

ART & DESIGN

Review: Alexander Calder's Intimate, Encompassing 'Multum in Parvo'

By **ROBERTA SMITH** JUNE 4, 2015



Alexander Calder's show at Dominique Lévy features a selection of nearly 50 small mobiles and stables that the sculptor made over nearly four decades. They are displayed in an installation designed by the architects Santiago Calatrava and his son Gabriel.

2015 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Tom Powel Imaging, Inc., via Dominique Lévy Gallery, New York

If you require further proof of the greatness of Alexander Calder, this exceptional show should do the trick. Intimate and encompassing, it is like a drawing retrospective in three dimensions: a selection of nearly 50 small mobiles and stables, a few less than two inches tall, that this American sculptor executed between the mid-1930s and around 1970.

They confirm that Calder was all but infallible when it came to cutting sheet metal and maybe giving it a little twist, bending wire, finding just the right piece of rock or glass to use and contrasting bold colors with black or white. All the while he moved fluidly between aspects of abstraction and nature, summoning the skills of an engineer, a painter, a sculptor and a jewelry maker.

Adding to the effect, these little gems are displayed in a blazing-white installation designed with both restraint and flair by the architect Santiago Calatrava and his son Gabriel, who is also an architect. Its mirrored wall vitrines, pedestals raised on biomorphic platforms and all-white floors (paper booties are required) can initially seem overly precious, but you can't argue with the visual clarity and uncanny sense of spaciousness.

The exhibition, which has been organized in collaboration with the Calder Foundation, resembles a giant walk-in catalog, specifically the one that accompanies it and records this very installation. The show's title, "Multum in Parvo," translates loosely as "much in little," a phrase that in this case applies equally to the art and to its presentation.

Dominique Lévy
909 Madison Avenue, at 73rd Street
Through June 13