAIR (RESIST)

mastery
Masters

Chapter 4

A Phantasy at The Salon: A Review of My Exhibition



Fig. 47. Nicholas Calcott *Louise Bourgeois' Chelsea Apartment*. 2014. Photo: Telegraph.

The Phantasy:

Bourgeois has invited Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist Clinton Van Der Walt[81] and me, to her home studio in Chelsea for one of her legendary Sunday Salons with contemporary artists and thinkers (a way for this agoraphobic to stay in touch with the current art scene).

[81] Clinton Van Der Walt is a Johannesburg-based psychoanalytic psychotherapist, who has published (local and international) papers in the areas of psychoanalysis, violence, national reconciliation, race, HIV and Aids and public health. At the time of this research, Van Der Walt is completing his PhD at The University of the Witwatersrand. His research is concerned with the psychoanalytic understandings of violence perpetration. He is also a performer and musician, and thus a creative practitioner as well. His practices made him an appropriate choice as the speaker who formerly opened my exhibition *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis*.

These took place later in her life and these salons have been described as a symbiotic exchange where artists were expected to bring along a sample of their work for group discussion, which was said to be heated and engaging ("The Spider's Web" 2004 n.pag.). The following is an imagined exchange between myself, Clinton and Louise in conversation about my exhibition *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis* at Constitution Hill, held in Johannesburg from the 11 February – 11 March 2016. Building on the projective quality of my research in the below exchange, Bourgeois' questions or statements are all original quotations - taken out of context - and repositioned in the context of this conversational phantasy. Their original source has been acknowledged although I make no attempt to relate them to the current context. Van Der Walt's quotations are taken directly from his opening address at my exhibition and I include his words in this way, with his permission. My comments serve as a link between personas and combined, this chapter constitutes a form of critical reflection on the body of work produced for the Master in Fine Arts degree.



Imagined Setting:

Louise Bourgeois' Chelsea Residence, New York

Imagined Participants:

(LB) Louise Bourgeois - Artist & Hostess

(CVDW) Clinton Van Der Walt - Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist

(AC) Andy Cohen - Artist & Psychodynamic Practitioner

Imagined Context:

After two years of studio development, my exhibition has just opened to the public. The following conversation picks up at the point where I am asked to describe this experience to the group.

Fig. 48. Louise Bourgeois presiding over her Sunday Salon (2006). Photo: Lauren Fleishman

The Conversation:

LB: An artist's words are always to be taken cautiously. The finished work is often a stranger to, and sometimes very much at odds with what the artist felt or wished to express when he began[82].

AC: *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art and Psychoanalysis* is the start of re-thinking a lifetime of relationships with my objects – both real and created. The exhibition speaks to the sorting through of a version of the past, which has the binary potential to imprison or contain. It calls into question the ways in which to do this by bringing together art and psychoanalysis as interchangeable reparative devices. Resistance to repair is a secondary notion in the way that imperfection is present throughout the exhibition in both the choice and organization of the space, supporting the psychoanalytical idea of exploring dilapidation as a mechanism of moving through it.

LB: [So] what is your *itiniery unique*? [...] What have you done with the damn thing[83]?

AC: The exhibition takes place at Constitution Hill in the Ramparts, a rabbit-holed space within the Old Fort walls. The imperfection of the exhibition setting was in fact inspired, Louise, by my visit to your exhibition at Dia: Beacon (New York). 'Dia' comes from the Greek word meaning 'through', resonating as a way to see through one typical meaning of art into another. I was intrigued by how your exhibition there is housed in the attic of the building with its raw finish, befitting the "intimate mood" of your work[84]. The attic is where old discarded remnants are stored, and a location of 'holding onto things'. It can be a dead space, at least consciously. But we both know from the analysis that there is nothing dead about it... for it is the undead that we are dealing with in there and in this way the attic space is a place of much tension and decomposing. This notion brings the idea of the external accumulated object as a provocative component in our psychic lives.

[82] (Bourgeois qtd. in *Design Quarterly* n. pag.)
[83] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)
[84] (diaart.org n.pag.)



Fig. 49. Historical detail on a wall within Ramparts, Constitution Hill. Photo: Graeme Williams

CVDW: What we have presented here is a collection of extraordinary objects in a specific space and time. An object in the psychoanalytic sense is a collection of remembered experiences that form the basic template for how we organize our understanding of ourselves and the world. It is a mental representation of our feelings, bodily sensations and perceptions as we come to know them through our emotional links with the external[85].

AC: The way we choose to engage with these objects speaks to a particular internal need. With this in mind, the location of these objects provides an important layer of meaning for the viewer when reading the works within. Like the attic space in Dia: Beacon, Constitution Hill brings a particular object-relationship to the foreground. Recalling ideas of incarceration and liberation, it is a disturbing environment with pockmarked and uneven surfaces, interrupted visibility, echoing acoustics and unflattering lighting. The architecture is gritty and unforgiving, existing to enhance the story of the space and not necessarily the artwork displayed there.

