NEVELSON AT PURCHASE

THE METAL SCULPTURES

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NEUBERGER MUSEUM
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT PURCHASE/PURCHASE, NEW YORK

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Voyage, 1975, black painted cor-ten steel, 30′ x 9′ x 5′7″

In 1975, during a visit to the Neuberger Museum, Louise Nevelson was especially impressed by the Museum's largest gallery. With its dimensions of 89′ x 56′ x 22′, its black ceiling and windowless walls, the space immediately suggested possibilities to Nevelson. Following Philip Johnson's intentions, this space has already been used for the presentation of special projects and performances, accommodating works created for the space as well as those which command great space.

I presented Nevelson with a simple offer. The space was hers to show any group of works, as long as they had not been shown previously in a museum setting. I did not expect then that the Neuberger Museum would present Nevelson's most recent metal sculptures to the public for the first time.

Since 1975 Louise Nevelson has made a large group of monumental sculptures in painted aluminum and steel at Lippincott Inc. in North Haven, Connecticut. At Lippincott one could find Louise working with ease and confidence, as if she were making collages at a small table in her Spring Street studio. With the assistance of the Lippincott staff, Nevelson was making monumental sculpture directly—an awesome task and an awesome group of works.

The exhibition *Nevelson at Purchase: The Metal Sculptures* was made possible by the extraordinary efforts of several people. Don Lippincott and his staff have, from the outset, given their intelligent and friendly cooperation. Arnold Glimcher and the staff of the Pace Gallery provided experience and many helping hands on occasions when these were particularly needed. At Purchase, Nicholas Lentner, Dr. Robert Davies, John Cassidy and the rest of the Museum staff all contributed to the making of the exhibition. The preparation of the catalogue was fortunately in the very capable hands of Roberta Shestack.

This publication was made possible by support from the Council for the Arts in Westchester and the Ciba-Geigy Corporation. Their participation in events of such importance to the neighboring communities is most gratifying.

Finally, I would like to thank Louise Nevelson for coming to Purchase and bringing with her such wonderful things.

Jeffrey Hoffeld, Director

Night Presence IV, 1974, corten steel, 22′ high

In the end, as you get older and older, your life is your life and you are alone with it. You are alone with it, and I don't think that the outside world is needed. It doesn't have much influence on me, as an artist, or on us as individuals, because one cannot be divorced from the other. It is the total life. Mine is a total life.

As a segment or chapter of a total life, my current metal trees or sculptures are a continuation of the flow of my work. These metal sculptures are made directly—organically—and are an extension of the process of my wood sculpture. I use existing or, as they say, found forms as well as forms that I personally design. However, the art of selection of a form is for me a sculptural act and I do not consider the selected 'found form' less mine than the invented form. I invent my environments totally. Working in metal has allowed me to fulfill myself as an environmental architect. With the assistance of the crew at Lippincott in Connecticut, I have created works that begin to approach the scale of my projected concepts. Working in the open is especially difficult as you are in competiton with the scale of the universe. In enclosures, you can create infinite universes by illusion-shadow and light, but outside, scale becomes critical. Space is the greatest luxury whether it be in a room or out of doors.

I had never worked directly in metal before or, for that matter, in a foundry, but I am working near my capacity in an atmosphere of harmony. I can translate cor-ten into butter and butter into cor-ten. By the same token, butter can become granite or steel. Of course, a good forty to fifty years of concentrated visual thinking and working places me in the present position of finding that there is no difference between hard and soft substance—maybe I'll find that butter turns to the liquid that it is.

I build up elements and tear them down and work until my eye is satisfied. When a maquette is enlarged, there are different considerations and I never merely enlarge. I rethink and add and change edges and thickness of forms—as well as adding new pieces. My works are always in process until they are installed and, even then, I've made changes.

Louise Nevelson

Transparent Horizon, 1975,
black painted cor-ten steel, 28′ high
Collection: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge

"These metal sculptures are made directly—organically—and are an extension of the process of my wood sculpture."

