



Visual Impression | Alexander Calder (1898-1976), *Crinkly*, 1969
Photo's: ©Ville d'Amboise and John Lewis Marshall (visual by: Souverein Weesp BV)

Alexander Calder at the Rijksmuseum

Free exhibition in museum gardens

From 21 June to 5 October 2014, eighteen monumental sculptures by the American artist Alexander Calder will be displayed in the Rijksmuseum's free accessible 'outdoor gallery'.

Guest curator Alfred Pacquement, former director of Musée National d'Art Moderne *Centre Pompidou* in Paris, has selected the exhibition of Calder's mobiles, stabiles, and standing mobiles from major museums and private collections.

This exhibition is the second in a series of annual international sculpture displays, which will be presented in the Rijksmuseum's gardens over the next four years, made possible with funding from the BankGiro Loterij, the Terra Foundation for American Art and an anonymous donor.

The Rijksmuseum gardens are open daily from 9 am – 6 pm.

Alexander Calder (1898-1976) is undoubtedly one of the most celebrated inventors of modern sculpture. His cut-out and colourful abstract objects that move in the air or rest firmly on the ground can be found throughout the world, whether in museums or in gardens and public plazas, ranking him among the first and most prolific sculptors of large-scale outdoor works. This show of his monumental sculptures in the newly designed gardens of the Rijksmuseum will create a fascinating landscape of stately

abstract forms, following the first outdoor show of bronze figures by Henry Moore last year.

Calder was not always an abstract sculptor. Born in America into a family of artists, he lived and worked in the United States and France where he had several studios throughout his life.

His first works were delicate figures in steel wire where the artist showed an amazing skill in his use of the material: Calder at that time designed toys, animals, and three-dimensional portraits of his friends, and he articulated characters of a miniature circus, which he presented in public performances with great success. His visit to Mondrian's studio in Paris in 1930 had a major impact on his art and as a consequence he turned to abstraction. Soon abandoning painting, Calder developed the ambition to create moving coloured shapes: after some experiments with a motor, he started creating light structures suspended from the ceiling and set in motion through a breath of air. In 1931, it was Marcel Duchamp who applied the term *mobiles* to his kinetic works, which, for almost the first time in art history, formalized real movement in sculpture. The precarious balance of the shapes, like leaves on the branches of a tree, shows a very special talent, helped by his training as an engineer.

The development in scale of his works led him to invent a parallel category, the *stabiles* - a term introduced by Jean Arp in 1932 - where large sheets of generally black metal are assembled to create dynamic structures, sometimes in very large dimensions, to which Calder devoted himself from the 1950s onward. In some cases a mobile structure made up with abstract shapes sways at the top of the sculpture, creating so-called *standing mobiles*. Those two families of sculptures, lent by major museums and private collections, as well as by the Calder Foundation in New York, will find a perfect setting in the urban green space, between the permanent classic sculpture collection of the Rijksmuseum and architect Cuypers' neo-gothic museum building.

In addition, four Calder sculptures will be installed inside the museum, allowing visitors to explore the relationship of Calder's monumental outdoor sculpture to indoor works, including the mobiles for which he is best known. The presentation also creates a dialogue with the masterpieces of the Rijksmuseum's permanent collection.

Calder Foundation, New York | Pierre Giannada, Martigny | Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Pompidou, Paris | Middelheim Museum, Antwerp and the UNESCO Works of Art Collection.

For more information and images:

pressoffice@rijksmuseum.nl

Museumstraat 1

P.O.Box 74888

1070 DN Amsterdam

The Netherlands