

English

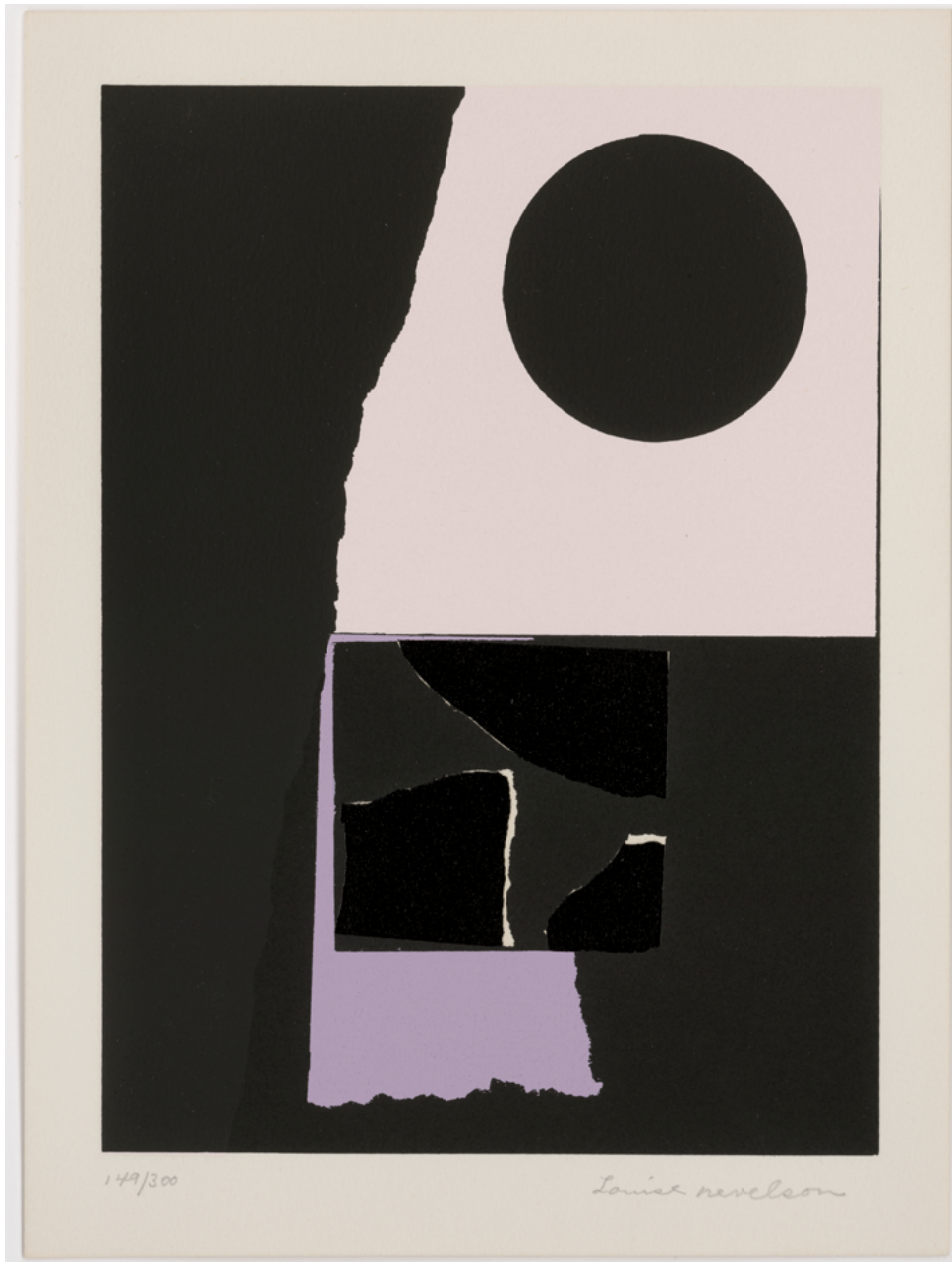
Gallery *Guide*

Louise Nevelson
Dawn to Dusk

August 20, 2026 —
January 17, 2027

Patricia & Phillip
Frost Art Museum

FIU



Nevelson

“I was brought up in the country, in Maine, and I was overwhelmed as a child with too many trees, the forest and all. And, after I began to study painting, I could go back to the country, and since I recognized the light and the shade and the movement—in other words, things coming in front, and things coming in back—I wasn’t overwhelmed because I had order. And that order has been sustaining me ever since.”

