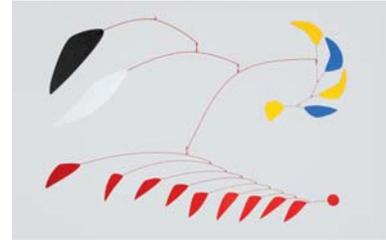


GAGOSIAN GALLERY

21 January 2011

PRESS RELEASE
GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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ALEXANDER CALDER

Tuesday, 8 February – Saturday, 26 March 2011

Opening reception: Tuesday, February 8th, from 6 to 9 pm

The underlying sense of form in my work has been the system of the Universe, or part thereof...What I mean is that the idea of detached bodies floating in space, of different sizes and densities, perhaps of different colors and temperatures, and surrounded and interlarded with wisps of gaseous condition, and some at rest, while others move in peculiar manners, seems to me the ideal source of form.

--Alexander Calder

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present sculptures by Alexander Calder made between 1939 and 1960.

Born into a family of celebrated yet traditional artists, Calder's innovative genius changed the course of modern art. He began by developing a new method of sculpting—bending and twisting wire to “draw” three-dimensional figures in space. Pre-dating Conceptual Art by several decades, and resonating with the Futurists and Constructivists as well with as the language of early abstract painting, Calder gained renown for his invention of the mobile (a term coined by Marcel Duchamp to describe Calder's new kinetic sculptures) in which abstract shapes, sometimes boldly colored and made of industrial materials, such as steel and wire, hang in perfect balance.

Although Calder's first mobiles made use of modern technology and were driven by electrical or mechanical means, he soon preferred their movements to be guided by the unpredictable influences of wind. While the kinetic energy, dynamism, and ebullience of the mobiles remained of primary interest to him throughout his life, Calder also created important static sculptures, which Jean Arp named “stabiles” to distinguish them from their kinetic counterparts. These constructions utilized various techniques of welding and bolting to create a type of metalwork that rejected the weight and solidity of a bronze mass, yet allowed an object to displace space in a three dimensional manner while remaining linear, open, planar, and suggestive of implicit motion. By the 1950s, Calder's international renown had increased significantly, affording him opportunities to create his mobiles and stabiles on a monumental scale.

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The mobile *Tuning Fork* (1939) suggests the aspiration towards tonal perfection. One arm of a small, branched form sprouts subtle orange, yellow, and blue elements, which extend into three thin black lines of different heights, mapping levels of steady resonance. The mobile's revolutionary motion further illustrates Calder's links with music, evoking, in the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, "a brief moment of jazz, unique and ephemeral," or what Calder himself envisaged as "scales and chords of motions unknown." *Blue and Yellow Sickles* (1960) invokes a harvest scene beneath an early morning sky of gray and black: a fluttering collection of red shapes at its base suggests vertebrae, a cluster of leaves, or a flock of birds. Conversely the shapes can coalesce into a single, majestic, sunlit bird. Like all of Calder's mobiles, it is ethereal, occupying the mind while freeing it of constraints and guiding thoughts along tracts of vivid color and waves of motion.

In the monumental stabile, *Triangles* (1957), the weight of massive steel tilted arcs is borne by delicate points of contact with the ground, resulting in a remarkable statement of grace and power. A hole in one of the arcs functions as an eye in the sculpture, as well as a frame for the sculpture's myriad lyrical upper angles, which suggest aquatic flora swaying in an ocean's current. Combining the physical and emotional presence of a Rodin, a surrealist exploration of form, and a unique engagement with the activity of abstract bodies, Calder's stabiles are a crucial paradigm of sculptural abstraction in the history of twentieth century art.

Alexander Calder was born in Pennsylvania in 1898 and attended the Stevens Institute of Technology and Art Students League. He died in New York City in 1976. Important museum collections include the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Calder's public commissions are on view in cities all over the world and his work has been the subject of hundreds of museum exhibitions, including "Alexander Calder: 1898-1976," National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1998 (traveled to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art); "Calder: Gravity and Grace," Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, 2003 (traveled to Reina Sofia, Madrid); "The Surreal Calder," The Menil Collection, Houston, 2005-2006 (traveled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Minneapolis Institute of Arts); "Calder Jewelry," Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, 2008 (traveled to Philadelphia Museum; Metropolitan Museum, New York; Irish Museum of Modern Art; San Diego Museum of Art; Grand Rapids Art Museum); "Alexander Calder: The Paris Years, 1926-1933," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2008 (traveled to the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto); "Calder," Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 2009-2010; and "Alexander Calder: A Balancing Act," Seattle Art Museum, 2009-2010. "Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art" is currently on view through March 6th at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (where it traveled from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago). Upcoming exhibitions this year include "Calder's Portraits: A New Language," National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., opening 11 March 2011, and "Calder," Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, opening 6 July 2011.

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at london@gagosian.com or at +44.207.493.3020.