LB: It is a fight with your notion of what you need. What you need and what you get is not the same. You need something, you want something and you get something else. So it is the joining of the will and the means that counts[86] …

AC: Yes, and while it is anything but a traditional white cube space, I felt compelled to embrace this dimension because the hostility of the location contextualizes this project as the breaking down of very powerful preconceived mindsets, in an effort to repair the past and gain contained relational reconciliation. In the same way, my sculptures incorporate found objects (which have lived an entire life before finding me) so too has the Ramparts experienced a long and loaded history, separate from my own: In the Nineteenth century the Ramparts made up the boundary wall to the Old Fort, built to protect the Boers from British invasion. Later, this same complex was converted into an Apartheid prison where the Ramparts section was used as an entry point for prisoner incarceration. Presently the space has been reimagined as a heritage site within Constitution Hill, positioned as a space to think about unthinkable versions of history, in the hope of some kind of architecturally led symbolic reconciliation.

[85] (Van Der Walt)
[86] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)

In this way, like the memory contained within each of my sculptural objects serves as an unconscious cue to another dimension of inexplicable meaning, I became increasingly curious about how the external space might illuminate a similarly damaged internal experience.

LB: It has to do with memories…that our memories can be distorted, your memories can become an event…"[87]

AC: Yes, and this exhibition is one such event. The result of which is that the extended time spent within these walls evolved my existing body of studio work to include site-specific installations that would integrate and elaborate on both our stories. As if I was having an ongoing conversation with the space, much in the same way that I am conversing now, with both of you. Similarly I understood that visitors to the exhibition would arrive with their own ideas about the location, and this was my way of recognizing the importance of their inner voices in the reception of my work and me.

AC: In this way the politics of the space emerge and intercept directly with my white female Jewishness; raising many questions about my 'right' and 'privilege' to use such a loaded space in this way. I felt the need to try to remind my audience that I respect the history of this space, that I understand the social advantage of being in psychoanalysis and a Fine Arts tertiary education and urge them to recognize the tensions of this space as a symbolic departure into an internal conflict (not an external one). But I am not convinced that this sentiment was entirely well received and at times I felt central to this external conflict.

CVDW: Experience is paramount, emotional subjectivity is primary. As human subjects we are first and foremost what we feel and what we experience. Psychoanalytic looking and understanding is derived from this basic fact. To look psychoanalytically, means that we self-reflexively lead with our feelings, our bodily sensations, our memories and our imaginations. As we engage with your work, we should allow ourselves to daydream and

[87](Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)

free associate when in relation to what you have created. We should pay special attention to the mind's work as we immerse ourselves in the experience of the exhibition. Let the exhibition look at us rather than the other way around.



Fig. 50. Gated entrance to the Ramparts with the poster demarcating the way to DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair Art & Psychoanalysis by Andy Cohen (2012).
Photo: Graeme Williams.

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LB: [So]… here you have the story of a lifetime of work. What do you want […] to say about it[88]?

AC: With both your points in mind, we have established that an internal experience is enacted parallel to the viewer's navigation of the exhibition, and so let us imagine walking through the space, and interacting with these objects, together:

AC: Upon arrival through the steel gates, you are immediately confronted by *Un-framable* (2015), an installation comprising of an upright bedframe (lynched with climber's rope, strapped to an existing information board which is native to the original space). The frame

[88] (Bourgeois qtd. in Finch n.pag.)

encases a bloodstained image. The rickety bed frame mechanism casts a geometric security bar-like shadow across the translucent membrane below and in its suddenness begins to allude to a very different kind of prison to the one in which it physically stands. Speaking to an internal reformatory that straddles then and now, old and young, innocent and damaged.

CVDW: The frame - whether it is this space itself or the literal frameworks encasing the work - is prevalent. Decomposing is very hard work and exacts a high emotional toll on the decomposing mind. The safety it guarantees is essential to the ability to break into subjective bits for the purposes of rebuilding. In psychoanalysis the frame is a regular time, a predictable space and a consistent analyst. But then the boundary too, becomes important…[89]



[89] (Van Der Walt)

Fig. 51. Andy Cohen *Un-Framable* (2016). Paper, acrylic, gold leaf, found objects, wood, nails. 185 x 90 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

