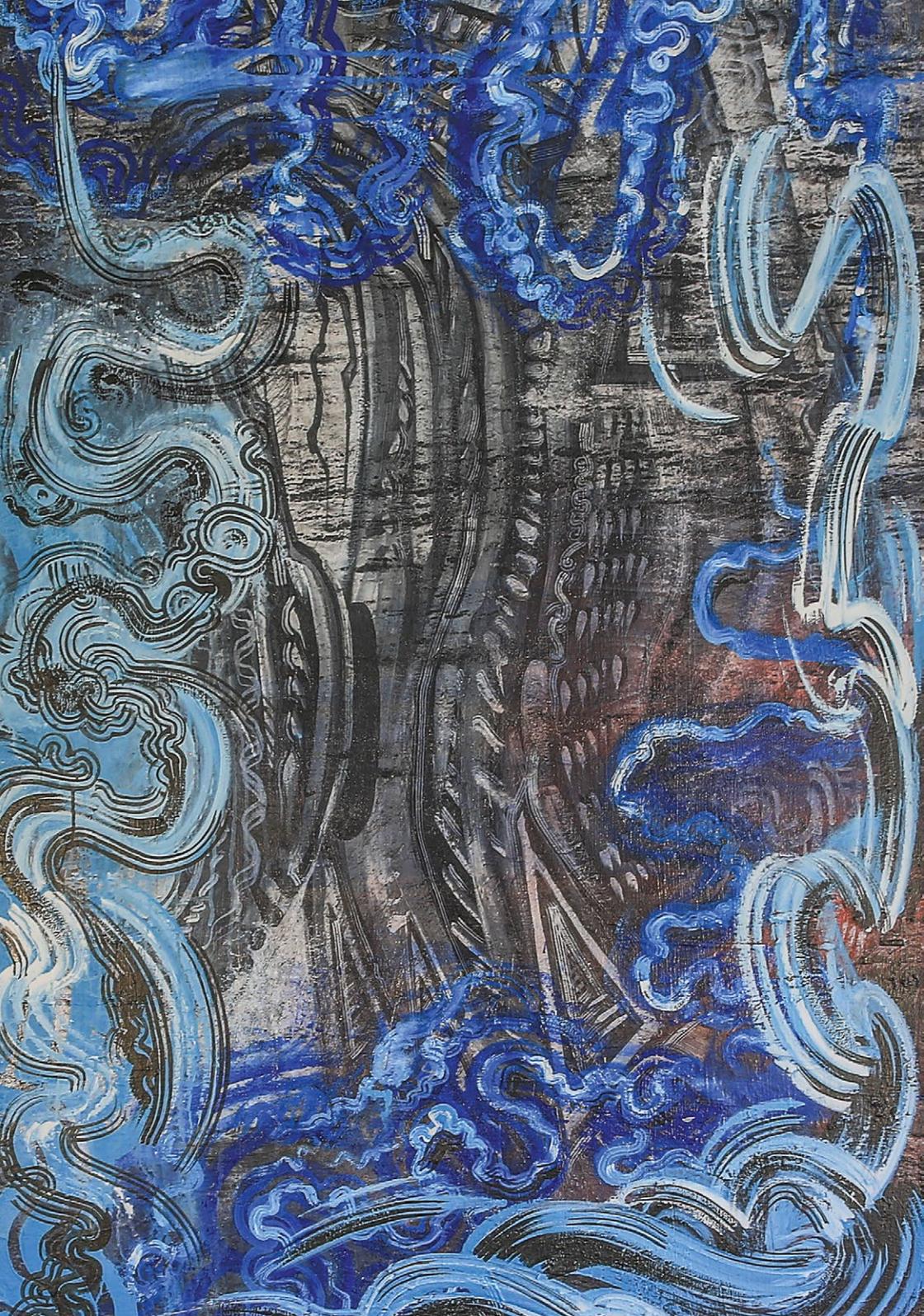




Bailer
Duality



ARTIST STATEMENT

PAUL "BAILER"

Reading Karen Kedmey's article - *How to be an artist, according to Louise Bourgeois*¹ I was struck with that familiar feeling that everything happens for a reason.

Wandering through Roppongi Hills in Tokyo last June I was mesmerised by the 10m steel sculpture of a spider that appeared to stand weightlessly in the middle of the Roku Roku plaza. *Maman* (Mum) by Bourgeois is one of many works that feature the spider motif.

