



TRAVELLING EXHIBITION
young visitors

WHAT A CIRCUS!

AN EXHIBITION WORKSHOP AROUND
CALDER'S WORK

Centre
Pompidou

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1 – GENERAL PRESENTATION

By manipulating coloured shapes, materials from everyday life, and using simple mechanical movements like blowing, pushing, and rotating, young participants tackle the concepts of balance and movement, composition, 3D drawing, empty and full, performance, etc.

These activities allow children to question some aspects of Calder's work and experience various issues of his visual language. They provide the necessary keys to discovering his works, create a connection with them, and enhance their encounter with the artist.

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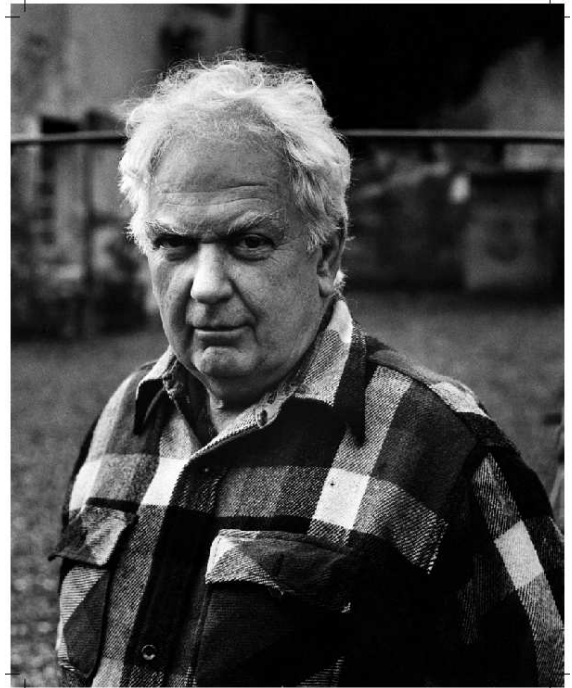
2 – BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ALEXANDER CALDER

Alexander Calder (1898-1976) is one of the most significant figures in 20th Century sculpture. Born in the United States, and descended from a long line of sculptors, he received a double education in engineering and art, which fuelled his extraordinary inventiveness. Very early on, he devoted himself to the creation of playthings - toys and small handcrafted animals - which testify to his ingenuity. His real career began when he arrived in Paris in 1926.

In just a few years, he reinvented sculpture, transforming it into 3D drawing, moving it towards dynamism and the abstract. Between 1926 and 1931, he developed a totally original idea, the *Cirque Calder* (Calder Circus), consisting of hundreds of figurines made from recycled materials, and animated by basic mechanisms that he controlled himself using strings, like a puppeteer.

Rejecting traditional techniques, he envisioned sculptures made from wire, which were empty, linear and mobile. His portraits of celebrities and artists, and his caricatures full of humour and fantasy, earned him the nickname "*Daumier du fil de fer*" (Daumier^[1] of wire). After 1930, influenced by the geometric abstraction of Mondrian, he created kinetic sculptures with metal lines, interspersed with pure colours – quite rhythmic directions. Marcel Duchamp called his motorised or crank-operated constructions "*mobiles*". The last sculptures created in Paris in 1933, "*mobiles suspendus*" (hanging mobiles), primitivist wooden sculptures that breathed within the space, are the embodiment of the cosmic ambition of a radical, exuberant and poetic lifework.

^[1] Honoré Daumier (February 26, 1808 – February 10, 1879) was a French printmaker, caricaturist, painter, and sculptor (TN)



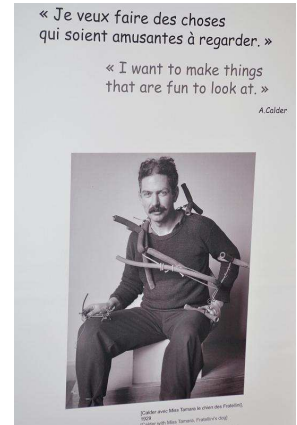
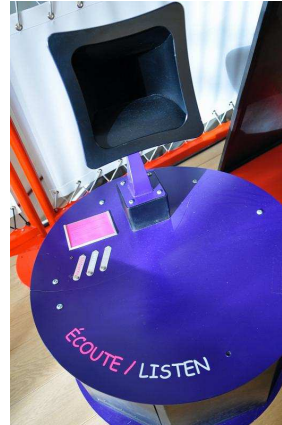
Portrait of Alexander Calder,
1960.

Photo by Christar Christian
Paris, Centre Pompidou, Bibliothèque Kandinsky,
Calder Collection

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© Photos: Gilles Petipas

3 – DESCRIPTION OF THE EXHIBITION

DETAILS TO LOOK OUT AND LISTEN FOR

The universe of the artist is revealed throughout the course of the exhibition by means of texts for the children and their families to read, enhancing their encounter with the artist.

References for each educational activity: selection of photographs of Calder in his studio and with his sculptures. They are accompanied by quotations from the artist, shedding light on his personality and his work.

Biography: selection of photographs highlighting the milestone years in Calder's life, with a short text to identify the artist and understand his time.

The photographs (in black and white), printed on large vinyl banners, are scenographic elements that evoke the world of the circus. The quotes are available in French and English. The configuration allows the integration of a third language.

Listening sequences: selection of texts in French and English, from among Calder's own writings, read by an actor. Possibility of integrating a third language.

Film sequences: presentation of two films by Carlos Villardebó: *Le Cirque de Calder* (Calder's Circus), and *Les Mobiles de Calder* (Calder's mobiles), as well as a scanned copy of the book *Animal Sketching*.

