

Louise Bourgeois

French, active USA, 1911–2010

C.O.Y.O.T.E., 1979

Bronze, pink paint, and stainless steel

Number five of an edition of six with one artist's proof

Private collection, courtesy Hauser & Wirth

Louise Bourgeois circles back to the same subjects, whether her iconic spiders or small bedrooms that feel like prison cells. From 1941 to 1948, she constructed six iterations of this sculpture. Then called *The Blind Leading the Blind*, it was made from sawn wooden wedges painted red and black, colors connected with fascism and the Nazi flag. In 1979, she built another iteration, painted it pink, and retitled the sculpture *C.O.Y.O.T.E.*, the name of a sex workers' coalition and advocacy group founded by Margo St. James in 1974. The letters stand for "Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics." Finally, in the early 1980s, she decided to memorialize this important piece in bronze. In an interview from 1988, the artist talked about these sculptures:

'The blind leading the blind' is a piece that brings me to the feminist cause. Another, which is very close, is *C.O.Y.O.T.E.*, which was the name of the prostitutes' group. All they can do is hold on to each other. Individually they couldn't even stand on their feet, but holding on to each other, they make it. It's also a comment on failures, on shortcomings, on being disabled. They huddle together, and through their positive attitude toward each other they summon the energy necessary to stand against the world. They conquer fear enough to finally express themselves and be what they are.



Louise Bourgeois, *The Blind Leading the Blind*, 1947-49. Wood, painted red and black. Collection of The Easton Foundation. Photo: Christopher Burke, © The Easton Foundation.