

PACE

For Immediate Release

Calder / Miró

Constellations

Pace Gallery
32 East 57th Street, New York
April 20 – June 30, 2017

Acquavella Galleries
18 East 79th Street, New York
April 20 – May 26, 2017

Joint Opening Reception:
Wednesday, April 19, 5:30–8 p.m.

New York—Pace Gallery and Acquavella Galleries are pleased to announce "Calder / Miró: Constellations," featuring the Constellations series of Alexander Calder and Joan Miró, respectively. The distinct yet complementary presentations illuminate the startling affinities between the two artists, who at the time the series were created, were separated by the Atlantic during World War II and unable to communicate. Presenting approximately 60 sculptures, paintings and works on paper in dialogue with one another, these shows highlight the varied formal, social and political concerns that informed the significant series—neither of which were actually named "Constellations" by the artists themselves. *Calder: Constellations* will be on view from April 20 through June 30 at Pace Gallery, 32 East 57th Street, and *Miró: Constellations* will be on view from April 20 through May 26 at Acquavella Galleries, 18 East 79th Street. A joint opening reception will be held on Wednesday, April 19 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at both galleries.

"This exhibition will be a landmark, both in our history of documenting the achievements of Alexander Calder and in our long and productive relationship with the Acquavella Galleries," says Marc Glimcher. "The two artists tapped into a powerful artistic current, which allowed them to create these unique but resonant series, while they were totally isolated from each other. Similarly, we and the Acquavellas share a passion to use our galleries to help advance, share and further the understanding of some of the greatest accomplishments in the history of 20th century art."

Calder: Constellations examines Calder's artistic output in the year 1943, with several key exceptions spanning 1942–1950. During a time when sheet metal was made scarce due to the war, Calder returned to wood—a medium he had used since the mid-1920s—as a primary material. Composed of carved biomorphic forms, sometimes painted in bright, monochromatic colors, and connected with steel wires, the majority of the Constellations are wall sculptures, with occasional standing or suspended works. James Johnson Sweeney and Marcel Duchamp proposed the term "Constellations" for these sculptures in early 1943, and they premiered at Pierre Matisse Gallery later that spring. Constituting a significant departure from the work for which Calder was already well known—the more



recognizable hanging mobiles and stables that he exhibited regularly throughout the thirties and early forties—the Constellations were nonetheless infused with tangible energy and a sense of dynamism. Although small in scale, they share Calder's expansive vision: "I was interested in the extremely delicate, open composition," the artist reminisced. Calder's Constellations also offer insight into his preoccupation with space and our experience of it. With their carved elements projecting at varying angles off the wall at unexpected moments, they dictate their own height and perspective. The Constellations are mounted higher on the wall than paintings, hovering above us, seemingly defying gravity.

At Acquavella Galleries, *Miró: Constellations* reunites the 23 works from Miró's Constellations series. Widely considered one of the crowning achievements of his career, the suite of gouaches was produced in the beginning years of the war, between January of 1940 and September of 1941—though it was not until 1958 that André Breton named them "Constellations." When Miró and his family fled France for Spain ahead of the German invasion in June of 1940, he took virtually nothing with him apart from the portfolio of his ten completed Constellations. Miró employed the same technique throughout the series, using oil wash to create a textured, hazy backdrop for his meticulously detailed motifs executed in gouache. Vibrant primary colors define elements like stars, eyes, crescent moons and ellipses, all connected by an interlacing web of thin black lines. With their harmonies of color and form, these works depict a private universe far removed from the turmoil and terror of the war, their poetic titles often alluding to themes of escape and regeneration.



"Since they were first exhibited at Pierre Matisse's gallery in New York in early 1945, after having been smuggled out of Europe, the Constellations have been celebrated as one of the most powerful artistic statements of the 20th century," said Bill Acquavella. "We are delighted to present these works in dialogue with Calder's Constellations and to have had the pleasure of collaborating with both artists' grandsons and foundations in the planning of this exhibition."