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988), *Untitled*, 1973. Silkscreen print, 12 x 9 inches. Collection of the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum. Gift from Mr. and Mrs. Bernard W. Gimbel in honor of Helen and Jacob Goldfinger. MET 80.6.17. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Dawn to Dusk

Louise Nevelson: Dawn to Dusk traces the artist's formative years to her emergence as a sculptor of international renown through works from the Farnsworth Art Museum's collection and selections from the permanent collection of the Frost Art Museum. Today, Nevelson (1899–1988) has become synonymous with monumental, wall-sized assemblages composed of stacked boxes enclosing all manner of shapes and recesses. She was a pioneer of installation art, creating works that formed environments, and crafted an iconic visual language over the course of her lifetime. Working first in wood, then later in plaster, steel, and aluminum, Nevelson often unified these found forms by coating them in a single color, using shadow to create depth and contrast, and improvising until each work was compositionally balanced.

This signature language, however, did not come into sharp relief until the early 1950s—some thirty years after she formally committed to being an artist—following her formal explorations of Cubism and Surrealism; her aspirations in theater and singing; her proximity to and friendships with Diego Rivera, Mark Rothko, and Willem de Kooning, among many other artists; and her spiritual inquiries into metaphysics. Like many artists of the early twentieth century, Nevelson was interested in a philosophical concept in vogue at the time called “the fourth dimension.” Theories of the fourth dimension suggested the existence of a higher spatial reality beyond ordinary perception—an idea embraced by Cubist artists and advanced by writers such as Max Weber, who argued that modern art could make this invisible realm perceptible.

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988), *Martha Graham*, ca. 1950. Cast bronze, 8 x 17 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Collection of the Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, gift of Louise Nevelson, 1984.23.8. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



An Artist's Evolution

Seeing her early works alongside the more familiar assemblages, as well as the newer material and formal discoveries of her later work, allows us to trace how this singular vocabulary emerged—revealing her influences, experiments, and inventions she made along the way. In the early works, the process of stripping objects of their original identities is already unfolding. What begins with figurative compositions and sculptures that evoke bodies and movement gradually transforms into something different: a table leg is no longer a table leg, and a dancing figure becomes something else entirely. In freeing objects and figures from their intended functions and preconceived forms, Nevelson pursued what she described as “something valid”—works that could exist on their own terms and be recognized simply as art. As Nevelson put it, she was an “architect of shadow and reflection.”

It is fitting that the Farnsworth's collection is especially strong in Nevelson's early works, as it was in Rockland, Maine, that she spent her formative years. Nevelson donated eighty-seven pieces of art to the Farnsworth in the lead-up to her exhibition there in 1985, including fifty-six of her works. Her brother, Nathan Berliawsky, and sister, Anita Berliawsky Weinstein, also gave significant gifts, making the Farnsworth's collection the second largest holding of Nevelson's work in the United States.

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988), *Woman with a Red Scarf*, ca. 1947. Oil on board, 56 5/8 x 33 x 1 3/8 inches. Collection of the Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, bequest of Nathan Berliawsky, 1980.35.24. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York





Installation view of the exhibition, *16 Americans*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. December 16, 1959–February 17, 1960. Photograph Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Dawn's Wedding Feast

After seeing a show of Nevelson's work at Grand Central Moderns gallery in New York in 1958, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Chief Curator Dorothy C. Miller invited the sixty-year-old artist to be included in the *16 Americans* (1959) exhibition the following year. When asked to participate, Nevelson replied simply: "Dear, we'll do a white show. Don't tell anybody. It will be a surprise."

Her creation was *Dawn's Wedding Feast* (1959), an all-white environment that filled a 14 x 24 x 22-foot gallery. Nevelson had investigated the theme of matrimony before, but never in such a visually compelling fashion. The complex of abstract, white wooden elements included four chapels, a cake, a wedding chest, a mirror and pillow, several attendants in the guise of stationary columns, and the columnar bride and groom, with the wedding party huddled in the center of the space. The Farnsworth's *Dawn Column I* (1959) is one of the stationary attendants.