Maman captured my attention because it drew parallels with my life.

The article references some of Bourgeois' sketches and notes to support the hypothesis; an artist's best work reflects their own life. Whether this is done as literally as Frida Khalo depicting her miscarriage or as cryptically as the metaphors that pepper Dali's surreal landscapes Bourgeois stated "Tell your own story and you will be interesting".

The themes of the spider and her web; entrapping, repairing, building, changing and even the metamorphosis of her prey crept into my work organically.

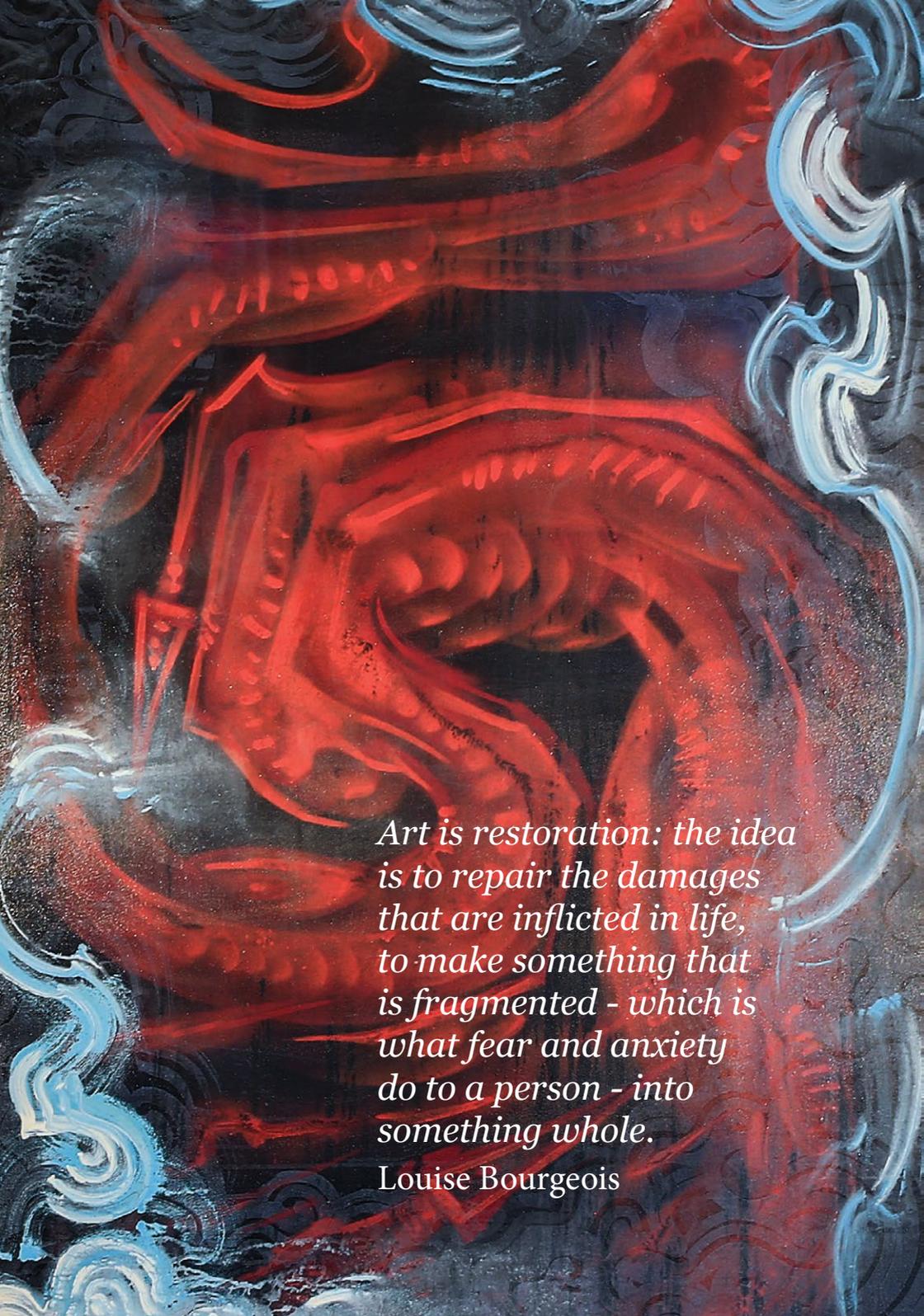
Last year I was bitten by red back spiders on three separate occasions. Each time my body overreacted to the venom requiring a few days in hospital to remove the sizable cysts that had manifested. I figured that this was my pound of flesh to pay for past bad deeds. One of the bites occurred on my painting (index) finger which needed to be cut to the bone.