AC: To the right of this work, the boundary of this physical space has been penetrated and one notices three punctures in the fort wall – rifle holes which at one time were used as a mechanism to protect the Old Fort from the enemy - an ellipsis of oculus' connecting and defending the outer from the inner. In contrast to the holes on the right, (looking left) at *Drawing Blanks* (2016), I have delicately repaired a further five of these holes with fragmented baby blankets, soaked in sealant and acrylic. Like a forlorn scab-like surface is ripe and ready to flake off and reveal a wound beneath. With this spatial intervention, the walls take on another dimension in relation to an internal reconciliation, alluding to the extreme lengths we are willing to go to, to protect our boundaries (often so blindly or manically) because at one time or another those boundaries were violated or traumatized. Then as adults we go to great measure to repair that, which has been done (or rather undone) to us. The blanket substrate speaks to a Winnicotian transitional object, and considers the sculptural object and psychoanalysis as transitional devices. But then as we move towards the rear of the space, *Amiss* (2015), a quiet work on paper warns of the ramifications of all this manic reparative activity. Its placement adjacent to a dark doorway reeks of loss and consequence.

LB: The work of art is limited to an acting out, not an understanding. If it were understood, the need to do the work would not exist anymore…art is a guaranty of sanity but not liberation. It comes back again and again. [90]

[90] Bourgeois c.1992



Fig. 52. Andy Cohen *Drawing Blanks* (2016) Blanket, acrylic, steel wool, non-abrasive adhesive, plastic. 27 x 340 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

Fig. 53. (Next page) *Drawings Blanks* (Detail) (2016). Photo: Graeme Williams.



AC: So the boundary becomes essential to contain and create new meaning, to stop it from returning and reenacting indefinitely. At the end of the darkened passage is *Up/set* (2015) a small object-relationship, which provides a glimmer of another kind of reparative journey. The dark tunnel is punctuated by moments of radiance from the adjacent rooms and collectively (with the set up of the entrance space) it establishes the scene of a crime and the reparative drive compelled to fill the void created from this rupture, but then it also alludes with slight suggestion to an alternative way down the passage and through the psychic fortress wall.

LB: [But] this is a Passage Dangereux[91]!



Fig. 54. Andy Cohen *Amiss* (2015) Paper, water colour, gold leaf. 78,5 x 71,5 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

[91] This is the title of Louise Bourgeois' 1997 work.

AC: Yes, like your work titled *Dangereux Passage* (1997), the space signals a daunting journey and it should be navigated with care. Upon entering the passage, in a peripheral doorway the title work *Decomposition: Resisting Repair* (2016) meets you at the door. Straddled by two illuminated glass panels (revealing the original prison floor) its linearity anchors the space and invites you in. The caged exterior is (all at once) part of the room; part of the artist and part of the viewer and this is uncomfortable. It is haunting in its invitational approach to engage with its broken pieces. The mirrored shelves create an infinity effect, littering the internal cubes with an eternity of breakages. The contents of the column plays off the brightened rocky Ramparts foundations alluding to the inestimable depths that internal brokenness can go. This is also an invitation to the viewer, to go deeper in trying to access their own vulnerability by really engaging the work as they move through themselves via the space.

LB: Oh I see, I hadn't thought of that. No, I hadn't thought of that[92].

[92] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)

