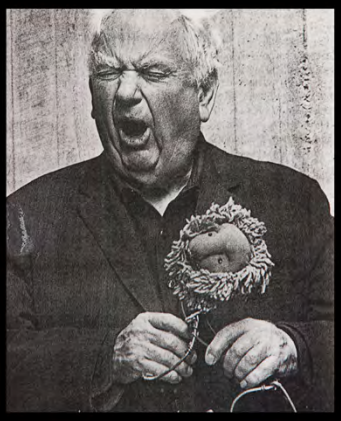
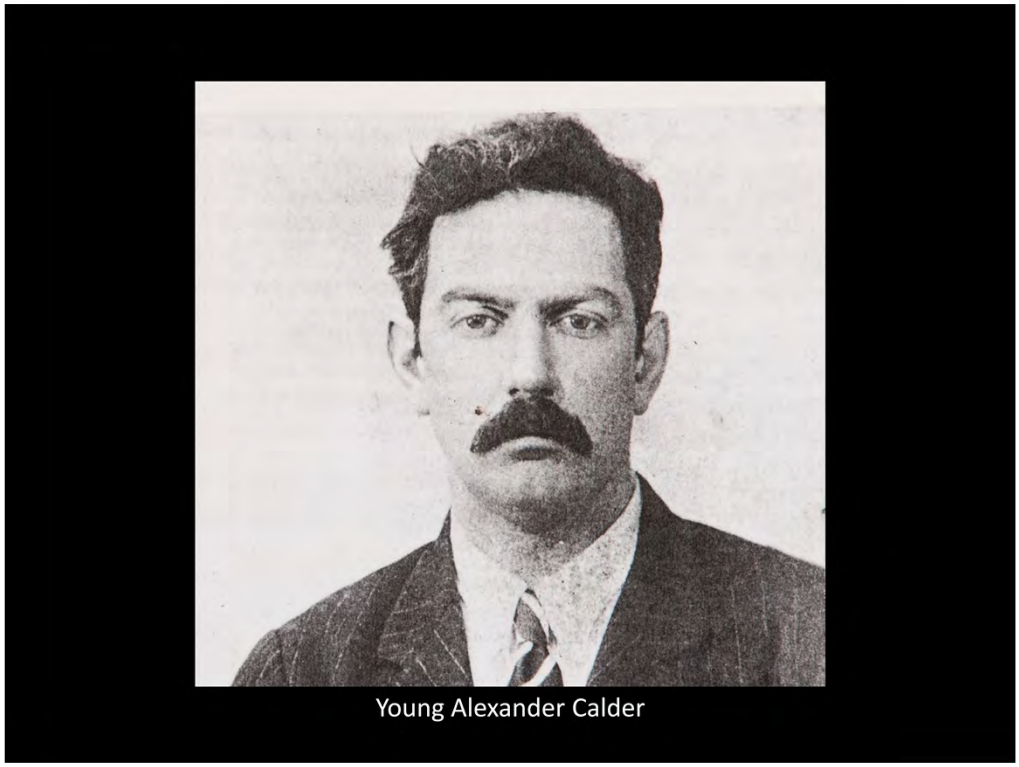
Alexander Calder

1898 - 1976

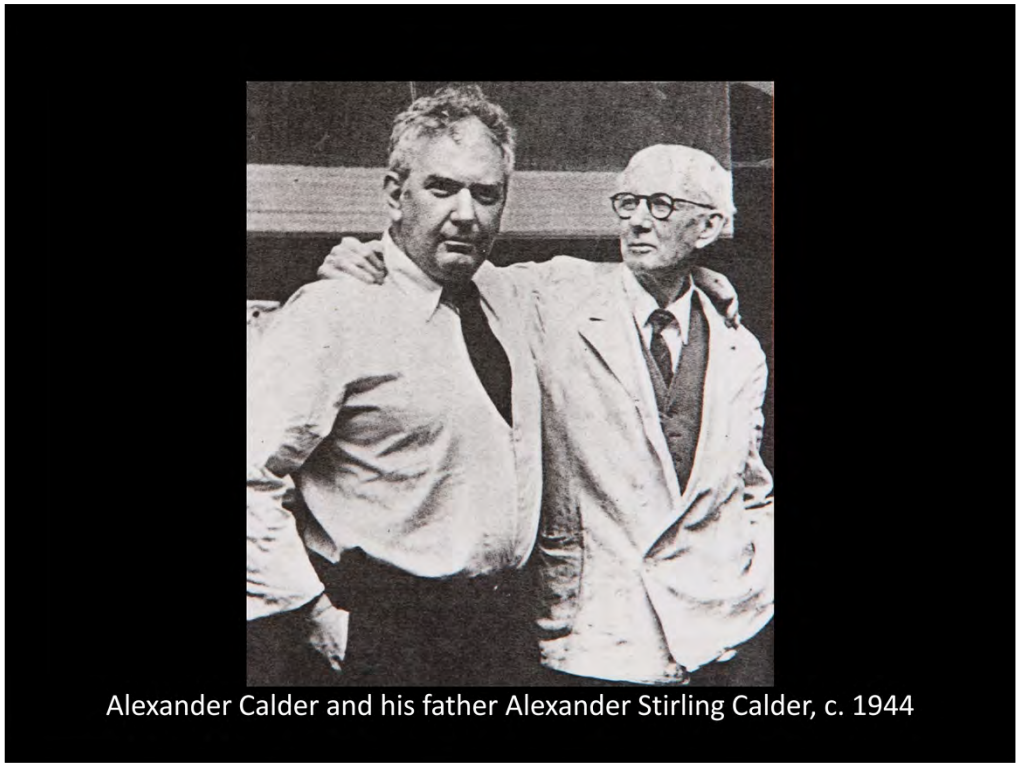


Sache, France
Roxbury, CT


Young Alexander Calder

Young Alexander Calder, date, photograph

- Calder is probably one of the most well-known sculptors of the 20th century.
- He is credited with creating several new art forms – the MOBILE and the STABILE
- He was born on July 22, 1989 just outside of Philadelphia.
- Alexander Calder, known to his friends as Sandy. He was a bear of a man with a good nature, a good heart and a vivid imagination. He always wore a red flannel shirt, even to fancy events. Red was his favorite color, "I think red's the only color. Everything should be red."


Alexander Calder and his father Alexander Stirling Calder, c. 1944

Alexander Calder and his father Alexander Stirling Calder, c. 1944, photograph

- He came from a family of artists. His mother was a well-known painter and his father and grandfather were also sculptors and were also named Alexander Calder – they had different middle names.

Ghost, 1964

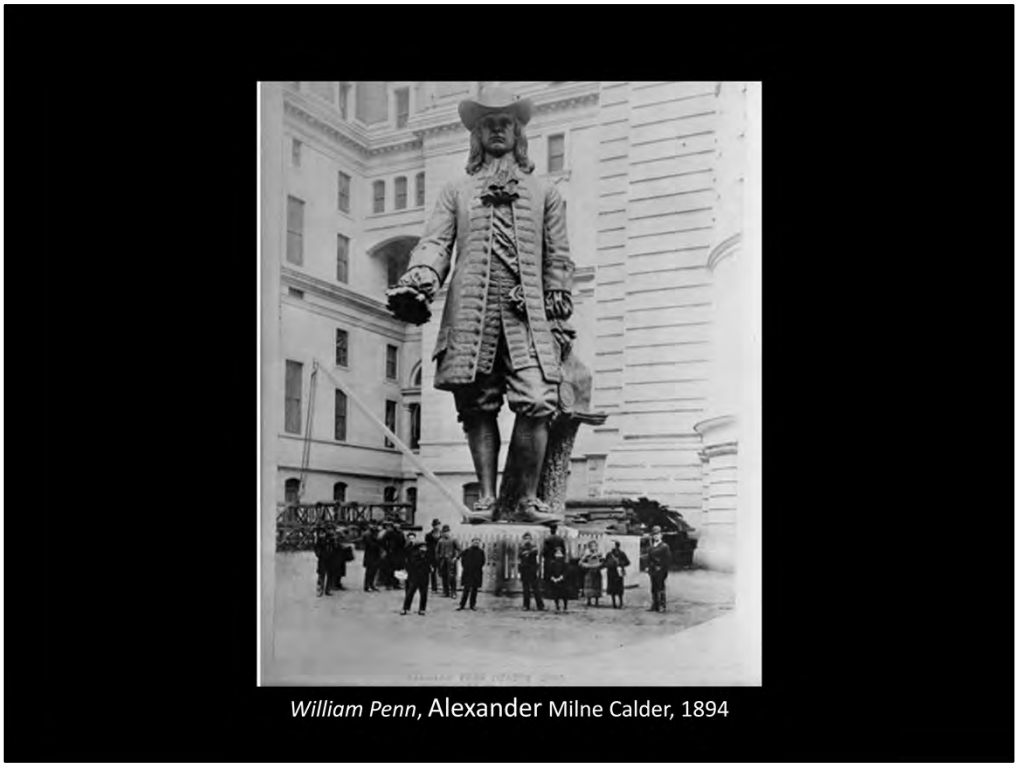
Ghost, 1964, Alexander Calder, metal rods, painted sheet metal, 34’ , Philadelphia Museum of Art

- In Philadelphia you can see sculpture from 3 generations of Calders.
    - *Ghost* created by Alexander Calder hangs in the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the Grand Hall.

Swann Memorial Fountain in Logan Square, Alexander Stirling Calder, 1924

Swann Memorial Fountain in Logan Square, Alexander Stirling Calder, 1924

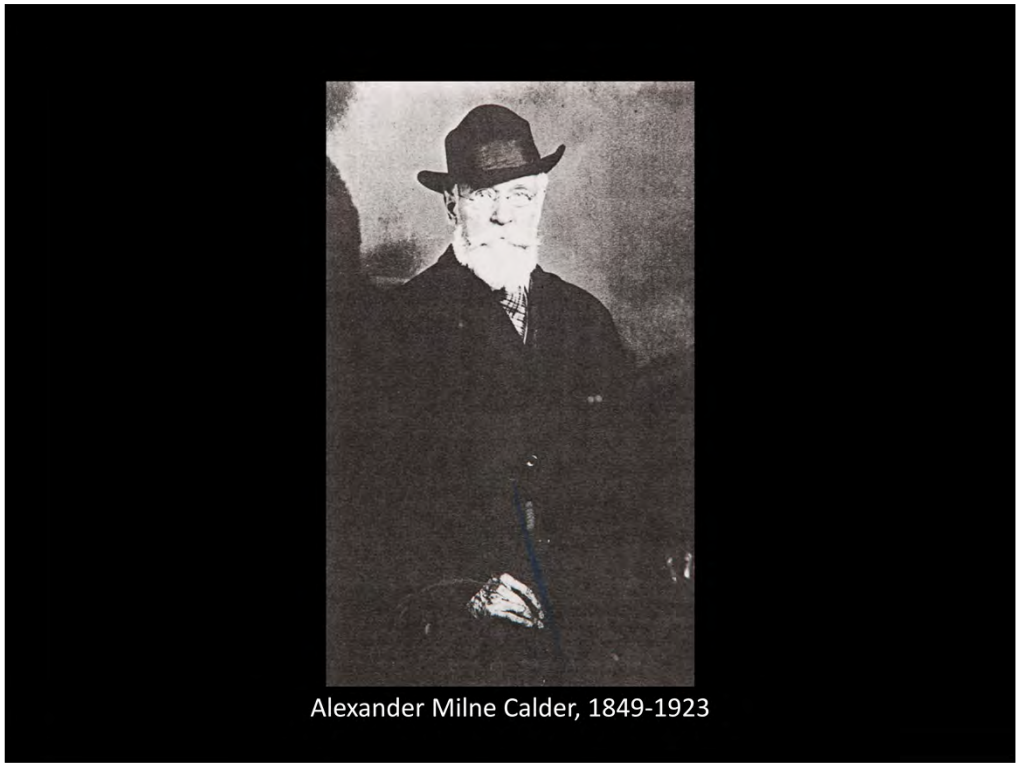
- Further down the street is the *Swann Memorial Fountain in Logan Square* created by his father, Alexander Stirling Calder.



