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## I Lost My Heart—and a Spider

### The Work That Got Away



Louise Bourgeois, *Spider* (1995) © The Easton Foundation, Licensed by VAGA, NY. Photo credit: Peter Bellamy

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I went to Jeff Koons studio, it must have been around 20 years ago, when he was working on some “Celebration” works for an exhibition that was going to take place at Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin. Everything was very organized in the studio and Jeff was showing us around. There was this maquette of a hanging heart: I am a sucker for hearts—I just love the shape and what it means. I shook hands on the work and then went to my apartment with [Jeffrey Deitch](#). There was just no way it would have fitted, so I had to say I couldn't take it.

It turns out the work would not have even been delivered to me until ten years later. Had I known that, I would have waited patiently. I have lived in other homes since then so if it didn't fit in that apartment then it would have somewhere else. I could have done something. But these are the things you don't know at the time—retrospective vision is always 20/20.

At the time I just didn't know what I would do with a work that big. I hate to put things in storage and it didn't even occur to me ask how long it would take to build. They didn't know either. The exhibition didn't actually take place because things spiraled out of control for the "Celebration" series. It took years to complete the work—Jeff is such a perfectionist that the process of creating the works took longer than anticipated and was much more costly than expected. But it's one of his best series and well worth the wait. Larry Gagosian sold one of the hearts to Adam Lindemann, *Hanging Heart (Magenta/Gold)* (1994-2006), who then sold it at Sotheby's in 2007 for \$23.6m. I would have had the red one—what else? It had to be. That was the first one.



Jeff Koons, *Hanging Heart (Magenta/Gold)* (1994-2006) © Jeff Koons

One thing I really love in art is spiders, and another work that got away was a wall spider by Louise Bourgeois that I saw at the Fiac art fair, around 20 or so years ago. I loved that work and have never gone a day without regretting it. It cost \$60,000 and was made by Bourgeois—it was welded, not a cast. It was unique. I don't know what happened to me but for some reason I didn't follow up.

I don't know what it was about the work, but it really spoke to me. It's not that I go and see work and think about the value of it, and whether that's reliable. For me, I am struck by art and can relate to it. Sometimes I love art that isn't going to go anywhere on the market but it speaks to me. It is just something that happens and it's very personal.

Everyone has a reaction and a story to tell—that's why I wrote my book *Could Have, Would Have, Should Have*, because I wanted to get the stories from the collectors themselves. In my case, every work has a story. One thing all of us collectors have in common is that we love to talk about our art—how and when we got something, what happened, things we missed. In the book, there are lots of heartfelt anecdotes because these people are passionate about art.

I had another opportunity to get a Bourgeois spider that was owned by Helmut Newton and his wife, June, who is known as the photographer Alice Springs. They had a similar work to the one I'd seen at Fiac in their apartment in Monaco.

I had this necklace that my husband had bought me as a gift and it turns out that June had seen the same necklace at the Biennale des Antiquaires in Monaco, and had wanted to buy it but was told it was sold. She suggested that we could exchange—the pearl necklace for the Bourgeois. But I said no because it was a gift from my husband, so I couldn't do it. So, for the second time, I missed it.

*\*Could Have, Would Have, Should Have: Inside the World of the Art Collector by Tiqui Atencio (illustrations by Pablo Helguera), is published by [Art/Books](#)*