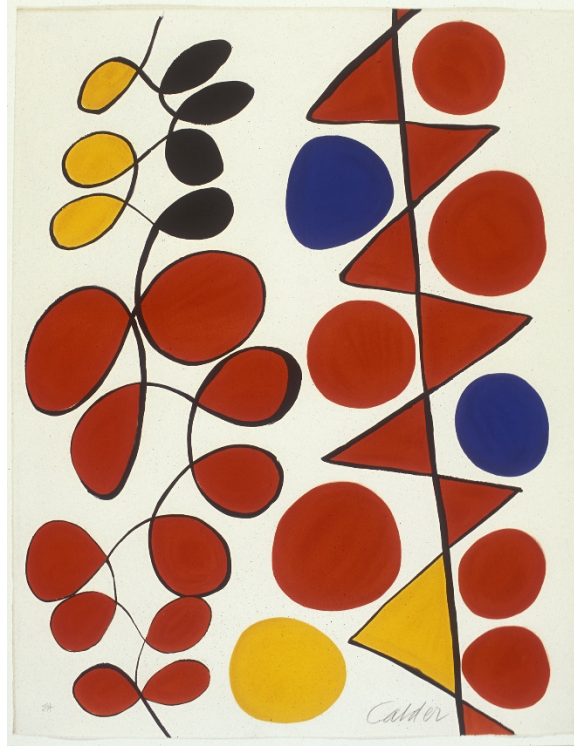


SPOTLIGHT: Alexander Calder
Title of Piece: Untitled (Spirals and Flags)



El Presenter: Leanne Wong

Date: April 15, 2008

Title of Piece: Untitled (Spirals and Flags)

Year created: 1976

Artist: Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

Five points of interest about this artist

1. Alexander Calder was born in Lawton, PA. His parents were both trained artists. His father, Alexander Stirling Calder, was a sculptor. His many public commissions meant that the family traveled the country during his childhood. His mother, Nanette Lederer Calder, was a painter. She studied at the Academie Julian and the Sorbonne in Paris (1888-93). Calder was encouraged by his parents to create; he was provided with material, tools and space.
2. Calder did not set out to be an artist. He graduated in 1919 from the Stevens Institute of Technology with an engineering degree. He worked for several years in various jobs. He committed to becoming an artist in 1923. He moved to New York, enrolling at the Art Students League. He also took a job illustrating for the National Police Gazette. This took him to the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus to sketch for two weeks in 1925. In 1926 he created his Cirque Calder, one of his most famous works. His performances of the Cirque Calder predated performance art by forty years.

3. He is probably best known for his creation of the mobile. He primarily considered himself a sculptor, but his painting style influenced by the artists of his time, Miro and Marcel Duchamp, was pure abstraction. In 1931 he created his first truly kinetic sculpture. Duchamp titled this new art form Mobiles. In French, mobile refers to both motion and motive.
4. Like his mobiles Calder's work on paper suggests movement and abstraction. His use of primary colors also reflects this.
5. Calder died in 1976 at the age of 78 ending the most prolific and innovative artistic career of the 20th century.

Possible questions to use when discussing this piece with museum visitors:

1. What colors do you see?
2. What shapes do you notice? What lines do you see?
3. What action words would you use to describe this work?
4. How does this work make you feel?

Tour Type: Learning to Look Art Moves You

Additional Notes and Sources:

JSMA Collection:

<https://jsmacollection.uoregon.edu/mwebcgi/mweb?request=record;id=17171;type=101>