My art is a form of restoration

In conversation with one of the world's greatest living artists, Louise Bourgeois reflects on her extraordinary career

Louise Bourgeois, the American artist whose work spans seven decades, is one of the world's greatest living artists. In a rare interview with The Observer, she talks about her extraordinary career and the inspiration behind her work.

"My art is a form of restoration," Bourgeois says. "It is a way of healing, of mending what has been broken or ripped apart."

Bourgeois, who was born in Paris in 1911 and moved to New York in 1938, has created an extraordinary body of work that includes paintings, prints, sculptures, and installations. Her most famous works include the "spider" structures, which are portraits of her mother and her sister, and the "swinging woman" pieces, which are portraits of women in the artist's life.

"My work is a form of restoration in terms of my feelings to myself and to others," Bourgeois says. "It is a way of healing, of mending what has been broken or ripped apart."

Bourgeois' work is deeply personal, and is often inspired by her own life and experiences. She grew up in a family of artists, and was educated at the Sorbonne in Paris. Her father was a painter, and her mother was a sculptor. Bourgeois' love of art was instilled in her from a young age, and she began creating art at a very young age.

As a child, Bourgeois was a "runaway girl" from France who married an American and moved to New York City. She did not have a market for her work, and was often dismissed by critics. But Bourgeois was determined to pursue her art, and continued to create despite the obstacles.

"To be an artist is difficult," Bourgeois says. "The market is only one issue, and it doesn't interest me. I am exclusively concerned with the formal qualities of my work."