Tropical Night Tree IV, 1972,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum, 4′2″ x 2′2″ x 1′8″

First Personage, 1956,
black painted wood,
7′10″ x 3′1″ x 11¼″
Collection:
The Brooklyn Museum,
gift of
Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Berliansky

◀ **Chief,** 1955,
black painted wood,
4′ x 2′3″ x 8¾″

Courtesy of Brooklyn Museum

Night Wall Spectre, 1976,
black painted cor-ten steel, 12′4″ x 10′ x 4′

Lippincott Foundry, Connecticut

Night Wall I, 1976,
black painted cor-ten steel,
12′8″ x 11′5″ x 7′

Night Wall V, 1976, black painted cor-ten steel, 9′2″ x 8′ x 4′

Sky Departure, 1976, black painted cor-ten steel, 11′ x 12′5″ x 2′6″

Night Wall II, 1976, black painted cor-ten steel, 8′2″ x 12′4″ x 1′11″

Dawn's Column, 1973, cor-ten steel, 14' x 6' x 4'
Collection: City of Binghamton, New York

"I can translate cor-ten into butter and butter into cor-ten."

Sky Sentinel, 1976,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum,
8′3″ x 4′ x 2′8″

Night Blossom, 1976,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum,
9′ x 3′2″ x 3′1″

◀ **Double Image,** 1976,
direct-welded, white painted aluminum, 9′1½″ x 6′2″ x 4′2″

Drum, 1976, direct-welded, white painted aluminum, 8′4″ x 5′6″ x 3′4″

Sun Disc/Moon Shadow V, 1976, direct-welded, black painted aluminum, 8′6″ x 6′6″ x 7′8″

"I build up elements and tear them down..."

Celebration, 1976,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum,
9′4″ x 7′ x 9′6″

Dawn Tree, 1976,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum, 8′8″ x 6′ x 5′6″

Sky Landscape I, 1976,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum, 10′1″ x 10′ x 6′2″

Sun Disc and Moon Shadow, 1976,
direct-welded, black painted aluminum, 9′5″ x 9′6″ x 5′

Celebration II, 1976,
black painted cor-ten steel,
28′ x 10′6″ x 13′6″

ONE-WOMAN EXHIBITIONS

1941 Nierendorf Gallery, New York.

1942 Nierendorf Gallery, New York.

1943 Norlyst Gallery, New York: *The Circus, The Clown Is the Center of the World.* Nierendorf Gallery, New York: *A Sculptor's Portraits in Paint.*

1944 Nierendorf Gallery, New York: *Sculpture Montages.*

1946 Nierendorf Gallery, New York.

1950 Lotte Jacobi Gallery, New York: *Moonscapes.*

1954 Lotte Jacobi Gallery, New York. Marcia Clapp Gallery, New York.

1955 Grand Central Moderns Gallery, New York: *Ancient Games and Ancient Places.*

1956 Grand Central Moderns Gallery, New York: *The Forest.*

1958 Grand Central Moderns Gallery, New York: *Moon Garden Plus One.* Esther Stuttman Gallery, New York.

1959 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York: *Sky Columns Presence.*

1960 David Herbert Gallery, New York. Devorah Sherman Gallery, Chicago. Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris.

1961 Martha Jackson Gallery, New York: *Royal Tides.* Tanager Gallery, New York: *The Private Myth.* Galerie Daniel Cordier, Paris. Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden. The Pace Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts.

1963 Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. Hanover Gallery, London. Balin-Traube Gallery, New York. Martha Jackson Gallery, New York.

1964 The Pace Gallery, New York and Boston. Gimpel-Hanover Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland. Kunsthalle, Bern, Switzerland. Galeria d'Arte Contemporanea, Torino, Italy.

1965 The Pace Gallery, New York. David Mirvish Gallery, Toronto, Canada. Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany.

1966 The Pace Gallery, New York. Ferus-Pace Gallery, Los Angeles.

1967 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Rose Art Museum, Waltham, Massachusetts.

1968 Arts Club of Chicago, Illinois.

1969 Harcus/Krakow Gallery, Boston. Museo Civico di Torino, Torino, Italy. Pace Gallery, New York. Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris. The Pace Gallery, Columbus, Ohio. Akron Art Institute, Ohio. Rijksmuseum Kroller-Muller, Otterlo, Netherlands. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.