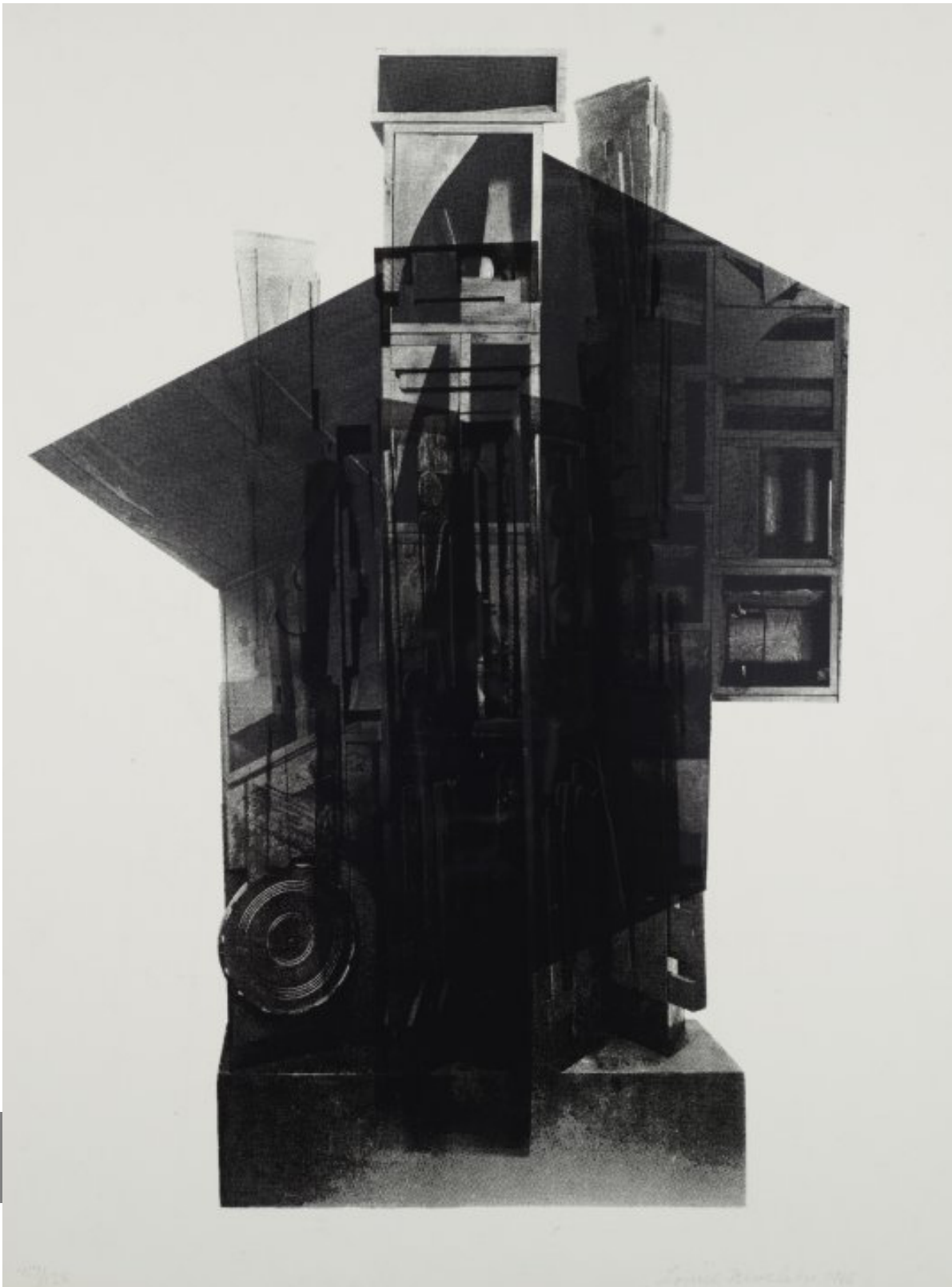
The project was a departure from Nevelson's previous predilection for black, a color that carried connotations of dusk and night. "Now white was what was in my mind," she said, "I feel that the white permits a little something to enter. The white is more festive. The forms have just the edge. For me, the black contains the silhouette, the essence of the universe. But the white moves out a little bit into outer space with more freedom."

Her choice of white is tied in part to ancient pictorial symbolism that associated the color with purity, as well as the new beginning that marriage often represents. Though the installation was not meant literally as her own wedding, Nevelson described her work as a "transition to marriage with the world," perhaps a reference to the failure of her marriage nearly thirty years before.

