

# For a Big Show in France, Calder 'Oughs' His Works

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SAINT-PAUL-DE- VENCE, France, April 2 — The most comprehensive exhibition of works by Alexander Calder opened here today at the Fondation Maeght, and not the least spectacular exhibit was Mr. Calder himself.

At 72, the dean of American sculptors looked like a polar bear — if polar bears wore red sports shirts over blue Levis and tennis shoes. "Mr. Calder's uniform," an assistant said. "He is always dressed that way."

Until nightfall yesterday, Mr. Calder had been tirelessly watching over the final adjustments and positioning of exhibits — 311, according to the catalogue, but more in fact, since some pieces were not listed due to the habitual confusion of such events. The items ranged from mobiles to stables, towers to totems, masks made of wire to sculpture in wood and from puppets to paintings. More than a dozen of the works had never been displayed.

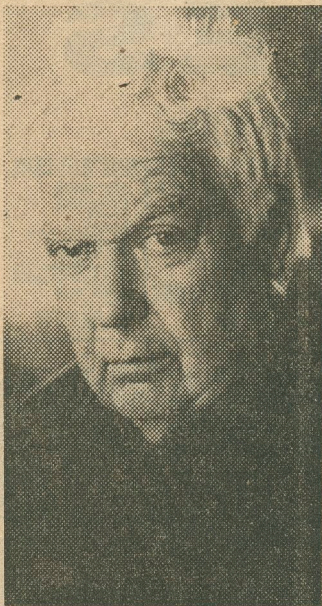
Mr. Calder not only looked like a bear—polar because of his shock of white hair—he even walked like a bear, arms away from the chest, and talked like a bear, in mellow muffled grunts of "ough" or "mmmh."

It turned out that this was the artist's own brand of French.

The handful of local workmen, carpenters and painters, seemed to have no trouble understanding. Depending on the context, a frown or a gesture of the hand, "ough" was immediately understood to mean "a little farther to the left" or "let's leave that thing just exactly where it is."

Two landmarks of the retrospective show are "Circus," dated 1927, and "Black Ball White Ball," which has just been finished. "Circus," an intricate show of a hundred-odd puppets, amounts to a miniature Barnum & Bailey. It actually used to move.

"Black Ball White Ball" is a mobile that takes up a whole room. A big white ball and a small black ball hang from



Camera Press-Pix

Alexander Calder

the ceiling each on a white string. If put in motion the balls will strike orange bronze basins of different sizes, producing sounds of solemn bells.

Among the hitherto unshown Calder's are "Ten Restless Disks," a tree-shaped mobile moving big white petals; a series of expressionistic paintings called "Les Affreux," depicting naked bodies of bald pink male and female monsters; and two giant pitch-black assemblages of metal plates, "Guillotine for eight" and "morning cobwebs."

There is much more: a mobile with dainty hats made of wire, and another with signs of the zodiac; a blue and brown wooden totem dedicated to Matisse and a sad man carved in a chunk of wood.

Present at the opening Joan Miró, who said he was moved: "When I first saw Calder's art very long ago I thought it was good, but not art. It is art."

Mr. Calder was asked by one reporter, "How did you graduate from things small like the "Circus" to things big like "Black Ball White Ball?" "Ough," he replied, and, as an afterthought, added "Maybe it was aging."