



# Louise Bourgeois: Armed Forces

Alex van Gelder

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- This beautiful clothbound book presents twenty of Van Gelder's portraits of artists Louise Bourgeois's hands
- The final project of Louise Bourgeois, in collaboration with photographer Alex Van Gelder

Louise Bourgeois was an immensely influential sculptor and one of the iconic figures of twentieth and early twenty-first century art. She died in May 2010, aged ninety-eight. In the last year of her life, she invited the artist Alex van Gelder to stay at her New York town house and take photographs of her. More than purely a portrait project, she considered the collaboration to be an extension of her work, allowing her person to be viewed as a segment of her art. Of the hundreds of pictures that Van Gelder took, it is those which depict her hands against the black of her clothes that astonish most: gnarled, sinewy and wrinkled with age, they were the tools with which she produced her extraordinary work, right up to a few days before her death. This beautiful clothbound book presents twenty of Van Gelder's portraits of Bourgeois's hands, each on a double-page spread and accompanied by comments by the artist. Cupped or cradling and always mobile, her hands recall many of her works: from the interlocking finger-like forms of her *Lairs* of the 1960s, to the skein of lines of her *Insomnia Drawings* and the poised spiders of her *Maman* series. Despite their stark simplicity, Van Gelder's images are suffused with warmth. They reflect his closeness to Bourgeois and the trust she placed in him when working together on this final project, brought to fruition here in this intimate and precious book.