

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

800, AVENUE DE L'EUROPE

93350 LE BOURGET

HOURS:

T. +33.1.48.16.16.47

F. +33.1.70.24.87.10

Tue–Sat 11:00am–7:00pm



CALDER | PROUVÉ

Saturday, 8 June–Saturday, 2 November 2013

Opening reception: Saturday, June 8th, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

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

My creative process imposes from the outset a formative idea that is rigorously realisable. The formative idea is, above all, the understanding of an ensemble as a whole.

—Jean Prouvé

Gagosian Paris, in collaboration with Galerie Patrick Seguin, is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Alexander Calder and by Jean Prouvé.

Calder's invention of the mobile (a term that Marcel Duchamp coined to describe these new kinetic sculptures) resonated with both early Conceptual and Constructivist art as well as the language of early abstract painting. Flat, abstract shapes made in steel, boldly painted in a restricted primary palette, black or white, hang in perfect balance from wires. While the latent energy and dynamism of the mobiles remained of primary interest to Calder throughout his life, he also created important standing sculptures, which Jean Arp named "stables" to distinguish them from their ethereal kinetic counterparts. These works reject the weight and solidity of sculptural mass, yet displace space in a three-dimensional manner while remaining linear, open, planar, and suggestive of motion.

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800 AVENUE DE L'EUROPE - 93350 LE BOURGET T. +33 (0)1 48 16 16 47 F. +33 (0)1 70 24 87 10

PARIS@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM

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Prouvé is widely acknowledged as one of the twentieth century's most influential industrial designers, with a wide-ranging oeuvre that brought a strong social conscience to bold, elegant design within an economy of means. A passionate teacher, engineer, and craftsman as well as a self-taught architect and designer, his career spanned more than sixty years, during which time he produced furniture for the home, office, and classroom as well as prefabricated houses, building components, and faades at Ateliers Jean Prouvé and his factory in Maxéville. Combining research, prototype development, and production, he was instrumental in ushering in building processes based on mechanized industry rather than artisanal practice.

Calder and Prouvé met in the early 1950s. They corresponded regularly between Calder's frequent trips to Paris, exchanging ideas on architecture and sculpture. In 1958, Calder collaborated with Prouvé to construct the steel base of *La Spirale*, a monumental mobile for the UNESCO site in Paris. Calder later gave Prouvé two mobiles—as well as a gouache with a dedication.

"Calder | Prouvé," installed in the lofty spaces of Gagosian Le Bourget, evokes comparisons in the broad, expressive range of production using new technologies that the close friends and collaborators evinced in their parallel practices as artist and designer. Calder's mobiles—*Rouge triomphant* (1963), *Pods and Shoots* (1966), and *Les trois barres* (1970)—are perfect studies of abstract kinetic form and color, while *Stabile* (1975), an imposing sculpture made of bolted sheet metal, demonstrates a mastery of gravitational principles with its weighty steel arcs borne miraculously by just a few points of contact with the ground. Prouvé's strong, distinctive lines are visible in furniture and architectural projects, including *Pavillon démontable* (1944), *Potence* (1950), *Table Flavigny n° 504* (1951), *Brise-soleil en aluminium* (1957), and *Station essence Total* (1969), while the playful geometry and bright turquoise of *Chaise Métropole n°305* (1953) echo Calder's more whimsical sensibilities. Considered together, these works testify to the fruitful exchange between two giants of Modernism in its most utopian aspirations.

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. His work is in public and private collections worldwide, including 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, traveled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts through 2006); "Calder Jewelry," Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach (2008, traveled to Philadelphia Museum; Metropolitan Museum, New York; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; San Diego Museum of Art; and the 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 and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto); "Calder: Sculptor of Air," Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2009–10); "Alexander Calder: A Balancing Act," Seattle Art Museum (2009–10); "Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2010, traveled to Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA; the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; and the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC); "Calder's Portraits: A New Language," National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C. (2011); and "Calder," Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul (forthcoming July 2013). "Calder Gallery II" is on view at the Fondation Beyeler, Riehen, Switzerland through June 2014.

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Jean Prouvé was born in Nancy, France in 1901, where he died in 1984. His work is included in private and public collections worldwide, including Centre Pompidou, Paris and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Major exhibitions include "Jean Prouvé: Constructeur, 1901–1984," Centre Pompidou, Paris (1990–91); "Jean Prouvé: Three Nomadic Structures," Pacific Design Center, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2005); "Jean Prouvé: A Tropical House," Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2006); "Jean Prouvé: The Poetics of the Technical Object," Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany (2006–07, traveled to Kamakura Museum of Modern Art; Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt; Netherlands Architecture Institute, Maastricht; Hotel de Ville de Boulogne-Billancourt, Paris; Design Museum, London; and Museo dell'Ara Pacis, Rome, among other venues; a multi-exhibition, multi-venue tribute at Musée des beaux-arts, Nancy, France (2012). "A Passion for Jean Prouvé: From Furniture to Architecture" is on view at Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin until September 2013.

Galerie Patrick Seguin specializes in twentieth century French design and architecture, in particular Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, and Jean Royère. In 2004, Seguin presented the works of Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand at Gagosian Gallery in Los Angeles. In 2008 Gagosian collaborated with Seguin to present Richard Prince's sculptural assemblages in Paris; and in 2010, an exhibition of Prouvé's prefabricated architectural designs inaugurated the project space at Gagosian Paris.

Press Enquiries

Claudine Colin Communication
28 rue de Sévigné
75004 Paris
www.claudinecolin.com

Contact: Mathilde Beaujard
E. mathilde@claudinecolin.com

Contact: Eloïse Daniels
E. eloise@claudinecolin.com
T. +33.1.42.72.60.01

For all other information please contact the gallery at paris@gagosian.com or at +33.1.48.16.16.47.