At first I was in shock as to how such misfortune could happen not once, twice but three times. While I was recovering I did some reading and found that if a spider bites you it is trying to tell you something; if it bites you again then it is something important; with three bites I figured this must be a pretty big wake up call. Throughout the year my physical and mental health had been in steady decline. Turns out 20 years of spray painting had filled my body with a plethora of poisons, the spider venom was just letting me know that I needed to detox. In a way the poison was a catalyst that triggered a metamorphosis.

I have longed to expand my personal visual language for many years. It was these critical factors that forced me to undergo a journey of self-discovery to find a new painting method more conducive to a healthy happy lifestyle.

This knowledge that my passion for graffiti art and spray paint was slowly killing me and that I couldn't use my hand to hold a spray can due to the surgery (removal of spider bites/cysts in index and thumb and broken 4th metacarpal) forced me to begin experimenting with brushes and rollers that I cut into custom shapes to produce repeated line work. You can see the influence my many trips to Asia have had on my line work.

This exhibition reflects a time line that shows the growing pains of a graffiti artist, trying to find his own visual language, purpose/place outside the confines of the

An abstract painting featuring a complex, swirling composition. The central focus is a large, textured shape rendered in vibrant red and orange tones, resembling a stylized, fragmented form. This central element is surrounded by dark, almost black, swirling patterns. On the right side, there are prominent, thick, white and light blue brushstrokes that create a sense of movement and contrast. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and emotional intensity, with a focus on texture and color contrast.

*Art is restoration: the idea
is to repair the damages
that are inflicted in life,
to make something that
is fragmented - which is
what fear and anxiety
do to a person - into
something whole.*

Louise Bourgeois

underground while still maintaining his own artistic language.

In the past, I have used travel as an escape to deal with trauma or add meaning to a life that had been previously plagued with depression. Last year my trip to Japan and time in Bali helped to shape my new process of artistic experimentation. I had been taken outside of my comfort zone due to sickness and mental health so I decided to also physically and artistically push out of my comfort zone. On my travels I found ancient Asian influences, adopted some old techniques and created some of my own.

This journey through styles and methods has taken me away from sickness and freed my mind. It has been a cathartic process.

The layering of the paintings is literally the metamorphosis of style; the new encroaching on the old. Like an archaeologist's dig site, each layer could be swept aside revealing another complete work as with the artefacts set in resin. Set like layers in stone, as though each new layer is just as important as the last, yet repainted as soon as it has dried as though none of the layers are important.

Duality is a contested theme in philosophy and literature. As a near bipolar Gemini I have thought about this concept since I was a child. It was a scene featuring the character "Joker" in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* that hit home for me as an angry young anarchist. When asked why he has a peace sign pinned to his coat and the words born to kill written on his army helmet Joker replies "I think I was trying

to suggest something about the duality of man sir. The duality of man the Jungian thing sir."

I titled the show *Duality* as life and art are in a constant push and pull of opposing forces. Instead of fighting them I am trying to now embrace them.

The recurring motifs of the hand and the eyeball fall into this theme of the yin and yang. The eye is the first point of contact. It can show love or fear. The hand can embrace or attack.

I hope you connect with something, if not that's ok, I really enjoyed making it all.

PAUL "BAILER"
ARTIST

¹ Karen Kedmey, *Artsy Magazine* <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-artist-louise-bourgeois>
Artsy Editorial, 15 Dec 2017

Thank you to p1xels for sending me this article.

IMAGE (cover page): *Untitled*, spray paint, acrylic on board, 240x120cm. Photo by p1xels.

IMAGE (inside cover): *Portal*, acrylic, enamel and spray paint on canvas, 161x100cm. Photo by p1xels.

IMAGE (left): *Gut Instinct*, Acrylic, enamel and glass coat on canvas, 154x102cm. Photo by p1xels.