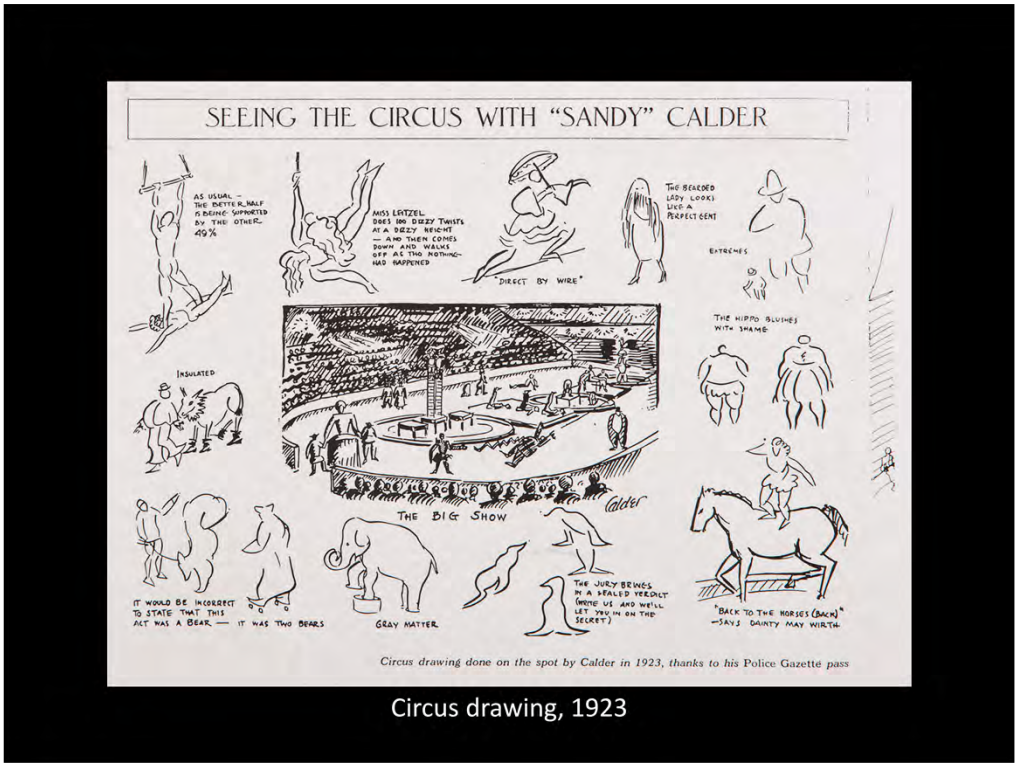
William Penn, Alexander Milne Calder, 1894

William Penn, Alexander Milne Calder, 1894, size, Philadelphia City Hall

- Even further down the street on the top of Philadelphia's City Hall is the statue of *William Penn* made by his grandfather, Alexander Milne Calder.



Alexander Milne Calder, date, photograph
1849-1923 – Calder's grandfather



Circus drawing, 1923

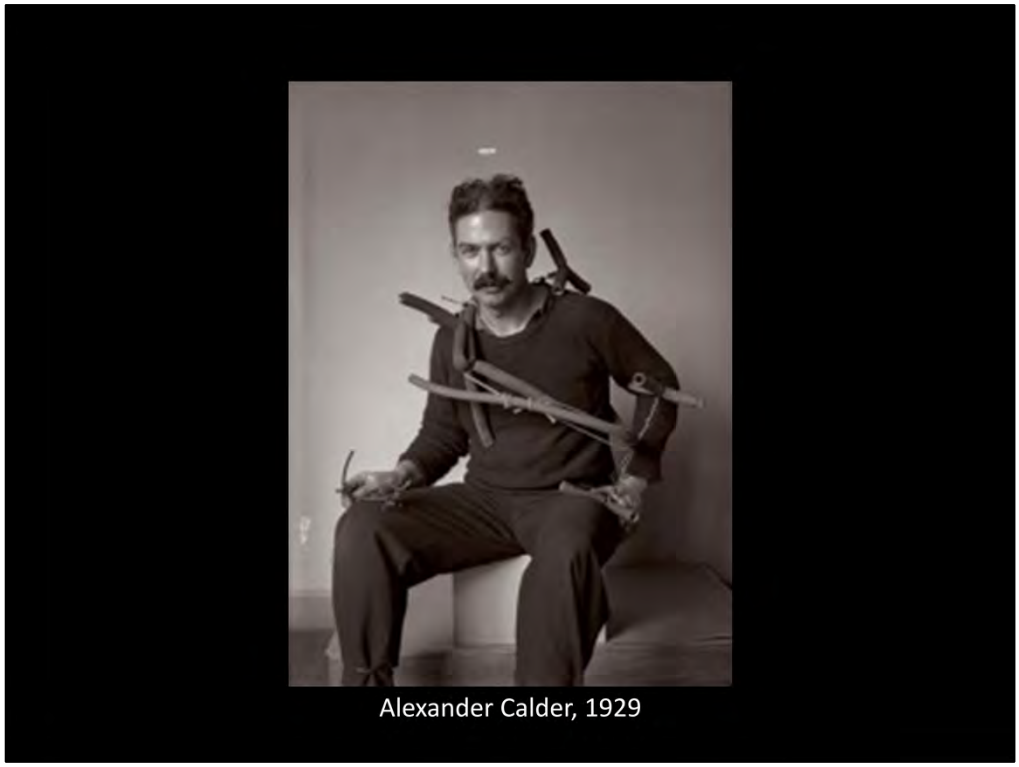
Circus drawing done on the spot by Calder, in 1923, thanks to his *National Police Gazette* pass

- He moved around a lot as a child, but he always had a workshop wherever he lived
- He played with mechanical toys and enjoyed making gadgets and toy animals out of scraps. He had a keen mechanical mind and was fascinated with how machines worked.
- He was always fascinated with animals
- Calder didn't want to be an artist; instead he got his college degree in mechanical engineering.
- He began a series of engineering jobs, none of which really interested him so he decided to be an artist after all.
- First he spent a year working on a ship
- In 1923 Calder entered a New York art school called Art Students League until 1926
- He studied with a teacher who encouraged him to draw with CONTOUR LINE (a continuous, non-stop line). The idea intrigued him and he practiced the technique and found he was good at it.
- This technique would foreshadow his later work where he "drew with wire"
- In 1923, when Alexander Calder was twenty-seven years old, he went to the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus to make some sketches to sell to a New York newspaper. He enjoyed himself so much that he went back night after night for nearly two weeks.

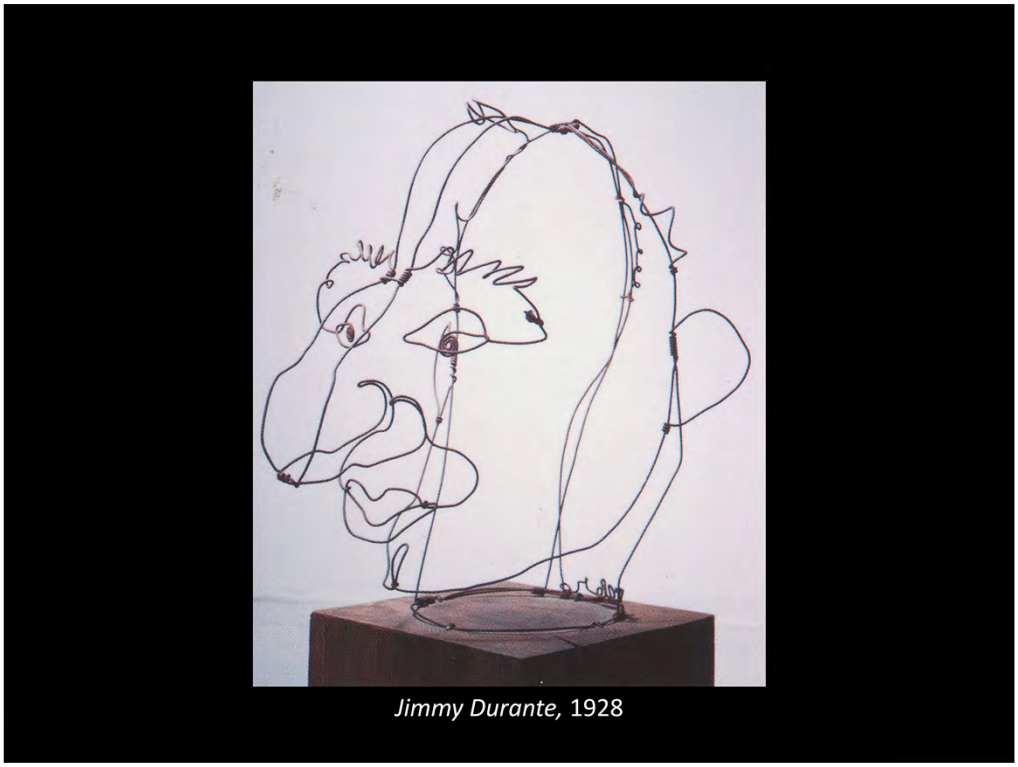
- 1924 – illustrator for National Police Gazette
- In 1926 he went to Paris

Fireman's Dinner for Brancusi, c 1926

Fireman's Dinner for Brancusi, c 1926, oil on burlap, 36 x 42 1/8 in, Whitney


Alexander Calder, 1929

André Kertész
Alexander Calder
1929
Médiathèque de l’architecture et du patrimoine, Paris

