

# DOMINIQUE LÉVY

For Immediate Release

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## DOMINIQUE LÉVY TO PRESENT RARE CALDER SCULPTURES IN AN ENVIRONMENT DESIGNED BY SANTIAGO AND GABRIEL CALATRAVA

*Alexander Calder: MULTUM IN PARVO*

April 22 – June 13, 2015

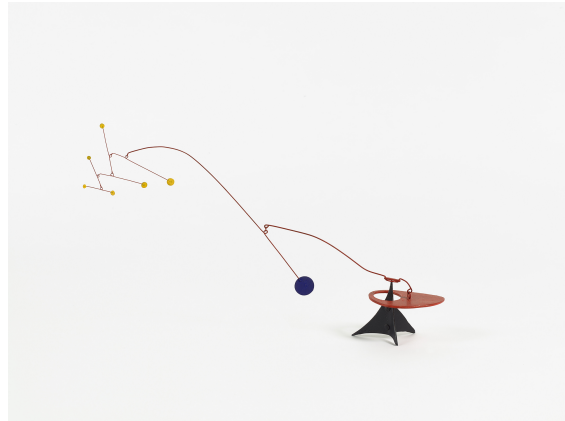
Dominique Lévy  
909 Madison Avenue  
New York City

**New York, NY.** Beginning April 22nd, Dominique Lévy is pleased to present *Alexander Calder: MULTUM IN PARVO*, an exhibition of over forty rare small-scale sculptures by an American master, installed in an environment conceived for them by the architects Santiago and Gabriel Calatrava.

Taking its title, *MULTUM IN PARVO*, from the Latin phrase meaning “much in little,” the exhibition explores the ways in which **Alexander Calder's** most diminutive works, ranging from thumb-sized to thirty inches tall, achieve monumental impact. These sculptures often share the same physical properties as Calder's largest stabiles and mobiles, but by means of the tiniest details. Presented in collaboration with the

Calder Foundation, the exhibition at Dominique Lévy casts a spotlight for the first time on the complex and often surprising relationship between scale and form in Calder's oeuvre over a period of more than thirty years. The show includes one of his smallest sculptures from the 1950s that measures just over one inch high—a miracle of miniature.

Many of Alexander Calder's small-scale works were models for larger objects, occasionally produced as proposals to be presented to collectors and their architects. Six standing mobiles from *MULTUM IN PARVO* were made in 1939 from wood, wire, lead, and metal elements on black wooden bases for Calder's friend, the architect Percival Goodman, to include in his submission to a competition for a new Smithsonian Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. In the end, Goodman was awarded second place to Eliel and Eero Saarinen, whose controversial ultra-modernist project was never realized in the architecturally conservative city. These six standing mobiles



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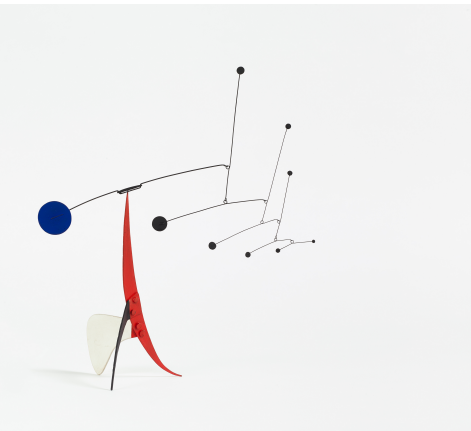
are exhibited together for the first time in more than fifteen years at Dominique Lévy.

The exhibition also includes a number of works made in the mid to late 1940s, when developments in technology, travel, and communication began to impact the international art scene. Calder had a keen interest in travel, and in particular was inspired to return to Europe after the liberation of Paris when World War II was drawing to a close. In 1945, his close

friend Marcel Duchamp proposed a presentation of Calder's small-scale works, many created from scraps rendered in the making of other works. "Let's mail these little objects to [Louis] Carré in Paris, and have a show," Duchamp suggested. Calder liked the idea and, intrigued by limitations on parcel size imposed by the United States Postal Service, began to conceive of larger, collapsible sculptures that could be easily transported via the international airmail system. Two of the works that Calder mailed to Carré, *Red T with Black Flags* and *Shoe with Split Heel*, are on view at Dominique Lévy.

