



Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life

Laurie Lisle

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Louise Nevelson, one of the most important American sculptors of the twentieth century, was a beautiful woman who lived so audacious a life that by the time of her death she was a legend both inside and outside the art world.

Born Leah Berliawsky in Czarist Russia in 1899, she grew up in Maine, ostracized as a Jew and a foreigner. At twenty she escaped to Manhattan as Mrs. Charles Nevelson, eventually leaving her husband for a life devoted to art. She lived and loved with lusty abandon, often in poverty and obscurity, until she finally achieved fame and fortune at sixty. “This biography of a monstre sacre is a tale of hard-tacks heroism and heedless swipes at those who dared to love her,” said *Interview* magazine.

Nevelson found inspiration in cubism, primitive art, and her own unconscious, creating a rich iconography of images. With black, white, or gold paint and perfect placement, she transformed old pieces of wood picked up on the street into powerful sculptures.

In later years she appeared in mink eyelashes and flamboyant costumes, all the while going to her studio every day before dawn to add to the astonishing body of work now in collections of museums around the world.

Laurie Lisle interviewed Nevelson before the artist’s death in 1988, as well as her lovers, family members, artist friends, and many others. This biography provides fascinating insights and information discovered in archives and public records, letters and diaries, and the artist’s own prose and poetry.

Now in a revised e-book edition, *Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life* is the only biography of this important American sculptor. It is “impressive in its thoroughness, which nonetheless results in ‘good reading’ by virtue of its interweaving of personal and professional information, its eclectic introduction of psychological analysis, and a phraseology that appreciates both the pain and the joy surrounding Nevelson’s eccentric behavior,” according to *Woman’s Art Journal*.

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