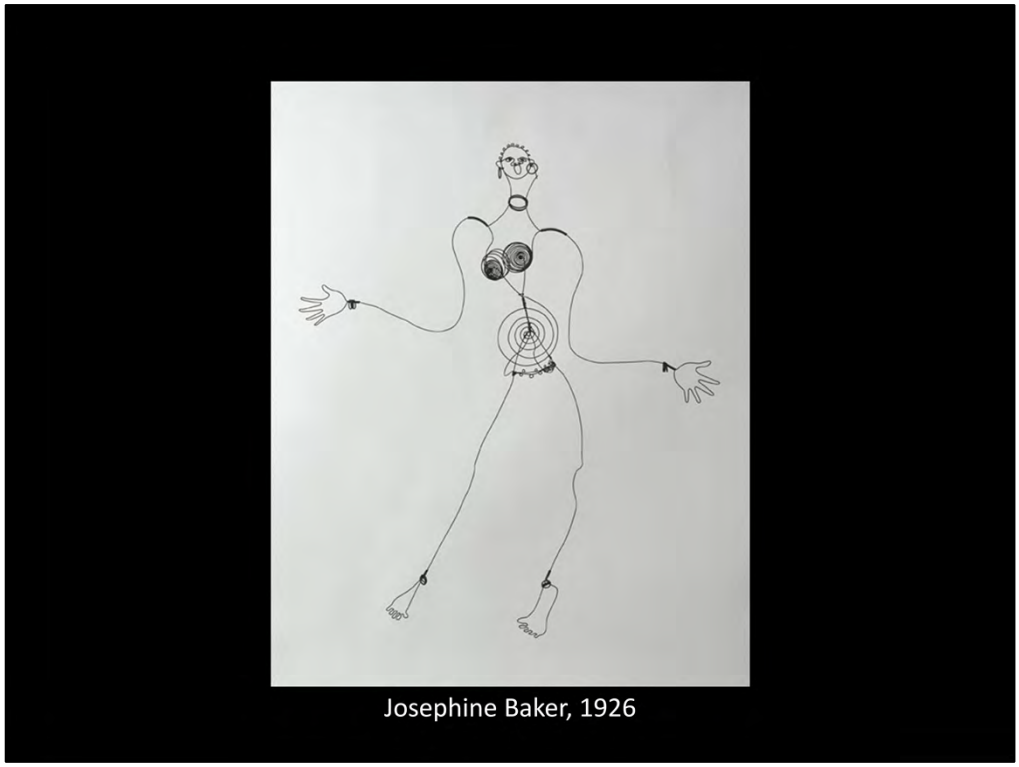


Jimmy Durante, 1928

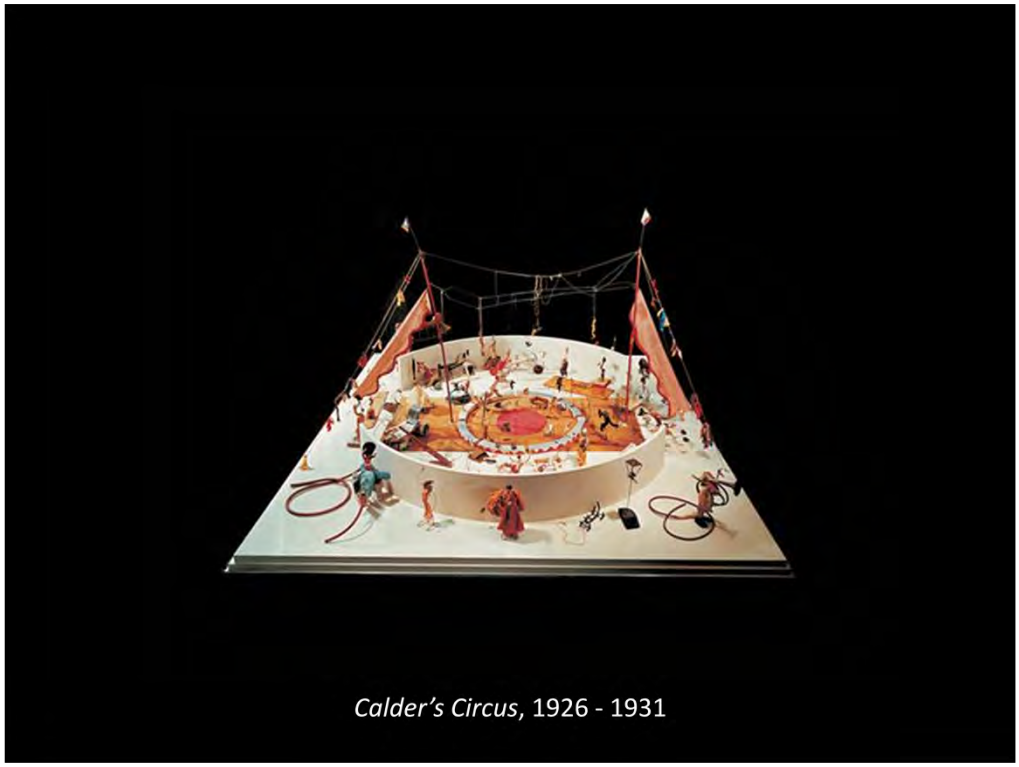
Jimmy Durante, 1928, wire, 12 x 9 ½ x 11 ½ in, private collection

- Calder became interested in making three-dimensional figures out of wire and began making wire portraits of people to make money

Calder's illustrations for the National Police Gazette were often made of single, continuous lines. He learned this technique in mechanical drawing classes at the Art Students League. In 1925, Calder was the first to extend this line drawing approach into three dimensions. He soon began creating figurative and portrait sculptures using only wire to "draw in space." His several sculptures of dancer Josephine Baker were his earliest works in this direction. These artworks were important in furthering both his career-long use of wire and his interest in open-space sculpture.



Josephine Baker, 1926, iron wire, 40”, Musee National d’Art Moderne, Paris



Calder's Circus, 1926-1931, mixed media, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

- Using his past experience as an engineer Calder created a toy circus of his own in his free time
- He made lots of characters, the tent, even a stretcher bearer for the injured characters
- They were made out of wire, cloth, cork, leather, string and wood

The Cowboy, from *Calder's Circus*, 1926-1931

The Cowboy, from *Calder's Circus*, 1926-1931, mixed media, size, Whitney Museum of Art, New York

- Most of the toys moved with levers and strings and could do things like throw spears or swing on the trapeze. They looked just like the real thing when they moved.
- In 1927 he had the first performance of Cirque Calder. He placed all the toys together, made sounds effects, played music and performed with his toy circus. He repeated the performance many times.

Lion and Cage from Calder's Circus, 1926-1931

Lion and Cage from Calder's Circus, 1926-1931, mixed media: wire, wood, metal, cloth, cardboard, leather, string, rubber tubing, buttons, rhinestones, pipe cleaners & bottle caps, 19 ½ x 6 ⅝ x 10 ⅛ in, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Elephant Trainer from *Calder's Circus*, 1926-1931

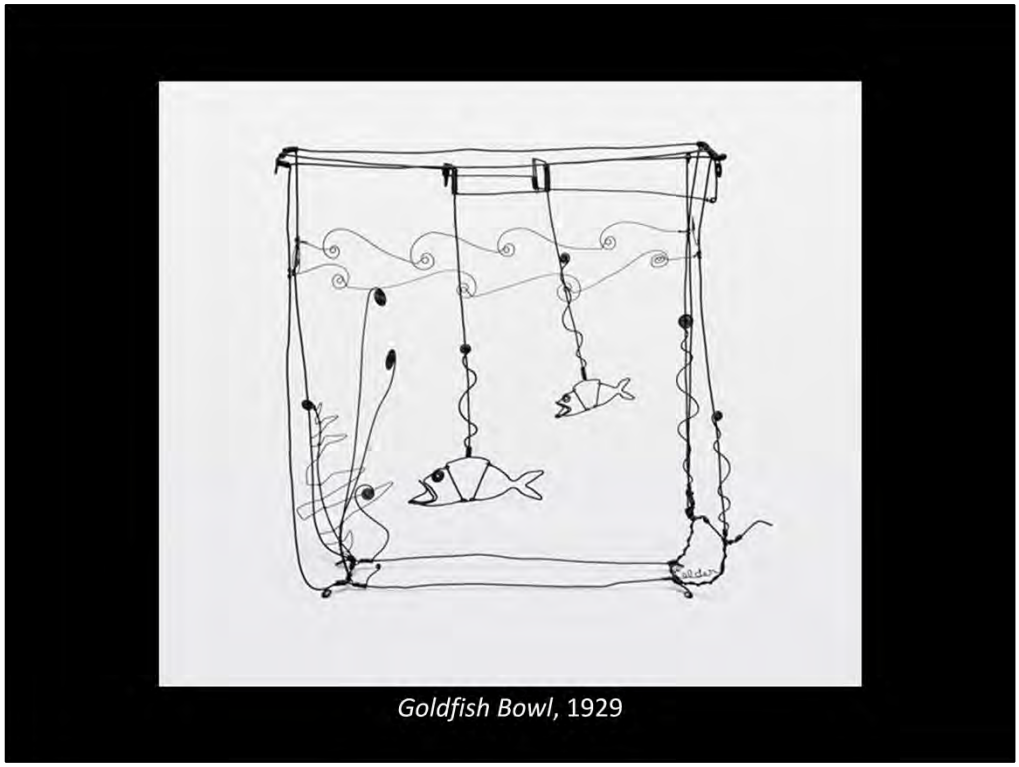
Elephant Trainer, 1926-1931, painted wood, cloth, rubber tubing, wire, fur, pipe cleaners, cork and nails, 12 ¼ x 29 x 15 ½ in, Whitney Museum of Art, New York

Little Clown, The Trumpeter, from *Calder's Circus,* 1926-1931

Little Clown, The Trumpeter, from *Calder's Circus,* 1926-1931, Wire, cloth, paint, yarn, thread, rhinestone buttons, electrical tape, rubber tubing, and metal horn, 12 × 3 ½ × 3 in, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

- He continued making the characters and packing them in a suitcase and taking them with him and performing wherever he was.
- He was quite a hit
- He met Miro in 1928, became very good friends
- Also became friends with Jules Pascin, who helped Calder get exhibits.
- "Portraits, Sculpture, Wire Forms" – first exhibit in 1929
- Later that year he went back to the US and met his wife Louisa James (grand niece of Henry James) on the ship.
- They married in 1931. It was an ideal marriage and they were married until Calder's death.

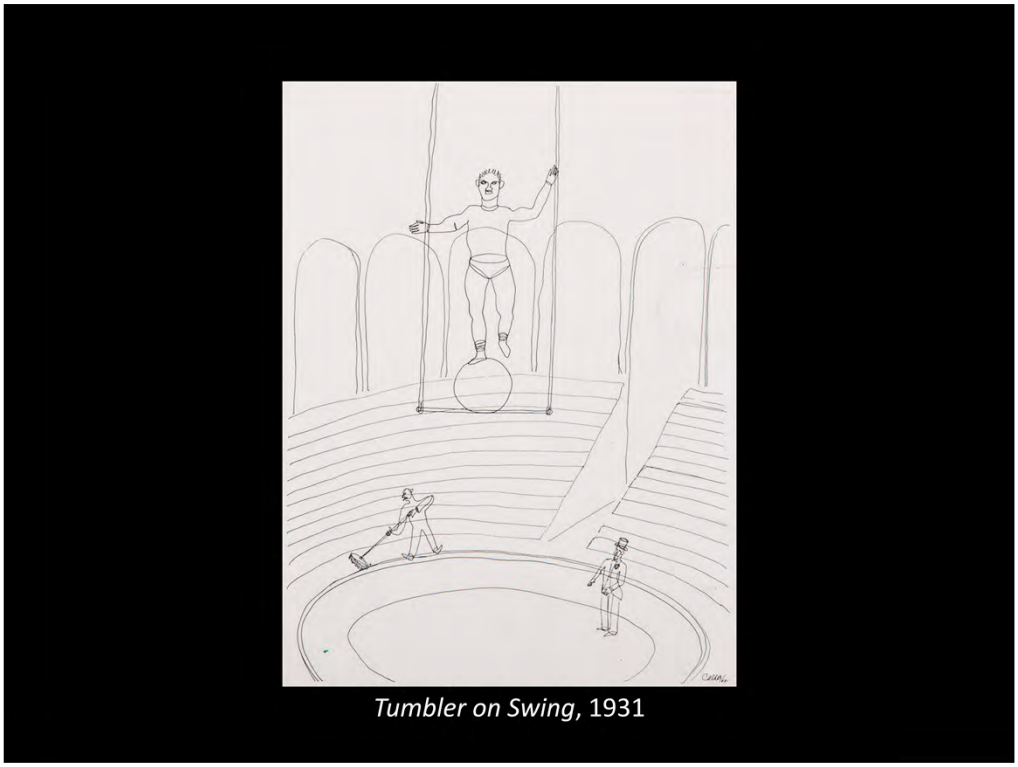
Circus video – 19 minutes



Goldfish Bowl, 1929

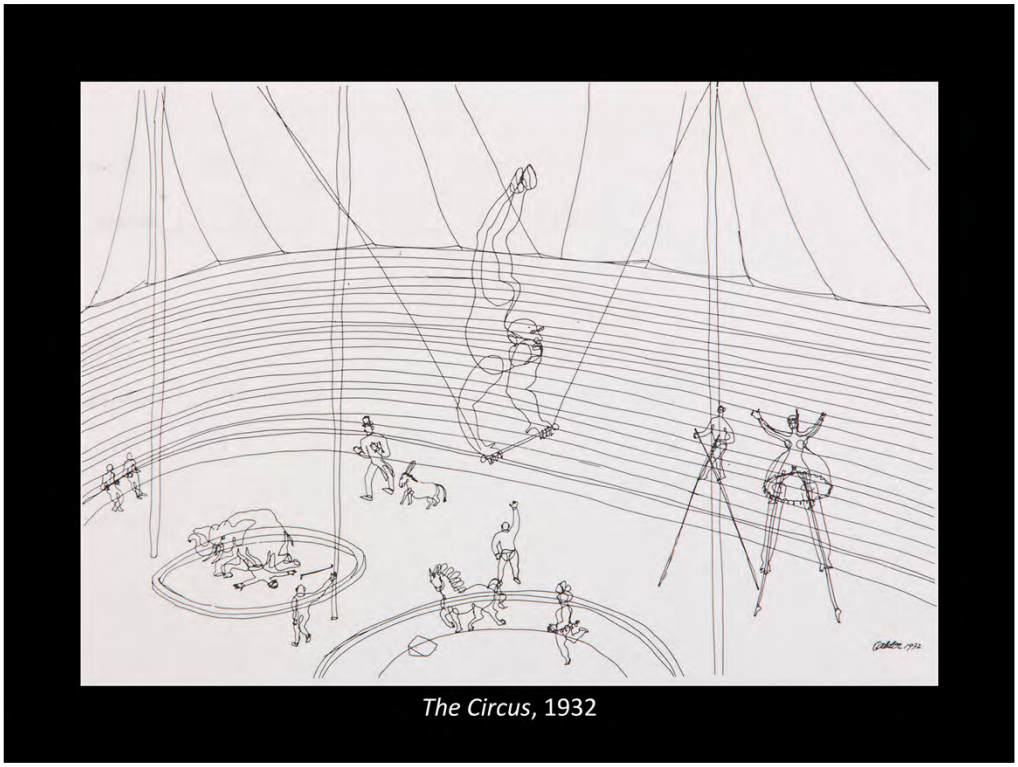
Goldfish Bowl, 1929, wire, 16 x 15 x 6 in, private collection

