

# Calder

## Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere

September 14 - October 26, 2019

540 West 25th Street

First Floor

New York

Alexander Calder, *Eucalyptus*, 1940, sheet metal, wire, and paint, 94-1/2 x 61" (240 x 154.9 cm), Calder Foundation, New York; Gift of Andréa Davidson, Shawn Davidson, Alexander S. C. Rower, and Holton Rower, 2010. © 2019 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy Pace Gallery.



New York — Pace Gallery is pleased to inaugurate its new global headquarters in Chelsea, New York, with a major exhibition tracing the breadth of Alexander Calder’s innovative practice, leading up to his conception of the mobile in 1931—an unprecedented form of kinetic sculpture that radically altered the trajectory of modern art. Working in close collaboration with the Calder Foundation, New York, Pace will present approximately seventy works, spanning the 1920s to the 1960s, that delineate the history of the mobile as it has never been shown before. Organized chronologically, the exhibition examines defining moments in Calder’s oeuvre, from his gestural animal sketches of 1925 and three-dimensional wire sculptures made in the late 1920s, to his abstract oil paintings of October 1930 and the first truly kinetic sculptures created in the early 1930s. The exhibition takes its name from Calder’s first hanging mobile, *Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere* (1932/33), installed among key examples of the medium from the ensuing decades. *Calder: Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere* will be on view from September 14 to October 26, 2019, during which time various sculptures in the exhibition will be activated for the public on a schedule.

Exhibited in the 3,600-square-foot first-floor gallery, the largest exhibition space within Pace’s new building, *Calder: Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere* will capture the remarkable transition from potential to actual energy in Calder’s work and underscore his relentless pursuit of the vitality and life force in art. The installation has been designed by Stephanie Goto, marking her first large-scale exhibition with Pace. In this new space, she has employed a range of distinct architectural elements and design techniques, including an iconic central volume, that utilize light and space to reveal major breakthrough points in Calder’s artistic process. For the viewer, the design will also unfold as a highly intentional, meditative walk through the gallery.

“Calder was a true pioneer and his legacy continues to influence so many of the artists that we work with today,” says Marc Glimcher. “Through his creation of the mobile, Calder introduced a radical new approach that forever changed how we understand and experience sculpture and we can’t think of a better suited artist to inaugurate the main gallery in our new home. This exhibition not only reflects our enduring relationship with Alexander Calder and the Calder Foundation but also our dedication to activating the history of our artists to connect their work with new audiences from a renewed perspective.”

Alexander S. C. Rower, president of the Calder Foundation and grandson of the artist, notes, “I have always wanted to do a show focusing on this important moment in my grandfather’s trajectory. The move away from his first great invention of wire sculpture and his transition into abstraction—all within a couple of years—paved the way for his creation of the mobile. Calder’s genius lies in how he engaged ideas of immateriality, perception, and the actuality of the moment, or present-time experience— notions that remain just as urgent and important today.”

*Calder: Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere* begins in 1925 with nearly fifty brush drawings that Calder made of animals at the Bronx and Central Park zoos. “Animals–Action: These two words go hand in hand in art,” he wrote in *Animal Sketching*, a drawing manual with over a hundred of these sketches published in 1926. The potential energy of the creatures he portrayed were captured through gestural brushstrokes. In his revolutionary wire sculptures that soon followed, Calder introduced this painterly energy into physical three-dimensional space. French critics coined the phrase “drawing in space” in 1929 to describe these figurative wire works, among them the portrait *Jimmy Durante* (c. 1928) and *Circus Scene* (1929).

Calder made a series of abstract oil paintings in the two weeks following his visit to Piet Mondrian’s Paris studio in October 1930, six of which will be on view. It was the all-encompassing environmental installation of Mondrian’s studio that ultimately pushed him toward total abstraction: “This one visit gave me a shock that started things.” He created his first truly kinetic sculpture the following year, giving form to an entirely new type of art: the mobile. Coined for these works by Marcel Duchamp in 1931, the word “mobile” refers to both “motion” and “motive” in French. Calder’s earliest mobiles moved by a variety of means, as seen in the crank-driven *Two Spheres Within a Sphere* (1931) and the motor-driven objects *Double Arc and Sphere* (c. 1932) and *Dancing Torpedo Shape* (1932). When the latter two works debuted in 1933 at the Berkshire Museum, Calder referred to them as “among the more successful of my earliest attempts at plastic objects in motion.” The Berkshire bought them, marking Calder’s first sale to a museum, and they were recently acquired by the Calder Foundation.

Calder’s first hanging mobile was *Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere* (1932/33), an eccentric conceptual work that engages avant-garde music, viewer intervention, chance, and variable configuration. Displacing the large “heavy sphere,” made of cast iron, sets the small wooden sphere in motion around a seemingly random collection of repurposed objects situated on the floor near the viewer. In this open composition of real-time orchestration, Calder was asking the viewer to step into dual roles of composer and conductor. As Calder continued to develop

his mobiles—engaging the dynamic, unseen forces of nature—they would become his best-known body of work, typified by the classical style of *Eucalyptus* (1940) [pictured above], *Red Maze III* (1954), and *Black Mobile with Hole* (1954).

*Calder: Small Sphere and Heavy Sphere* will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, with texts by Arnauld Pierre, Susan Braeuer Dam, Alexander S. C. Rower, and Noam M. Elcott. There will also be a portfolio of rarely seen archival photographs by Marc Vaux published in the catalogue.

**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** is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace’s mission continues to be inspired by our drive to support the world’s most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide: two galleries in New York, including its newly opened global headquarters at 540 West 25th Street; one in London; one in Geneva; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Hong Kong; and one in Seoul.

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