

## 10 **Ruth Asawa** (01.24.1926–08.05.2013)

Born to Japanese parents, with six brothers and sisters, Ruth (Aiko) Asawa was raised on a vegetable farm in California during the Great Depression. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the family was forced from their homes into internment, first at horse stables at the racetrack in Santa Anita, California. A few Japanese artists from Disney Studios were also interned there and were the first to teach Ruth how to draw. Ruth's family was transferred to an internment camp in Arkansas, where she finished high school, earning her admission to attend the Milwaukee State Teachers College. There she took every art course offered but ultimately was unable to graduate when no school in Wisconsin would hire a Japanese-American woman to complete her student teaching requirement. Afterwards, Ruth attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where she met her husband, architect and designer Albert Lanier. Staying home to raise their children, Ruth began to sculpt, working on a wire piece she had started at Black Mountain. She was inspired to use wire after a visit to Mexico, where she observed baskets in the markets for eggs and produce: "My materials were simple, and whenever there was a free moment, I would sit down and do some work." Ruth became known for her weaved, wire sculptures, as well as her public fountain installations throughout San Francisco. She co-founded a public school for the arts in 1982, now known as the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts; and in 1998, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, previously the Milwaukee State Teachers College, awarded Ruth the bachelor's degree she had been prevented from earning so many years before.

## 11 **Twiggy** (b. 09.19.1949)

Known for her slender frame, giant eyes, and blond bob, Twiggy and her distinct, androgynous look became a sensation in the 1960s and '70s in London's mod scene—earning her the groundbreaking title of the first international supermodel. Unlike the curvaceous, full-figured, and overtly sexualized models of the 1950s, Twiggy's look was nonconformist, boyish, and thoroughly modern. Twiggy modeled many of British fashion designer Mary Quant's clothes, and her look became synonymous with the designer's famed miniskirts. Born Lesley Hornby, the stunning Twiggy received her iconic nickname at the beginning of her career, as a thin teenager with long limbs growing up in England. And it wasn't long before her name was known in households worldwide. Twiggy's popularity was instant, as she appeared on the covers of successful fashion magazines, including *Elle* and *British Vogue*, working with established photographers like Richard Avedon. Her images defined the era, and she became an idol and inspiration for young women across the globe. Using her fame to her business advantage, Twiggy branched out to create a clothing line, began acting on the stage and screen, and inspired consumer products, including a Barbie doll, lunch box, and board game. For her performance in the stage production *My One and Only* she earned a Tony nomination, and as Polly Browne in the film *The Boy Friend*, she received two Golden Globe awards. In recent years, Twiggy has served as an animal activist and supporter of breast cancer research groups. And her striking appearance and cheeky personality have granted Twiggy an iconic and lasting presence in the annals of fashion.

## 12 **Mary Quant** (b. 02.11.1934)

Bold, graphic, colorful, and patterned, Mary Quant's fashion designs were synonymous with the Mod aesthetics of the 1960s. She may not have invented the minidress, but Mary Quant brought fame and recognition to the fashionable style, even wearing a minidress herself to accept an OBE from the Queen of England in 1966. International supermodel Twiggy wore the style frequently, and the girls who came into Mary's Chelsea shop asked for their hems to be shorter and shorter. But this garment wasn't her only contribution to the fashion industry; with her signature Vidal Sassoon bob and plastic boots, she modeled and marketed her own innovations—from her shop, Bazaar, in London to her tour through America. Her youthful lines appealed to a large demographic, and J.C. Penney purchased 6,000 of her garments in the early 1960s. Her carefully arranged shop windows in Bazaar drew in interest and customers, and the rise in popularity allowed Mary to open a second branch of her store in 1963. Success continued, including a hot pants trend, and Mary later launched the Ginger Group to offer her designs to a wide range of consumers at more affordable prices, with her label appearing worldwide on beauty products and accessories as well. In her 1966 autobiography, *Quant by Quant*, she commented on her preference for mass appeal: "What ready-to-wear does today, the couturiers—even the Paris couturiers—confirm tomorrow. It has happened several times already. I think it will go on happening." In the 1960s and '70s Mary added makeup and household goods to her repertoire, even designing the interior of the Mini Designer car in 1988.

