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## Masterpiece: *Sky Cathedral*, 1958

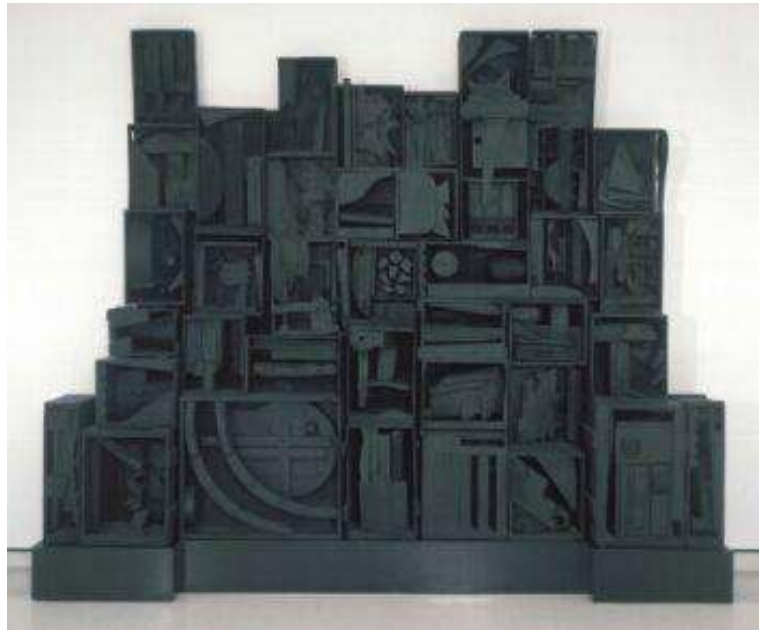
### By Louise Nevelson

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**Keywords:** Sculpture, Unity  
**Grade:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
**Month:** September/October  
**Lesson:** Art Sculpture

#### Meet the Artist:

- Born in Russia in 1899. Died in 1988. Her family moved to Maine when she was 6 to escape persecution of the Jews during WWII.
- During the move she went into a Candy Store and saw shelves lined with canisters full of different kinds of candy. This later gave her inspiration for her sculptures.
- She knew when she was very young that she would be an artist - she decided to be a sculptor when she was 7. She didn't get very good grades in school and felt like she didn't fit in.
- As a child she collected shells and stones and put them in little boxes.
- Her father owned a lumber yard and she like to play with pieces of scrap wood. How do you think the exposure to wood affected her career? What if he owned a textile factory?
- Nevelson didn't become very well known until she was 60 years old - it took 30 years of hard work before she started to sell any of her work.
- She was the first sculptor to create **Art in a Box**. Her artwork is made up of "found" objects that she gathered along the side of the road and city streets. She used crates and boxes and filled them with old chair legs, broom handles, cabinet doors, even toilet seats. She also got stuff from junk shops.
- Louise Nevelson liked to wear unusual clothes - she was described as a cross between Catherine the Great and a bag lady.



### **Keyword Discussion:**

**SCULPTURE** is a three-dimensional work of art.

**ASSEMBLAGE** - a three dimensional work made from found objects and various odds and ends.

**UNITY** - A combination of elements in a work of art to make it appear as one - each part contributes to the whole piece.

### **Possible Questions:**

- Does this look like a work of art? Why / why not?
- Describe this sculpture - Boxes, various pieces of wood, chair legs, etc.
- Have you ever seen anything like this before?
- What kinds of shapes do you see? Are some of the shapes and pieces repeated?
- What colors do you see? This piece is monochromatic (one color).
- Have you ever made anything like this? If you were to make a sculpture like this, what would you make it out of?

### **Activity- Creating an Assemblage: Art Sculpture**

**Note to Grade Coordinator and Art Guide:** This is a great project to be prepared for! A month before the scheduled lesson/activity, send home a note with the students requesting a variety of *SMALL* objects and junky things such as: bobbin spools, buttons, single earrings, half used pencils, paper clips, errant puzzle pieces, screws, nuts—any small, light weight object. This is a good way to clean out a back pack or a desk to bring from home to use for their assemblage.

