



The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend **A Gallery Guide for Families**

This guide is for kids and grown-ups to use together as you explore the exhibition.

“One person’s trash is another person’s treasure.”

The artist Louise Nevelson is famous for her sculptures and installations made entirely of found wood. What does “found” wood mean? This means that Nevelson didn’t buy wood to create her sculptures. She found the wood herself on the streets of New York in trashcans, on the sidewalk, thrown away at the lumberyard, and in furniture factories. Nevelson made art out of things other people put in the trash.

In this exhibition you will see Louise Nevelson’s sculptures as well as drawings and prints. Not all of her sculpture is made of wood. Some are made of clay, bronze, steel, or plastic.

Enter the first gallery and find...

Self-Portrait, c.1940

Walk around this sculpture. Notice its shape or form. Does it remind you of something found in nature like an animal or a tree, or does it remind you of something built by people like a skyscraper or a bridge? Describe the figure’s pose to the adult you are with. Now, strike the pose together!

A self-portrait is an image a person creates of himself or herself. It can be a sculpture, painting, or photograph. This sculpture is a self-portrait by Louise Nevelson.



Turn to...

First Personage, 1956

What is this sculpture made of? How can you tell? Can you think of some words to describe the surface of the sculpture? Here are some to help you: smooth, bumpy, rough, spiky, sharp, hard, and cool. What is the difference between the form in front and the one behind it?

Nevelson assembled wood scraps that she painted to create this sculpture. Can you find the knot in the wood? The artist said that this knot was a mouth that spoke to her. Does it look like a mouth to you? If this knot could speak to you, what would it say?

Walk into the next gallery to find...

Moving-Static-Moving Figure(s), c.1945

Take a moment to look at these 7 sculptures. Which one do you like the best? Say the first word that comes to mind when you look at this sculpture. What shapes or forms do you see in this sculpture? Are the forms more rounded or more square? Why is this figure interesting to you?

Geometric forms like circles, triangles, and squares have straight lines. Organic forms have uneven edges and soft lines like things found in nature. Can you find geometric and organic shapes in these sculptures?

Turn to the right and walk toward...

Night Landscape, 1955

Point out the organic forms in this sculpture. These forms are made of wood. Can you imagine where these pieces of wood came from? Do you think they were part of a bed, a chair, a tree or a cabinet before they became a sculpture?

Turn around to walk into the next gallery.

Moon Fountain, 1957

Walk all the way around this sculpture. (Please be very careful not to get too close!) How does this sculpture change when you look at it from different points of view? How does it look different when you can see the white part of the room in the background? Which side do you like to see it from best?

Walk to the center of the room and stand with one foot on the black side and one foot on the white. What do you notice? Is there anything that catches your eye when you look around? Which side of the room would you prefer to be in, the black or the white?

Nevelson thought that black was the most noble and elegant of all colors. Black reminded her of nighttime and the end of the day. What do you think of when you see the color black? What does white remind you of?

Now walk toward *Dawn's Wedding Feast, 1959*

Dawn's Wedding Feast, 1959

Look closely at the two tall sculptures in the center. Name one similarity and one difference between these two sculptures. Do they remind you of a bride and groom? Why or why not? Can you find the other people that might be at the wedding? Think of four words to describe Dawn's Wedding Feast. Make up two lines of poetry about this work of art using one or more of these words.

Walk into the next gallery to find...

Louise Nevelson constructed several sculptures to create this environment. Notice all the different parts.

Mrs. N's Palace, 1964-77

Notice the outside of this artwork. Are the forms and shapes of Mrs. N's Palace mostly geometric or organic? Peer inside. How do you think it would feel to be inside? Do you think you would feel comfortable? Would you want to live in here? Play here? Why or why not?

"Mrs. N" is the nickname that the neighborhood children gave to Louise Nevelson. This "palace" contains images of many of her other sculptures. Do any of the shapes you see look familiar? Take a moment to look at a smaller sculpture nearby called *Dream House*.

Walk into the next gallery and then turn right. Find...

Golden Gate, 1961-70

What do you think of when you see the color gold? What are some things made of gold? Who wears gold? Count how many different boxes (squares and rectangles) make up this wall sculpture. Notice how the artist has grouped similar forms together in each box. Point out the box you like best. What do you think is interesting about this box?

Take some time to look at the drawings, prints and works on paper in this gallery. When you are finished, walk into the next gallery and look to your left.



Transparent Sculpture VI, 1968

Can you tell what material this sculpture is made of? How does this sculpture look different from the sculpture you have just seen? Notice how you can see through it. If you were the artist, what name would you give this sculpture?

At home: Design your own dream house using *Mrs. N's Palace* and *Dream House* for inspiration. Make your drawing as imaginative as possible!



Congratulations! You have completed your tour of
The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend.



This Family Gallery Guide for the Fun-Filled Multi-Generational Family Day is made possible by The Office of Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer funded under contract with the New York City Department for the Aging.



Promotional support is provided by PATHMARK.