- First formal mechanized sculpture



Tumbler on Swing, 1931

Tumbler on Swing, 1931, pen and ink on paper, 30 ½ x 22 ½ in, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

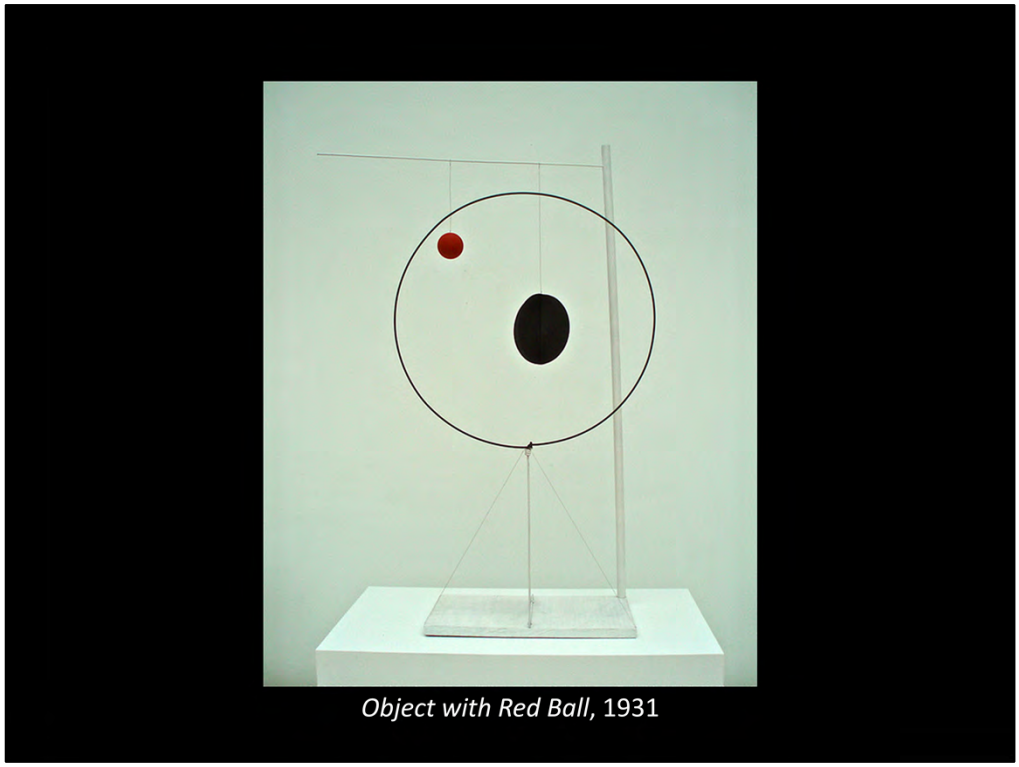


The Circus, 1932

The Circus, 1932, ink on paper, 20 ¼ x 29 ¼", Private collection

Mondrian's Studio, restored to 1930

- In 1930, one day when he was visiting Piet Mondrian's studio he got an idea. Mondrian worked with geometric blocks of color and he had a number of colored shapes hanging on his wall. Calder was fascinated with them and commented "these are nice but wouldn't it be fun if they could move?"
- He realized he could use ABSTRACT shapes to make his art. He went back to his studio and began to experiment



Object with Red Ball, 1931

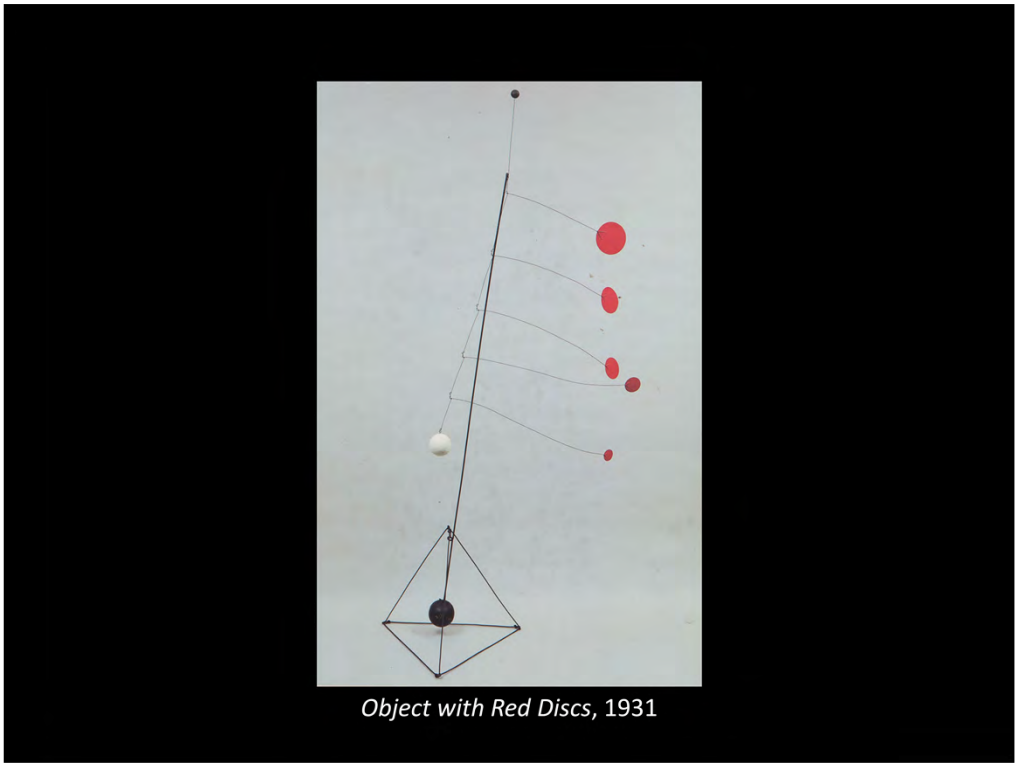
Object with Red Ball, 1931, wood, sheet metal, wire, paint, 61 ¼ x 39 x 12 ¼ in, Calder Foundation

- He tried to paint first, but that just wasn't his medium
- He took found objects, painted them then attached them with wire, which he attached to a hidden motor that would move the objects.
- Sculptures that move are known at KINETIC Sculpture.
- Because these sculptures could move, Calder's friend Marcel Duchamp, also an artists, saw this invention and named it a MOBILE.
- These stand on the floor

- in 1930, Calder visited the studio of the Dutch abstract painter Piet Mondrian. The studio was decorated like a Mondrian painting -- brilliant white walls adorned with rectangular strips of red, blue, yellow, black and white. The abstract colors impressed Calder. **But he told Mondrian the impact would be greater if the rectangles could be made to move. Mondrian was annoyed at the suggestion. "No, it is not necessary," he said. "My painting is already very fast."** But Calder mulled his own suggestion and eventually created assemblies of abstract, colorful pieces of sheet metal that moved in the air. The French sculptor Jean Arp dubbed the works "mobiles," and Calder was en route to his special place in modern art.

Mobile, c 1934, wood, metal rods, cord, 39 x 36 in, Guggenheim

- Later he eliminated the motors and just let the air move the pieces. He designed the various parts to move in certain ways. Sometimes the parts never touched; sometimes they set off a chain reaction of the parts.
- Some hang from the ceiling such as these.



Object with Red Discs, 1931

Object with Red Discs, 1931, Painted steel rod, wire, wood, and sheet aluminum, 88 ½ × 33 × 47 ½ in, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

also known as *Calderberry Bush*


Calder with *Mercury Fountain*, Spanish Pavilion, World's Fair in Paris, 1937

Calder with *Mercury Fountain*, Spanish Pavilion, World's Fair in Paris, 1937

- Returned from Paris in 1933
- Miro asked for Calder to be allowed to add to the Spanish Pavilion, but was rejected since he wasn't a Spanish citizen. Later when the original artist wasn't' performing they came back and asked him to create the Mercury Fountain.
- First major commission

For many years, the world's greatest source of mercury were the mines at Almadén, Spain, which produced some 250,000 metric tons of mercury over nearly two millennia of operation.

So when Spain decided to build a monument to the mine (which was long worked by criminals and slave laborers, most of whom died of mercury poisoning), they commissioned American sculptor Alexander Calder to build a graceful fountain which, instead of water, would pump pure mercury. It was to be displayed at the 1937 World's Fair.

At the time, the inherent beauty of the liquid metal was well understood, but its toxicity was not. Today, the fountain resides in the Fundacio Joan Miro in Barcelona, Spain, and continues to pump pure mercury, though now it does so behind a pane of glass to protect viewers from touching or breathing fumes produced by this deadly work of art.

Gothic Construction from Scraps, 1939

Gothic Construction from Scraps, 1939, sheet metal, 28 ½ x 25⅝ x 12⅝, owner

Effet du Japonais, 1940, metal sheet, rod and paint, 95 x 99 x 73”, private collection

Aluminum Leaves, 1941, a stabile of sheet metal, wire, and paint, 61 x 61 in, Estate of Alexander Calder

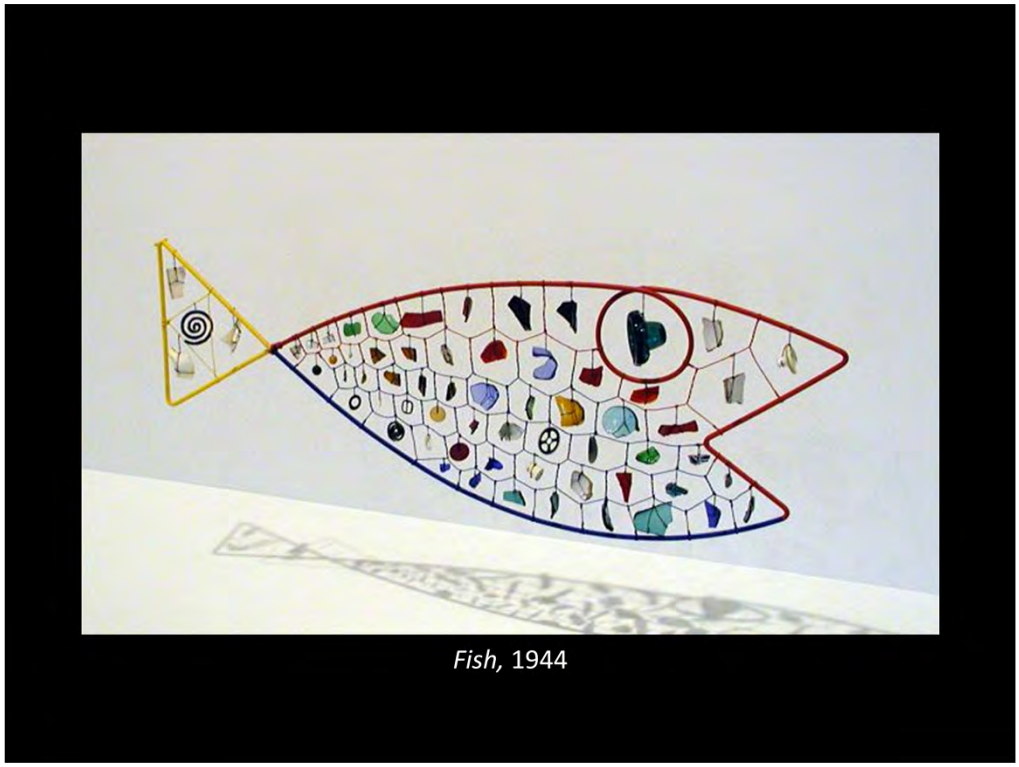
Vertical Constellation with Bomb, 1943

Vertical Constellation with Bomb, 1943, painted steel wire, painted wood, and wood, 30 1/2 x 29 3/4 x 24 in, NGA