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EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The exhibition workshop "*Quel Cirque!*" invites children to experience the inventiveness, the power and poetry of Calder's work, in a tangible and active way. It uses the theme of the circus to propose three activity areas that allow children to experiment and to address various issues of the artist's visual language.

The scenographic atmosphere created in the exhibition is an instrument in raising awareness about Calder's work (colours, shapes, and themes).

→ Playing with shapes and balance:

Activity aimed at exploring the concepts of balance and movement, through physical games and constructions of shapes in equilibrium.

Six educational activities:



Acrobat:

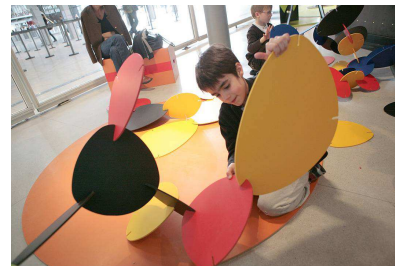
This activity involves creating acrobatic figures by playing with the balance of shapes, sizes and colours, which the children then arrange on their bodies.

Tightrope:

A line on the ground invites the child to move forward without falling while looking in a mirror.

Pile and Stack:

The goal is to build a large sculpture by stacking different shapes on top of each other, playing with the sizes and colours. Each time a new piece is added, the balance changes and the construction may collapse.



Shapes in equilibrium:

The child must find the best possible balance between two shapes, by moving the attachment point on the rod that supports them.

A mobile, moves! :

This activity is a continuation of the previous one: the child must assemble different rods to create a mobile and find the balance.

Freeze frame:

Looking through a viewfinder, the child must photograph a mobile in motion to study the changes occurring in its overall shape.

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→ Drawing in 3D

To experience the transition between two and three dimensions, from line to volume, and to play with light to reveal shadows.

Two educational activities:



Draw with a line:

The purpose of this activity is to draw a single line, using a small chain, pencil or finger, to represent an animal, a person, or a head, that is as expressive as possible.

Sculpt the line:

Wire is available to the child to bend, fold, or twist, to create a sculpture in 3 dimensions. The base of the sculpture is then placed in the light to be able to watch the shadows on a wall.

→ All aboard:

To create a figurine from different materials, choose their movement, and as a group come up with a one time performance.

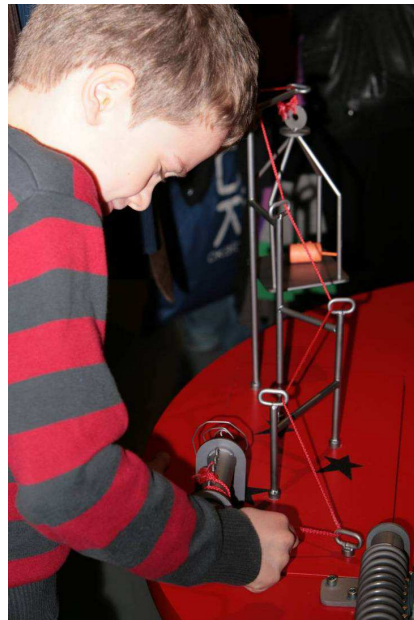
Two educational activities:

Craftwork magic:

A material library of everyday objects (wire, corks, springs, caps, pieces of wood, etc.) invites children to make figurines, whether an acrobat or performing animal, who will then perform in the ring.

Everyone on stage! :

To make the figurine move, various methods can be used: the child can push, pedal, turn a crank, blow air, etc.



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4 – ACTIVITIES

Duration of the workshops: 2 hrs to go through all the displays

One facilitator per fifteen people maximum.

Visitor capacity: 60 people maximum

School groups:

6 years and older.

Maximum of two classes of 30 children visiting at any one time.

Individual visits:

Accompanied children 5 years and older.

Teacher training for staff supervising the activities is provided by the Centre Pompidou. The person in charge of training the facilitators is chosen by the Centre Pompidou and is under the direction of the Exhibition curator.

Duration: 1 full day with facilitators plus supervision of the first activities.

Purchase of the consumable items for the exhibition is the responsibility of the partner.

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5 – TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Insurance: organised by the Centre Pompidou
Presentation area required: approx. 200 m²
Truck volume required: 70 m³
Weight: 8,092 kg

Composition of the exhibition: 19 crates
Storage space required: 30 m²
Hire rate: On request

ADDITIONAL FEES TO BE MET BY THE PARTNER INSTITUTION:

✓rights to the 2 films "*Le Cirque*" and "*Mobiles*": 3,000 euros (Pathé)

✓transport there and back (to be calculated)

✓preparation of the signage

✓Provision of materials:

- restocking of the consumable teaching material (material library)
- provision of a 50-inch LCD screen (127 cm diagonal)

✓provision of staff (installation and removal)

✓provision of facilitators (1 facilitator per 15 children)

✓maintenance contract for the multimedia equipment

International

- Translation of the texts, printing of banners, and recordings
- Interpreter for the Centre Pompidou teams (installation and removal)

ON-SITE ATTENDANCE (4 trips)

- 1 all expenses paid business trip (transport, accommodation, meals) for the exhibition curator or an educational supervisor from the Centre Pompidou to assist in the installation, train the facilitators, attend the opening of the exhibition, and supervise the first activities.
- 1 all expenses paid business trip (transport, accommodation, meals) for an artwork registrar from the Centre Pompidou to install the exhibition.
- 1 all expenses paid business trip for a representative from the touring section to make an assessment and assist in the removal of the exhibition.
- 1 all expenses paid business trip for an artwork registrar from the Centre Pompidou to remove the exhibition.