

KUKJE GALLERY | PRESS RELEASE

CALDER at Kukje Gallery **A Solo Exhibition of Works by Alexander Calder**

Press Conference: April 4 (Tues.), 2023, 11 am at Kukje Gallery
Exhibition Dates: April 4 – May 28, 2023
Venue: Kukje Gallery K2 1F, K3

Kukje Gallery is pleased to announce *CALDER*, a major exhibition to be held in the gallery's K3 and K2 spaces in Seoul from April 4 to May 28, 2023. Calder is universally celebrated as one of the 20th century's most influential and innovative artists, and the presentation at Kukje Gallery, organized in cooperation with the Estate of Alexander Calder, will include iconic examples of his mobiles and standing mobiles, as well as a stunning selection of bronzes and works on paper. The first show of Calder's work at the gallery since 2014, *CALDER* will focus on the artist's immensely productive period beginning in the 1940s through the 1970s. Characterized by material experimentation and the use of abstract forms to engage and activate space, Calder's sculptures continue to enchant viewers with their mix of poetic lightness and philosophical gravity; his work has become synonymous with the modern ideals of freedom and sophistication.

Starting in the late 1920s, Calder served as a vital bridge between European Modernism and the nascent American avant-garde. He was a contemporary of Marcel Duchamp, who famously coined the term "mobile" to describe Calder's kinetic works (a pun on the French word, which means both "motion" and "motive"). Calder's continuously evolving approach to sculpture and diverse visual vocabularies led him to international acclaim in the post-WWII milieu, fundamentally altering the history of art and establishing a legacy that continues to influence a wide range of contemporary artists around the world.

The exhibition at Kukje Gallery will focus on how gesture and intuition underlie the artist's mastery of movement. This primacy is well established in the unexpected yet graceful turns of Calder's mobiles, which expanded the purview of sculpture—activating not only their environments but also the air that they float in. Many exhibitions have explored this effect in relation to choreography, such as the Whitney Museum of American Art's *Calder: Hypermobility* in 2018. The show's curators described his works as having "an embedded performativity that is reflected in their idiosyncratic motions and the perceptual responses they provoke."

Installed in Kukje Gallery's K3 space, Calder's mobiles and standing mobiles are arranged to showcase the distinctive character and profound spatial dynamics that power them. This performativity can be seen to stunning affect in such standing mobiles as the sound-making *Untitled* (c. 1940) and the small-scale *Grand Piano, Red* (1946), as well as the sweeping arc of hanging mobiles including *Untitled* (c. 1954) and *White Ordinary* (1976). Their ability to capture energy can be likened to geology and time, and perhaps more evocatively, weather. The monumental *Guava* (1955) evokes a full sky of brilliant colors cutting through space. The way the mobiles pick up and amplify atmospheric changes are central to their magical transformation of the gallery. This sensitivity to attraction and repulsion, power and grace, is also perfectly embodied in the three superlative bronzes shown together here, *The Flower, Fawn, and Whip Snake* (all 1944).

This same attention to invisible elements can also be seen powerfully in K2 where the ink and gouache works establish a powerful resonance with Calder's sculptural practice, a process that sees the artist working out ideas and experimenting with spatial configurations. The vibrant black calligraphic lines in *Untitled* (1963), recurring spirals in *Blue Eye, Red Eye* (1969), and natural forms in *Yellow Flower, Red Blossoms*

(1974) expand on this dialogue. Taking it even further, Calder's lines in *The Bottle* (1975) suggest the seismic waves that underlie the landscape.

The gouaches and sculptural works installed through K2 and K3 together create a kind of symbiotic concert involving something like a call and response. The works on paper function like an accompaniment, assisting the viewer in understanding the unseen complexities of the mobiles and how they inhabit and transform the gallery space.

About the Artist

Alexander Calder (1898–1976) utilized his innovative genius to profoundly change the course of modern art. Born in a family of celebrated, though more classically trained artists, he began by developing a new method of sculpting: by bending and twisting wire, he essentially “drew” three-dimensional figures in space. He is renowned for the invention of the mobile, whose suspended, abstract elements move and balance in changing harmony. Coined by Marcel Duchamp in 1931, the word mobile refers to both “motion” and “motive” in French. Many of the earliest mobiles moved by motors, although these mechanics were virtually abandoned as Calder developed mobiles that responded to air currents, light, humidity, and human interaction. He also created stationary abstract works that Jean Arp dubbed stabiles.

From the 1950s onward, Calder turned his attention to international commissions and increasingly devoted himself to making outdoor sculpture on a grand scale from bolted steel plate. Some of these major commissions include: *.125*, for the New York Port Authority in John F. Kennedy Airport (1957); *Spirale*, for UNESCO in Paris (1958); *Teodelapio*, for the city of Spoleto, Italy (1962); *Trois disques*, for the Expo in Montreal (1967); *El Sol Rojo*, for the Olympic Games in Mexico City (1968); *La Grande vitesse*, which was the first public art work to be funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), for the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan (1969); and *Flamingo*, for the General Services Administration in Chicago (1973).

Major retrospectives of Calder's work during his lifetime were held at the George Walter Vincent Smith Gallery, Springfield, Massachusetts (1938); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1943–44); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1964–65); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1964); Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris (1965); Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France (1969); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1976–77). Calder died in New York in 1976 at the age of seventy-eight.