In 1942, Calder invented a new format for his sculpture, producing a series of works that his friends James Johnson Sweeney and Marcel Duchamp would later refer to as constellations. These delicate, medium-sized, open-work constructions are composed of linear wire elements and small, carved biomorphic and geometric forms in painted and unpainted wood. Unlike Calder's mobiles, which are suspended in open space where their individual parts are gently propelled by random air currents, the constellations, including *Vertical Constellation with Bomb*, are stationary objects that generally sit on a tabletop or hang against a wall. **Calder turned to wood in these and other works of the early 1940s partly in response to the scarcity of scrap metal during the war years, although the small forms that are featured in the constellation series originate in certain mobiles of the mid-1930s.** Clear affinities with the work of various surrealists, including Joan Miró, Jean Arp, and Yves Tanguy, are found throughout the constellations. Pierre Matisse formalized this comparison in 1943, when he exhibited Calder's constellations at his New York gallery along with recent paintings by Tanguy (who had, by then, become Calder's neighbor in Connecticut). "It was a very weird sensation I experienced," Calder later recalled with regard to the 1943 exhibition, "looking at a show of mine where nothing moved." [1] ***Vertical Constellation with Bomb*** **appeared in the Pierre Matisse exhibition as well as in Calder's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art later that year.**

While Arp and Miró had also created series of "constellations

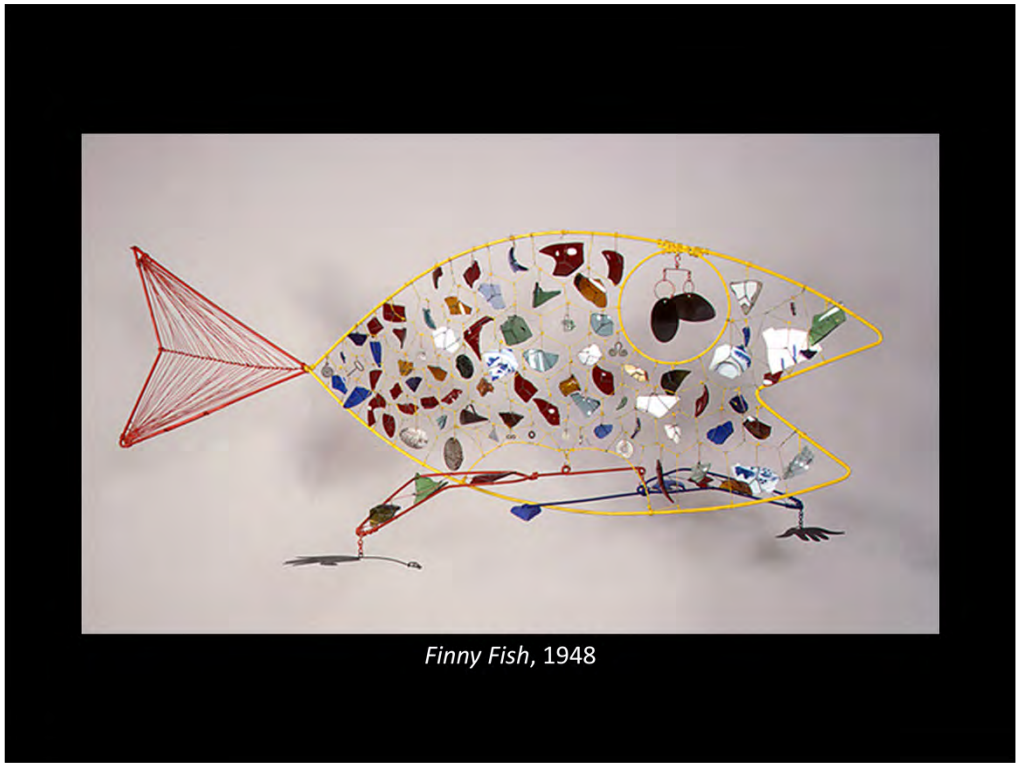
Wooden Bottle with Hairs, 1943, wood and wire, 22 3/8 × 13 × 12 in, Whitney Museum of American Art,



Fish, 1944

Fish, 1944, painted metal rod, wire, metal, plastic, wood, glass and ceramic fragments, 16 ¼ x 48 1/8 x 4 ½ in, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC

Found object scupture



Finny Fish, 1948

Finny Fish, 1948, painted steel rod, painted steel wire, glass and objects, 66 x 152.4 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

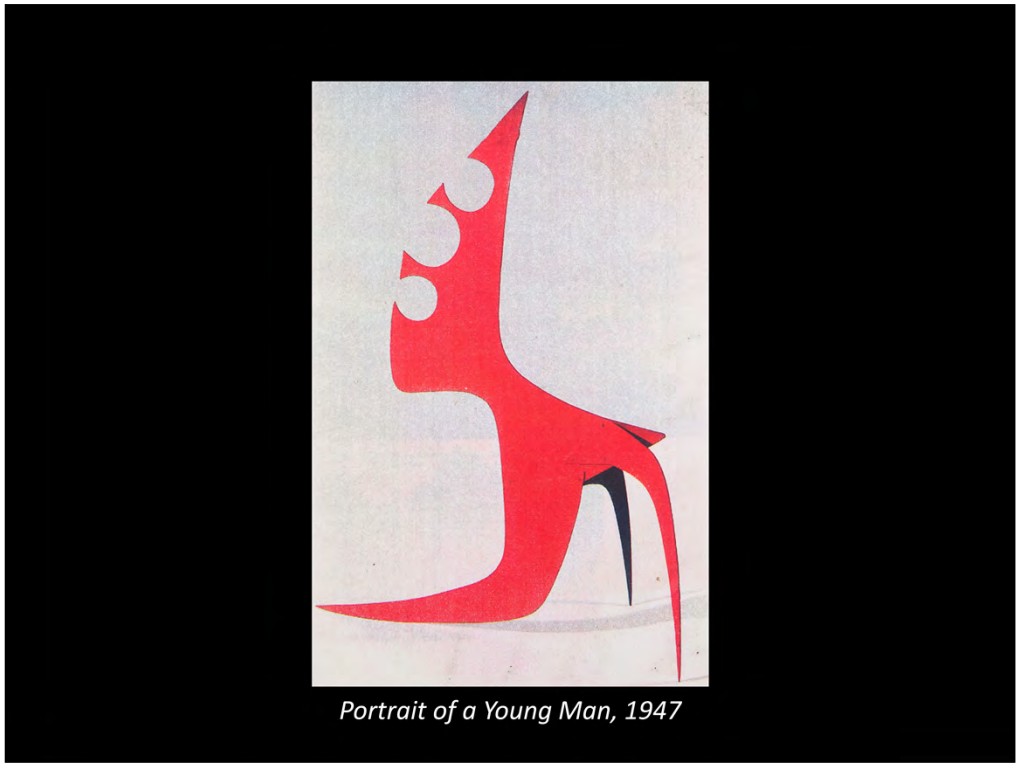
- *Finny Fish* is an example of Calder's sculpture using found objects (also at National Gallery)

Morning Cobweb, 1945

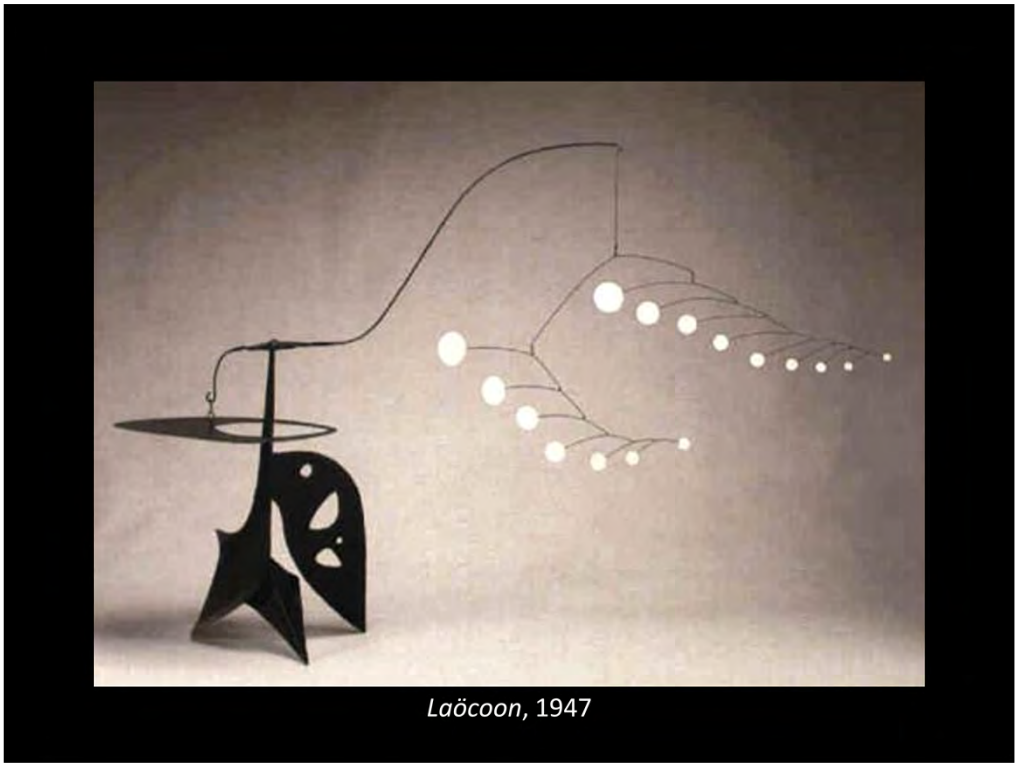
Morning Cobweb, 1945, medium, 35 ¾ " high, owner

Little Parasite, 1947

Little Parasite, 1947, sheet metal, wire & paint, 20 x 53 x 13 in, Private collection



Portrait of a Young Man, c. 1947, Painted sheet metal, 35 × 27 3/16 × 11 in, Whitney Museum of American Art



Laöcoon, 1947

Laöcoon, 1947, metal, size, owner

Pomegranate, 1949

Pomegranate, 1949, Sheet aluminum, steel, steel wire, and rods, 71 ¼ x 72 ¼ x 42 ¼ in, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

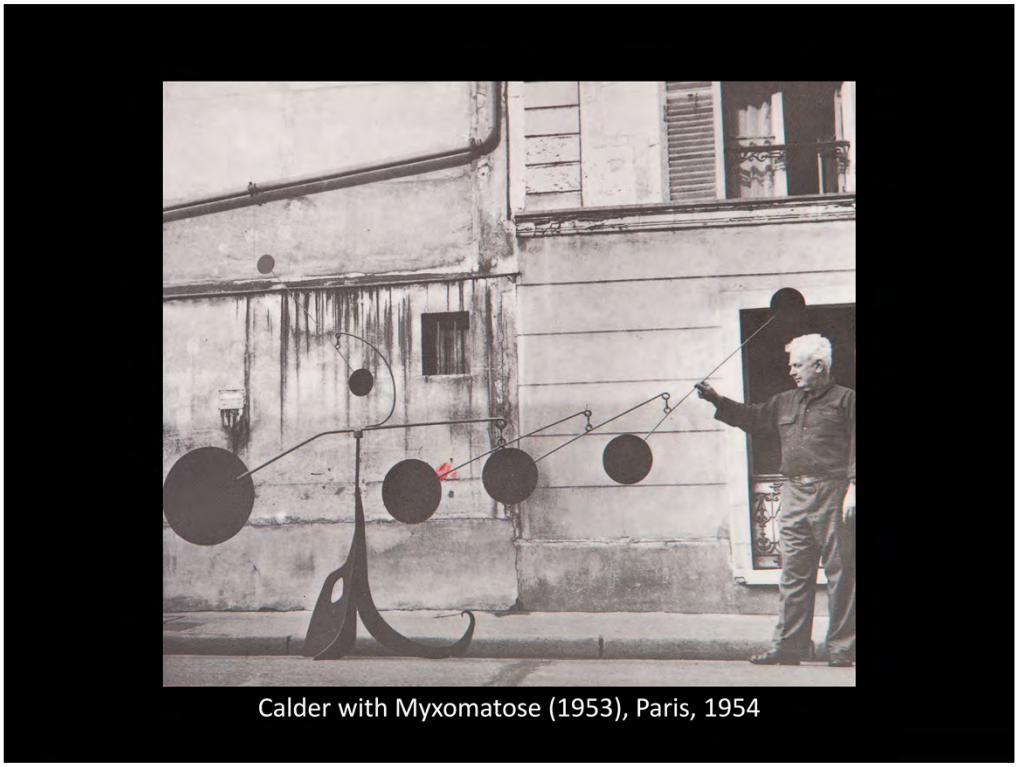
Calder like placing the loop of the arm off center, closer to one end of the arm than the other. He knew he could make a shape behave as if it were heavier or lighter by placing it nearer or rather from the loop.

