

PEDER LUND

TRAVIS JEPPESEN, "CRITICS' PICKS: LOUISE BOURGEOIS, *ARTFORUM*, FEBRUARY 2015

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Tit and phallus are much the same. For instance, consider how both offer the purifying comforts of a white liquid substance rich in life-giving protein, nurturing our anguished doubts and returning us to an ideal, infantilized state. Those life-giving parts become the landscape of a series of watercolors on paper by Louise Bourgeois on view in this exhibition, all produced late in her life, circa 2003 and 2004. These breast-cocks are hills, and their only texture is dots, unhurriedly applied.

Add to that the pregnant belly, as there are also two sculptures—one untitled, the other *Pregnant Woman*, 2003—included here. The latter is made of flesh-pink fabric and placed upon a stainless steel platform. Armless, the woman becomes an alarming phallus, her sagging butt cheeks resonating with her breasts in front. The untitled work, 2004, is another pregnant body, but rendered in a much rougher fabric—it looks like candle wax or oatmeal until you get close and notice the anarchic stitching. The wild, gestural seams turn her into a punishment talisman, as if she were being penalized for being pregnant, or for being a woman. Bourgeois understood the place in which female artists have traditionally been confined: "A woman has no place as an artist until she proves over and over that she won't be eliminated," she once stated. Her art is its own kind of war, then, a battle against the forces that attempt to consolidate the self—feminine or other—in all its unruliness.



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