*MULTUM IN PARVO* presents Calder's small sculptures in an environment conceived by internationally admired architect Santiago Calatrava and his son, Gabriel. Unfolding over the gallery's two exhibition floors, Calatrava's design honors the beauty and delicacy of Calder's smaller sculptures, and seeks to bring visitors into close contact with the tiniest details and gestures that give these works their magic. A collection of biomorphic stacked, curving platforms bring to mind forms popular in architecture of the post-World War II years, the period during which most of the sculptures on view were created. Each of these platforms present several works, with each work placed on its own mirrored disc. The mirrored discs are then mounted on thin poles of varying heights. The reflective bases create an illusion of expanding the physical size of Calder's pieces, while paradoxically enhancing the sense of intimacy with the viewer by providing perspective at all points of the sculpture. The various heights provide each work with its own area of suspended space, creating a kind of 'individual atmosphere' around every one of Calder's objects.

Brought together across time, Calder and Calatrava express an interest in blurring boundaries between the disciplines of art and architecture. Both explore the ways in which delicacy and strength can co-exist in combinations of curving lines, basic forms, and diminutive details. Calatrava combines advanced engineering with dramatic visual elements to produce massive



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utilitarian structures that appear as delicate, graceful, and natural forms. Calder brought the precision learned from his own training as an engineer to create some of the most iconic artworks—large and small—of the 20th century.

*Alexander Calder: MULTUM IN PARVO* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring archival material, installation photography, and original sketches by Santiago Calatrava that reveal the architectural process in response to Calder's ideas and work. The book also includes commissioned essays by **Jed Perl**, art historian and author currently at work on the first full-length biography of Alexander Calder, and **Paul Goldberger**, Pulitzer Prize-winning architecture critic, as well as poems by **Karl Shapiro** and **John Updike**.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Alexander Calder (1898–1976)** utilized his innovative genius to profoundly change the course of modern art. Born in a family of celebrated, though more classically trained artists, he began by developing a new method of sculpting: by bending and twisting wire, he essentially "drew" three-dimensional figures in space. He is renowned for the invention of the mobile, whose suspended, abstract elements move and balance in changing harmony. Coined by Marcel Duchamp in 1931, the word mobile refers to both "motion" and "motive" in French. The earliest mobiles moved by a system of cranks and motors, although these mechanics were virtually abandoned as Calder developed mobiles that responded to air currents, light, humidity, and human interaction. He also created stationary abstract works that Jean Arp dubbed stables. Major retrospectives of Calder's work during his lifetime were held at the George Walter Vincent Smith Gallery, Springfield, Massachusetts (1938); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1943–44); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1964–65); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1964); Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris (1965); Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France (1969); and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1976–77). Calder died in New York in 1976 at the age of seventy-eight.

## ABOUT THE ARCHITECTS

**Santiago Calatrava** was born in 1951 in Valencia, Spain. With degrees in architecture and civil engineering, he has become an international leader in urban design since opening his first office in Zürich in 1981. Over the next thirty-five years he has opened additional offices in Paris and New York, and completed major commissions in Argentina, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Spain, The Netherlands and the United States, among others. An architect, engineer, and artist, in 2005 an exhibition of his work was mounted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York titled *Santiago Calatrava: Sculpture into Architecture*. In 2011 a joint work created with Frank Stella was exhibited at Berlin's New National Gallery. Stella painted the 98-foot-long mural, *The Michael Kohlaas Curtain*, which was installed on the inside of a torus-shaped steel sculpture constructed by Calatrava and suspended from the ceiling of the iconic Mies Van der Rohe building. Calatrava was named a "Global Leader for Tomorrow" by the World Economic Forum in 1993, and one of the 100 most influential people by Time Magazine in 2005.

**Gabriel Calatrava** works with internationally acclaimed architecture and engineering



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firm, Santiago Calatrava. Noted for iconic white cantilevered bridges, Calatrava's structures gracefully transform and give new life to the urban landscapes in which they are built across the globe. A citizen of the world, Gabriel has studied both engineering and architecture in New York at Columbia University. Gabriel is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Municipal Arts Society.



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## Full Copyright and Courtesy Credits:

Alexander Calder

*Untitled*

c. 1947

Sheet metal, wire, paint

10 x 15 1/2 x 2 3/4 inches (25.4 x 39.4 x 7 cm)

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Photo Credit: Tom Powel Imaging, Inc. Courtesy: Dominique Lévy Gallery, New York

Alexander Calder

*Cafritz Fountain* [maquette]

1966

Sheet metal and paint

8 x 9 1/2 x 7 inches (20.3 x 24.1 x 17.8 cm)

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Alexander Calder

*Eight Black Dots*

c. 1950

Sheet metal, wire, paint

15 x 12 x 5 inches (38.1 x 30.5 x 12.7 cm)

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