

Storm King Art Center

SCULPTURE PARK AND MUSEUM

For Immediate Release

STORM KING TO PRESENT THE LARGEST EXHIBITION EVER ASSEMBLED OF CALDER'S MONUMENTAL SCULPTURES

MOUNTAINVILLE, NY – An unprecedented gathering of 18 monumentally scaled sculptures by Alexander Calder—most of them unseen in public for decades or never before exhibited—will rise from the fields and hillsides of the Storm King Art Center, as the sculpture park and museum presents the exhibition *Grand Intuitions: Calder's Monumental Sculpture*.

Opening to the public on May 21, 2001, *Grand Intuitions* is by far the largest exhibition ever assembled of these large-scale, outdoor works, on which Calder concentrated his energies during the last phase of his career. With 6 more Calder sculptures installed inside the museum building, along with 24 preparatory models and panels of archival photographs, *Grand Intuitions* is also the first exhibition to tell the story of Calder's growing fascination with monumental sculpture and to illustrate his creative process in developing these works.

The guest curator of *Grand Intuitions* is Alexander S.C. Rower, Director of the Calder Foundation and a grandson of the artist, who has collaborated on the exhibition with David R. Collens, Director and Chief Curator of the Storm King Art Center. With the exception of *The Arch* (1975), which is in the permanent collection of the Storm King Art Center, all of the sculptures and maquettes exhibited in *Grand Intuitions* are on loan through the courtesy of the Calder Foundation.

“One of the great moments in the development of our sculpture park and museum was the purchase of Calder’s *The Arch*,” notes H. Peter Stern, Chairman and President of Storm King Art Center. “For almost twenty years, its sweeping curves of black steel have ushered visitors into our landscape, and confirmed our mission of crafting a generous setting for grand-scale sculptures against the backdrop of Storm King and Schunnemunk mountains. We are deeply grateful to the Calder Foundation for enabling us now to present *Grand Intuitions: Calder’s Monumental Sculpture*, an exhibition that pays homage to one of our greatest sculptors while animating this landscape as never before.”

“*Grand Intuitions* is unique in several ways,” says Alexander S.C. Rower. “It presents roughly twice as many of Calder’s monumental sculptures as have ever been seen before in a single exhibition. About half of these works will be new to the public. All of them have been restored to excellent condition, so you can see them as Calder intended. And, of course, these works are being installed in the beautiful landscape of the Storm King Art Center.”

Among the notable early works on view are *Red and Yellow Vane* (1934), the first sculpture Calder made for the outdoors, and *Devil Fish* (1937), the first sculpture that Calder enlarged from a maquette, or smaller model. *Funghi Neri (Black Mushrooms)* (1957) is one of Calder’s first large-scale public works. Made for an exhibition in Milan on the basis of a maquette from 1942, the work illustrates how the artist had been prepared for years to carry out such large-scale commissions. *Southern Cross* (1963), a monumentally scaled work that Calder installed permanently at his home and studio in Connecticut, has been exhibited in public on only three previous occasions.

Among the monumental works that have never before been seen in public are *Discontinuous* (1962), *Untitled* (1972), *Bobine (Bobbin)* (1976), *Knobs* (1976), and *Gui (Mistletoe)* (1976).

Calder's Monumental Sculpture: Evolution and Process

According to Rower, Calder was ready by 1937 to make large-scale, outdoor sculptures, as demonstrated by his exhibition of that year at the Pierre Matisse gallery in New York City. A photograph of the gallery installation reveals that Calder showed a large-scale work titled *Big Bird*, together with its maquette and a number of other maquettes. (*Big Bird* and the photograph will be included in *Grand Intuitions*.) “The idea was, you’d come to the gallery, see *Big Bird*, then choose one of the little models and have it made three meters high or ten meters high, to install in your garden or in front of your building. But at the time, no one commissioned him.”

Calder got the opportunity to realize these projects only after World War II, Rower says. “After World War II, the International Style became prevalent, and you had great European and American architects building these simplified, dynamic and elegant structures. Everybody wanted to have a sculpture as a counterpoint. So in the 1950s, my grandfather started getting all these commissions for what he had been prepared to do since the 1930s.”

From then until his death in 1976, Calder became more and more fascinated by the possibilities of monumental sculpture. Although these enormous works had to be fabricated by the technicians at ironworks, “Calder never allowed the process to become purely mechanical,” Rower says. “He always had his hand involved; he was always

altering things, whether it was correcting a form or changing a color.” Rower notes that Calder even instructed the technicians how to strengthen these huge works, so they would bear their weight properly and withstand the elements. “Calder would take out a piece of soapstone chalk he always carried in his pocket and mark the surfaces. He’d balance the form and the shapes, and then he’d mark where the gussets or ribs would be added.”

By seeing the maquettes for these works in close proximity to the finished sculptures, visitors to Storm King will come to appreciate how Calder’s creative process remained intuitive even on the grand scale. “We’re familiar with artists who make twelve or fifteen sketches of an idea and then make a painting,” Rower says. “I hope people will learn that these maquettes were really sketches for my grandfather.”

Publications and Public Programs

In conjunction with *Grand Intuitions: Calder’s Monumental Sculpture*, the Storm King Art Center will publish a brochure on the exhibition during 2001. A major catalogue on Calder’s monumental sculpture, as seen in the exhibition, is scheduled for publication in 2002.

During *Grand Intuitions*, Storm King will also offer educational programs for families, students and general visitors, including presentations by Alexander S.C. Rower and a number of artists.

About the Storm King Art Center

The Storm King Art Center is located in Mountainville, New York, 55 miles north of New York City and seven miles south of Newburgh, New York. Driving time from the George Washington Bridge is approximately one hour.

The Art Center is open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., April 1 through October 27, and from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from October 28 to November 15. The sculpture park will be open until 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays and also on Sundays of holiday weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day, with admission free from 5:00 p.m. to closing.

For driving instructions, the public may call 845-534-3115. For information on transportation from New York City by ShortLine Bus, call 800-631-8405.

#

For further information:

Elly Muller
The Kreisberg Group, Ltd.
1926 Broadway, Suite 601
New York, NY 10023
(212) 799-5515 (telephone)
(212) 799-5535 (telefax)