

Louise Nevelson papers

MS.019

Finding Aid prepared by Hoang Tran



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF THE FINE ARTS

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Updated by Hoang Tran, January 2016

Summary Information

Repository	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Dorothy and Kenneth Woodcock Archives
Creator	Louise Nevelson (1899-1988)
Title	Louise Nevelson papers
Date [bulk]	
Date [inclusive]	1960-1988
Extent	½ document box
Location note	
Language	
Language of Materials note	English
Abstract	The collection consists of ten postcards Nevelson sent to her friend Lucille Beards from various locations in the 1960s; exhibition invitations and catalogues, 1960-88, several inscribed to Lucille; other small items of printed matter; and six photographs of Nevelson.

Preferred Citation note

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives, Philadelphia, PA.

Historical note

Louise Nevelson (September 23, 1899 – April 17, 1988) was an American sculptor known for her monumental, monochromatic, wooden wall pieces and outdoor sculptures.

Born in the Poltava Governorate of the Russian Empire (present-day Ukraine), she immigrated with her family to the United States in the early 20th century. Nevelson learned English at school, as she spoke Yiddish at home.

By the early 1930s she was attending art classes at the Art Students League of New York, and in 1941 she had her first solo exhibition. A student of Hans Hofmann and Chaim Gross, Nevelson experimented with early conceptual art using found objects, and dabbled in painting and printing before dedicating her lifework to sculpture. Usually created out of wood, her sculptures appear puzzle-like, with multiple intricately cut pieces placed into wall sculptures or independently standing pieces, often 3-D. A unique feature of her work is that her figures are often painted in monochromatic black or white. A figure in the international art scene, Nevelson was showcased at the 31st Venice Biennale. Her work is seen in major collections in museums and corporations. Nevelson remains one of the most important figures in 20th-century American sculpture.

Scope and Contents note

The collection consists of ten postcards Nevelson sent to her friend Lucille Beards from various locations in the 1960s; exhibition invitations and catalogues, 1960-88, several inscribed to Lucille; other small items of printed matter; and six photographs of Nevelson. Also of note are three black and white snapshots of Nevelson and playwright, Edward Albee, on board a plane from St. Louis in 1984, and cocktail napkins printed with Nevelson's signature.

Several dozen newspaper and magazine clippings which came with the collection were destroyed due to mold problems. All were from major American publications such as *The New York Times* or mass-circulation art magazines. Uninscribed exhibition catalogues in the gift were transferred to the Academy library.

Arrangement note

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

Conditions Governing Use note

The collection is the physical property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Archives. The Museum holds literary rights only for material created by Museum personnel or given to the Museum with such rights specifically assigned. For all other material, literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. Researchers are responsible for obtaining permission from rights holders for publication and for other purposes where stated.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Provenance note

These materials were given to Lucille Beards (1909-2001), a long-time friend of Louise Nevelson, over the course of several decades. The collection was a gift of Richard Beards, of Kirkwood, Pennsylvania, the son of Lucille Beards, in 2001.

Processing Information note

Controlled Access Headings

Person(s)

Corporate Name(s)

Genre(s)

Geographic Name(s)

Subject(s)

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

Collection Inventory

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Provenance		1	1
Printed matter		1	2
Postcards and photographs		1	3

Louise Nevelson papers (MS.019)

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Photograph		1	4
Catalog: Nevelson the prints Gene Baro	1974	1	5
Catalog: Louise Nevelson: the Fourth Dimension	1983	1	6
Catalog: Nevelson Draws and Dusks	1976	1	7