

FIVE THINGS

WE LEARNED AT

Louise Bourgeois: Twosome

We visited the highly-acclaimed exhibit of prolific French-American artist Louise Bourgeois, best known for her large-scale sculpture and installation art. Here's what we found out... ■ *By Jennifer Greenberg*



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1 It's all in the details

Don't be afraid to lean in a little closer, or peak your head past the wire caging keeping you safe from the Passage Dangereux. There are hundreds of well-kept secrets embedded in Bourgeois' work, particularly in the section of the exhibition devoted to her very psychological "Cells". Reminiscent of Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* meets *The Shawshank Redemption* with a touch of *The Twilight Zone* thrown in for good measure, take an extra minute to notice the red light bulb hanging above a child-sized chair and mirror, or peak inside a cell to find a love note signed in red ink: 'j'taime'.

2 She says one thing but means "your mother"

Bourgeois' mother, Joséphine, was an essential role in both her life and works. While her mother left her at way too young

of an age (Bourgeois was barely 21 when she died), Joséphine lives on through the entire gamut of Bourgeois' repertoire – especially inside her famous bronze, steel, and marble spider sculptures that guard the world's most esteemed galleries (i.e. the Tate Modern in London and the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa). Additionally, spiders spin silk; in "Spider Couple", the artist associates this delicate action with her mother's avocation as a tapestry weaver and restorer.

3 It's a material world

While most artists favor one or two mediums, it only takes entering the first room of the exhibition – which features three contrasting pieces: a (glass-)boxed embracing couple made out of fabric, leather, stainless steel, and a prosthetic leg, a phallic hanging piece called "Fillette", made by layering latex on plaster, and a

bronze piece seeking unity between male and female, past and future – to realize that Bourgeois is a woman of many materials. Pay close attention as her decisions are not random; for instance, the fabric and thread used to create "Child Devoured by Kisses" alludes to significant "sign posts" from her life and the cast aluminum that enrobes her two figures in "Spider Couple" helps to 'reflect' her deeply-rooted anxieties.

4 Size matters

Louise Bourgeois said it herself, "My emotions are inappropriate to my size." With more than 50 works creeping behind every nook and cranny of the Multi-Purpose Gallery, hidden in the basement of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, there is something absolutely breathtaking about turning the white-washed corner and being slapped in the face with the exhibit's title piece, "Twosome". This obscure, kinetic



"Twosome" Tel Aviv Museum of Art, through February 17, 2018 (bourgeois-tamuseum.org.il)

sculpture, atypical of Bourgeois' style, features two large black tanks that fit inside one another, then shift apart, yet never fully separate – reflective of earlier motifs which narrow in on an uncut umbilical cord attaching mother and child for eternity.

5 This is not a murder scene

All signs point to police tape: the dimly-lit rooms, the blinding spotlights shining down on the culprits (her cast of characters), the complete absence of humanity (albeit we were there on a Monday afternoon), even the unsettling whir that was only later explained by the mechanized "Twosome", channels the air of an interrogation room. Yet, while Bourgeois' thoughts seem dark, and her scenes seem murderous, she merely used art as an outlet to personify her most intense emotions: "In real life, I identify with the victim, / in my art, I am the murderer." Perfectly fitting, indeed.

OTHER MUST-SEE SHOWS AT THE TEL AVIV MUSEUM OF ART



Rei Naito: Two Lives

A stunning installation by Japanese artist and poet Rei Naito has been created for the space occupying a cascade of light in the Herta & Paul Amir building of the Tel Aviv Art Museum. Embodying the Japanese aesthetic of "Hakanash", a concept that expresses the fragile, temporary nature of things, this is the sixth in a series. → Through April 28, 2018



Shaun Gladwell: 1,000 Horses

As both Israel and Australia mark a centennial to the Battle of Beersheba, Australian contemporary artist, Shaun Gladwell, uses a photographic display to shed light on the historic role that Australian-reared and trained horses played in the defeat of the empire, which led to the rise of British-ruled Palestine. → Through March 3, 2018, Joseph Sydzlowsky Conference Hall



Red Over Yellow

"Art collecting is a passion – the collector finds a work of art, falls in love with it and cannot let go" – a process which repeats itself over and over again. "Red over Yellow: a Selection from a Private Collection," narrows in on this passion, featuring 70 paintings, drawings, and sculptures from the 60s through to the 90s. → Through December, Sam and Ayala Zacks Pavilion