1970 University Art Museum, University of Texas at Austin. Martha Jackson Gallery, New York. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

1971 Makler Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Pace Gallery, New York: *Seventh Decade Garden.*

1972 Dunkelman Gallery, Toronto, Canada. Parker 470, Boston, Massachusetts. The Pace Gallery, New York.

1973 Studio Marconi, Milan, Italy. Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden. Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

1974 Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium. Musée de la Ville de Paris, France. Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany. San Francisco Museum of Art, California. Dallas Museum of Art, Texas. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia. William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. The Pace Gallery, Columbus, Ohio. Makler Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Pace Gallery, New York.

1975 Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio. Minami Gallery, Tokyo, Japan. Galleria d'Arte Spagnoli, Florence, Italy. Harcus Krakow Rosen Sonnabend, Boston, Massachusetts. Galleria d'Arte l'Arcipelago, Torino, Italy.

1976 The Pace Gallery, New York. Makler Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hokin Gallery, Palm Beach, Florida.

1977 Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, College at Purchase, New York. Truman Gallery, New York.

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Albany Mall Project, New York.
Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York.
Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois.
Arts Club of Chicago, Illinois.
Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama.
Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts.
Brooklyn Museum, New York.
Carnegie Institute of Arts, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
City Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri.
Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio.
Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Farnsworth Museum of Art, Rockland, Maine.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.
Hospital Corporation of America, Chicago, Illinois.
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
James A. Byrne Federal Courthouse, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Jewish Museum, New York.
Juilliard School of Music, Lincoln Center, New York.
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Musée de Grenoble, Grenoble, France.
Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands.
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.
Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Museum of Modern Art, Paris, France.
Neuberger Museum, SUNY, Purchase, New York.
New York University, New York.
Newark Museum, New Jersey.
Pasadena Museum, California.
Princeton University, New Jersey.
Queens College, New York
Rijksmuseum Kroller-Muller, Otterlo, Netherlands.
Riverside Museum, New York.
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.
Tate Gallery, London, England.
University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1934 Secession Gallery, New York.

1935 *Young Sculptors,* Brooklyn Museum, New York. Also exhibited about this time at Contemporary Arts, Jacobsen Gallery, The Society of Independent Artists, The New York Municipal Art Exhibition, A.C.A. Gallery, Federal Art Gallery, all in New York.

1941 *Art in Therapy,* Museum of Modern Art, New York, prize.

1944 139th Annual Exhibition, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

1948-49 Sculpture Center and the Artists Gallery, New York.

1953 Group show of sculptors (selected by Hugo Robus and Milton Hebald), Grand Central Moderns Gallery, New York.

1955 Stable Gallery Annual (also in 1956), Roko Gallery, New York.

1958 *Nature in Abstraction,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

1959 *Work in Three Dimensions,* Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Sixteen Americans,* Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Art, U.S.A.,* New York Coliseum, Grand Prize.

1960 *63rd American Exhibition,* Art Institute of Chicago, Logan Award.

1961 *The Art of Assemblage,* Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1962 XXXI Biennale Internazionale d'Arte, Venice (United States Pavilion). *Art Since 1950*, World's Fair, Seattle.

1964 *Documenta III*, Kassel, West Germany. *Painting and Sculpture of a Decade, 54-64*, Tate Gallery, London. *The Artist Reality,* New York Art Center, New York. *Between the Fairs,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Boston Collects Modern Art,* Boston.

1965 *American Sculpture of the 20th Century,* Musée Rodin, Paris. *Sculpture of the 20th Century,* Dallas Museum of Fine Arts. *Highlights of the '64-'65 Season*, Larry Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Conn. *Kane Memorial Exhibition*, Providence, Rhode Island. *Contemporary Art Acquisitions 1962-65*, Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo.

1966 *Flint Invitational*, Flint, Michigan. *Homage to Silence*, Albert Loeb and Krugier Gallery, New York. *Contemporary Painters and Sculptors as Printmakers*, Museum of Modern Art, New York. *68th American Exhibition,* Art Institute of Chicago.