Calder liked placing shapes of unequal weight at each end of the arms. This force them to tilt rather than remain horizontal

- He continued experimenting with various methods.
- *Pomegranate* shows how he balanced the sculpture. He spent a great deal of time getting the sculpture balanced.
- *Do you think his engineering background was helpful?*
- He made more than 1,000 mobiles.
- Some stand on a pedestal such as these.

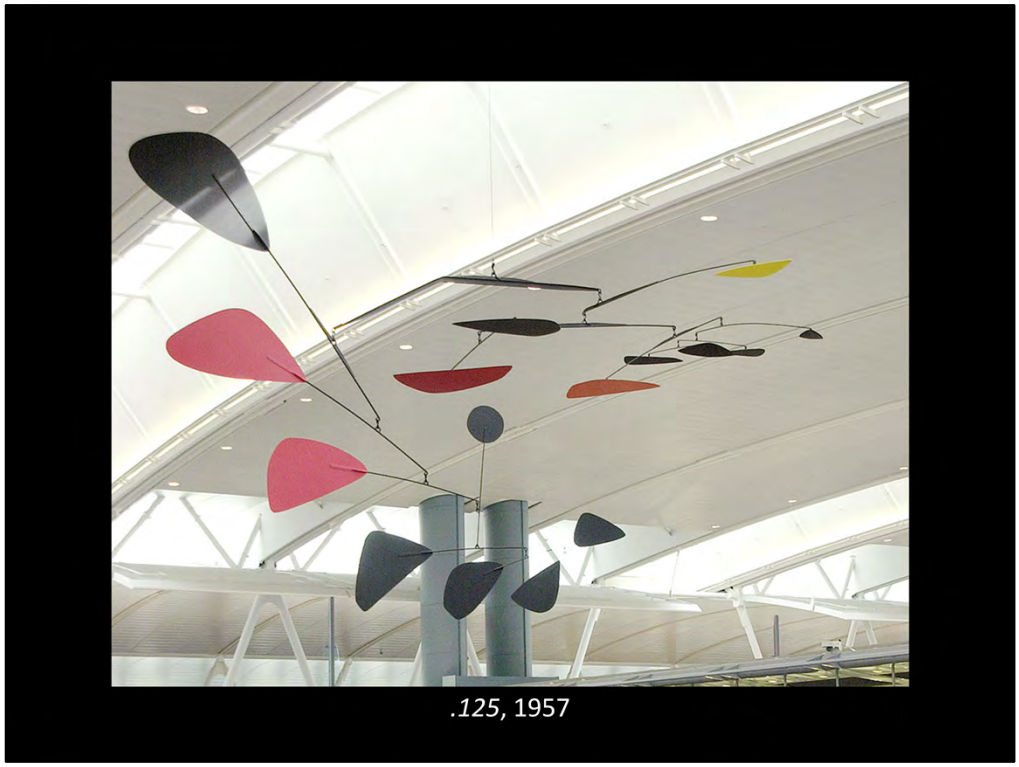
The Only, Only Bird, 1952

The Only, Only Bird, 1952, medium, 15” high, owner



Calder with Myxomatose (1953), Paris, 1954
Photograph by Agnès Varda

- Calder spent his whole life transforming his wonderfully clever ideas into works of art that give lasting pleasure to us all.



.125, 1957

.125, 1957, sheet metal, 300 x 540 x 204 in, JFK Airport, NY

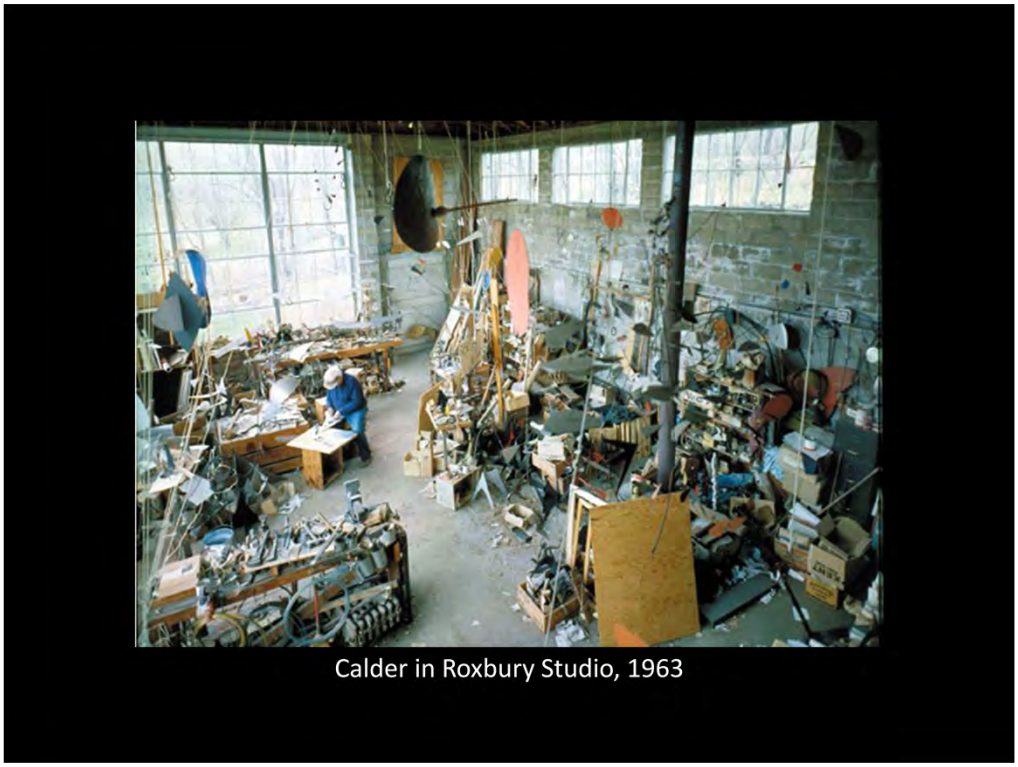
The Blue Comb, 1959, painted sheet metal and wire, 55 x 67 in, owner sold 11/14

Antennae with Red and Blue Dots, 1960, Aluminum and steel wire, 43 ¾ x 50 ½ in, Tate Gallery, London

Teodelapio, 1962

Teodelapio, 1962, painted steel, 60 ft high, Spoleto, Italy

- Calder thought that many cities were drab, crowded places where all the buildings looked alike. He hoped that his bright stabiles would be refreshing spots that people would enjoy "like a bunch of flowers on a table."
- *Have you seen any art in your area that makes the outside space more fun?*



Calder in Roxbury Studio, 1963

Calder Studio, Pedro E. Guerrero, Roxbury, Conn., 1963

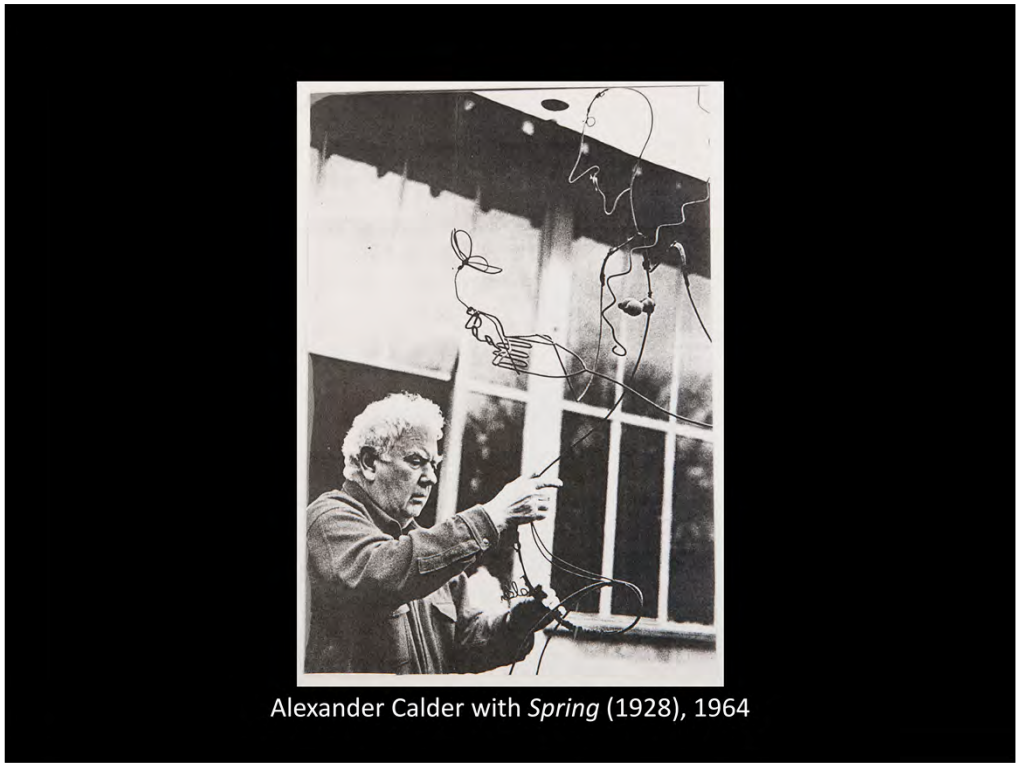
- He moved around a lot as a child, but he always had a workshop wherever he lived
- He played with mechanical toys and enjoyed making gadgets and toy animals out of scraps
- He had a keen mechanical mind and was fascinated with how machines worked.
- Calder didn't want to be an artist, instead he got his college degree in 1919 in mechanical engineering.
- He began a series of engineering jobs, none of which really interested him so he decided to be an artist after all.


Southern Cross, 1963

Southern Cross, 1963, sheet metal, wire and paint, 32 x 31 x 17 in, Private collection

Les Remforts (The Reinforcements), 1963

Les Remforts (The Reinforcements), 1963, medium, size, Fondation Maeght, Barcelona

