

Landmarks Guide for Adolescents



Louise Bourgeois

American, born in France, 1911

Eyes

1982

Marble

Subject: Creating contrasting, biomorphic forms

Activity: Contrasting shapes

Materials: Found objects or clay

Vocabulary: Contrast, Figurative, Malleable, Organic/Biomorphic forms, Unconscious

i Introduction

Louise Bourgeois was born in France in 1911 to a family of tapestry craftsmen. She moved to New York in 1938, where she continues to live to this day. Early in her career, Bourgeois worked with malleable materials, such as plaster and latex, to create organic/biomorphic forms. Later, she made marble and bronze sculptures, selecting her stones from famous quarries around Carrara in Italy. Though working with hard materials, Bourgeois continued to depict organic forms, often drawing upon figurative features, such as the eyes.

In this sculpture, the marble eyes stare out, expressing strength and a challenge to the viewer. Bourgeois liked the transformative process of working from a block of marble: “The cube no longer exists as a pure form for contemplation; I take it over with my fantasy, my life force. I put it to the use of my unconscious.”

? Questions

What does *Eyes* appear to be suggesting to you?

Why do you think the artist chose just one part of the human figure?

Why did Bourgeois chose marble?

How do plaster and latex differ from marble?

What is your interpretation of the quote from Bourgeois in the Introduction?
How do you think it applies to this sculpture?

Louise Bourgeois, continued



Activity

In this sculpture, Bourgeois uses simple contrasting shapes: circles and a square. Use simple shapes to make your own sculpture. You may choose to use found objects or clay.



Look Again

Louise Bourgeois' *Eyes* and Bryan Hunt's *Amphora* were both made in the same year out of very traditional materials - marble and bronze. Compared with steel, a material used for many of the sculptures at the University of Texas, marble and bronze have long histories. People living in the Cyclades, a chain of islands running across the Aegean Sea from Greece to Turkey, were the first to use marble for sculpture (from about 3,000 BCE). Likewise, the earliest known bronzes are from the ancient Near East (now Iran and Iraq) and date from about 4,000 BCE.

How does the long history of marble and bronze sculpture influence the work of Bourgeois and Hunt? Why would a twentieth-century artist choose to work with traditional materials rather than machine-age materials like steel or aluminum?



BTW

Eyes weighs 11,000 pounds!



Vocabulary

Contrast - two or more unlike elements (as color, tone, emotion) in the same work of art

Figurative - representing a figure

Malleable - a material that can be easily stretched or shaped

Organic/Biomorphic forms - resembling the forms of living organisms

Unconscious - a part of a person's psyche, or mind, that is not usually enter awareness except through slips of the tongue or dreams