

The Museum of Modern Art

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Press Preview
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A SALUTE TO ALEXANDER CALDER, an exhibition of 72 works from The Museum of Modern Art collection, illustrating the full range of Calder's art from the late 1920's to the present, will be on view at the Museum from December 19 through February 15. In addition to his world-famous stabiles and mobiles -- hanging and standing and motorized, his most recent public monuments are represented, as well as early wire constructions, caricatures and wood sculptures, watercolors and drawings, prints and illustrated books, and jewelry.

Among Calder's earliest sculptures in iron and brass wire on view is the 39-inch figure of Josephine Baker (1927-29), inspired by the renowned American singer and dancer then popular in Paris. Two life-size portrait heads, Marion Greenwood and Man with Eyeglasses, and several delightful miniature pieces, including a wire girl on a soda fountain stool, a wire cat lamp, and a tin elephant that makes a chair with the trunk holding a lamp, all date from the late '20's.

The wood sculptures Horse (1928) and Shark Sucker (1930) and the classic metal mobiles Spider of 1939 and the suspended Snow Flurry of 1948 are included in the exhibition. Also on view are three of his stabile constructions: Gibraltar (1936), Constellation (c. 1941), and Constellation with Red Object (1943).

The celebrated Whale of 1937, originally a loan from the artist, which was almost continuously on view in the Museum's Sculpture Garden after 1941, was given to the collection by Calder in 1950. Damaged by weather, Calder proposed that he make a new Whale in heavier steel. From this came the second version, Whale II, in 1964.

Other important stabiles are the Black Widow (1959) and the 24-inch model for "Teodelapio", a 60-foot steel stabile made in 1962 for the Festival of Two Worlds of Spoleto, a gateway to the city through which pedestrians and cars pass. This was the first of Calder's towering steel monuments to which he has devoted his energies

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in recent years.

Part of a continuing series of exhibitions designed to show in depth the Museum's holdings of the work of a single artist or movement, A SALUTE TO ALEXANDER CALDER represents the largest and most complete collection of work by Calder in any museum in the world.

The Museum of Modern Art first exhibited Calder's work in 1930, a year after the Museum was founded, when four wood sculptures were included in PAINTING AND SCULPTURE BY LIVING AMERICANS. The first Museum acquisition was the motorized mobile A Universe, acquired in 1934. The large mobile Lobster Trap and Fish Tail was commissioned to hang in the stairwell of the Museum's main building when it was completed in 1939. In 1943 the Museum presented Calder's first large retrospective.

The artist wrote to Alfred Barr in 1966: "I have long felt that whatever my success has been has been greatly as a result of the show I had at the MOMA in 1943, and now, as I seem to have quite a number of -- I think -- important objects 'left over' I would like to make a gift of several of them to the museum -- if you would be interested." This modest offer resulted in the generous gift of 19 magnificent works, including Sandy's Butterfly of 1964, which was exhibited as a group the following year. Although a few gaps remained in the Museum's collection of Calder's, many have since been filled through the generosity of donors, including Calder himself, whose most recent gift is The Bicycle, a reconstruction of his "motorized mobile that Duchamp liked" of about 1932.

Also added in the last two years to the Museum's holdings of work by Calder are 10 gouaches given to the collection by the artist and by Mr. and Mrs. Klaus G. Perls and a dozen prints acquired through the John B. Turner Fund, which are included in A SALUTE TO ALEXANDER CALDER.

In connection with its 1943 retrospective, the Museum published the first comprehensive study of Calder's work, with text by James Johnson Sweeney, which was reprinted by Arno Press this year in a volume entitled FIVE AMERICAN SCULPTORS. Two

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well-illustrated and fully documented books on the artist were published in 1966: his autobiography and a critical biography by H. H. Arnason. THREE YOUNG RATS, a book of nursery rhymes for adults illustrated by Calder and first published by the Museum in 1944, was reissued in 1967. These are available in the Museum Bookstores.

A checklist of A SALUTE TO ALEXANDER CALDER, with an introductory essay by Bernice Rose, Assistant Curator of Painting and Sculpture and director of the exhibition, is being sold at the Museum.

The film Calder's Circus, made in 1963, will be screened in the Museum Auditorium on Monday, Tuesday and Friday, December 22, 23, and 26 at 11:30 a.m.

Photographs and additional information available from Linda Gordon, Associate Director, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, New York. 10019. (212) 956 - 2648, 7501.