

CHRISTIE'S

THE ART PEOPLE

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LOUISE BOURGEOIS'S GIGANTIC BRONZE *SPIDER*

ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING AND ICONIC SCULPTURES BY THE ARTIST

WILL TAKE UP RESIDENCE AT CHRISTIE'S 20 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA
FROM HALLOWEEN - OCTOBER 31ST UNTIL NOVEMBER 12TH



Property From an Important American Collection
Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010)

Spider
bronze

128½ x 298 x 278 in. (326.3 x 756.9 x 706 cm.)

Conceived in 1996 and executed in 1997

This work is number three from an edition of six with one artist's proof and one unique variant,
plus one unique sculpture in steel.

Estimate : \$25,000,000-35,000,000

Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale

November 10th 2015

New York – On November 10th, Christie's Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale promises to be a landmark occasion for the art market when Christie's will offer *Spider*, one of Louise Bourgeois's most enduring and iconic motifs and the largest work by the artist ever offered at auction. Estimated between \$25 million to \$35 million, the mammoth bronze arachnid is expected to surpass the artist's current record of \$10.7 million, established in 2011 by Christie's New York for a different edition of *Spider*, and is set to make history for the sale of a sculpture by a female artist.

Acquired in 1997 by the present owner, this exceptional *Spider* has been featured prominently in every major Bourgeois retrospective, including The Prada Foundation, Milan; the Foundation Belem and Malmo Konsthall, Lisbon; the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Kyungki-Do, Korea; the Akademie Der Bildenden Künste Wien and Kunstraum Innsbruck, Vienna; Rockefeller Center, New York; The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; the City Art Museum, Helsinki Stockholm; the Museet for Samtidskunst and Humlebæk, Oslo; the Museum of Modern Art, Louisiana; the Playhouse Square's Star Plaza, Cleveland; the Akademie der Künste, Berlin-Brandenburg; the Wilfredo Lam Center, Havana; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, and the Museo Picasso, Málaga.

With its combination of irregular, hand-worked surfaces and smooth, highly finished elements, the spider form is a complex mix of menace and emotion. Stretching upward over ten feet, *Spider's* exaggerated legs recall the arches of so many Gothic cathedrals. Its yarn-like body suspended in air, *Spider's* form becomes an airy mass—creating a space of both asylum and inquisition. A source of extreme fear for some, the artist's giant spider cannot help but conjure up cult American science fiction movies of the late 1950s, exploiting the notion of arachnophobia by positing the end of the Earth through the diabolical acts of an eight-legged monster. For Bourgeois however, the spider takes on a more personal role, acting as the embodiment of her own turbulent autobiography.

"It is an honor to present at auction this masterwork by one of the most significant and influential artists of our time. Spider is a tour de force through which Bourgeois masterfully brings us into her highly personal, symbolic and powerful domain." **declared Jonathan Laib, Senior Specialist Post-War and Contemporary Art.**

Conceived in 1996 and executed in 1997, *Spider* is third in an edition of six brilliantly rendered sculptures by Bourgeois, based upon a motif that she initially referenced in a small ink and charcoal drawing in 1947. In the second half of the 1990s, the spider became a dominant preoccupation for the artist, who created colossal versions such as *Maman*, 1999, which was exhibited to great acclaim at Tate Modern, London, and the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao. Three spiders of the six existing reside permanently in institutions in the US, Brazil and Korea.

Bourgeois has spoken of the spider as evoking her mother Josephine, who repaired tapestries in the textile restoration workshop that Bourgeois's father ran in Paris.

Louise Bourgeois wrote: *"The Spider is an ode to my mother. She was my best friend. Like a spider, my mother was a weaver. My family was in the business of tapestry restoration, and my mother was in charge of the workshop. Like spiders, my mother 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."*

Spider may also be said to draw on the Greek legend of Arachne, the mortal weaver who challenged the goddess Athena and was condemned to become a spider, as well as the reputation of the black widow who eats her partner immediately after mating. These sources—personal, mythological and folkloric—combine to give a sense of the bittersweet fate of being a woman, a wife and a mother. Bourgeois's choice to use the traditionally male-dominated domain of monumental sculpture to articulate her childhood feelings intensifies the effect and represents a repudiation of the power of her volatile father.

Born in Paris, Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), lived in a building on the rue de Seine that also housed the Galerie Gradiva, a Surrealist exhibition space. During the Second World War, she moved to New York and spent time with members of the exiled Surrealist circle, including André Breton, André Masson and Joan Miró.

NOTE TO EDITORS



Christie's holds the world auction record for a work by Louise Bourgeois, with *Spider*, 1996, a different edition which was sold in New York on November 2011 for \$10,722,500

**Viewing - Christies New York – in front of 20 Rockefeller Plaza
31 October - 12 November 2015**

**Post-War and Contemporary Art Evening Sale
Christies New York – 20 Rockefeller Plaza
10 November 2015**

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About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2015 that totalled £2.9 billion / \$4.5 billion. In 2014, Christie's had global auction and private sales that totalled £5.1 billion/\$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, third-party financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

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