

**Seattle Art Museum Launches Multi-Year Initiative Dedicated to Artist Alexander Calder
With Robust Slate of Programming for All Ages**

***Calder: In Motion, The Shirley Family Collection* Opens November 8**

**Programming Made Possible by Generous Support from the Shirley Family
As Part of Multifaceted, Transformational Gift to SAM**



September 19, 2023 (Seattle, WA)—The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) today announced additional details about the dynamic public programs that will accompany the exhibition *Calder: In Motion, The Shirley Family Collection*. Launching on November 8, the exhibition and programs inaugurate a multi-year initiative devoted to the artist Alexander Calder (1898–1976), made possible through the generosity of longtime SAM supporters and trustees Jon and Kim Shirley, who this past spring donated 54 works by the celebrated American artist, as well as a \$10M endowment and \$1M in funds for special programming. Taking place at the Seattle Art Museum and the Olympic Sculpture Park—site of Calder’s *The Eagle*—programs will include public lectures, docent-led tours, open houses, family workshops, a Calder-inspired festival, and musical and dance performances. There will also be a strong outreach component to area public schools, including free admission and transportation for students, as well as newly created grade-specific activities and tours.

“The Shirleys’ generous gift allows SAM to live its values of truly inclusive access,” said Jason Porter, Kayla Skinner Deputy Director for Education and Public Engagement. “We are thrilled that their gift earmarked for public programs allows us to create multifaceted programming and to undertake important outreach to the city’s students and surrounding communities. These exciting programs will serve a range of visitors, from our youngest learners to our oldest patrons, and will allow everyone to appreciate the enduring impact of Calder’s legacy.”

Robust Public Programming

On Friday, November 10, SAM presents a free public lecture to celebrate the exhibition’s opening week. Dr. Elizabeth Hutton Turner, Professor of Art at University of Virginia, will discuss *Calder: In Motion*, highlighting specific works and the ways they represent specific areas of fascination for the artist as well as speaking to the interests of the collector. Turner, a former curator, is the organizer of over 25 exhibitions and the author of numerous books about contemporary American artists.

Throughout the run of the exhibition, numerous curator tours will be included with museum admission. These will be led by José Carlos Diaz, Susan Brotman Deputy Director for Art; Catharina Manchanda, Jon and Mary Shirley Curator of Contemporary Art; and Carrie Dedon, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. Lectures by Calder scholars and local artists will also be presented on various themes of the exhibition.

SAM will devote many of its beloved Family Fun Workshops between December 2023 and May 2024 to exploring the creativity that animated Calder’s artistic practice and inviting visitors to bend artistic rules as Calder did. Each workshop will begin by exploring a specific work by the artist. With the guidance of a teaching artist and plenty of art-making materials provided, children will create a masterpiece inspired by their time in the galleries or at the

Olympic Sculpture Park—home to Calder's *The Eagle* (1977), donated in 2000 by Jon and his late wife Mary Shirley. Participants will learn to embrace Calder's use of humble and often "upcycled" materials to bring abstract expressions to life. In addition to the public editions, workshops will also be offered exclusively for the families of the SAM's community partners, including Old Redmond Schoolhouse and Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA).

On January 12 and April 14, 2024, the museum will host SAM Open House, inviting members from its network of community partners for a free art celebration taking place in the evening and providing free access to the galleries. This event will feature in-gallery activities and performances that appeal to a wide range of age groups such as dance workshops, performance art, music performances, and "My Favorite Things" tours, which bring artists, cultural producers, and community figures into the galleries to discuss their favorite works of art. All these programs and more will respond to themes and concepts in *Calder: In Motion*.

On April 20, 2024, SAM will host Calder Family Festival Day, featuring performances, art making, and in-gallery experiences, including movement and workshops by local dance artists to encourage intuitive appreciation of Calder's works and embrace the physicality of art through the lens of Calderian innovation. This family program will offer an opportunity for dynamic, multigenerational learning inspired by elements of Calder's artistic process.

"We hope these experiences will encourage visitors to SAM to embrace and experience art in a new and more physical way," said José Carlos Diaz, Susan Brotman Deputy Director for Art and exhibition curator. "These programs will bring visitors along the pathways of Calder's expression, which has had such a profound influence on so many generations of artists."

Pre K-12 Student Engagement and Inclusive Access

A core component of the Shirleys' programming support focuses on K-12 students and provides free admission and bus reimbursement for all qualifying Seattle Public Schools. Beginning on November 8, all guided school tours will visit *Calder: In Motion*. K-2 students will explore sculptural concepts such as space, form, movement, and balance. Students in grades 3-12 will broadly examine how art connects with mood and emotions, in alignment with local school districts' focus on social-emotional learning. All students will have the opportunity to participate in an art-making workshop led by a professional teaching artist, creating their own sculptures inspired by the exhibition.

SAM will also send teaching artists into preschools serving underserved youth, including refugee and immigrant children. Traveling to the [Refugee Women's Alliance \(ReWA\)](#) Early Learning Centers in South Seattle and Lake City, as well as [Old Redmond Schoolhouse](#) Early Learning Center, artists will help children foster connections through art making.

Interpretative Materials

The Shirleys' gift also supports the creation of many learning aids to support visitor engagement, including a robust audio guide produced by SAM and hosted by Acoustiguide, featuring Jon Shirley, collector; Alexander S. C. Rower, Calder's grandson and the President of the Calder Foundation; and Kennedy Yanko, a painter-sculptor based in Bushwick, Brooklyn, who works in paint skin and metal to explore the limits of material gesture. New public tours led by SAM's docents will connect the Calder exhibition to SAM's larger collection.

Image credits: *Dispersed Objects with Brass Gong*, 1948, Alexander Calder, 1898-1976, brass, sheet metal, wire, and paint, 19 x 66 in., Promised gift of Jon and Mary Shirley, Photo courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York / Art Resource, New York, © 2023 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Family Fun Workshop at the Seattle Art Museum, December 2018, photo: Jen Au. *The Eagle*, 1971, Alexander Calder, 1898-1976, sheet metal, bolts, and paint, 465 x 390 x 390 in., Gift of Jon and Mary Shirley, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, © 2023 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, 2000.69, photo: Benjamin Benschneider.

About Seattle Art Museum

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.

About the Shirley Family Calder Collection Gift

In April 2023, longtime Seattle Art Museum supporters Jon and Kim Shirley donated a \$10 million endowment and one of the most important collections of works by Calder in private hands to SAM. The gift of the Shirley Family Calder Collection includes 54 seminal works, representing all decades and mediums in which the American modern master worked. The inaugural exhibition, *Calder: In Motion, The Shirley Family Collection*, and related programming are supported by an additional \$1 million gift from the Shirleys, who have also promised an annual gift of \$250,000 to \$500,000 to support future programs, events, and Calder-related research. The Shirleys' gift to SAM is the centerpiece of an ongoing series of annual exhibitions and programs that center around Calder, his diverse cultural influences, and his profound impact on modern and contemporary art.

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