

LOUISE NEVELSON (1900-1988), born Kiev, Russia

EDUCATION/INFLUENCES

- Father was a junk dealer and woodworker. Brought family in 1905 to Rockland, ME. One of few Jewish families-always felt on the outside (woman, Jewish, artist). Married Charles Nevelson to escape Rockland and go to New York. They divorced in 1931. Charles wanted a society wife and Louise wanted to be an artist. Felt confined by marriage and motherhood.
- Studied Cubism in Europe with Hans Hoffman and at Art Students' League in NY.
- Influenced by Picasso, Hofmann, Duchamp and was assistant to Diego Rivera.

BIG IDEAS/THEMES

- Best known for her sculptures of assembled wood objects. She would collect pieces of wood off the street (became a woodworker and junk collector like her father). And create a wall of stacked wooden crates filled with these found objects. Single walls became wood environments as her career progressed. She made the objects equal by painting them the same color, usually black, white or gold. Using the same color would neutralize idiosyncratic details, harmonize disparate elements, and transform common and mundane into elegant art objects. These cast off objects acquired dignity, power and grandeur (no longer the other-a concept with which she readily identified).
- Early works were influenced by Cubism-breaking up of forms and was known to do many self-portraits in her early career.

KIA Work-Double Cubist Face, 1937, colored pencil

- It is possible that this early work could be a self-portrait but don't know that for sure. Quick drawing but exploring the ideas of Cubism-abstracting a natural form and breaking it up into components. Face is flipped upside down-mirror image. Exploring a person's other sides? Multiple personalities? Nevelson was always acutely aware of her "otherness" and maybe was exploring her one role as artist and other as mother/ex-wife/woman/foreigner/Jew, etc.