1967 *Contrasts,* Hanover Gallery, London. *Sculpture: A Generation of Innovation,* Art Institute of Chicago. *American Sculpture of the '60's,* Los Angeles County Museum. *Sculpture in Environment,* City of New York Arts Festival (CBS Building). *The Helen W. & Robert M. Benjamin Collection,* Yale Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn. *The 180th Beacon Collection of Contemporary Art,* Boston. *Guggenheim International,* New York.

1968 *Suites: Recent Prints,* Jewish Museum, New York.

1969 *20th Century Art from the Nelson A. Rockefeller Collection,* Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Tamarind: Homage to Lithography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1970 *American Art Since 1960,* Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, N.J. *Expo 70,* Osaka, Japan.

1971 *Calder/Nevelson/David Smith,* The Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach, Florida.

1973 *American Art: Third Quarter Century*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington. *American Art at Mid-Century,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

1974 *Monumenta,* Newport, Rhode Island. *The Twentieth Century: 35 American Artists,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

1976 La Biennale di Venezia '76, Venice. *200 Years of American Sculpture,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY: Books and Exhibition Catalogues

Chicago Arts Club. *Louise Nevelson.* Chicago, 1968.

Civica d'Arte Moderna Galleria. *Louise Nevelson Sculpture-Litografie.* Text by Luigi Malle. Torino, 1969.

Daniel Cordier Gallery. *Exposition L. Nevelson sculpteur.* Commentary by Georges Mathieu. Paris, 1960.

Daniel Gervis Gallery. *Louise Nevelson.* Paris, 1967.

Galatea-Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea. *Nevelson.* Text by Luigi Carluccio. Torino, 1964.

Galleria d'Arte Spagnoli. *Louise Nevelson.* Florence, 1975.

Gimpel Hanover Galerie. *Louise Nevelson.* Zurich, 1964.

Glimcher, Arnold. *Louise Nevelson.* New York, 1972.

Hanover Gallery. *Louise Nevelson.* London, 1963.

Houston Museum of Fine Arts. *Louise Nevelson.* Introducton by Mary Hancock Buxton. Houston, 1969.

Jeanne Bucher Galerie. *Louise Nevelson.* Paris, 1969.

Johnson, Una. *Louise Nevelson.* New York, 1967.

Martha Jackson Gallery. *Nevelson.* Texts by Kenneth Sawyer, Jean Arp and Georges Mathieu. New York, 1961.

Museum of Modern Art. *Sixteen Americans.* Edited by Dorothy Miller. New York, 1959.

Nevelson, Louise. *Dawns + Dusks.* Taped conversations with Diana MacKown. New York, 1976.

Pace Gallery. *Nevelson.* New York, 1964.
Nevelson: Recent Wood Sculpture. New York, 1969.
Nevelson: Sky Gates and Collages. New York, 1974.
Nevelson: *Dawn's Presence—Two Moon Garden + Two.* New York, 1976.

Rijksmuseum Kroller-Muller. *Louise Nevelson, Sculptures 1959-1969.* Introduction by R. Oxenaar. Otterlo, 1969.

Roberts, Colette. *Nevelson.* Paris, 1964.

Staatlichen Kunsthalle. *Louise Nevelson.* Text by Dietrich Mahlow. Baden-Baden, 1961.

Walker Art Center. *Louise Nevelson.* Text by Martin Friedman. New York, 1973.

Whitney Museum of American Art. *Louise Nevelson.* Text by John Gordon. New York, 1967.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

1899 Born in Kiev, Russia. Parents were Isaac Berliawsky and Minna Ziesel Smolerank. There were four children: Nathan, Louise, Anita, and Lillian.

1905 The family moved to the United States and settled in Rockland, Maine, where she attended public schools. Here the father was a builder and ran a lumber yard.

1918 Graduated from Rockland High School.

1920 Married Charles Nevelson. Moved to New York.
Studied painting and drawing with Theresa Bernstein and William Meyerowitz. Studied voice professionally with Metropolitan coach Estelle Liebling. Also studied dramatics. From this point on she educated herself in all of the arts.