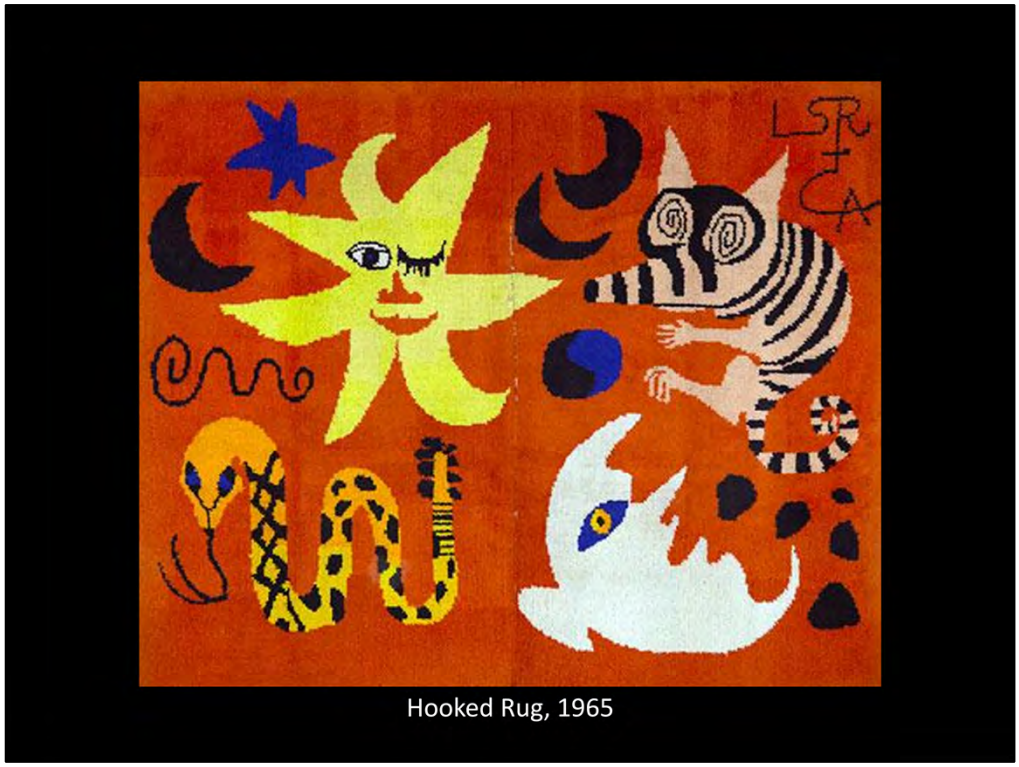


Alexander Calder with *Spring* (1928), 1964

Picture of Alexander Calder, date, medium, size, owner

La Touraine, 1965

La Touraine, 1965, tin cans and wire, 32 ¼ x 21 ⅝x 30 ⅝”, owner

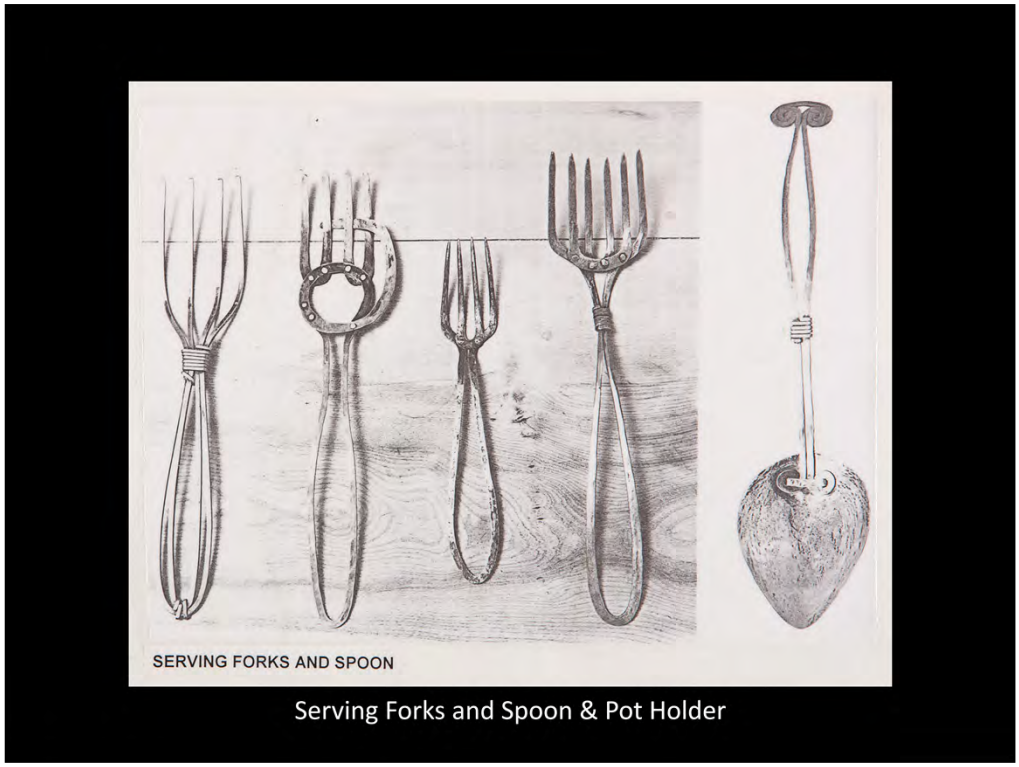


Hooked Rug, 1965

Design by Calder and make by his wife Louisa
Had many all over their houses

Toilet paper holder

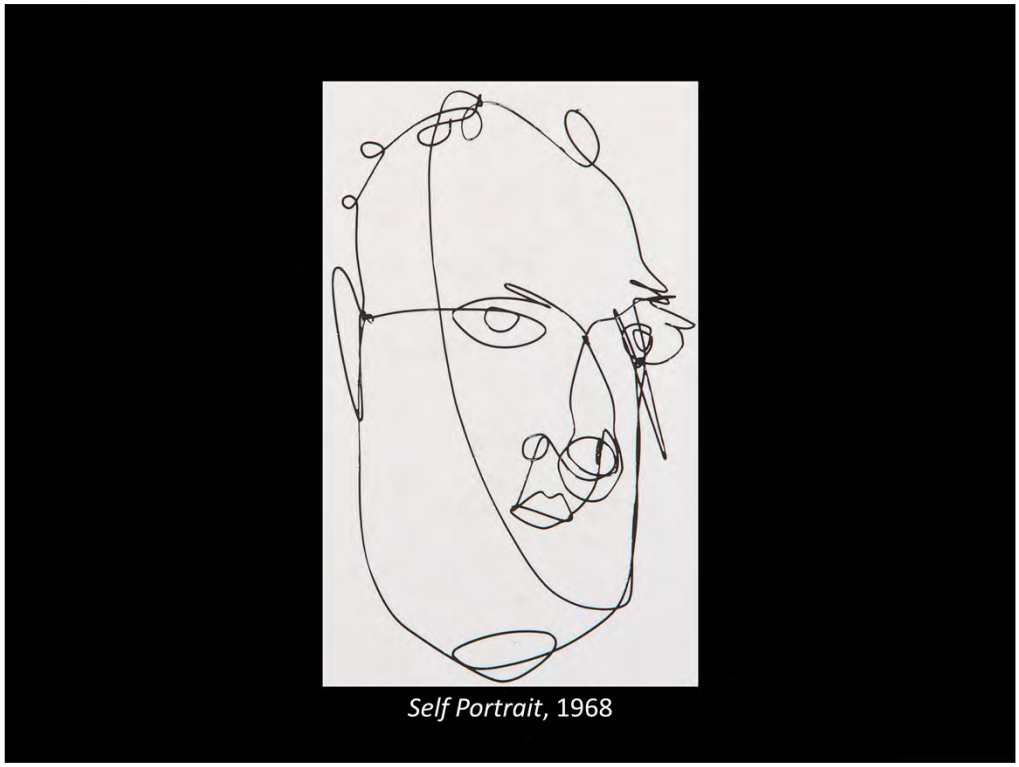
- Calder designed a lot of other things also including silverware for his house, jewelry for his wife and friends, toys for his children and grandchildren.
- He also painted; illustrated books; designed fabric and wallpaper; and even created a design for a plane.



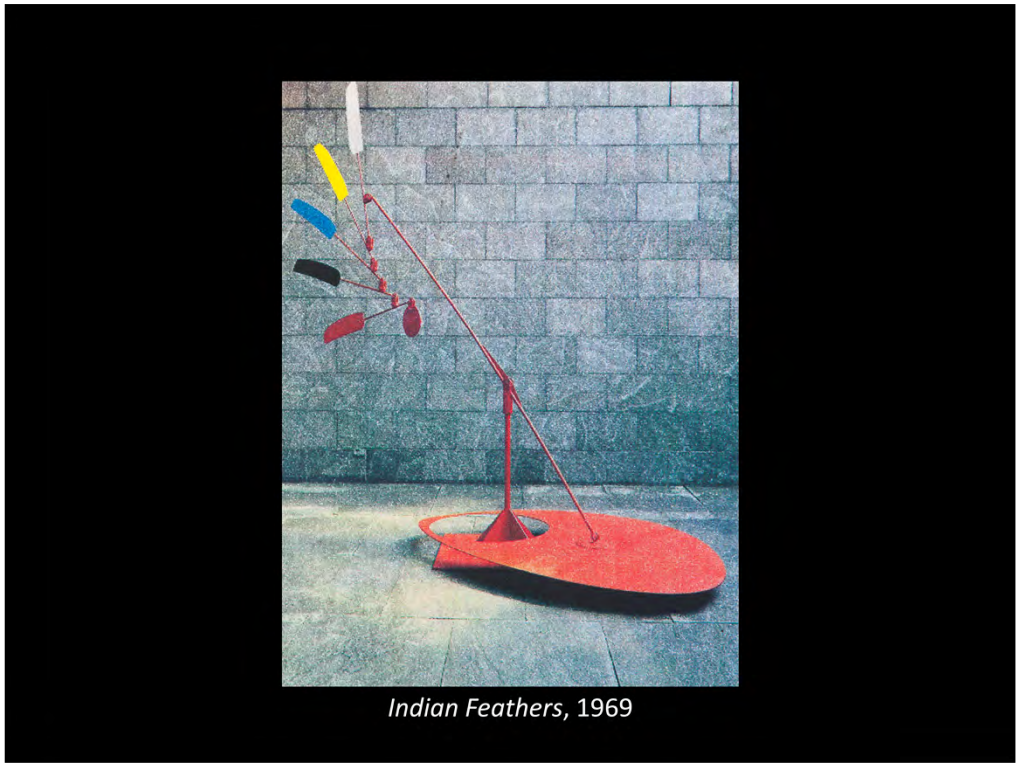
Serving Forks and Spoon & Pot Holder

Serving Forks and Spoon

Alexander Calder. | On wall: Necklace, (c. 1943), silver wire; on surface: a) Bracelet, c.1947, gold wire. b) Cufflinks, c. 1940, silver wire. c) Tiara, c. 1938, silver wire. | All Calder Foundation, N.Y., photo © Maria Robledo



Self Portrait, 1968, wire, 17 ½ x 9 ¾ x 18 in, Calder Foundation


Indian Feathers, 1969

Indian Feathers, 1969, painted aluminum sheet and stainless steel rods, 136 ¾ × 91 × 63 in, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Calder and Miro, 1969

Calder Miro
Phillips 2004

http://articles.latimes.com/2004/nov/21/entertainment/ca-caldermiro21
For almost a half-century, the American sculptor Alexander Calder and the Spanish painter Joan Miro looked on each other as good friends. When apart, as they often were, they sometimes exchanged a letter or postcard of greeting. "A good smack on the butt for you," wrote Calder in French in 1934. "A hug, kisses, and see you soon, you big stud," wrote Miro in Spanish in 1945. They liked to embellish the postcards. Miro, for example, added underarm hair to the portrait of a Spanish dancer. But one thing they never did. Their correspondence has no discussion of theories or techniques or movements of art.

"Calder called himself a painter, not a sculptor," she says. "He said he was drawing in space." Calder was challenging the definition of a painting as something limited by the borders of a canvas. Miro, Turner adds, tried to do the same by painting figures as if they could float away from a canvas.

The artists met in Paris in 1928 when the 30-year-old Calder called on the 35-year-old Miro at his studio in Montmartre. Miro, born in Barcelona, had worked in Paris on and off for eight years and had already attracted attention with some of his finest work. His "Carnival of Harlequin," in which he tried "to capture the hallucinations caused by my hunger," was

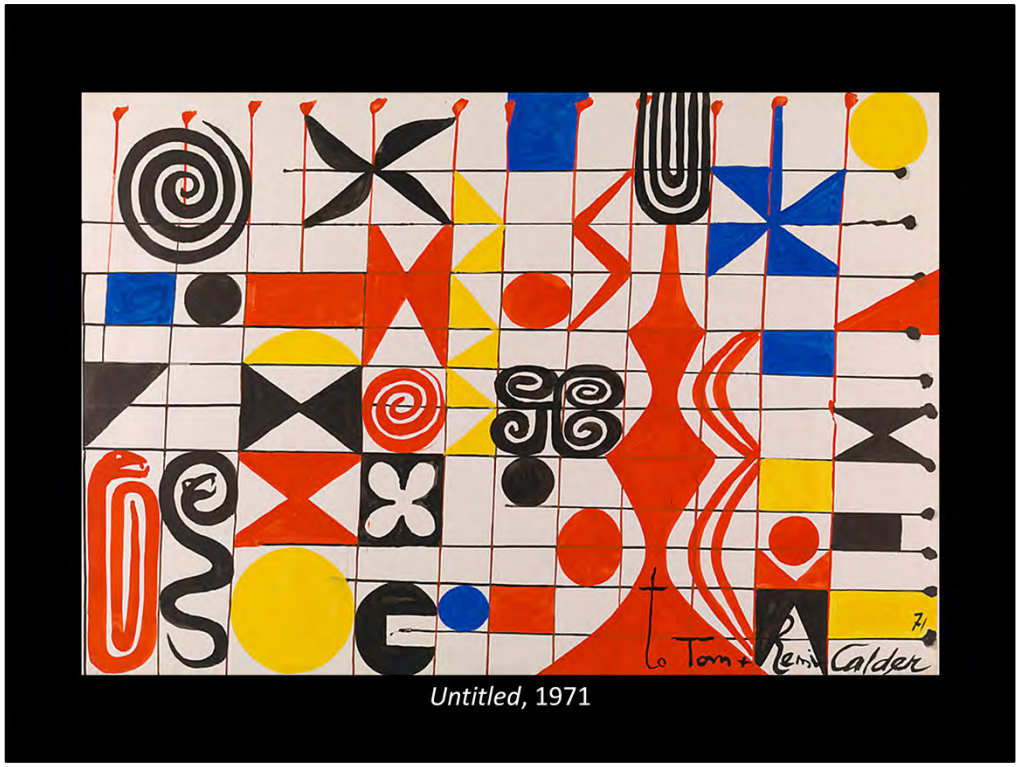
exhibited alongside the works of Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst and Giorgio de Chirico in the first exhibition of Surrealist paintings in 1925.
Although impoverished in those early days, Miro had a bourgeois sense of dress that made him stand out. When he walked on the streets of Paris, he would wear a bowler hat, bow tie, spats and a monocle. That sense never left him. Although he usually worked in coveralls, he put on a suit and a proper tie to receive us for our interview in 1978.
Calder, born in Lawton, Pa., was the son of a sculptor and a painter but turned his back on art and studied mechanical engineering at college. Engineering soon bored him, however, and Calder returned to the family trade by enrolling at the Art Students League in New York. He worked as an illustrator for the National Police Gazette, the most sensational tabloid of its day, and then joined the flock of American expatriates who rushed to Paris in the 1920s in hopes of making a name in art and literature. He earned his upkeep in Paris by making toys, producing shows of a miniature circus, and creating wire sculptures of celebrities and friends, including Miro.
Calder and Miro, two young bachelors, became close friends, meeting other expatriate artists at La Coupole, the large brasserie in Montparnasse. Miro, who sometimes boxed with Ernest Hemingway at the American Club, taught Calder how to box. Calder taught Miro how to dance.