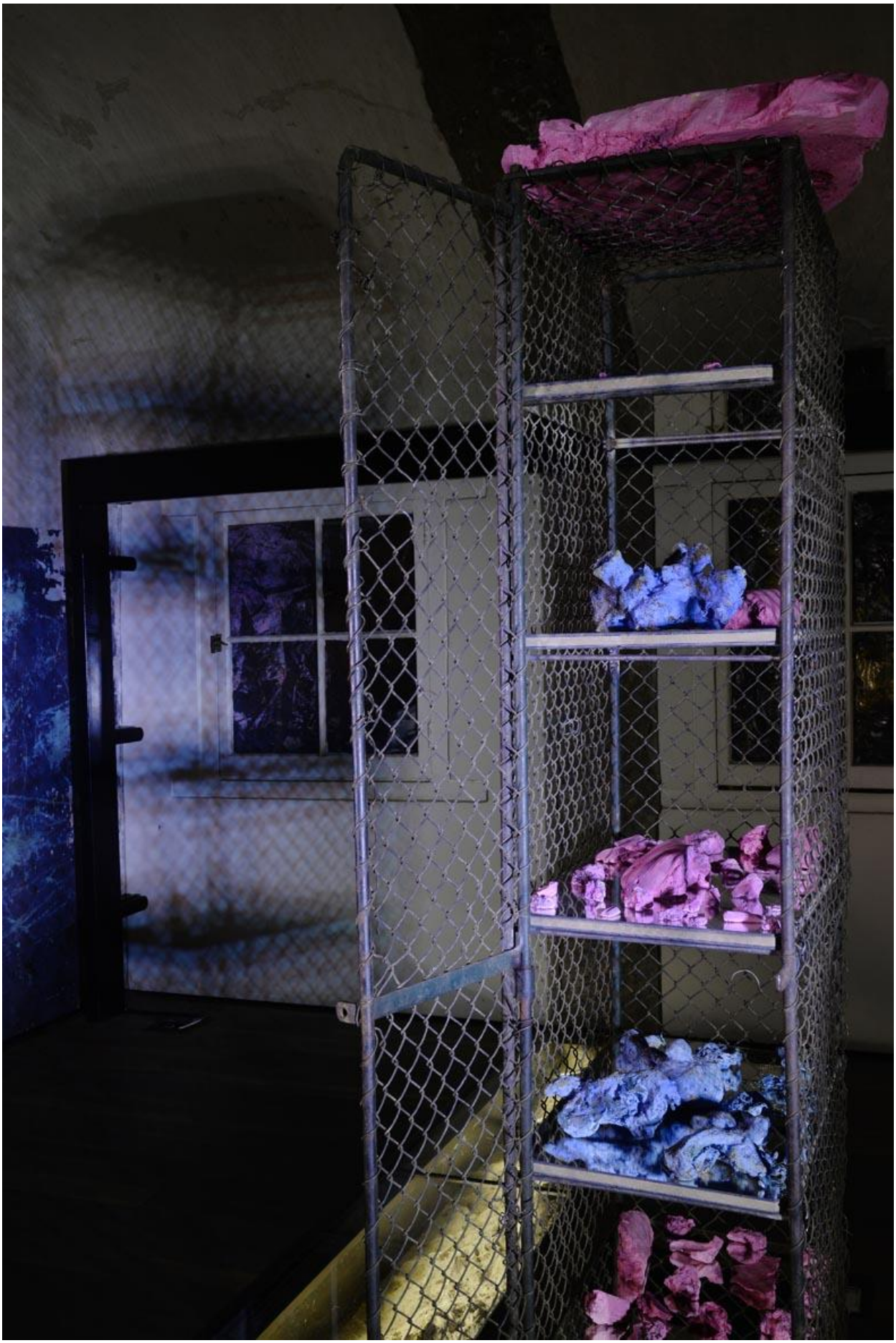
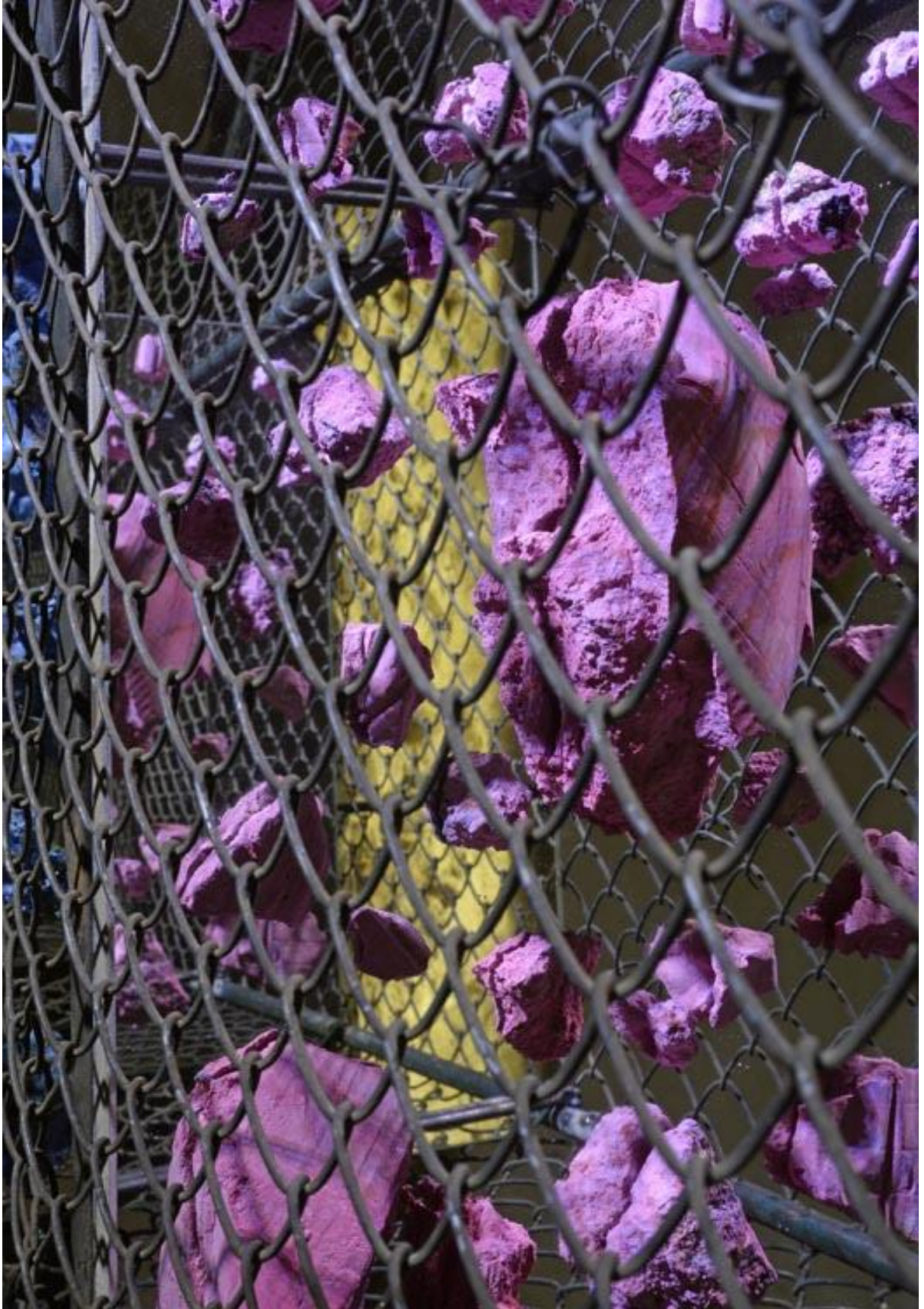