## 13 **Louise Nevelson** (09.23.1899–04.17.1988)

Louise Nevelson is known for her large-scale, collage-like sculptures that house multiple compartments and objects in relief united by a single color. Louise was born in Czarist Russia to a Jewish family in 1899. Her family immigrated to the United States in 1905, and by 1920, Louise was married and living in New York. By 1929 she became a full-time student at the Art Students League. Two years later she traveled to Munich to study with Hans Hofmann, walking by Adolf Hitler's house every day on her way to the school. While in Europe, Louise was influenced by Picasso's Cubism, and was inspired to create her own three-dimensional sculptures, initially in wood, that often incorporated found objects, such as table legs, into her pieces. One of her most important pieces, *Sky Cathedral* (1958), is a large-scale, wooden, interior sculpture painted black, which now lives in the permanent collection of MoMA in New York City. Louise's first solo exhibition occurred in 1941, but it wasn't until almost reaching sixty that her body of work earned the respect and recognition she'd struggled for over decades. In her seventies, Louise began working on even larger-scale outdoor sculptures and utilized Corten steel. Beyond her larger-than-life sculptures, Louise's personality was much the same—she was known as strong, flamboyant, bisexual, and striking, with a penchant for false eyelashes and vibrant scarves. Of her single-minded pursuit of art creation she said, "I never got caught [up] in making a living. That would have seemed to be a little bit out of order to a creative mind such as mine."

## 14 **Elaine Lustig Cohen** (b. 03.06.1927)

A recipient of the distinguished American Institute of Graphic Arts medal in 2011, Elaine Lustig Cohen has earned a reputation as a talented graphic designer and artist over the past eighty-eight years. Growing up in New Jersey, Elaine's mother instilled in her a sense that she could accomplish anything of interest, no matter her gender. Elaine took drawing lessons and eventually earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts. In 1948 she married designer Alvin Lustig, and the two were together for seven years, until Alvin's untimely death at age forty. During their marriage Elaine worked as an assistant to Alvin, who owned his own Manhattan design firm. Upon Alvin's death, it became Elaine's responsibility to fill her husband's shoes. Thus at age twenty-eight, with no formal graphic design training, Elaine took the reins and proved herself a talented designer in her own right. Architect Phillip Johnson commissioned her to design the signage for the Seagram Building. Eventually, she began to specialize in signage, book jacket design, catalogs, and other pursuits. Alvin had designed twenty-five book covers for Meridian Books, and Elaine went on to design more than a hundred. At this time she was one of very few women to own and run her own high-profile graphic design firm. Throughout her life Elaine has continued to change and evolve, and she continues to explore new avenues of design, including printmaking and digital work. In a 2013 interview, she spoke about her artistic methods: "The wonderful thing about being an artist is you never know exactly where you are going with a process. ... You're always opening another door and finding something unexpected."

## 15 **Helen Frankenthaler** (12.12.1928–12.27.2011)

Helen Frankenthaler was one of the foremost painters of the mid-twentieth century. Early in her career, Helen was influenced by many of the major artists of Abstract Expressionism she was fortunate enough to meet, including Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, and Robert Motherwell—whom she went on to marry. Helen had a privileged upbringing that garnered many opportunities that helped shape her artistic voice. While still in high school at Dalton she studied with Mexican painter Rufino Tamayo, and later at Bennington College she studied with Paul Feeley. Helen developed her own method of painting referred to as the "soak-stain" technique, where she would pour turpentine-thinned oil paint onto oversized canvases, creating large, luminescent areas of color. This breakthrough was hailed by critics and seen as an instrumental part of what was called the new Color Field movement. Helen often found inspiration for her works in landscapes of nature, as was the case for *Mountains and Sea* (1952), which she painted after returning home from a trip to Nova Scotia. As an abstract artist, her focus was not on literal interpretation of her subject matter: "What concerns me when I work is not whether the picture is a landscape, or whether it's pastoral, or whether somebody will see a sunset in it. What concerns me is: did I make a beautiful picture?" Both Helen and Robert came from well-to-do families and were known to live a lavish lifestyle; they were fond of entertaining at their home on the Upper East side of New York. In New York, Helen's work is part of the permanent collections at MoMA and the Guggenheim, as well as many more museums around the world.