Also: The process described in #7 may take an additional hour or so, but is extremely worth it.

### **Materials needed:**

1. wooden Craft sticks (popsicle sticks)
2. black marker
3. White glue
4. found objects, odd pieces of junk and "stuff" (see above)
5. Gold spray paint
6. Blue plastic tarp to use for spray painting outside

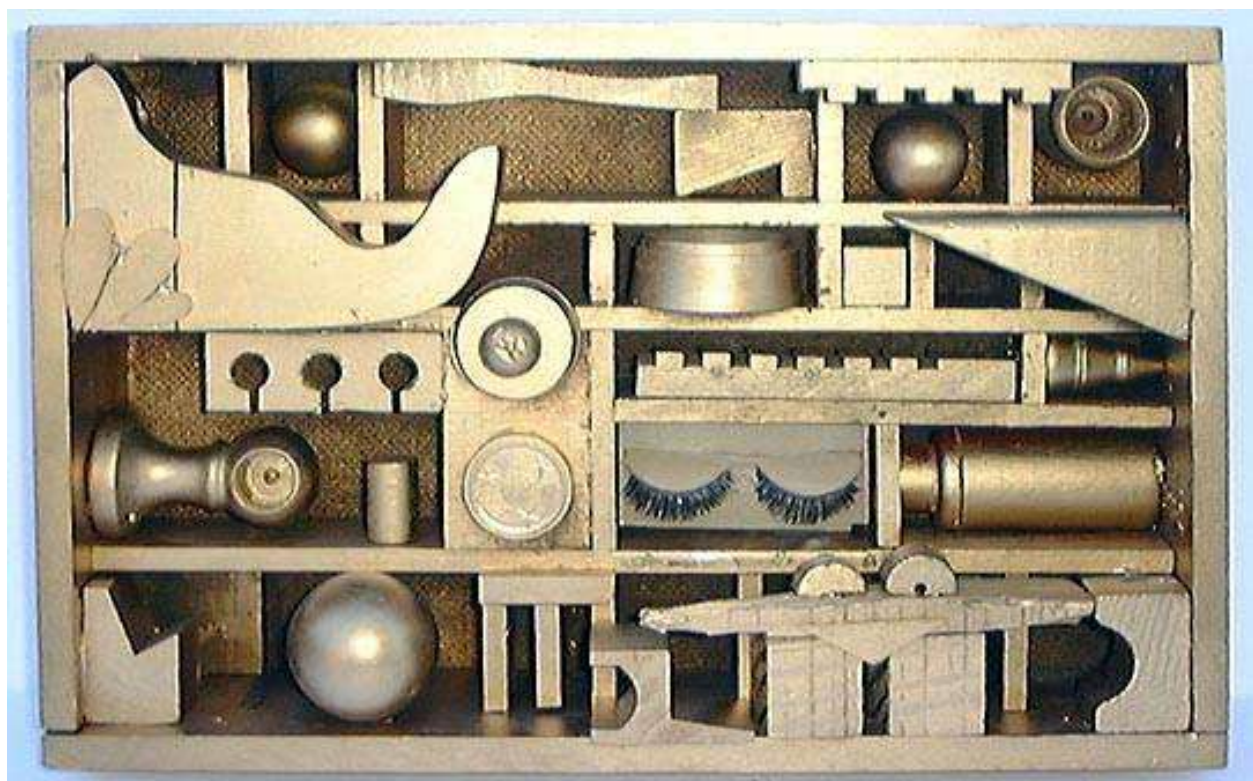
### **Process:**

1. Give each student enough sticks (about 14) to make the flat board shown on page 3 and a bottle of glue.
2. Using a black marker, have students write their names on one of the sticks to be used for the back of the board. Make sure their name is toward the desk when they start to assemble the boards.