Fig. 55 and 56. Andy Cohen *DeComposition Resisting Repair* (Details) (2016) Found objects, plaster, wax, steel wool, acrylic, glue, mirror. 181 x 45,5 x 31 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.



AC: In the adjacent room, *Jar* is equally arresting in its own way: As its title suggests, it is another kind of container, but this one is closed. Its name also brings to mind a jolt or a jerk, embodying the arresting quality of its materiality and placement. The labored objects inside, bathed in laboratorial light, feel unsafe. As if burdened by the viewer's gaze and hampered from being continuously construed. Their surgical skins are their only defense against the reflective nature of their circumstance. *Their* past and *your* presence collide in this moment and it feels threatening.



Fig. 57. (Previous page) Andy Cohen *DeComposition Resisting Repair* (Detail) 2016. Photo: Graeme Williams.
Fig. 58. (Above) Andy Cohen *Jar* 2015. Found objects, plaster, wax, latex, steel wool, cabinet, acrylic. 11,4 x 80 x 23 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams

LB: A lot of people are so obsessed by the past that they die of it…"[93]

CVDW: The boundaries between the objects and the space is a fluid one…the connection between the looker and the looked at, between the seer and the seen, between the object and the gaze, between the analyst and the analysand is a fluid and inter-subjective one. If we are looking and listening properly, the boundaries of the self, as with the boundaries of the exhibit, become blurred - a state of relational decomposition and then remaking[94]

AC: Yes, it is an a/r/tographical matrix where the artist, the researcher (and now the readers of her work) together with the embodied therapist are cohabiting the same inner space, chewing and digesting the same food. It is a vibrating relationship, and I notice how as the viewers navigate the space they are compelled to keep moving into the next region. As one travels through the dark and into the light, four larger works meet the viewer in the next open room. Here wax, sealant, rust, plaster and found objects take the viewer on a rescue mission via each oddity. Their bases bring to mind Bion's Container-Contained



Fig. 59. Andy Cohen *Jar* (Detail) (2015). Photo: Graeme Williams.

[93] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)
[94] (Van Der Walt)

model, supporting each body as it becomes more and more of itself. The found objects are antique, aged and well worn suggesting an inherited intergenerational trauma calling into question that which is ours versus that, which belongs to those that came before us.

AC: In this next room the mood softens and four sculptures emerge like enlarged version of the shards from the previous cabined displays. As if they had fallen off their host body and in their newfound independence were forced to become something new. They carry a different level of resolution to the previous objects and provide the viewer with some breathing room.



Fig. 60. Layout of Room 4 in *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis* (2016). Photo: Graeme Williams.

