

## Lesson 7

## READ THIS STORY #2, Advanced

## Alexander Calder

Almost everyone enjoys the kinetic art of Alexander Calder. He is most famous for creating playfully balanced sculptures composed of colorful suspended shapes that move, called mobiles. Calder's work is classified as abstract art because it has its own unique form and shape instead of being a representation of something real.

Alexander Calder was the son of two artists. In his autobiography, he described himself as a junkman who collected all the prettiest stuff in the garbage cans to make and enhance his "toys."

After graduating as a mechanical engineer, he designed action toys with movable joints as a way to support himself. His popularity as a modern artist grew when he produced an elaborate miniature circus with characters that could perform when he manipulated them. His circus was composed of jugglers, sword swallows, clowns, and animals made of wire, wood, yarn, paper, string, cloth and cork. This circus collection, too delicate to travel, is now permanently displayed at the Whitney Museum in New York City.

Some of Calder's mobiles use small motors or hand cranks to set the sculptures in motion. His later works included large outdoor sculptures that produced random movements depending on the aerodynamics of the atmosphere.