

Louise Nevelson

MEDIUM Sculpture

NATIONALITY American

LIFE DATES Kiev, Ukraine 1900 - 1988 New York, New York

Louise Nevelson was born in Kiev, Ukraine, in 1899 and immigrated with her family to Rockland, Maine, in 1905. She moved to New York City in 1920 where she studied painting and drawing at the Art Students League intermittently from 1928 until 1933.

A brief period of study with the painter Hans Hofmann grounded her with in Cubist design and collage. From the 1930s through the mid-1940s, Nevelson produced human and animal figures which reflected the influence of Cubism and Surrealism as well as an affection for primitive art - African, American Indian, and pre-Columbian - which she collected, admiring its sense of magic and mystery as well as its masses and linear surface patterns.

During the mid-1940s, Nevelson worked on assembled constructions made from found wood objects and scraps, which reflected the broader activity during the 1940s in Surrealist assemblage. By the mid-1950s she began to make walls of stacked boxes filled with found and carved wood forms. These she joined with wood columns, reliefs, and other box-walls to create sculptural environments.

Louise Nevelson has exhibited her work in numerous solo and group shows at institutions including the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; the Art Institute of Chicago; the Carnegie Institute of the Arts, Philadelphia; the Brooklyn Museum; and the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, among many others. Her first major retrospective occurred at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1967. She was elected president of the National Artists Equity in 1965 and became vice-president of the International Association of Artists in the following year. Her many honors and recognitions include the Gold Medal in Sculpture from the American Academy of the Arts in 1983, a National Medal of the Arts in 1985, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's Great Artist Series Award in 1986.

Louise Nevelson died in New York in 1988.

