
Masterpiece: *Royal Tide V*, 1960 by Louise Nevelson

Keywords: Sculpture, Unity
Grade: 2nd Grade
Month: March/April
Lesson: Creating an Assemblage: 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, you may want to send home a note with the students requesting a variety of small objects and junky things such as: thread spools, yarn, half used pencils, buttons, paper clips, errant puzzle pieces, plastic spoons, etc. 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 #5 may take an additional hour or so, but is extremely worth it.

Materials needed: wooden sticks, glue, found objects, odd pieces of junk and "stuff" (see above), Gold or White spray paint

Process:

1. Give each student about 14 wooden sticks (or enough sticks) to construct and fill the box as shown to make a flat board and a bottle of glue. In the center of each workstation place an assortment of objects or have them use their own.
2. Working quickly, have the students build their wooden flat board. When finished, arrange their objects on the flat board with generous amounts of



glue. Encourage the students to be creative about how they put their assemblage together but that all pieces have to fit on the flat board.

3. Make sure to label the back of the boxes with the student name/teacher tag provided.
4. Let dry overnight, if necessary.
5. If assemblages dry within the class time, collect them, take them outside and spray paint all visible surfaces but not the back of piece with gold or white spray paint. Let dry completely.
6. Have 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).
7. If there is NOT enough class time, collect all the works when complete and finish the final steps described above at another scheduled time.