

***Maman*** (1999) is a sculpture by the artist [Louise Bourgeois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Bourgeois). The sculpture, which resembles a [spider](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spider), is amongst the world's largest and most impressive, measuring over 30 ft high and over 33 ft wide, with a sac containing 26 marble eggs. Its abdomen and thorax are made up of ribbed bronze.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maman#cite_note-Louise_Bourgeois.2C_Spider_1996-1) The title is the familiar [French](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language) word for *Mother*.

The sculpture picks up the theme of the arachnid that Bourgeois had first contemplated in a small ink and charcoal drawing in 1947.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maman#cite_note-Louise_Bourgeois.2C_Spider_1996-1) It alludes to the strength of Bourgeois' mother, with metaphors of spinning, weaving, nurture and protection.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maman#cite_note-tate_.2708-2) Her mother Josephine was a woman who repaired tapestries in her father's textile restoration workshop in Paris.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maman#cite_note-Louise_Bourgeois.2C_Spider_1996-1) Bourgeois lost her mother at the age of twenty-one. A few days afterwards, in front of her father who did not seem to take his daughter’s despair seriously, she threw herself into the Bièvre River; he swam to her rescue.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maman#cite_note-3)

**Louise Joséphine Bourgeois** (French: [[lwiz buʁʒwa]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA_for_French); 25 December 1911 – 31 May 2010),[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Bourgeois#cite_note-1) was a renowned [French-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_American) [artist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artist) and [sculptor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sculptor), best known for her contributions to both [modern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_art) and [contemporary art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_art), and for her spider structures, titled [*Maman*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maman), which resulted in her being nicknamed the *Spiderwoman*.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Bourgeois#cite_note-2) In 2011 one of her *Spider* works sold for $10.7 million, a new record price for the artist at auction,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Bourgeois#cite_note-3) and the highest price paid for a work by a woman artist.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Bourgeois#cite_note-4)