HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Calder: François Premier

Hauser & Wirth Paris
19 October – 19 December



In 1953, Calder returned to live in France for the first time in 20 years, settling in the countryside outside Aix-en-Provence and then in the small town of Saché in the Loire Valley. The artist's productivity flourished in the expansive Provençal landscape and the modest, solitary spaces of a 17th-century stone house called François Premier in Saché. In Paris the following year, Galerie des Cahiers d'Art exhibited Calder's ink and gouache paintings from Aix and Galerie Maeght presented 'Aix. Saché. Roxbury. 1953–54'—a pair of shows that together marked Calder's triumphant return to France.

Over 70 years later, inspired by a curious fortuity, the beautiful galleries of Hauser & Wirth Paris—located within an hôtel particulier on a street that also bears the name François Premier—'Calder: François Premier' will be the first major project dedicated to this expansive postwar period in the life and career of one of the greatest artists of the 20th Century.

'Calder: François Premier' will introduce new generations of viewers to three extraordinary, multi-dimensional works: 'Les Granettes' (1953), a large-scale standing mobile exhibited for the first time in 72 years; 'The Putney Mobile' (1954), making its public European debut here seven decades after its creation; and 'Guava' (1955). These sculptural masterpieces will be complemented by an important body of ink and gouache paintings and other works executed by Calder between these seminal years of 1953 and 1954.

Together, the works on view in 'Calder: François Premier' capture the amalgam of explosive imaginative energy and technical innovation that defined the career of one of the world's most influential and enduringly contemporary artists.

About the exhibition

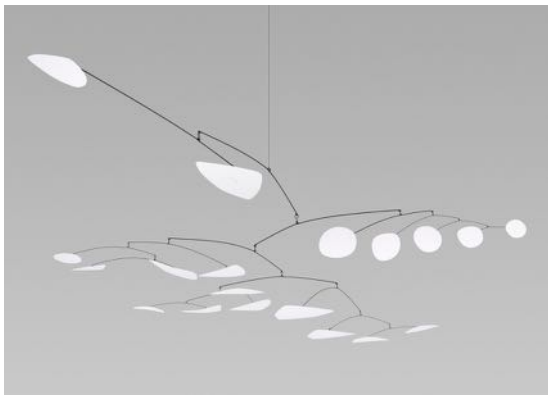
In the summer of 1953, Calder and his wife Louisa returned to France after 20 years, urged by the painter André Masson and his wife, Rose, their neighbors in Connecticut during the Second World War who had recently settled outside of Aix-en-Provence. The Calders rented a home known as Mas des Roches in the rural hamlet of Les Granettes near Aix, setting up in a house without running water or electricity. It was during this time that Calder and his wife acquired the rural property of François Premier in the hamlet of Saché, deepening their recommitment to life and work in France, a country they regarded as a second home.





Back in Les Granettes, at a nearby blacksmith shop, Calder began a series of large outdoor standing mobiles. Rather than his standard process of working from a maquette, he chalked forms directly onto steel plates, then cut and welded the elements together in an unconventional method. This mode of working was risky, as mistakes could be costly and time-consuming. The process yielded the large-scale standing mobile 'Les Granettes' (1953), which later became a fixture in the private courtyard of François Premier. Bold but graceful, with suspended polygons in red, white and black, this outdoor sculpture will anchor the ground floor of the exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Paris, where it will be publicly shown for the first time since it debuted in Paris in 1954. Suspended above, the delicately interlocking wires and white forms of 'The Putney Mobile' (1954) and 'Guava' (1955) will float in a dynamic dialogue with 'Les Granettes.' The three works are a testament to Calder's rare mastery over the interplay of aesthetics and physics, equilibrium and disparity, stasis and motion.

Using the carriage shed at Mas des Roches as a studio, Calder began to concentrate on ink and gouache paintings that paralleled the movement of his sculptures, echoing the forms and lines of the three-dimensional works in metal while establishing a bold yet enigmatic language of their own. The second floor of the exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Paris will focus on this extraordinary body of work. These paintings, striking and diverse, range from richly hued compositions created by mixing ink liberally with water such as 'The Black Star' (1953) to abstracted landscapes such as 'Untitled' (1953) and a series of monochromatic, crosshatched figures such as 'Portrait de famille' (1953). 'I was practically doing nothing but gouaches and concentrating on them,' Calder wrote of this time. 'I seemed to develop something new.'





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Press contacts:
Alice Haguenauer (UK / France), Hauser & Wirth, alicehaguenauer@hauserwirth.com, +44 7880 421823
Jonalynne Maisonneuve (France), SUTTON, jonalynne@suttoncomms.com, +33 (0)6 62 28 40 05
Andrea Schwan (US), Andrea Schwan Inc., andrea@andreaschwan.com, +1 917 371.5023

Hauser & Wirth Paris

26 bis rue François 1er
75008 Paris

Gallery hours:
Tuesday to Saturday
10 am – 6 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy:

Calder with 'Les Granettes' (1953) at François Premier, Saché, 1967. © 2026 Calder Foundation, New York / ADAGP, Paris. Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York / Art Resource, New York. Photo: © Tony Vaccaro Studio

Alexander Calder
Les Granettes
1953
Sheet metal, rod, wire, and paint
129" x 198" x 55"
© 2026 Calder Foundation, New York / ADAGP, Paris
Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York / Art Resource, New York

Alexander Calder
The Black Star
1953
Gouache and ink on paper
29 3/4" x 41 1/2"
© 2026 Calder Foundation, New York / ADAGP, Paris
Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York / Art Resource, New York

Alexander Calder
The Putney Mobile
1954
Sheet metal, wire, and paint
51 1/2" x 142" x 140"
© 2026 Calder Foundation, New York / ADAGP, Paris
Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York / Art Resource, New York

Alexander Calder
Portrait de famille
1953
Ink on paper
27 1/8" x 40 1/8"
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