

Louise Bourgeois: Germinal

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026 – JANUARY 17, 2027



Germinal, 1967, bronze and polished patina, 5 5/8 x 7 3/8 x 6 1/4 inches

NEW YORK – Craig Starr Gallery is pleased to present *Louise Bourgeois: Germinal*, on view from September 17, 2026, through January 17, 2027.

Organized with The Easton Foundation, this two-floor exhibition focuses on Bourgeois's defining work of the 1960s, a turning point in her practice. Featuring sculptures on the first floor and drawings on the fourth, the exhibition traces the emergence of a formal and symbolic vocabulary fundamental to her art: the fragmented body, the ambiguous sexual object, the repeated organic form, conceived as iterative and subject to transformation.

On the first floor, the installation foregrounds three large, segmented totemic sculptures that mark Bourgeois's departure from the rigid verticality of her early wood *Personages* toward more sensual, organic forms in plaster, latex, and bronze. Key works from her *Germinal* (1966-67) and *Fingers* (1968-71) series extend this shift through processes of pouring, repeating, and hand-shaping to impose order on emotional chaos. Through embedded pins, glove-poured plaster

fingers, and clustered protrusions, Bourgeois's forms suggest growth and transformation. These elements evoke a visceral and unconscious experience, holding conflicting physical and emotional states in a delicate tension.

The fourth floor features atmospheric, cloud like drawings from the 1960s. Bourgeois named these drawings *Cumul*, which denotes a heap, mass, or gathering. As she wrote, "the title *Cumul* comes from a system of clouds...and for me it is the study of clouds, of the sky, of the heavens" the drawings rounded contours—which suggest clouds, cells, breasts, or landscapes—are for Bourgeois, "very calming...anticipated and reliable. Consequently, it is peace, the peaceful side of things." This rhythmic repetition functions as both a formal method and a psychological necessity: a repeated unit symbolizing continuity and predictability, allowing unstable psychic states to be reordered through recurrence.



Untitled, 1968, crayon and pencil on paper, 7 1/4 x 11 1/2 inches

The installation makes that relationship visible across mediums. The repeated form on the first floor occupies a physical space: elements project, cluster, and accumulate. Then, on the fourth floor, the same principle becomes graphic: contour replaces volume, and repetition produces the cloud. The drawings should therefore not be understood simply as studies for sculpture, nor the sculptures as translations of drawings. Rather, Bourgeois moves a shared vocabulary between two and three dimensions, testing how the same forms behave under different material conditions.

In these works, Bourgeois returns to an elemental form or memory not to reproduce it, but to discover what it might become. The past supplies the seed; repetition transforms it. For Bourgeois, making art was not an escape from lived experience, but a means of giving that experience form. “Art is about life,” she said, “and that about sums it up.” In the works in this exhibition, life is understood in its most fundamental sense: as something unstable and embodied, something that remembers, desires, divides, touches, repeats—and, finally, grows.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring a new essay by Philip Larratt-Smith, a writer and curator based in New York. Since 2019, he has been the curator of The Easton Foundation, which administers the legacy of Louise Bourgeois. He has curated exhibitions by Bourgeois, Cy Twombly, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Bruce Nauman, and written extensively on artists such as Philip Guston, Jenny Holzer, Roni Horn, and Alice Neel. He is currently preparing Louise Bourgeois’s selected psychoanalytic writings for publication.