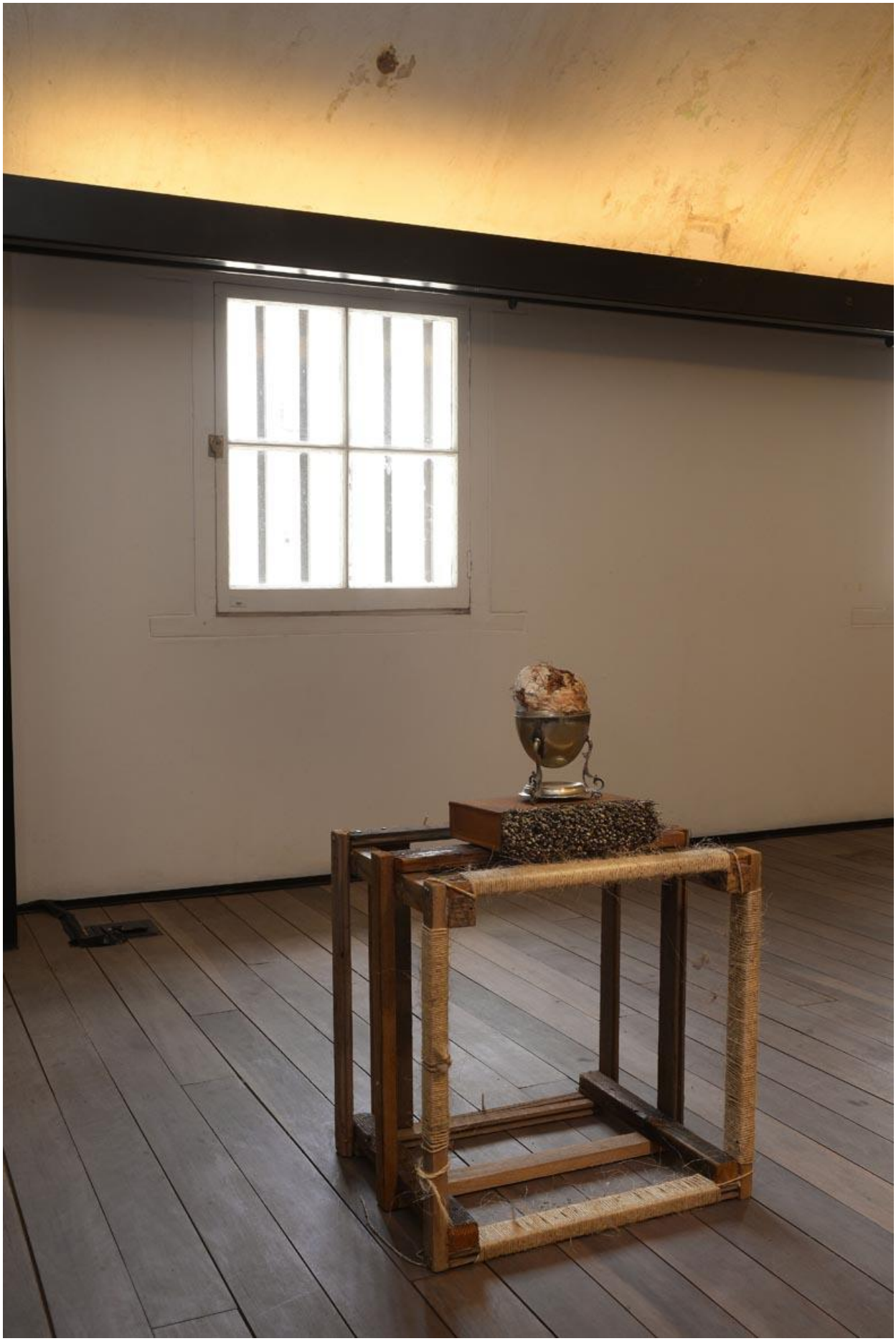


Fig. 61. Andy Cohen *Undoing* (2014 - 2016) Found objects, steel wool, plaster, wood, string. 77 x 50 x 40,4 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams



Fig. 62. Andy Cohen *Point of Impact* (2015) Found objects, wax, acrylic, glass, wood. 124 x 86 x 43 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

LB: … The sculpture is a problem to be resolved. And it is a pleasure to find a solution. After you have found a solution you let go of the object, so that the purpose of sculpture is really self-knowledge[95].

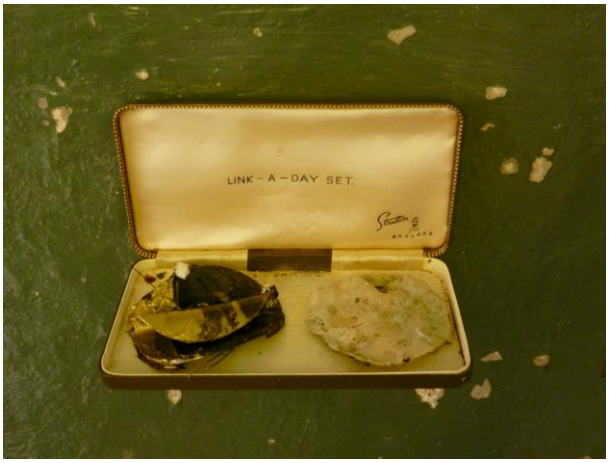




Fig. 63. Andy Cohen *Up/Set* (2014) Found Objects, wax, enamel. 15 x 7 x 8 cm. Photo: Andy Cohen
Fig. 64. Andy Cohen *Unearthing the Bell Jar* (2015) Found objects, clothing, acrylic, plaster, bitumen. 85,5 x 42 x 22 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

[95] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)