The success of *Dawn's Wedding Feast* led to Nevelson's invitation to represent the United States in the 1962 Venice Biennale, for which she created another white project, *Voyage*, which included parts from *Dawn's Wedding Feast*. Nevelson hoped her massive installation would remain intact, but she herself separated parts from it, using them for other works. Over time, other parts entered public and private collections. The Farnsworth purchased *Dawn Column I* in 1979 from Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, which began showing Nevelson's work in 1959.



Louise Nevelson (1899–1988), *Dawn Column I*, 1959. Wood and found wooden objects painted white, 92 3/8 x 13 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches. Collection of the Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine, museum purchase, 1979.81. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



A New Approach to Collage

Nevelson continuously reinvented both her materials and her methods in response to this intellectual curiosity. Her openness to material exploration reached a new expression in 1971 when, for an exhibition at Pace Gallery, Nevelson presented twenty collages alongside her sculptures. As critic and friend John Canaday noted in his review of the show:

“Louise Nevelson’s new exhibition ... proves once again that the woman simply cannot be trusted. For several years now, from show to show, she has implicitly capped off her career with a final demonstration of her powers of invention, but each following year she comes up with something new.”

Constructed from torn paper, foil, sprayed newspaper, bronze, art trays, glass, scraps, and found objects, these new works extended the principles of assemblage onto paper. Collage became more than a compositional exercise; the technique was now another way of exploring the tension between fragmentation and cohesion.

Nevelson’s late works continued this investigation. In a series of unpainted assemblages shown in this exhibition, she returned to found materials but allowed their natural surfaces and textures to remain visible by leaving them unpainted. Seen on a continuum alongside the collages from the 1970s, even the most incongruous elements achieve equilibrium through the same push and pull that animate her sculpture.

Louise Nevelson, *Mariner Man*, from the portfolio *Façade: Twelve Original Serigraphs in Homage to Edith Sitwell*, 1966. Silkscreen, mylar, 23 x 17 ½ inches. Collection of the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Rudolph E. Drosd. MET 77.21.5.2. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Exhibition *Checklist*

Female Nude, ca. 1929
Oil on canvas
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.2.1

*Maine Meadows,
Old County Road*,
ca. 1932–1933
Oil on multi-layered
composite board
Farnsworth Art Museum
1980.35.20

York Avenue, New York City, 1934
Oil on board
Farnsworth Art Museum
Bequest of Nathan Berliawsky
1980.35.21

Female Figure, ca. 1936–1937
Carved wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Anita Berliawsky Weinstein
1981.6

Woman, Child and Cats, 1946
Oil on canvas
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Nathan Berliawsky
1977.36

Woman with a Red Scarf (Self-Portrait),
ca. 1947
Oil on board
Farnsworth Art Museum
Bequest of Nathan Berliawsky
1980.35.24

Portrait of a Woman (Self-Portrait),
ca. 1948
Oil on board
Farnsworth Art Museum

Bequest of Nathan Berliawsky
1980.35.16

Seated Figure, ca. 1946–1951
Cast stone sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.12

Small Stele, ca. 1946–1951
Painted terracotta sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.4

Night Form, ca. 1946–1951
Terracotta sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.8

Woman with Headdress, 1950
Terracotta sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.5

Mother and Child II,
ca. 1946–1951
Terracotta sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.9

Child, ca. 1946–1951
Terracotta sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.11

Figure of a Woman, ca. 1947
Terracotta sculpture
Farnsworth Art Museum

Gift of Louise Nevelson
1981.11.16

Martha Graham, ca. 1950
Cast bronze
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1984.23.8

Bronze Bird, 1952
Cast bronze
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of the Federation of Modern Painters
and Sculptors, with funds provided by
Anita Berliawsky
1955.911

Two Women, ca. 1933–1935
Cast aluminum
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1984.23.10

Untitled, ca. 1950–1955
Painted wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Museum purchase by the Friends
of the Farnsworth Collection
2002.10

Dawn Column I, 1959
Painted wood and found objects
Farnsworth Art Museum
Museum purchase
1979.81

The Endless Column,
1969 and 1985
Painted wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Bequest of Nathan Berliawsky
1980.35.30

