

'City of Rooms (part one)'

Louise Bourgeois

Eva Gold

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Rose Easton

Text written in collaboration between
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Footnotes by Eva Gold

In *City of Rooms*, Gold reworks fragments of the familiar, presenting new sculptures and drawings alongside a work from Louise Bourgeois, in a continuation of her enquiry into the work of cinema and its mechanisms. Much of Gold's work ruminates on blurring binaries between public and private, where each is defined in terms of a mediating skin rather than in terms of a private interiority and conceptually opposed social outside. There is a sense of surveillance that intensifies this mediating condition, suggesting that the domestic is not necessarily private.¹

Something is off here, something is broken.² These are materials that speak of a time, a place, and a human presence – those emitted by the body, or enclosing one. There is a latent masculinity to these objects: a leather-clad folding chair, camcorder, static tv screen. A satellite dish made from beaten aluminium connects to a second dish, in another room across London, their curved forms both receiving and emitting. In that room there are drawings of CCTV screens that have erased the bodies from their settings, lifted directly from the 1997 Japanese horror film *Cure* directed by Kyoshi Kurosawa. Much of the affective registers in *City of Rooms* mirror the ways in which *Cure* treats the body in space, mediated by technologies of surveillance.³ Not least of all, how cinema itself inscribes viewers as voyeurs.

In the work of Louise Bourgeois, we repeatedly encounter a private interior world, into which we are able to glimpse. Sitting on a carpeted plinth, *The Curved House* (2010) speaks to place as a site of memory,⁴ as well as a kind of psychological horror.⁵ Here, in contrast to how privacy might otherwise be understood, this house for Bourgeois is not only a trope but a literal refuge for her and her family during WWII. This architecture, where vulnerable bodies were protected as they slept, ate, and washed, and where the taking in and preparation of food, or the erotic encounter, or the various forms of work that were done, becomes expressly political. As we circle this building and inspect its edges, the symbol of private refuge is brought into this complex environment where it is transfigured for public consumption and scrutiny.

Here, proximity to life is distant.⁶ This is not the main event, the spectacular stage or the public environments we have witnessed in previous Eva Gold exhibitions. Archetypal characters are absent here but the trace of their private lives is on display.⁷ These are the interconnected liminal spaces that network the private and public into a social body. The quiet, ominous detritus left as clues behind the scenes, in the back rooms of itinerant addresses.⁸

- 1 In a 1998 TV advert for the Panasonic Palmcorder, a couple in their 60s lie on a bed on their backs. They are in a motel room, wood panelled, high pile carpet, large faded print of a palm tree sunset behind the headboard. He wears a wife beater and Hawaiian shirt, and she a satin dress. Side by side. The hand of a man in a lab coat cuts across the frame, pushing a coin into a slot, as she makes eye contact with the camera. She licks her lips, and the bed begins to rock, thudding rhythmically against the wall. The man and the woman each hold a camcorder, pressed to their eye, filming the ceiling fan as it circles above them. The bed continues to move, and we see their bodies jiggle in time. We understand that this is some sort of experiment.

An exercise in image stability.

Notice how the image from his camcorder is stable. As if he weren't moving at all.

- 2 The problem is not, any more, the longing to get to the past, but the inability to get out of it. You find yourself in a grey black drizzle of static, a haze of crackle. Why is it always raining here? Or is that just the sound of the television, tuned to a dead channel?^a
- 3 The light from the bright room reflected from the mirror back into the room itself is much greater than the light transmitted from the dark room, overwhelming the small amount of light transmitted from the dark to the bright room; conversely, the light reflected back into the dark side is overwhelmed by the light transmitted from the bright side. This allows a viewer in the dark side to observe the bright room covertly.^b
- 4 As if its unfamiliarly echoing rooms have somehow discerned the intensity of hurried shame with which their curators have cleared them of furniture and effects, the house begins to restock itself with ghostly mementos... this house, so swiftly cleansed of all tangible history, suddenly insists on reminding me that something has happened here.^c
- 5 The word 'haunt' and all the derivations thereof may be one of the closest English word to the German 'unheimlich', whose polysemic connotations and etymological echoes Freud so assiduously, and so famously, unravelled in his essay on the uncanny.^d
- 6 You suppose that you could be in familiar territory... The present – broken, desolated is constantly erasing itself, leaving few traces. Things catch your attention for a while but you do not remember them for very long. But the old memories persist, intact... constantly commemorated.^e