1922 Son Myron (Mike) born.

1929-30 Studied at the Art Students League with Kenneth Hayes Miller.

1931 Studied for a short time with Hans Hofmann in Munich.
Worked as an extra in films in Berlin and Vienna.

1932 Was an assistant to Diego Rivera. Studied modern dance with Ellen Kearns.

1933-34 Exhibited in group shows at various New York galleries.

1935 Exhibited in group show, *Young Sculptors*, arranged by the Secession Gallery at the Brooklyn Museum.

1937 As part of the Works Progress Administration, taught art at the Educational Alliance School of Art.

1941 First one-woman show at Nierendorf Gallery.

1948 Traveled to Europe (England, France, Italy).

1949-50 Worked at the Sculpture Center in terra cotta, aluminum, bronze. Observed Atelier 17 with Stanley William Hayter for a short time. Made two trips to Mexico.

1953-55 Worked at Atelier 17, New York. Produced a series of Black Wood Landscape sculptures.

1956 Whitney Museum of American Art acquired ***Black Majesty.***

1957 Brooklyn Museum acquired ***First Personage.***

1957-59 President of New York chapter of Artists' Equity.

1958 Museum of Modern Art acquired ***Sky Cathedral.***

1962 Included in United States Pavilion, XXXI Biennale Internazionale d'Arte, Venice. Whitney Museum purchased the wall ***Young Shadows.***

1962-64 President of National Artists' Equity. In this capacity, participated in Conference of World Affairs, which included international leaders in the fields of science, government, art, etc.
First Vice-President of Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors. Member, National Association of Women Artists. Member, Sculptors' Guild.

1963 Fellowship to Tamarind Workshop, Los Angeles, completed twenty-six editions of lithographs.

1963 President, Artists' Equity.

1965 Participated in National Council on Arts and Government in Washington.
Israel Museum, Jerusalem, acquired ***Homage 6,000,000.***

1966 Honorary degree, Doctor of Fine Arts, from Western College for Women, Oxford, Ohio.

1967 Major retrospective show at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (March-April).
Fellowship at Tamarind Workshop, Los Angeles.

1969 Commissioned by Princeton University to do first monumental cor-ten steel work (fall).
MacDowell Colony Medalist winner (September).
Juilliard School of Music acquires wall ***Nightsphere-Light*** (December).
Major retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, and at the University of Texas, College of Fine Arts, at Austin.
One-woman exhibitions at Rijksmuseum Kroller-Muller (Otterlo) and Museo Civico di Torino.

1970 55-foot wall commissioned by Temple Beth-El, Great Neck, New York.

1971 Brandeis University Creative Arts Award in Sculpture.
Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture.

1972 Honorary degree, Doctor of Fine Arts, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
Gift to New York City of cor-ten steel sculpture, entitled ***Night Presence IV*** 22 feet high (situated at Park Avenue between 91st and 92nd Streets).

1973 Commission of cor-ten steel sculpture, entitled ***Sky Covenant,*** for Temple Israel, Boston, Massachusetts.
Commission of ***Atmosphere and Environment XIII*** (Windows to the West) for Scottsdale, Arizona.
Commission of cor-ten steel sculpture, entitled ***Dawn's Column,*** for Binghamton, New York.

1973-75 Walker Art Center organized major exhibition, which traveled to: San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia; William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio.

1975 Commission, entitled ***Bicentennial Dawn,*** for U.S. General Services Administration, James A. Byrne Federal Courthouse, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Commissioned by I.M. Pei for Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, cor-ten steel sculpture painted black, entitled ***Transparent Horizon.***
Exhibitions organized by United States Information Agency, traveled to Iran, India, and Japan.

1976 Exhibited a 1957 black environment at Venice Biennale.
Commission of Errol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd, St. Peter's Church, New York.
Commission, entitled ***Sky Tree,*** for Embarcadero Center, cor-ten steel sculpture painted black.

Robert Giza and Larry Wallace appear with Louise Nevelson in the photos at Lippincott.

Photo Credits: Roxanne Everett, Al Mozell, George Russo, Richard Solomon

Louise Nevelson with **Sky Tree** at Embarcadero Center, San Francisco

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