

THE DRAWING ROOM 66 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937 T 631 324 5016

COSTANTINO NIVOLA

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

1911-1939

Born in Orani, Sardinia, Italy. Son of a mason, Nivola follows father's trade from a young age. At 15, apprenticed to painter Mario Delitala, spends five years as his assistant in Sassari, Sardinia. Awarded scholarship at 20 to study at ISIA (Istituto Superiore per le Industrie Artistiche) in Monza, Italy. Among his teachers are Marino Marini, Pio Semeghini, architects Edoardo Persico and Giuseppe Pagano, and designer Marcello Nizzoli.

Awarded *Maestro d'Arte* diploma in 1935. While at ISIA, meets fellow student Ruth Guggenheim, whom he marries in 1938.

Executes murals for Milan Triennale (1936) and for Italian Pavilion at the International Exposition in Paris (1937).

Becomes Art Director for Olivetti Corporation in Milan (1937). Spends nine months in Paris, where he meets Giorgio de Chirico. Moves to the United States in 1939.

1940s

Settles in Greenwich Village, New York City. Forms friendships with Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Esteban Vicente, Hedda Sterne, Fernand Leger, Alexander Calder, and re-establishes lasting friendship with Saul Steinberg, whom he met in student days in Milan.

Works for six years as Art Director for *Interiors and Industrial Design* (later *Progressive Architecture*) as well as for the magazine, *You*.

Exhibits paintings and sculptures with Steinberg at Wakefield Gallery, New York City (1944).

Around 1945 José Luis Sert introduces Nivola to Le Corbusier, and they become close friends, sharing Nivola's studio for the duration of the architect's stay in the United States.

In 1944, a son, Pietro, is born, and three years later, a daughter, Claire. In 1948, the Nivolas buy a farmhouse in East Hampton, strengthening his relationship with American artists who have already moved to the East End of Long Island, among them Jackson Pollock, Ibram Lassaw, James Brooks, John Little, and photographer Hans Namuth.

1950s

Invited by José Luis Sert to teach at the Design Workshop (now The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts) at Harvard University. Goes on to direct the Design Workshop from 1954-57.

Takes part in famous Ninth Street Show in New York City (1951) and has one-person shows also in the city at Tibor de Nagy Gallery (1950), Peridot Gallery (1954 and 1955), Stable Gallery (1959), and Signa Gallery in East Hampton, NY (1959). In Italy, has one-person show at Galleria del Milione, Milan (1959), and participates in Rome's Quadriennale (1950 and 1959) and Milan's Triennale (1959).

On the beaches of Springs, invents technique of sandcasting, which he uses in 1953 to execute a large bas-relief for Olivetti's Fifth Avenue showroom in New York City. Sandcasting is one of several techniques he implements in the coming years for large works commissioned with architects. Executes several murals and sculptures for buildings, among them the Gagarin House, designed by Marcel Breuer, Litchfield, CT (1952), Raymond Loewy House, NY (1955), Hartford Mutual Insurance Company, Hartford, CT (1957), McCormick Plaza Exposition Center in Chicago, IL (1959), and the International Legal Studies Building (1958) and Quincy House (1959), both at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. In addition, creates murals and sculptures for playground of P.S. 46 in Brooklyn, NY, one of numerous such commissions he undertakes over the years for New York public schools. He continued to complete large commissioned works for buildings and public spaces throughout his career.

Designs war memorial to *The Four Chaplains*, Falls Church, VA (1954). Nivola will show a lifelong interest in memorials and monuments.

Receives *Certificate of Excellence* from American Institute of Graphics (1956) and *Enrico Fermi Competition Award* together with Huson Jackson, Vincent Solomita, and Joseph Zalewski (c. 1957).

1960s

Becomes Visiting Professor of sculpture at Columbia University, New York City (1961) and serves as visiting critic there in 1964.

Invents technique of cement carving, which he uses in executing numerous sculptures integrated into Eero Saarinen's design of the Morse and Stiles Colleges at Yale University, New Haven, CT (1960). Other commissions for buildings include works for the Motorola Building in Chicago, IL (1960), Stephen Wise Recreation Area (working with architect Richard Stein, with whom he later collaborates on many projects) (1962), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia, PA (1962), Federal Office Building in Kansas City, MO (1963), Bridgeport Post Newspaper Building, CT (1966), Janesville Gazette, WI (1968), and Hurley House State Office Building, Boston, MA (1969).

Among his one-person exhibitions are those at Andrew Morris Gallery (1963) and Byron Gallery (1965, 1966, and 1967), both in New York City and McCormick Plaza Exposition Center and Superior Street Gallery in Chicago, IL (1968). Remains active in Italy, exhibiting his works in museum and galleries for the next three decades.

Invited to take part in an international campaign for the preservation of the Abu Simbel temples in Egypt (1961). Designs and executes a memorial piazza in honor of the poet Sebastiano Satta, Nuoro, Sardinia (1966). Creates monumental sculpture to represent Italy at the Olympic Games in Mexico City (1968).

Awarded *Silver Medal of Honor in Sculpture* by Architectural League of New York (1962 and 1965), *Certificate of Merit* by Municipal Art Society of New York (1962), *Certificate of Commendation* by Parks Association of New York City (1965), and *Fine Arts Gold Medal* by American Institute of Architects in New York City (1967).

1970s

Visiting Professor at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University (1970 and 1973). Artist in Residence at Dartmouth College, Hanover NH (1978). Visiting Professor at University of California at Berkeley (1978-1979, and 1982). Artist in Residence at the American Academy in Rome (1972 and 1977).

Exhibitions include one-person shows at Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (1974), Loretta Yarlow Fine Arts Center in Toronto (1976), Gallery Paule Anglim and the Quay Gallery, both in San Francisco, CA (1978), as well as important galleries in Italy.

Awarded membership to American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1972) and honorary membership to Royal Academy of Fine Arts in The Hague (1975).

1980s

Serves on jury that selects Maya Lin as the winning entry in the competition for the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC (1981).

Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in The Hague (1982).

Receives *Award for Excellence in Design* from Art Commission of City of New York (1985).

One-person exhibitions at Washburn Gallery, New York City (1985 and 1987), and in Italy at San Quirico D'Orcia in Tuscany (1987). Recent work is shown, along with Giorgio Cavallon and Italo Scanga at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice (1988).

The last of his many large scale commissions is completed in 1987 for the Palazzo del Consiglio Regionale in Cagliari.

Costantino Nivola dies on May 5, 1988.

1988 – present

A memorial exhibition curated by Henry Geldzahler is held at the DIA Center for the Arts, Bridgehampton, NY (1988). Important exhibitions include a two-person show with Saul Steinberg at Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY (1993), as well as a one-person show at

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, New York City (1999) and a retrospective and symposium at The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY (2003). In Italy, one-person exhibitions are held at Rimini, Nuoro, and Orani (1989), the Mercati Traianei, Rome (1994), Pietrasanta (1996), the P.A.C. (Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea) in Milan (1999-2000), and Forte Belvedere in Florence (2003-4).

A foundation dedicated entirely to Nivola's work was established in Italy and the Nivola Museum opened in his hometown of Orani in 1995.

Nivola's own childhood stories are published in *Memorie di Orani* (Libri Scheiwiller, Milan, 1997), and three major monographs on his work are published by Jaca Book in Milan: *Nivola Sculpture* (1991), *Nivola Dipinti e Grafica* (1995), and *Nivola Terrecotte* (2004). The Nivola Foundation's museum catalogue is issued in English and Italian (Ilisso, Nuoro, 2004).