Untitled, 1976
Found wood collage on paper
mounted to board
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.28

Series of an Unknown Cosmos I, 1979
Mixed media collage
mounted to wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.25

Orfeo: Gold Throne I, 1984
Gold leaf on wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.29

Orfeo: Gold Throne II, 1984
Gold leaf on wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.30

Volcanic Magic XVI, 1985
Wooden collage on matboard
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.26

Volcanic Magic XXIII, 1985
Wooden collage on matboard
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.27

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.2

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.3

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and silver
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.4

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.5

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.5

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.6

Pin, 1985
Painted wood and silver overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.7

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.8

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.10

Pin, 1985
Painted wood and silver overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.11

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.18

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and silver metallic overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.19

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and copper alloy overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.21

Pendant, 1985
Painted wood and silver overlay
Farnsworth Art Museum
Gift of Louise Nevelson
1985.23.24

Clown's Houses, from the portfolio
Façade: Twelve Original Serigraphs in Homage to Edith Sitwell, 1966
Serigraph, mylar
Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum Collection
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Rudolph E. Drosd
MET 74.8.2

Mariner Man, from the portfolio
Façade: Twelve Original Serigraphs in Homage to Edith Sitwell, 1966
Silkscreen, mylar
Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum Collection
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Rudolph E. Drosd
MET 74.8.2

The Wind's Bastinado, from the portfolio
Façade: Twelve Original Serigraphs in Homage to Edith Sitwell, 1966
Lithograph and collage on mylar
Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum Collection
Gift of Dr. And Mrs. Martin B. Grossman
FIU 80.2.10

Lullaby for Jumbo, from the portfolio
Façade: Twelve Original Serigraphs in Homage to Edith Sitwell, 1966
Serigraph with collage on colored wove paper
Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum Collection

Gift of Nicholas J. Pisis
FIU 2019.23.1

Untitled, 1973
Silkscreen print
Collection of the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum
Gift from Mr. and Mrs. Bernard W. Gimbel in honor of Helen and Jacob Goldfinger
MET 80.6.17

Symphony Three, 1974
Black polyester resin sculpture
Collection of the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum
Gift of Alfred Allan Lewis
FIU 2023.3.15

Aquatint II, 1973
Lithograph and mixed media
Collection of the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum
Gift of Alfred Allan Lewis
FIU 2023.3.13

Farnsworth Art Museum

Art Bridges



The exhibition is supported by the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, and the Members of the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum. Generous support for this project provided by Art Bridges.

Louise Nevelson: Dawn to Dusk was originally organized by the Farnsworth Art Museum in Rockland, Maine, and guest curated by Suzette McAvoy. Its presentation at the Frost Art Museum was organized by Natalia Zuluaga, chief curator.

About the Artist

Born Leah Berliawsky in 1899 in Tsarist Russia, near Kyiv in what is now Ukraine, Nevelson immigrated to Maine with her family in 1905 to escape the persecution of Jews under the Imperial regime. At an early age, she received recognition from her schoolteachers as “the artist.” She later said: “From the first day in school until the day I graduated everyone gave me one hundred plus in art. Well, where do you go in life? You go to the place you got one hundred plus.”

In 1920, Louise married Charles Nevelson, a shipping company executive from New York City who had business interests in Rockland. Her move to New York following their marriage was instrumental to her growth as an artist. She called it: “a city of collage ... the whole thing is magnificent. ... There’s no place like it.” Upon her arrival, she vigorously pursued her interest in the arts, studying painting, acting, dance, and voice. After her son, Mike, who was born in 1922, reached school age, she enrolled full-time in the Art Students League, resolving to pursue a career in art.

Over the next three decades, Nevelson practiced both painting and sculpture, studying briefly in Munich with the influential teacher Hans Hofmann, who introduced her to Cubism and the “push and pull” of negative and positive spaces, concepts that were critical to the development of her mature work. In 1958, her groundbreaking exhibition *Moon Garden + One* at the Grand Central Moderns gallery, which included her first monumental black wall construction, *Sky Cathedral* (1958), established her as an artist of national importance. After nearly thirty years of struggle, Nevelson had become the “grande dame of contemporary sculpture.”

Louise Nevelson (1899–1988), Lynn Gilbert. *Louise Nevelson*, 1976. Louise Nevelson papers, circa 1903-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. © 2026 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



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