AC: Yes, but the curatorial layout does not give you very much time with the resolution, because soon after these engagements, as if ready to reconcile the exhibition experience, you are suddenly confronted by the largest scale work on display dryly called *Too Much To Name* (2016). It exists like a radioactive nest inhabited by a mutant magpie, this tortured entity is under interminable tension. Its bulging body feels burned, branded and biased. It dominates and compresses the space with its spires and its driftwood limbs, which threaten to claw at you should it break free of its lair. Within this small space there is the tension of wanting to be able to walk around and inspect the work from all angles, but the confines of this particular construction will not allow this, which is equally important. The unconscious will not allow the conscious to see everything so freely, and therefore the viewer must experience this frustration too. During each walkabout however, I noticed how many viewers did not actually want to look at it too closely and were openly unable to approach the orb, as if engaging it wakes up something frightening inside them. One viewer became overtly aggressive towards the crowd, suggesting that he too is defensively holding as much as the muscular mesh which is so obviously antagonizing him.

LB: All these […] confront each other…[they] represent one of us and they have to take their place in the circle and face themselves in front of the others. Nothing can let us escape this confrontation. We have to come to terms with how bad we are…[96]

CVDV: Encountering the unknown of ourselves, or an encounter with the unconscious, is not as mysterious and mystical as it is often depicted in popular versions of psychoanalysis. The unconscious is encountered in the everyday productions of our minds. Dreams, thoughts, memories, reveries, desires, jokes, slips of the tongue, bodily sensations and psychological symptoms such as depression [even aggression] all speak at length about what is going on in the unconscious. In this sense psychoanalysis is the process of learning to listen to the unconscious and free ourselves up to respond to it[97].

[96] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)

[97] (Van Der Walt)



Fig. 65. (Above) Andy Cohen *Suspicious Object: Swaddled* (2015) Found objects, bitumen, plaster. 69 x 90 x 50 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

Fig. 66. (Next page) Andy Cohen *Too Much Too Name* (2016) Found objects, acrylic, wax, bitumen, wire. 210 x 120 x 155 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.





Fig. 67 and 68. (Above and below) Final layout of sixth room in the exhibition housing works on paper.



AC: My objects function as moments in this conversation, which shift in tone in the final room, home to four works on paper. These two dimensional objects provide a different tempo of the same explored experience.

CVDW: These are abject objects - objects related to the body but that are not longer part of the body: blood, feces, spilled milk and babies - objects that have the special property of being part of the self and not part of the self at the same time[98].

AC: And together, this imagery speaks undeniably to absence, loss and holding on. The final work *Beyond Repair* is housed on another bedframe, completing the parenthesis established at the entrance and its title suggests that some things cannot ever be restored.



Fig. 69. Andy Cohen *Holding* (2015) paper, acrylic, steel wool. 89 x 64 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

[98] (Van Der Walt)



Fig. 70. (Above) Andy Cohen *Lost and Found (*Detail). Paper, ink, found objects. 151 x 94 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

Fig. 71. (page 142) Andy Cohen *Missing* (Detail) Found object, wire, paper, acrylic, staples, plant and animal matter. 188 x 76 x 40 cm. Photo: Graeme Williams.

AC: On this note, the viewer is required to retrace their steps back past that which has been seen/ ignored, through the light and dark and back to the entrance in order to exit again, suggesting that this is a complete navigational experience. A key aspect of the exhibition is its labyrinthine quality. Overall I want to give my audience an experience of walking through a very loaded environment filled with landmines and goldmines. Ultimately communicating something of a very deep and personal nature, for those who are open enough to really encounter it. The curatorial decisions set up this relationship, which is ever present and of the utmost importance.

CVDW: This agreement allows both parties to become observant about whom they become in relation to each other as they decompose and recompose in relation to each other. In this sense this exhibit is best to engage without knowing too much about the complex realities informing it. It is an experience to be created anew in real time - this to my mind is its essence. The relationship, without which there can be no psychoanalysis. It is a transformative relationship with the self, facilitated in connection to another. My hope is that [the audience] will relate to the exhibit and be brave enough to come undone in the rich undulating aliveness of the human experiences it represents[99].

LB: Like I have said of Freud's patients, they are like maggots. But a maggot is actually a symbol of resurrection[100].

AC: Yes, because for restitution to truly occur, we must be active participants in our own decomposition. Artist, analysand and audience each share this instinct to re-visit and re-pair.

LB: This is okay…[101]

AC: I hope so...

[99] (Van Der Walt)
[100] (Bourgeois qtd. in Turner n. pag.)
[101] (Bourgeois qtd. in Wallach and Carjori)

Coda: A Resistance to Conclude

"Within the art (as, one suspects, within the artist) form and formless are locked in constant combat" (Lippard qtd. in Coxon 37).