http://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/21/nyregion/art-review-calder-and-miro-two-giants-in-sync.html

Both artists rejected academic restraints to produce abstract art derived from nature and the imagination. They knew each other in Paris in the 1930's and met again in New York during World War II. Both were influenced by the Surrealist notion of the unconscious as the most authentic source of inspiration, but they rooted their fantasies in recognizable imagery based on personal experience.

Moreover, and perhaps most significantly for a show that aims to draw analogies between two artists' works, their creative sensibilities have much in common. The use of weaving, continuous line to create figures and creatures, the occasionally naughty playfulness, the overt sexuality and visual wit, even the very shapes they used, are often analogous. Their synergy was recognized as early as 1936, when a New York Times review described Calder's mobiles as ''living Miro abstractions.''

The show also highlights some essential differences between Miro, a Catalan whose spirit was deeply rooted in his native Spain, and Calder, an American five years younger, with his more lighthearted approach. Miro's work can turn in on itself and brood as Calder's never does, and the distortion and fragmentation in his compositions sometimes reflect the dark side of the human condition.



Untitled, 1971

Untitled, 1971, Gouache on paper, 29 3/8 x 43 3/8 in, Guggenheim

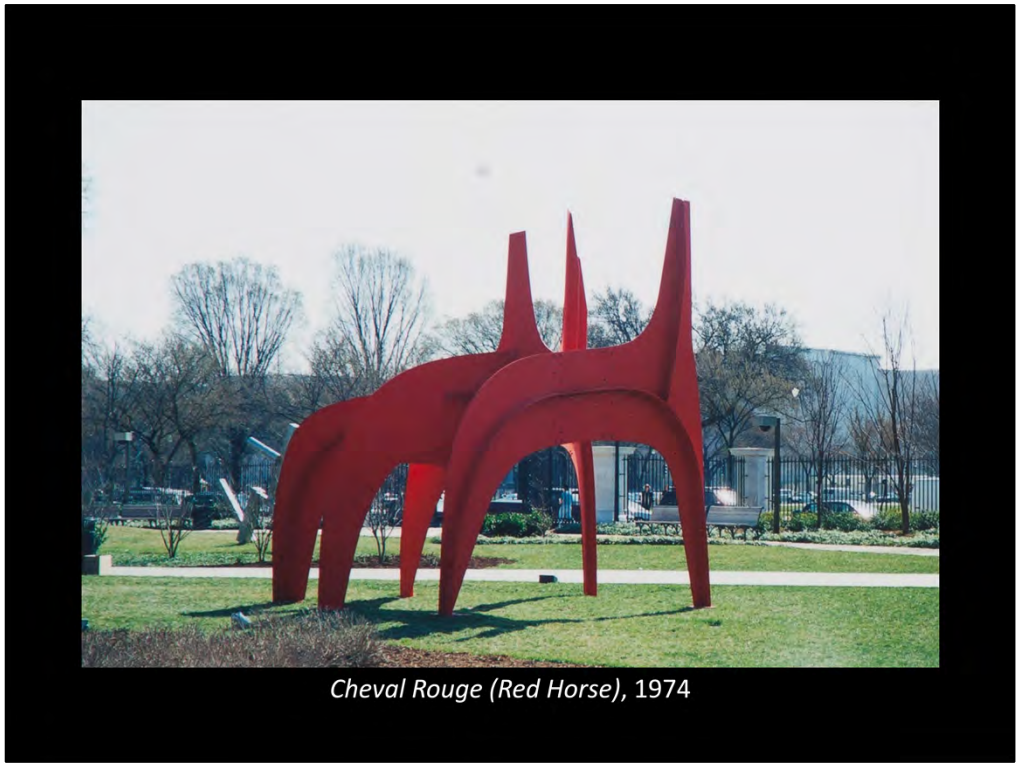
Flamingo, 1973

Flamingo, 1973, metal plates, bolts and point, 636 x 720 x 288", General Services Administration, **Chicago Federal Plaza**

- Calder also made sculptures that did not move. In 1932, his friend, Jean Arp, another artist, dubbed these sculptures, STABILES, since they did not move.
- Both the term mobile and stabile are now common terms in sculpture.
- A Calder STABILE is a strong sculpture made of sheet metal that stands still on the ground. It doesn't move around like a mobile, but it allows you to walk around and explore it inside and outside.
- When he started these stabiles they were small. They got larger but still fit in a building. Over time they become as large as a building and had to be placed outdoors. This presented another set of challenges.

Flying Colors, 1973

Braniff International Airways was an American airline that was in business from 1928 until 1982. In 1973, the airlines asked Alexander Calder to paint one of their airplanes. The result was a Douglas DC-8 known as "Flying Colors." When Calder designed the plane he wanted it to reflect the bright colors and simple designs you see all over South America and Latin America. "Flying Colors" was used mainly on flights to these areas.



Cheval Rouge (Red Horse), 1974

Cheval Rouge (Red Horse), Alexander Calder, 1974, painted sheet metal, 196 x 233 x 233 in, National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden

- ASSEMBLING – ADDITIVE - individual pieces, segments or objects are brought together to form a sculpture.
- All of his sculptures are ASSEMBLED with bolts so they can be easily taken apart and transported.
- Often Calder's stabiles reflect animal forms and still create an illusion of movement.
- *Can you guess what his favorite color is?* Red

1975 BMW Art Car by Calder

Year: 1975
Car: 3.0CSL
Artist: Sandy Calder
Why it's cool: The 3.0CSL is known to Bimmeristas as "The Batmobile" due to its wild styling. Sandy Calder was known not only for inventing the freaking mobile that hung above your crib as an infant, but also for painting jumbo jets for Braniff. The combination of the two was pretty wild, and hard to top.

The Arch, 1975, medium, size, Storm King

- Calder used all his engineering skill when he planned his stabiles. First he thought about what kind of shapes to use, how heavy each piece should be, and how the pieces would fit together and push or pull on each other.
- In order to make such large sculptures, Calder began be making some drawings of the stabile just as he saw it in his imagination. Then he made a little model of his idea.
- He cut some small pieces out of sheet aluminum, punched holes for bolts, bent the pieces to get the shape he wanted, and then bolted the pieces together.

Flying Dragon, 1975

Flying Dragon, date, painted steel plate, 144 in × 132 in × 228 in, Art Institute of Chicago

dragonfly

Untitled (aka East Building Mobile), 1976

Untitled (aka East Building Mobile), 1976, aluminum honeycomb, tubing, steel and paint, 29’10” x 76’, East Wing of National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

- This sculpture is untitled, but many of you may know it, it used to hang in the atrium of the East Wing of the National Gallery.
- It is very large and took a lot of engineering to design. By far, the largest example of this type of motorless construction
- Last major work by Calder, installed after this death
- In 1972, when the East Building was still under construction, Calder was asked to create a large mobile that would visually anchor the structure's monumental atrium. Originally planned in steel, the sculpture's thirteen panels and twelve arms were too heavy to function as the artist intended. Paul Matisse translated the design into an aluminum construction that retained the look and dynamism of Calder's original maquette. The mobile is now constructed of aluminum honeycomb panels, hollow aluminum tubes, and very little steel. Calder's last major work of art, it was installed on November 18, 1977, one year after his death.
- Taken down in 2004 and reinstalled in 2005
- National Gallery staff and engineers, including artist-engineer Paul Matisse, the grandson of Henri Matisse and a close friend of Calder's, disassembled the 920-pound sculpture in April 19, 2004 so that its multicolored parts could be cleaned and its metal surfaces repaired. At the same time, work is being done on the hanging mechanism that is secured to the atrium roof.

Untitled, 1976

Alexander Calder's monumental mobile moves solely on the air currents in the East Building's Central Court. The sculptor originally intended the work to have a motor, but the use of advanced, lightweight materials made this unnecessary. Paul Matisse, grandson of the French artist Henri Matisse, enlarged Calder's original concept thirty-two times to its present dimensions. Rather than use welded steel—Calder's customary choice of material—Matisse employed **aluminum** for this mobile, strengthening its stress points with molybdenum. **The buoyant panels appear solid built are actually hollow honeycomb-type structures covered with paper-thin aluminum skins.** Although the sculpture's wingspan is just over eighty-five feet across, it weighs only 920 pounds—two tons less than if it were made of ponderous steel.

After studying scale models of the East Building, on April 28, 1972, Calder composed the original maquette, or small three-dimensional model, which is also in the Gallery's collection. Starting at the bottom arm and working progressively upward, he established the centering for each part before attaching it to the next higher, unfinished section. By maintaining equilibrium in this way, Calder could concentrate on cutting the shapes and bending the rods.

As with most of Calder's work, this mobile draws inspiration from organic forms—flower petals, fish fins, bird wings—which enlivens its geometry. The mobile is simpler than many of Calder's earlier, more intricate pieces. The composition opposes two orientations, two silhouettes, and two tones: the triangular, painted red; the upper assembly, by contrast, is

all horizontal, roughly wedgelike, and rendered in black except for the largest plane, which is deep ultramarine blue.

Calder selected a position for the mobile that brings its lowest plate into tantalizing proximity with the structure of the East Building: at times, the red tail seems as if it might collide with the building's interior architecture, but the mobile playfully escapes contact (by mere inches) and continues in slow revolution. When informed during the mobile's construction that size adjustments would be necessary to avoid actual contact, Calder joked, "Personally, I might be in favor of a little rubbing or bumping."

When asked to title the National Gallery's object, Calder replied, "You don't name a baby until it is born." Unfortunately, he died one year before the finished mobile was hoisted up to the space-frame roof on Friday, November 18, 1977. Thus he never witnessed the "birth" of his last major commission.

Calder room at NGA East, 2010

Front – Crinkly Worm, 1971, painted sheet metal, 18 1/8“
Middle - black – Black Camel with Blue Head and Red Tongue, 1971, 21”
red – La Vache, 1970, 34 1/8”
yellow – Red and Yellow with Blue Head, 1971
black – Crinkly Taureau, 1970, 16”
Wall – Red Panel, 1936, 96 x 60”, Calder Foundation

- Calder died in 1976 at the age of 78 from a heart attack. Everyone that knew him missed him immensely but he left a large legacy behind him in his work. We can enjoy his work and marvel at his imagination.
- Today, we still take delight in Calder’s work and marvel at the way he used his imagination.
- Calder spent his whole life transforming his wonderfully clever ideas into works of art that give lasting pleasure to us all.

Vertical Constellation with Bomb, 1943

Little Spider, c. 1940 , painted sheet metal and wire , 43 3/4 x 50 x 55 in

Mobile video, NGA – 24 min