Together, these exhibitions provide unique insight into how the austere climate of the war inspired both artists to produce iconic works. Longtime friends, the two met in Paris in 1928 and were regular fixtures of the Montparnasse arts scene, known to congregate at the legendary brasserie, La Coupole. The pair saw each other frequently and remained in close contact. When the war broke out in 1939, communication between the artists was disrupted, with Calder living in the United States and Miró in Europe. Remarkably, they created their respective seminal Constellations series in tandem with one another. In both cases, the expansive subject matter belied the circumstances of their origins, bearing witness to the artists' resolve to defy external influence and preserve their creative freedom. Detached from the widespread devastation of that time, the Constellations are a testament to how an artist's autonomy can manifest.

The joint exhibitions will be accompanied by a significant three-volume catalogue with texts by Margit Rowell, a former curator at The Museum of Modern Art, Centre Georges Pompidou, Centro de arte Reina Sofia and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, on Miró's Constellations, and art historian and author Mildred Glimcher on Calder's Constellations. The third volume will comprise an illustrated chronology of the two artists' relationship during the war, while each was making his Constellations works.

Alexander Calder (1898–1976) is one of the most acclaimed and influential sculptors of the twentieth century. He is renowned for his invention of wire sculpture—coined by critics as "drawings in space"—and the mobile, a kinetic sculpture of suspended abstract elements whose actual movement creates ever-changing compositions. Calder's stabiles, which suggest implied rather than actual movement, similarly transform their surrounding space and the experience of the viewer. Calder also devoted himself to making outdoor sculpture on a grand scale from bolted sheets of steel, many of which stand in public plazas in cities throughout the world. Pace Gallery has worked closely with the Calder estate since 1984.

Pace Gallery is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Founded by Arne Glimcher in Boston in 1960 and currently led by Marc Glimcher, Pace has been a constant, vital force in the art world and has introduced many renowned artists' work to the public for the first time. Pace has mounted more than 800 exhibitions, including scholarly shows that have subsequently traveled to museums, and published over 400 exhibition catalogues. Today, Pace has ten locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; and spaces in Seoul, Hong Kong, Paris and Menlo Park, California. In 2016, the gallery launched Pace Art + Technology, a new program dedicated to showcasing interdisciplinary art groups, collectives and studios whose works explore the confluence of art and technology.

Joan Miró (1893–1983) was a Catalan painter, sculptor, and ceramicist of international acclaim. Considered to be one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, Miró created a unique and personal language which draws on memory, fantasy, and the irrational. His works evolved from the tension between his poetic impulse and the fraught political climate of the time, framed by the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Works by Miró can be found in museum collections across the world, and there are two museums dedicated to his work: Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona and Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró, Palma de Mallorca.

Acquavella Galleries is distinguished for its expertise in the fields of Impressionist, modern and contemporary art. Founded by Nicholas Acquavella in the early 1920s, the gallery is now a three-generation, family-owned business. For over 90 years, Acquavella Galleries has presented the work of acclaimed international artists, working with private collectors and museums worldwide. Through its exhibitions, it has gained a reputation for organizing shows of museum-quality, including those of Monet, Degas, Cézanne, Sisley, Renoir, Pissarro, Modigliani, Bonnard, Tanguy, Léger, Picasso, Matisse, Rauschenberg, Feininger, Giacometti, and Miró as well as those of living artists Miquel Barceló, Jacob El Hanani, Damian Loeb, and Wayne Thiebaud.

IMAGE 1: Alexander Calder, *Constellation with Diabolo*, 1943, wood, wire and paint, 24-1/2" x 18-1/4" x 16" (62.2 cm x 46.4 cm x 40.6 cm). Private Collection, courtesy Pace Gallery. © 2016 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

IMAGE 2: Joan Miró, *Femmes au bord du lac à la surface irisée par le passage d'un cygnet (Women at the Edge of the Lake Made Iridescent by the Passage of a Swan)*, May 14, 1941, gouache and oil wash on paper, 18-1/8" x 15" (46 cm x 38 cm). Private Collection, courtesy of Acquavella Galleries. © 2017 Successió Miró / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.

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