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

Grand Piano, Red

1946

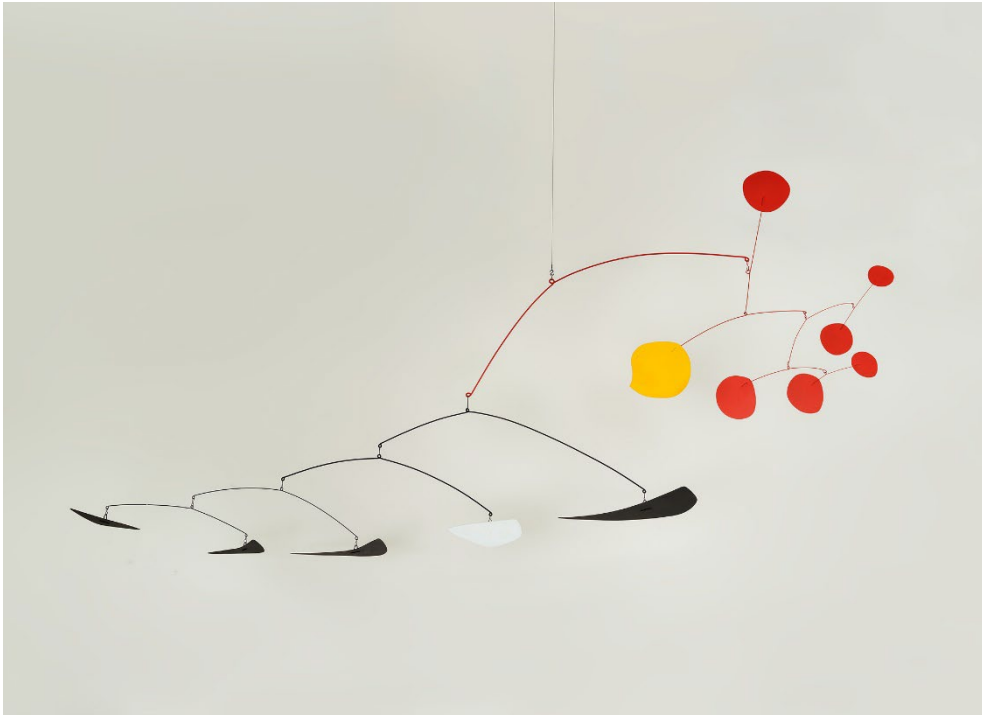
Sheet metal, wire, and paint

24.45 x 25.4 x 7.62 cm

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Image provided by Kukje Gallery



Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

Guava

1955

Sheet metal, rod, wire, and paint

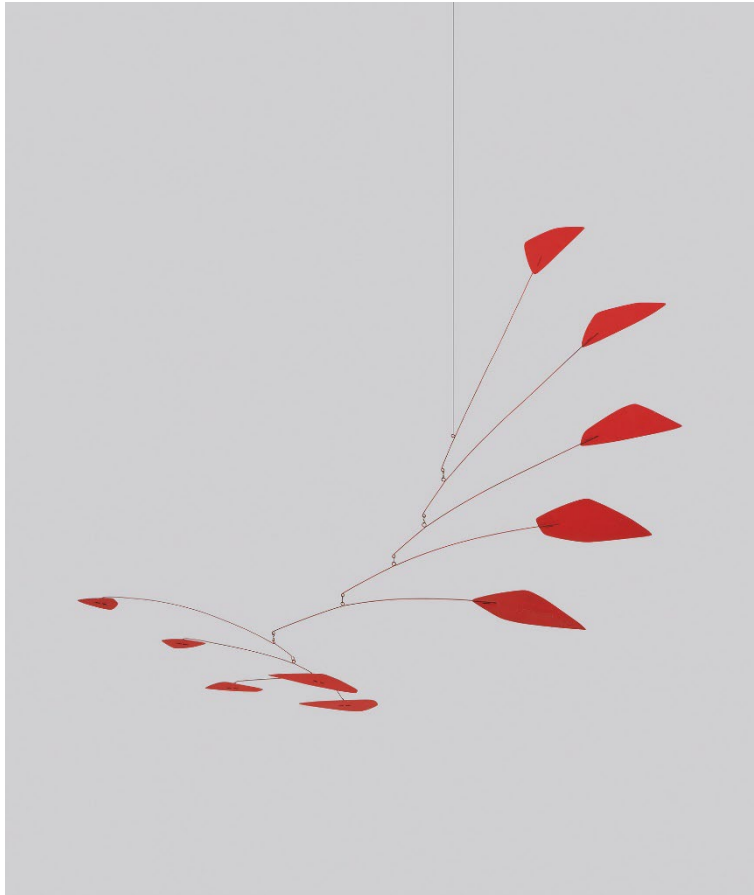
180.98 x 372.11 x 118.11 cm

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

London (maquette)

1962

Sheet metal, wire, and paint

88.9 x 114.3 x 25.4 cm

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

Fawn

1944

Bronze

83.82 x 51.44 x 78.74 cm

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

Black Squids

1963

Gouache and ink on paper

68.58 x 101.6 cm

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

The Signed Balloon

1969

Gouache and ink on paper

109.86 x 74.61 cm

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