IMAGE (over page, left): *Reverberation*, Acrylic, enamel and glass coat on canvas 153x 102cm. Photo by p1xels.

IMAGE (over page, right): *Gift from the Gods*, Acrylic, enamel, spray paint and glass coat on canvas, 153x102cm. Photo by p1xels.







CURATOR'S MESSAGE

GEORGIA ROUETTE

Duality, paintings and sculpture by Bailer traverse the liminal states of being, delving into the mutable perspectives emerging from the human condition. Largely known for his public art works, the exhibition provides an opportunity to experience some of Bailer's more intimate and diverse stylistic approaches to the themes and concerns that pre-occupy his life.

Bailer's practice delves into the deepest recesses of psychology and his works can be viewed as autobiographical explications resulting from a cathartic process of expunging and coming to terms with his own internal dualistic challenges. The idea of dualism is fundamentally at the core of his practice. The philosophy of dualism has been interrogated since Plato's doctrine of Metaphysics, which we have come to understand and generally accept within contemporary vernacular as denoting the state of two essential and fundamentally opposing parts – yin and yang, good and evil, light and dark. Whether dualism is approached and considered through diverse interpretations such as ontology or epistemology, we inhabit this internal dualistic conundrum within our individual and collective human condition.

For Bailer, the process of making art is a means of working through personal experiences, transmitting and exuding emotion into his artistic practice. His work is a process of unravelling the unconscious in an attempt to discover the origins of his feelings and articulate his views within the personal, socio-economic and political realm.

Through this highly charged, intimate content, the artist has found a personal visual language that resonates at a universal level. Influenced by surrealism, abstract expressionism and graffiti, a genre which he immersed himself in at a young age, capturing a likeness of something that already occupies space has never really interested him. Instead, the development of a personal style and the refinement of a purgative process takes precedence. He prefers the process to be apparent in the artwork as for him it is the most important part of his artistic expression.

With a background in painting, film and music, Bailer's art fits comfortably amongst artists as diverse as surrealist animator and film maker Jan Svankmajer who is known for his avant-garde stop motion films, the bio-mech forms of H.R. Giger, Louise Bourgeois, Pierre Soulages and Katsushika Hokusai. Bailer's body of work encompasses these diverse platforms which allow him to outwardly express the dualistic botheration that we all seem to be experiencing and questioning, consciously or otherwise. The exhibition encourages the viewer to become immersed in unlocking their own mecurial states of mind and to ultimately understand that nothing ever stays the same, all is fluid, moving.

GEORGIA ROUETTE
ART HISTORIAN AND CURATOR

IMAGE (left): 1984, Found objects, resin, 46x54cm. Photo by p1xels.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say a massive thank you to Georgia Rouette who has supported me through all of my sickness and self-doubt and pretty much stopped me from quitting. Having someone else believe in me took the pressure off me having to believe in myself Ha Ha.

(Nella) P1xels for always being so nice and shooting photos and hanging out when-ever you can.

Thank you Briar Holt, Gallery Manager and her team at fortyfivedownstairs for providing the space and ongoing support/advice.

The guys from Bodriggy brewing for providing fellow artist Mic Porter and myself with an amazing art-space for the last year. That was actually ridiculous. I am going to miss that place and really appreciate it cheers Pete, Stingray and gang.

Thank you also to Dimity Mapstone for designing this catalogue, Monica Cronin for editing the essays and her assistance installing the exhibition and Fiona Hilary, Lecture in Art In Public Spaces RMIT University, for opening the exhibition.

Finally thanks to our opening night sponsor Mountain Goat Brewery and to you for coming out to see my work.... now go have a beer.

Peace.

