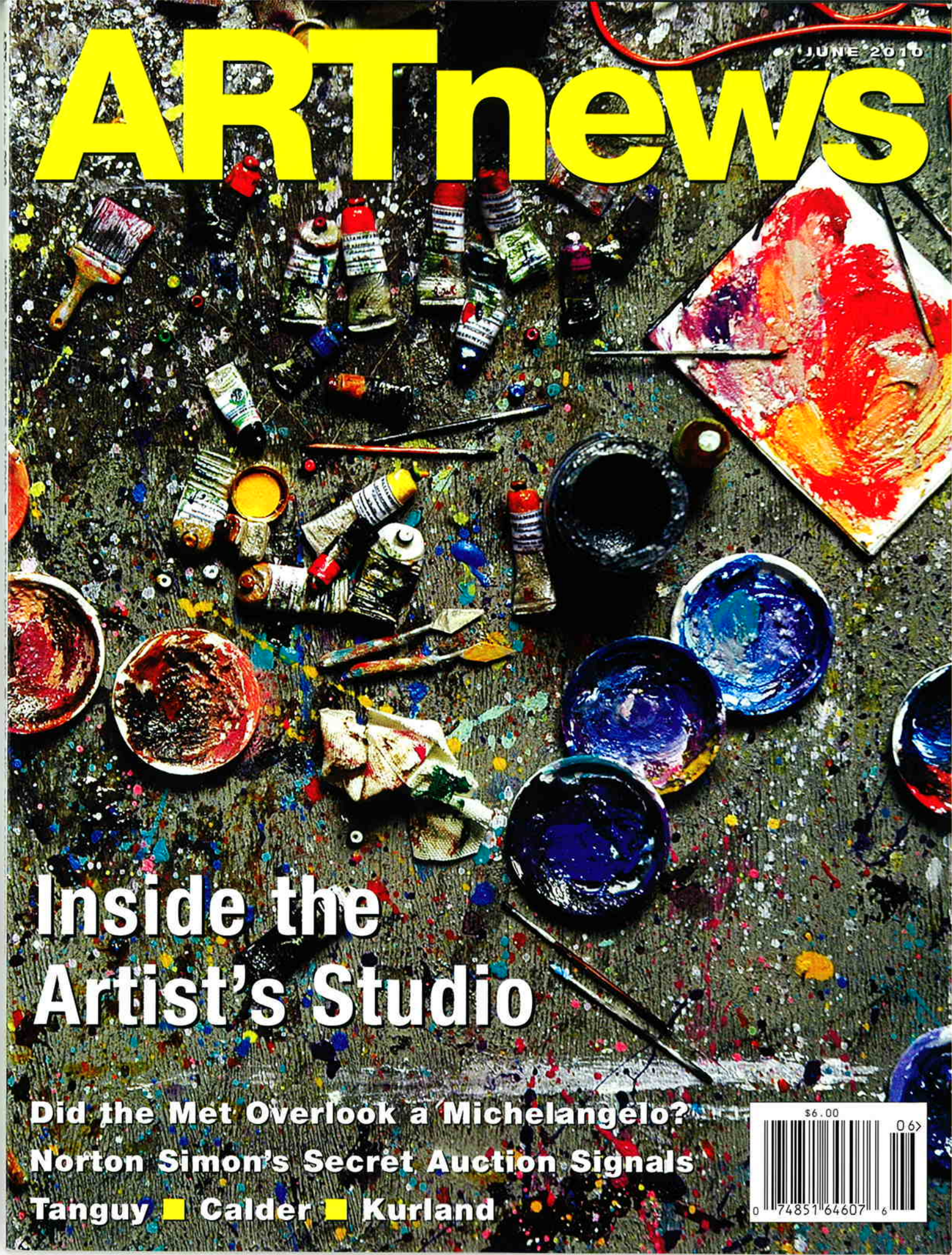


JUNE 2016

ARTnews



Inside the Artist's Studio

**Did the Met Overlook a Michelangelo?
Norton Simon's Secret Auction Signals
Tanguy ■ Calder ■ Kurland**

\$6.00



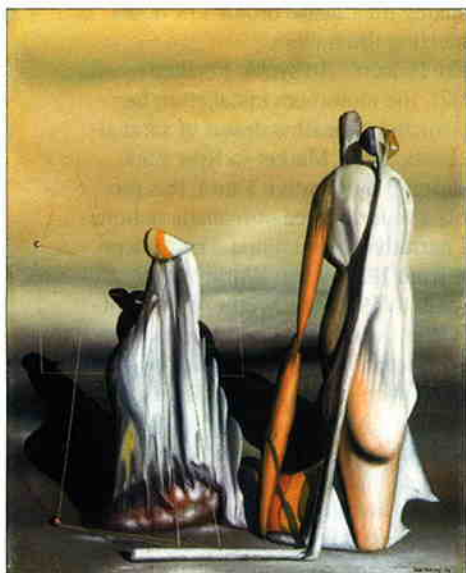
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reviews

Yves Tanguy and Alexander Calder

L & M Arts

Through June 12



LEFT Yves Tanguy, *Le Prodigue (Prodigal Son)*, 1943, oil on canvas, 11" x 9".

RIGHT Alexander Calder, *Money Bags*, 1934, wood, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

Titled "Tanguy Calder: Between Surrealism and Abstraction," this fascinating and unexpected exhibition deals with a lively bifurcated moment in cultural time—when two artistic movements shared a basic vocabulary of form and took it to quite different ends.

In Alexander Calder's and Yves Tanguy's works made between 1934 and 1956, we see Europe meet America and vice versa, each influenced by the other but retaining its native profile.

The quintessentially American sculptor Calder and the suave French painter Tanguy likely met in Paris in the late '20s. They became close friends in the '30s, when Tanguy came to the United States and got a house in Litchfield County, Connecticut, close to Calder's.

Tanguy's Surrealism, like Dalí's and even de Chirico's—with its biomorphic forms, bleak depictions of loneliness in barren landscapes, and allusions to

Tanguy riffs on the classics in *Perspectives* (1952), with its white "marble" statuelike forms and unearthly structures, and in his frightening *The Saltimbanques* (1954), in which sculptural shapes march toward an infinite horizon. These dreamscapes are painstakingly composed and complex, amazingly concrete representations of states of mind. His 1943 *Le Prodigue (Prodigal Son)* offers a literal translation of a classic Old Master subject into an abstract-surreal vision, with the prodigal figure following a draped form representing his mother. In *Le Prodigue ne revient jamais I (The Prodigal Son Never Returns I)*, also 1943, a red, white, and blue figure walks militantly across a littered landscape. The gouache-and-ink *La Grue des sables (Sandpiper, 1946)*, by contrast, is strikingly delicate and poetic. In it, a graceful feminine figure, built up of abstract forms, appears in motion brushed over with strokes of translucent white paint.

Calder's fanciful imagination reveals itself in some lesser-known works. In his 1934 wood sculpture *Money Bags*, for instance, two fat shapes—almost humanoid in a Henry Moore-ish way—press together on a small wood base. *Untitled* (1935) is an improbably balanced, ungainly wood form atop a modernist wire and wood table apparatus, and *Wooden Bottle with Hairs* (1943) is festooned with inordinately big wood hair follicles connected by wires.

There is a macabre feel to both artists' works—to Calder's *Constellation with Red Knife* (1943), for example, a grouping of vertical forms

connected by red wire with a "knife" lurking in the midst of it all. His 1944 work *The Vine*, which could prefigure Mark di Suvero's balancing acts, features a snaking animal-plant form, with a blob draped over it, teetering on a tripod base.

Both of these artists were devoted to describing—or trying to make some sense of—the cosmos and/or the mind. Tanguy's visions are often hellish; Calder's pure abstractions are romantic. Both artists succeeded in making their own universes.

—Barbara A. MacAdam



classicism and the Old Masters—exudes a sense of formality and coldness rather than sadness.

Calder was ebullient and intrepid in his use of similar exotic, unnameable biomorphic forms, deploying them with a spontaneous ease and wit.

In both artists' works, razor-sharp, nearly invisible, and often diagonal lines, rather than rational grids, connect otherworldly shapes, linking the stuff of dreams and the imagination in Tanguy, and of the imagination and pure form in Calder.