



ALEXANDER CALDER (1898-1976)**Woman with Square Umbrella****A10700**

Signed underneath, "Calder"

wood

19 x 6 x 6 in.

48.26 x 15.24 x 15.24 cm

1928

10221

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, gift from the artist, by descent

EXHIBITION:

Museum of Modern Art, New York. "Alexander Calder", September 29, 1943 - January 16, 1944

After disappointing sales at Weyhe Gallery in 1928, Calder turned from sculpted wire portraits and figures to the more conventional medium of wood. On the advice of sculptor Chaim Gross, he purchased small blocks of wood from Monteath, a Brooklyn supplier of tropical woods. He spent much of that summer on a Peekskill, New York farm carving. In each case, the woodblock suggested how he might preserve its overall shape and character as he subsumed those attributes in a single form. There was a directness about working in wood that appealed to him. Carved from a single block of wood, *Woman with Square Umbrella* is not very different from the subjects of his wire sculptures except that he supplanted the ethereal nature of using wire with a more corporeal medium. © 2023 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Alexander Calder was a prolific American artist who infused his artwork with a wit and whimsy inspired by his early fascination with the circus. His childhood hobby of crafting objects from found materials initially led to a degree in Engineering and Applied Kinetics. However, only four years later in 1923, Calder enrolled in the Art Students League in New York, and began his first freelance art job in 1925. In doing so, Calder followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who were classically-trained and practicing artists.

Calder's *Circus* (Whitney Museum of American Art), the small-scale model of a circus involving wire, wood, cloth, and leather string, among other materials, is an early example of this interest and represents one of Calder's first wire "drawings". While many artists made contour line drawings on paper, Calder used wire to draw three-dimensional people, creatures, and things into space. Eventually, these three-dimensional figurative drawings evolved into more abstract forms, which would become known as "mobiles".

In 1932, Calder exhibited his first moving sculpture in an exhibition organized by Marcel Duchamp, who coined the term "mobile". These kinetic sculptures are composed of wire counter-balanced with thin metal fins that are set in motion by random air currents to create natural movement. In addition to these sculptures, he created "stables", or static sculptures, which are now installed in major museum

collections around the world. His creation and elaboration of the mobile and stabile are his most lasting contributions to the history of art.

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