BAILER: DUALITY

30 January – 10 February 2018

fortyfivedownstairs

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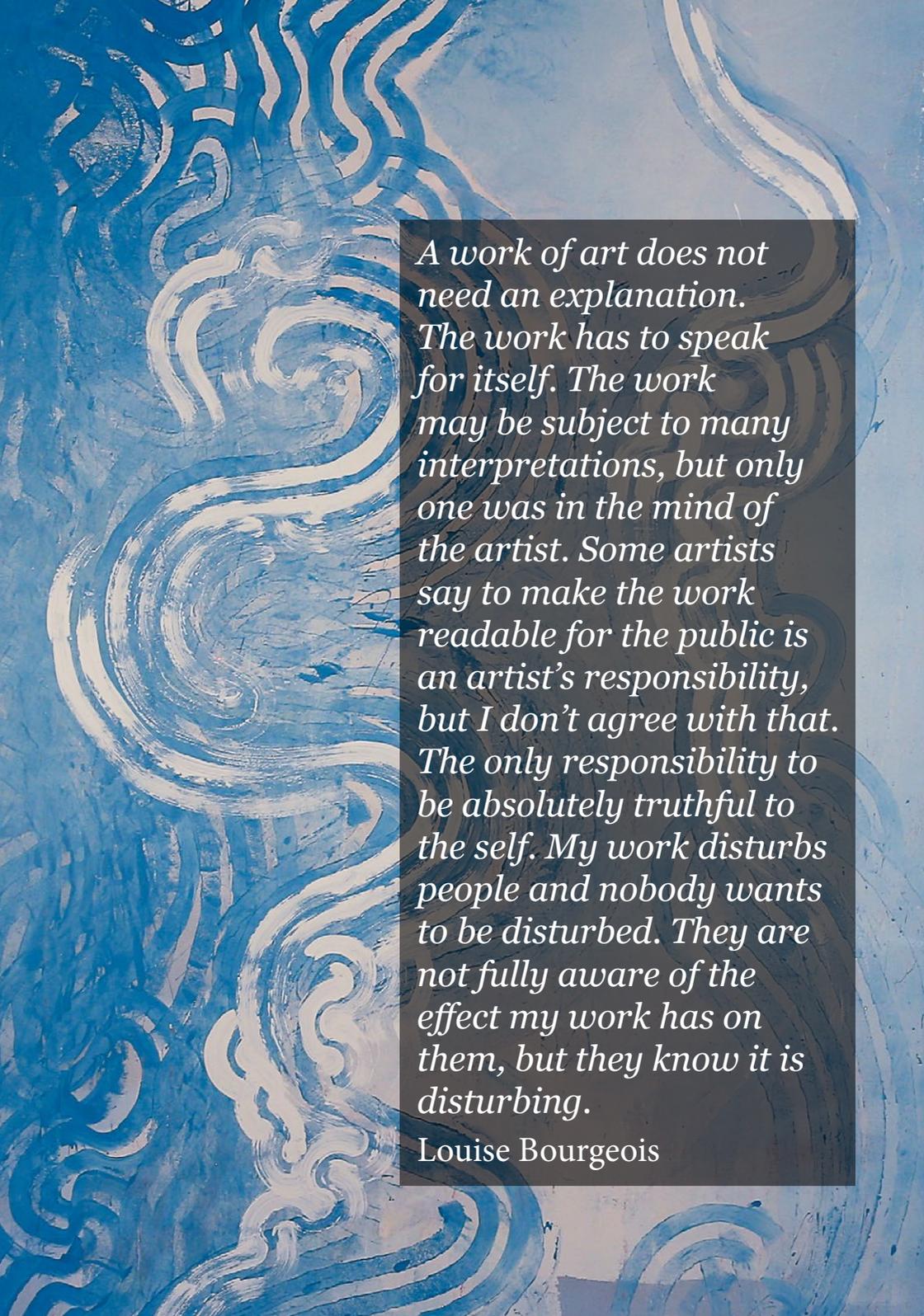


**fortyfive
downstairs**



IMAGE (right): Wave, Spray paint and acrylic on board, 240x120cm. Photo by p1xels.

IMAGE (back cover): Wander Karmar, Raccoon and bird skulls, spider webs, Bailer's wisdom tooth, Sinch' knife, Money, other found objects, German Army Knife, 50x30cm. Photo by p1xels.

An abstract painting featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes in various shades of blue and white. The strokes are swirling and organic, creating a sense of movement and depth. The background is a mix of light and dark blue tones, with the white strokes providing a stark contrast.

A work of art does not need an explanation. The work has to speak for itself. The work may be subject to many interpretations, but only one was in the mind of the artist. Some artists say to make the work readable for the public is an artist's responsibility, but I don't agree with that. The only responsibility to be absolutely truthful to the self. My work disturbs people and nobody wants to be disturbed. They are not fully aware of the effect my work has on them, but they know it is disturbing.

Louise Bourgeois

