

**James Johnson Sweeney, *Mobiles by Alexander Calder*, exh. cat. (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1934).**

The evolution of Calder's work epitomizes the evolution of plastic art in the present century. Out of a tradition of naturalistic representation, it has worked by a simplification of expressional means to a plastic concept which leans on the shapes of the natural world only as a source from which to abstract the elements of form.

First we have a reduction of volumes to contour lines—a sort of spatial calligraphy in wire—which gave a freer field to fantasy, but, at the same time, laid a stronger emphasis on essentials. Then a growing interest in the bases of plastic organization—texture contrasts, primary colors, simple rhythms. Finally a new fusion of these elements into forms interesting not so much in their representational character as for themselves.

And it is in the ability to effect this fusion that Calder's quality lies. Moscow as early as 1921 had seen constructivism a realization. But Tatlin's and Obmochu's constructions remained architecture and machines. Calder personalizes his "mobiles" with a lyricism entirely his own—a freshness, gaiety and charm.