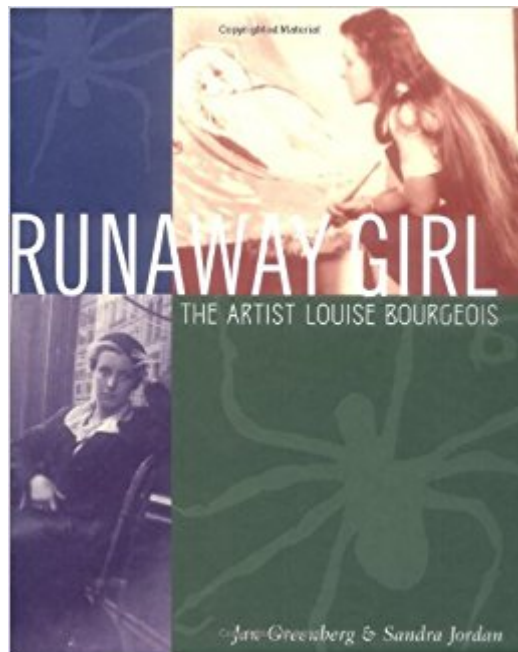




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# **Runaway Girl: The Artist Louise Bourgeois (Bccb Blue Ribbon Nonfiction Book Award (Awards))**



## Synopsis

This title about one of the most important and controversial artists of the 20th century is aimed at young teenagers. "Runaway Girl" provides an intimate look at the life and work of sculptor Louise Bourgeois (born 1911). Known for her graphic, sometimes disturbing, yet always personal artworks, Bourgeois broke down barriers for women in the male-dominated art world as she struggled to make sense of her own troubled past. Family photographs and reproductions of Bourgeois's work - from "Deconstruction of Father" to "Maman" - are interspersed with exclusive interviews, selections from the artist's journals and clear text.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up-To mix a biography of Bourgeois with an explanation of her sculpture, fit in her impact on the artistic community, and remain accessible to students may seem to be an impossible feat, but Greenberg and Jordan have done it. Through solid research and interviews with Bourgeois, the woman's stories and work come to life with poignant clarity. Her childhood years and her relationship with her parents are examined and their effect on her work is clear in the abundant black-and-white and full-color photographs. Bourgeois's place in the art world was sealed in 1969 when she became the first woman sculptor to have a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. An explanation of how to view sculpture using Bourgeois's Couple (2001) as an example, an area list of locations where her art is displayed, and lists of the works pictured-one chronological and one by chapter-are included. This superb book is a perfect starting point for research on the artist and

20th-century sculpture. Delia Fritz, Mercersburg Academy, PA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 8-12. As in Frank O. Gehry, *Outside In* (2000), the authors once again make challenging art accessible and exciting to teen readers. This time they focus on Louise Bourgeois, one of the best-known living sculptors, whose work deals with primal themes of jealousy, betrayal, and shifting sexual identities, which, according to Bourgeois are inspired by her painful childhood and her adulterous father. In clear, elegant prose, bolstered with numerous quotes from the artist, the authors seamlessly juxtapose stories of Bourgeois' life with relevant artworks, which are often explained in the artist's own words. Beautifully reproduced photographs, printed on well-designed pages, offer an excellent mix of the artist's personal life and her art, though the authors remind readers that "we don't have to know her story to have our own strong reaction," to her work. By showing the relationship among shapes, colors, materials, and emotions, the authors invite readers to approach even the most bewildering art with confidence and think about it in their own words. The book concludes with a glossary, a bibliography, and notes. Gillian Engberg Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

I loved all the pictures the book had of Louise Bourgeois art work. Easily understandable for younger kids but entertaining for adults as well. Buy it, you will love it.

As you read *RUNAWAY GIRL*, a beautifully-crafted book that illuminates Louise Bourgeois's story, it is impossible not to keep your eyes on the art. The book is absolutely saturated with vivid photographs of the ninety-two year-old artist's work, as well as a progression of photos of Louise throughout a life that spanned nearly the entire twentieth century and has continued on into the new millennium. Louise's story--from a childhood in France to an apartment in Manhattan--encompasses family, creativity, and personal evolution, as well as her historic role in breaking down sexual barriers in the art world. But what makes *RUNAWAY GIRL* such an important piece of nonfiction for young adults is that unique peek at the psychological roots of an artist's creativity. Greenberg & Jordan provide the perfect measure of Louise's early years in order for us to understand those roots without ever getting bogged down in extraneous detail. The extensive access to her inner life that this controversial artist has granted the authors and their readers makes the book inspiring and unique. I didn't expect to enjoy a book about some female artist I'd never heard of before, but to find out why some two-story-high spiders represent her mother and herself totally captivated me."From

one of Louise Bourgeois's journals: The Runaway Girl who never grew up. I need no support nor comfort. I need no safety net, no breakfast. No lunch or tea, no visitors, no telephone calls nor little messages. No little concerts, no hype, or encouragement for big projects. No ambitions, no spying on my neighbors. I need nothing... I can wait, I am not afraid, I am an adult. Nothing is lacking." It is also fascinating to see little snippets of the artist at work. For instance, the authors describe her creation of one of my favorite pieces of her art: "She would go back to [the marble quarries in] Pietranta many times in the sixties and again in the eighties. Jerry Gorovoy, who accompanied her on one such trip, says there wasn't much time for sightseeing. They arrived at their hotel in the evening and instead of going to a restaurant or walking around town, she insisted on getting right to work. Jerry says that Louise had a hard time relaxing. 'If you take her to the beach, she can sit still for about five minutes. Then she gets restless.' Unfortunately, Louise hadn't packed any art supplies--no clay, wax or Plasticine. So she asked Jerry for the shirt off his back. She folded and shaped it, stitching the cotton into position until she was satisfied with the form. The next day at the quarry she changed the design somewhat, then applied gesso, a liquid plaster, to harden the fabric. A larger, marble version was measured and roughed out by the craftsmen at the quarry according to her specifications. Then it was shipped to the studio [in Brooklyn], where, upon her return, she carefully reworked it with a chisel. Eventually Jerry's shirt evolved into *Femme Maison*, 1983, a fresh interpretation of her familiar subject." RUNAWAY GIRL concludes with a variety of useful resources, including "How to Look at a Sculpture," and "Where to View Artwork by Louise Bourgeois," as well as an expansive glossary, a bibliography, and a chronological listing of her work." What happens next? That is her main focus. And so she stays at home on Twentieth Street, spinning her memories, fantasies, and ideas into art. Free with her thoughts and feelings, up to a point, she lets us know that there are other secrets, other ideas and thoughts to consider about her, about her work. 'I'm a long distance runner. I'm a lonely runner and that's the way I like it.' "It was a delight to "meet" Louise. Long may she run.

Interesting book on a great artist

I highly recommend this book to readers of all ages who want to know more about Louise Bourgeois and her work. It's beautifully designed, straight-forward, full of information, and inspiring.

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