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**LOUISE BOURGEOIS**  
**Hauser & Wirth**  
**Zurich**

Odd as it may seem, there is something heartwarming about the acerbic tone and rawness of Louise Bourgeois's new work. In an artworld obsessed with youth, the 89-year-old Bourgeois continues to create pieces as visceral and tough as any by the emerging generation. Always one to experiment with new formats, Bourgeois this time offered up a series of lead plaques with texts carved into them. One reads: "Let me see your eyes/Twist her face/Put her on her knees/Drop a 20 kilogram can of nails on her head/Catch her at the throat/Assaults." So much for going gently into that good night.

Another plaque, this one oval-shaped, states only, "The hour is devoted to revenge," its cold lead seeming a silent affirmation of that vow. But there's more to these plaques than being a harsher Jenny Holzer. In one work, thin twine weaves through holes punched into the top of a metal plaque, forming a jagged cat's cradle. A single piece of string hangs down, its end wrapped like a noose around the neck of a tiny nude female figure made of lead. The plaque's inscription reads: "To unravel a torment you have to start somewhere."

Much of the show focuses on the parent-child dynamic, often with sharp rancor. The installation *Do Not Abandon Me* features a recumbent pink rag doll ejecting a baby doll from its womb like a cannon. The dolls' crude patchwork seams suggest tremors of pain streaking across their bodies.

Within this context, everything turns caustic. The drawing *Louise Eating Madeleine*, for example, ostensibly shows the artist consuming pastry. Yet the voracious mouth that dominates the image evokes the Greek god Cronos eating his offspring so they will not dethrone him. Fortunately for Tracey Emin and company, Bourgeois need not take such extreme measures. Still, her work suggests she would not blink twice if she had to.

*Marc Spiegler*