3. Working quickly, have the students build their wooden flat board (below right).
4. While they build their boards, place a selection of objects in the center of each workstation.
5. When they've finished gluing the board, have them arrange their objects on the flat board with generous amounts of glue. They can choose from the objects supplied or use the ones they've brought from home. Encourage the students to be creative about how they put their assemblage together but that all pieces have to fit on the flat board.
6. Let dry overnight, if necessary.
7. If assemblages dry within the class time, collect them, take them outside and place them on the blue plastic tarp. Spray paint all visible surfaces with gold spray paint. Paint will dry quickly in September heat. Do not paint the back
8. When all the assemblages have been spray painted and dried. Help the students organize their assemblage into a larger assemblage and tape them together on a wall to form the unity (if there is space and teacher is OK with it).
9. If there is NOT enough class time, collect all the works when complete and finish the final steps described above at another scheduled time.



Photographs of Louise Nevelson and Other works

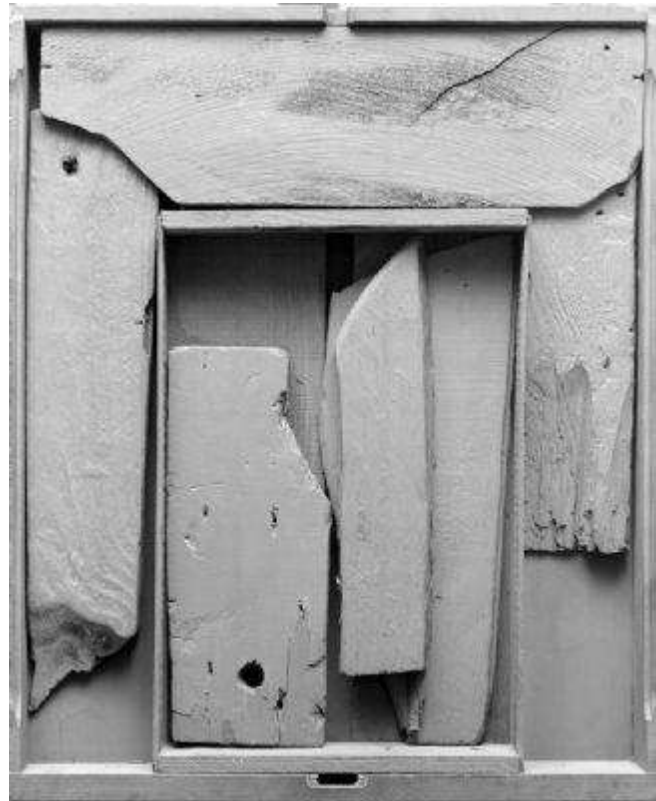




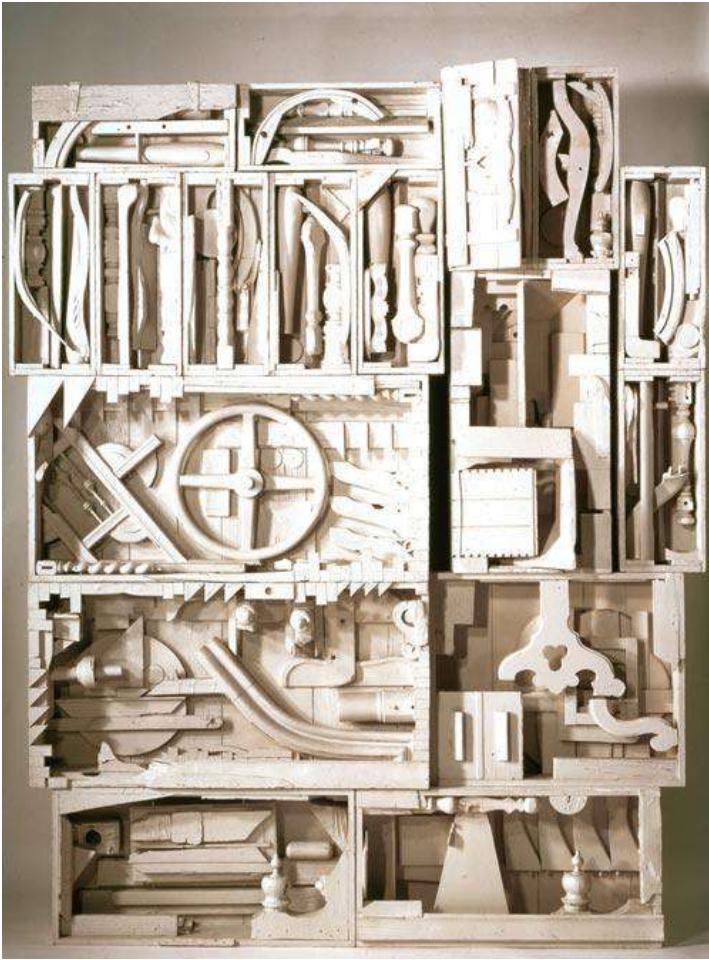
**Cascade, 1964**



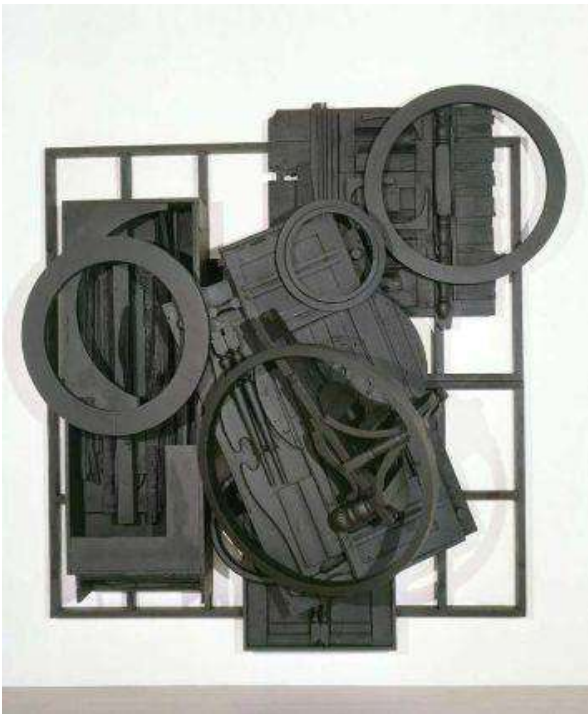
**White Vertical Water, 1972**



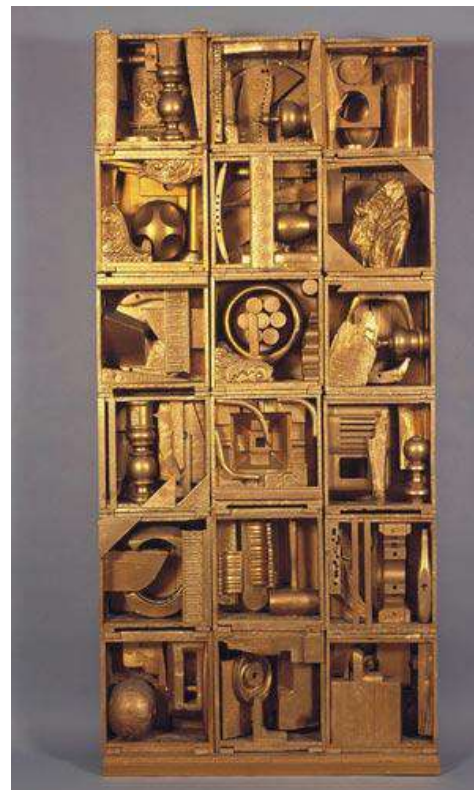
**Untitled, 1954**



**Dawn's Wedding Chapel IV,  
1959-60**



**Mirror-Shadow VIII, 1985**



**Royal Tide I, 1960**