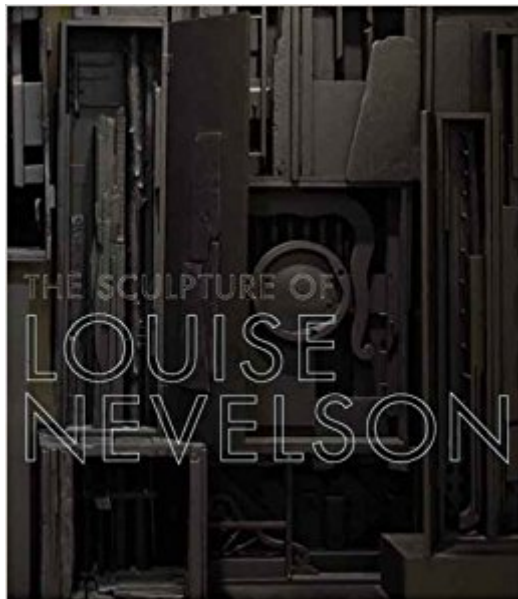




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# The Sculpture Of Louise Nevelson: Constructing A Legend (Jewish Museum)



## Synopsis

Louise Nevelson (1900–1988) was a towering figure in postwar American art, exerting great influence with her monumental installations, innovative sculptures made of found objects, and celebrated public artworks. *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson* focuses on all phases of the artist's remarkable ascent to the top of the art world, from her groundbreaking works of the 1940s to complex pieces completed in the late 1980s. The most extensive study of Nevelson to be published in over 20 years, this beautifully illustrated book also demonstrates how Nevelson's flamboyant style and carefully cultivated persona enhanced her reputation as an artist of the first rank. Essays by distinguished scholars examine a wide variety of important issues and themes throughout Nevelson's career, including the role of monochromatic color in her painted wooden sculpture; the art-historical context of her work; her acclaimed large-scale commissioned artworks, which established her as a central figure in the public art revival of the late 1960s; and her self-fashioning as a celebrated artist, particularly her origins as a Ukrainian-born Jewish immigrant to the United States. An illustrated chronology and exhibition history accompany the text. Published in conjunction with the first major exhibition of Nevelson's work in America since 1980, this book provides essential information on and insights into the study of a revolutionary 20th-century artist.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

American sculptor and fine artist Louise Nevelson (1899-1988) played an integral role in 20th

century art; this, the "most extensive study of Nevelson...in over twenty years," combines large, lush images of Nevelson's work with essays on her art and personal life. Many of the essays mention Nevelson's strong sense of self and the ways-both overt and implicit-that that sense presents itself in her artwork. Observational gems stud these essays, like editor and curator Rapaport's insight into Nevelson's work with foraged wood, "a material that she could command viscerally because of childhood associations with her father's work as a lumberman." Arthur C. Danto's essay, in which he shows how Nevelson struggled with 1960s art criticism, provides a picture of the sculptor both as a famous artist and as a vulnerable human being. For Nevelson newcomers, the best place to start is in the back, with Gabriel de Guzman's succinct but unhurried "Chronology of Louise Nevelson's Life," a year-by-year summary adorned with well-chosen personal photos. Comprehensive and evenly balanced between text and image, this is the volume Nevelson devotees have been waiting for. 140 color illustrations. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** Louise Nevelson and her profoundly evocative black-wood sculptures were upfront and center in the 1970s and 1980s. Commanding in her dramatic scarves and robes, mink coats, and extravagant false eyelashes, the artist herself was a work of living sculpture. A pioneer in installation art, Nevelson transformed the humblest of materials, wood scraps, into intricate constructions with the complexity of cellular architecture. So powerful were Nevelson's finely detailed black, white, and gold room-filling wood sculptures, she was commissioned to create large outdoor works and built remarkably airy steel structures. But after her death in 1988, Nevelson was forgotten. Now, finally, she is reclaimed as the visionary she was in this suitably dazzling overview in which Rapaport and her superb contributors, including Arthur C. Danto, match measured biography with judicious critical commentary and superb photographs. Given to oracular and contradictory pronouncements, Nevelson herself remains a riddle. But her daring and transfiguring work, which finds beauty and value in the broken and the cast-off, speaks a universal language. The world is a richer place with Nevelson back in view. Donna Seaman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Super book. I've loved Louise Nevelson's work but didn't know much about her. This book describes her entry into the art world, her process and history. Filled with images of many of her pieces, it is descriptive and a good read as well.

The review from "Publishers Weekly" is not just hype but rather an excellent summation of this gem. Though another reviewer wished for more close-ups of Nevelson's sculptures, I was pleased with their number and really don't think more would have added much. I was also pleasantly surprised to find good coverage of Nevelson's etchings and metal sculptures. And it is always an added bonus when the text is well-written and insightful. All in all, THE SCULPTURE OF LOUISE NEVELSON: CONSTRUCTING A LEGEND is a must-have book for those interested in both the person and her oeuvre. --B. Evans, 7/19/07

If you like Nevelson, you'll enjoy this book.

As a life-long Louise Nevelson fan this is an amazing review of her work. The photos are really wonderful to look through & represent her career very well. It's a great tribute to her and all that she accomplished. This book is really a treasure for any fan of her pieces.

Great book!

There is not a lot of information out about Nevelson. I was pleased to find and become owner of this item of information. Very enjoyable and worth the investment. A fascinating personality and life.

Nevelson's work, as I had seen it in books and other photos, never really impressed me. Then I saw a show of her work, for which this book is catalog - what a difference. Size matters - I knew that intellectually, but standing in front of these imposing works creates a subjective experience that no photo can capture. Walking around them changes perspective, too, giving a sense like one of those Zen gardens where no point of view presents all of the work's features. Then, at least in the "black" works, there's an odd paradox. If the works had been perfectly, 100% black and non-reflective, then there would have been nothing to see. Only the fact that they're not truly black exposes their mystery. The static museum display, even more than the book's photos, left me knowing that I had missed at least two aspects of these majestic works. First, their depth and structure only half-define the shadows deep inside these works. The other half of the shadow's definition comes from the light - a constant in the museum gallery, freezing the shadows like insects in amber, whereas natural lighting would change throughout the day and let the shifting shadows come to life. Second, some of the installations seemed incomplete. Oh, the pieces of Dawn's Wedding Chapel were all there and presented well, but I felt that there must have been some original placement of

the pieces that would define the interior of the chapel - the pieces' placement in the display that I saw lacked the consistent logic that I expected of Nevelson. More than just a catalog of the Nevelson show, this book provides insight into her origins, life, and career. Almost as much as Salvador Dali, Nevelson might well have been Nevelson's greatest creation - once success allowed it, her extravagant clothes, mask-like makeup, and signature scarf on her head worked together to create a unique persona. Beneath that, we still see the remarkable person and her groundbreaking work.-- wiredweird

This review relates to the Yale University Press hardcover. An excellent production: cloth over hardback boards in dustjacket with a sewn binding. Large format book, 238 pp on heavy paper, almost 4 pounds, color and some b&w illustrations throughout. Prose: "Louise Nevelson: A Story in Sculpture," "Louise Nevelson's Self-Fashioning: The Author of Her Own Life," "Black, White, Gold: Monochrome and Meaning in the Art of Louise Nevelson," "Three Artists Reflect on Louise Nevelson: Chakaia Booker, Mark di Suvero, and Ursula von Rydingsvard," and "Louise Nevelson's Public Art." 15 page chronology of her life, 5 page Bibliography, Notes, Index.

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