

DOMINIQUE LÉVY

For Immediate Release

TRANSATLANTIC ALEXANDER CALDER EXHIBITION: MONUMENTAL MOBILE IN LONDON AND 'MULTUM IN PARVO' IN NEW YORK

Alexander Calder. PRIMARY MOTIONS

April 29 – September 1, 2015

Dominique Lévy London

22 Old Bond Street, London



Dominique Lévy London is pleased to present its third exhibition, *Alexander Calder. PRIMARY MOTIONS*. The gallery will display a single dynamic work by the American artist which measures more than two meters high by four meters long, as a transatlantic response to *Alexander Calder. MULTUM IN PARVO*—an exhibition of more than forty of Calder's small-scale works currently on view in New York.

Encompassing the entire gallery floor at 22 Old Bond Street, the larger-than-life 'Blue and Yellow Among Reds' (1964) hovers above the viewer, consuming the space with a spirited performance of vibrant red, blue, yellow, black, and white. The carefully selected colour scheme features predominantly bright red circular elements, including two large vertical circles framing the entire mobile and a scattering of four suspended circles drifting in the centre of the work. There is a tier of one white and three

Í

DOMINIQUE LÉVY

black elements, and the remaining two pieces accent the palette, as noted in the title, with sky blue and golden yellow. The circular elements slowly dance from the ceiling, the connecting wires twisting under and over each other while retaining a soft sense of balance. By working with primary colours as well as the non-colours of black and white in a not quite symmetrical balance, Calder creates points of references to trace the movement of the mobile and emphasises the formal elements of physicality and aesthetics in the structure.

In 1926 Calder moved from New York to Paris, where he was introduced to the avant-garde scene after creating his performance-based installation, 'Cirque Calder' (1926-31). Following a visit to Piet Mondrian's studio in the early 1930s, where he was impressed by the environment and use of space, Calder produced his first abstract sculptures that maintain a kinetic element. The earliest of these moved by a system of motors, although Calder soon abandoned these mechanics by suspending cut-metal shapes on lengths of wire, which floated through the air at the lightest touch of a breeze. Marcel Duchamp coined these structures "mobiles", which in French mean both "motion" and "motive", and Jean-Paul Sartre described them as "at once lyrical inventions, technical, almost mathematical combinations and the tangible symbol of Nature, of that great, vague Nature."¹

By the 1950s, spurred on by wide public recognition and an increased demand in public commissions, Calder began creating awe-inspiring mobiles of an ever-growing scale. 'Blue and Yellow Among Reds' is a distinguished example of these immense structures. Though grand in scale it retains a sense of refinement in its delicate wires and gentle movement. This paradox of monumentality and aeriality creates an astonishing display, with the mobile's large elements almost appearing to float in mid-air overhead. As Calder exclaimed, "People think monuments should come out of the ground, and never out of the ceiling, but mobiles can be monumental too."² Impressive, dynamic, and playful, this large vibrant mobile captures Calder's universe, his own ebullient personality and great imagination.

About the Artist

Alexander Calder (1898–1976) utilised 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. The earliest mobiles moved by a system of cranks and motors, although these mechanics were virtually abandoned as Calder developed mobiles that responded to air currents, light, humidity, and human interaction.

¹ J-P. Sartre, trans. C. Turner, "Les Mobiles des Calder", in *Alexander Calder: Mobiles, Stables, Constellations*, exh. cat., Paris: Galerie Louis Carré, 1946.

² A. Calder quoted in R. Osborn, "Calder's International Monuments", in *Art in America*, vol. 57, no. 2, New York, 1969, p. 37.



DOMINIQUE LÉVY

He also created stationary abstract works that Jean Arp dubbed “stables.” 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.

About the Gallery

Dominique Lévy Gallery is widely known for its rigorously researched and curated exhibitions of historical figures. Since opening in January 2013 in New York, the gallery has presented works by a strongly international repertoire of artists, including Alexander Calder, Willem de Kooning, Alberto Giacometti, Yves Klein, Pablo Picasso, and Andy Warhol, amongst others, often shown in conjunction with one another. Dominique Lévy's London space in Mayfair opened in October 2014.

Currently on view in New York is *Alexander Calder. MULTUM IN PARVO*—an exhibition of over forty rare small-scale sculptures by the artist, installed in an environment conceived for them by the internationally admired architect Santiago Calatrava. The accompanying publication features archival material and sketches by Calatrava, as well as essays by Jed Perl, art historian and author currently at work on the first full-length biography of Alexander Calder, and Paul Goldberger, Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic, as well as poems by Karl Shapiro and John Updike.

For press requests and further information please contact:

Diana Babei, Rhiannon Pickles PR: diana@picklespr.com, +44 (0)7789 868 991

Full Copyright and Courtesy Credits:

Alexander Calder
Blue and Yellow Among Reds
1964
Painted sheet metal and wire
78 3/4 x 157 1/2 inches (200 x 400 cm)
© 2015 Calder Foundation, New York / DACS London