As an alternative to a conclusion, I reflect briefly on my creative research as a dance-like process and offer the following as a form of coda. Like the methodical mending of a damaged tapestry in the Bourgeois atelier, this dissertation and the accompanying exhibition have seen the careful stitching together of Lippard's "form and formless" by considering binary notions of artist and analysis; conscious and unconscious; object and meaning; self and other. While there are gestures towards bringing these binaries together, there is also the realization that this is a process akin to "to-ing and fro-ing", and thus, this will to unify is understood to be subject to a range of variables. The psychoanalytic tensions explored through Bourgeois' work and texts, positions creativity, as a core reparative instinct providing visceral evidence of this primal drive in motion. This, together with my autoethnographic interpretation of the material as projective, repositions art making (and research) as an unconscious cathartic phantasy. This invites a broader re-reading of much Modern and Post Modern work as being born out of an unconscious "rescue mission" (Bourgeois qtd. in Coxon 25) intrinsic in the artist, the process and the audience at large.

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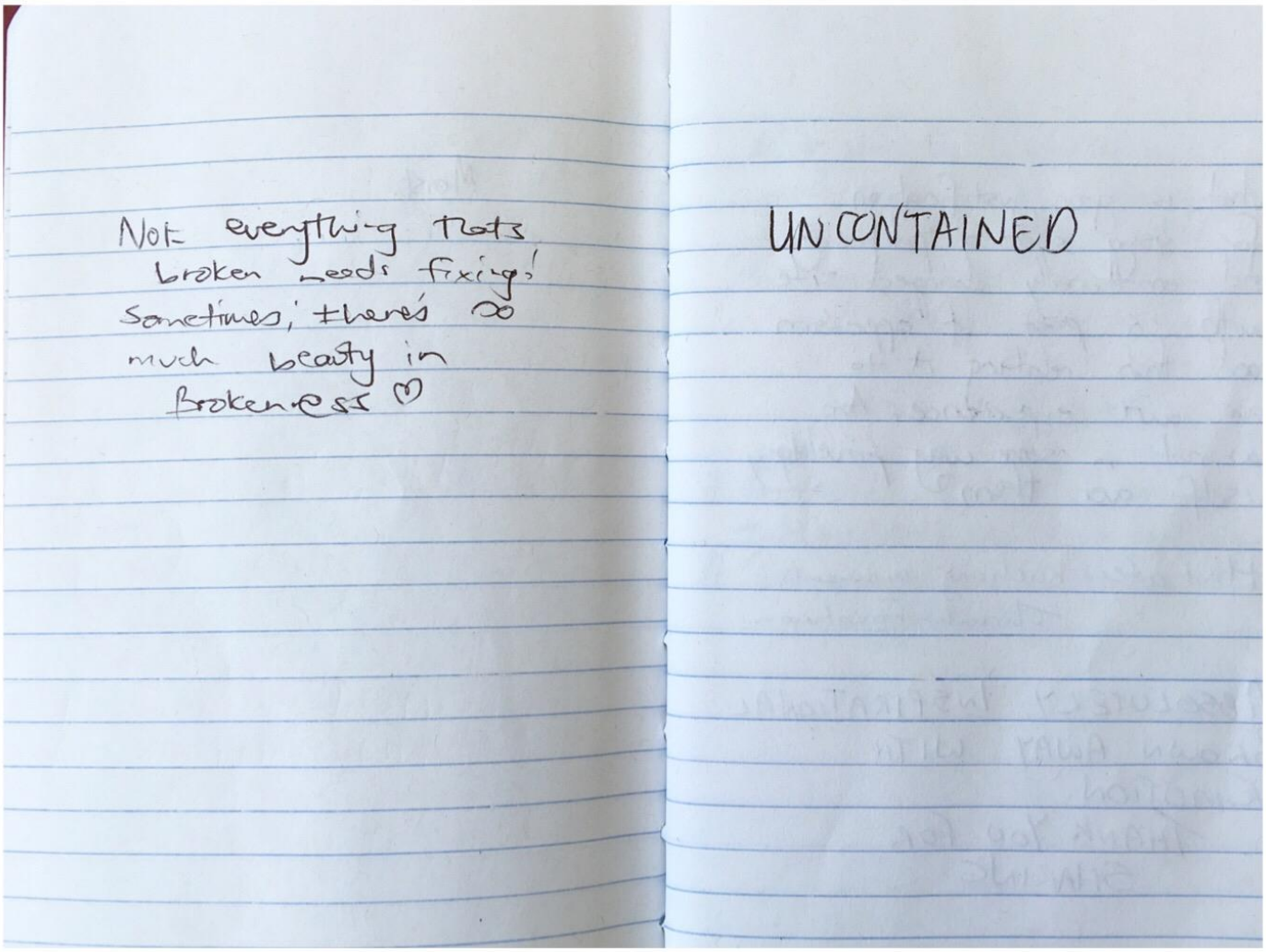


Fig. 72. Anonymous comments written in the visitor's book at *DeCOMPOSITION Resisting Repair: Art & Psychoanalysis* (2016).