



Let's Create Cardboard Sculptures

Use recycled materials to create a monochromatic sculpture inspired by the assemblage artworks of Louise Nevelson

What is Monochromatic?

All the colors used in the art project are of a single hue.

DID YOU KNOW: Louise Nevelson often used black in her sculptures.

What is Assemblage? (pronounced *ah-sem-blahj*)

A form of sculpture comprised of objects found in the world, often everyday objects (man-made or organic), that are arranged by the artist to create a 3-D artwork.



Activity

Young artists will work with found cardboard objects and paint to create a monochromatic sculpture within a box frame. The students will assemble the found objects to create positive and negative spaces and explore how light and shadow can enhance their sculptures.

Materials

- Cardboard box (with the top removed) to be used as a frame
- Mix of different types of cardboard (shipping boxes, paper towel and toilet paper tubes, egg crates, etc.)
- Scissors
- Artists glue or a hot glue gun with glue sticks
- Black or White paint and paintbrushes (optional)
- Newspaper or tarp to protect your work surfaces.





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LET'S BEGIN!

Step 1

Create your frame.

This is the box you will build your sculpture in. (A shipping box would be perfect for this.) It should be open like a window frame so remove the top flaps of the box, leaving only the side walls and bottom intact.

Step 2

Cut your shapes.

Using your cardboard, create shapes such as half circles, triangles and rectangles. Cut the tubes into smaller slices. Manipulate the cardboard by folding, creasing and coiling.

Step 3

Assemble and layer.

Place the shapes around the box until you have the right "fit," stacking the pieces from the bottom to create layers.

Step 4

Glue.

Once you are happy with the arrangement, begin to glue the pieces into the frame starting with the bottom pieces first. The pieces may move around a bit while gluing. That's okay so long as you are happy with the final arrangement. Once the glue is dry you will be ready to paint.

Step 5

Paint.

This can get a little messy so be sure to work on the newspaper or tarp. Remember, this is a monochromatic project so be sure to use only one color (black or white are recommended). With your brush, paint the interior of the box working around all the edges and shapes. Cover every surface. Allow to dry.





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Step 6

Do more!

Louise Nevelson made larger scale sculptures of multiple box frames and secured them together to create a larger unified piece. (You could describe them as sculptures within sculptures.)

Step 7

Take a photo and share!

We can't wait to see your creations!

Have a grownup post your photo to social media and be sure to tag #NEUtoDoKids.



A puzzle is an assemblage of pieces joined together to create a picture.

Art can be viewed in this same lens.

Louise Nevelson collected materials discarded on New York City streets to make her textured sculptures. Sometimes she cut the collected pieces of wood and other materials and sometimes left them as they were, fitting the pieces together at different depths to form a whole sculpture. Just like a puzzle.

DID YOU KNOW?

Similar to assemblage, **RELIEF** is a sculptural technique where the elements remain attached to a solid background of the same material. The term is from the Latin verb *relevo* which means "to raise." To create a sculpture in relief is to give the impression that the sculpted material has been raised above the background plane.

There are different degrees of relief depending on the degree of projection of the sculpted form. The full range includes **high-relief** where more than half of the depth is shown. **Shallow-relief** is where the plane is only slightly lower than the sculpted elements. **Mid-relief** is between the highest and lowest depths. There is also **sunk relief**, which is mainly found in Ancient Egypt artifacts.

Egyptian reliefs such as the one shown in this image were made by carving the sculpture directly into a flat surface of stone or wood. Depictions were mostly linear in nature, like hieroglyphs. In most cases the figure itself is in low relief but set within a sunken area shaped round the image so that the relief never rises beyond the original flat surface.



neu About the Artist



Louise Nevelson

October 7, 1883–August 12, 1957

Photograph by Lynn Gilbert - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

A Russian/American sculptor known for her large scale, monochromatic, assemblage sculptures and outdoor installations.

Born as Leah Berliawsky in the Poltava Governorate of the Russian Empire—now known now as present-day Ukraine—Nevelson emigrated to the United States in the early 20th century. She learned English at school as her family spoke only 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. Early in her career, Nevelson experimented with early conceptual art using “found objects” and explored painting and printmaking before dedicating the majority of her life’s work to sculpture.

Nevelson was deeply interested in finding art everywhere. Retaining her interest in found objects, she would often walk the streets of New York City in search of scraps of wood. Rather than regarding her discoveries as “junk,” she took inspiration from the works, weaving pieces together to create a whole form of dynamic fluency.

The 3-D wall sculptures and free-standing works that she created are puzzle- like with intricately cut pieces that appear to be fused together as one. She was also fond of using monochromatic tones such as black or white in her work, finding that removing the color removed distraction and allowed the negative spaces of the shapes to take on their own form, shadows and light.

In the 1960s, Nevelson began working with plastics, Formica, steel, and aluminum. However, she never gave up her passion for working with wood and found, discarded objects.

Celebrated as one of the most important figures in 20th century American sculpture, Nevelson’s work can be found in major museums, corporations and public installations around the globe.

Her clear Plexiglas *Transparent Sculpture VII* (1967-1968) and resin on wood *Symphony Three* (1974) are part of the Permanent Collection at the Neuberger Museum of Art.



Louise Nevelson, *Symphony Three*, 1974
18 1/4 x 18 x 2 in

Collection Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, SUNY
Gift of Roy R. Neuberger



Louise Nevelson, *Transparent Sculpture VII*, 1967-1968
From an edition of 6, 19 x 11 1/2 x 6 1/2 in (48.3 x 29.2 x 16.5 cm)
Collection Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, SUNY
Gift of Roy R. Neuberger, 1993.05.09