- 7 Imagine standing by a window at night, on the sixth or seventeenth or forty-third floor of a building. The city reveals itself as a set of cells, a hundred thousand windows, some darkened and some flooded with green or white or golden light. Inside, strangers swim to and fro, attending to the business of their private hours. You can see them, but you can't reach them, and so this commonplace urban phenomenon, available in any city of the world on any night, conveys to even the most social a tremor of loneliness, its uneasy combination of separation and exposure.^f
- 8 The lights have gone out.^g
- a Mark Fisher, "Sleevenotes for The Caretaker's *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*" *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 111.
- b "One-Way Mirror," n.d., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One-way_mirror.
- c Brian Dillon, "View by Appointment" *In The Dark Room* (London: Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2020) 23.
- d Mark Fisher, "Sleevenotes for The Caretaker's *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*" *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 125.
- e Mark Fisher, "Sleevenotes for The Caretaker's *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*" *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 111.
- f Olivia Laing, *The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone*, First U.S. Edition (New York: Picador, 2016) 3.
- g Mark Fisher, "Sleevenotes for The Caretaker's *Theoretically Pure Anterograde Amnesia*" *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester, UK: Zero books, 2014) 111.

Eva Gold (b. 1994, Manchester, UK) lives and works in London. After completing her BA at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2016, Gold went on to complete a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Academy of Art, London in 2019. Her practice harnesses methodologies of storytelling, using objects, writing, materials and space to recount narratives. Recent solo exhibitions include *Slow Dance*, Eigen + Art Lab, Berlin (2022); *The Last Cowboys*, Ginny on Frederick, London (2022) and *Perv City*, at Parrhesiades in collaboration with Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London (2020). Selected group exhibitions include *Not before it has forgotten you*, Nicoletti Contemporary, London / The Pole Gallery, Paris (2022); Lock Up International, Brussels (2022); *SEX*, Rose Easton, London (2022); *Corps*, MAMOTH, London (2021); *Sets & Scenarios*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2020); *Barely Furtive Pleasures*, Nir Altman, Munich (2020) and *General Meeting*, Freehouse, London (2019).

Louise Bourgeois (b. 1911, Paris, France; d. 2010, New York, USA) used the body as a primary form to explore the human condition. From poetic drawings to room-sized installations, she physically manifested her fears and anxieties in order to exorcise them. Memory, love, fear, and abandonment are at the core of her complex and renowned body of work. Bourgeois was named Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French minister of culture in 1983. Other honors include the Grand Prix National de Sculpture from the French government in 1991; the National Medal of Arts, presented by President Bill Clinton, in 1997; and the French medal of Commander of the Legion of Honor presented by President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2008. She represented the United States at the Venice Biennale in 1993, and in 1999 she was awarded the Biennale's Golden Lion for a living master of contemporary art. Bourgeois's work can be found in important collections worldwide and has been the subject of several major traveling retrospectives, including those organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Kunstverein, Frankfurt; Tate Modern, London; the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Haus der Kunst, Munich; the Hayward Gallery, London; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

List of works, clockwise from entrance

Eva Gold

Channel Zero, 2023

Pencil on paper, framed

42 × 50 × 3.5 cm

Louise Bourgeois

The Curved House, 2010

Pink marble

12.1 × 21 × 7 cm

Eva Gold

Insomniac (SE14 5NT), 2023

Aluminium

46 × 39 × 28.5 cm

Eva Gold

Soft Touch, 2023

Lambskin leather,

found chair

73 × 55 × 60 cm

Eva Gold

Home Video, 2023

Jesmonite, rubber

18 × 8.5 × 21 cm

Private View, Wednesday 22 March, 6 – 8pm
Open, Wednesday – Saturday, 12 – 6pm

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of live events and activations. Programme to be announced. Follow @roseeaston223 to be kept up to date. For all enquiries, please email info@roseeaston.com

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