

Berkshiremuseum

Resources for Self-Guiding Groups *While You Are in the Calder Toy Gallery*

Activities: PreK - K

Charades

In the Alexander Calder: An Artist At Play gallery, there are copies of Calder's push and pull toys that visitors can wheel around. Take some time to try out the toys. Then get the group back together and form a circle. Ask volunteers, one at a time, to describe one toy to the group without saying the name of the animal that appears in the toy or pointing to the toy.

Students can use words to describe the colors, shapes, movement and materials used in the toy. They can also act out the motion that the toy makes. Then ask the rest of the group to guess which toy it is. This activity allows for free exploration time with the toys, but also encourages close observation, use of descriptive language, and kinesthetic learning.

Activities: Grades 1 - 2

Compare and Contrast

In the Alexander Calder Gallery, there are copies of Calder's toys that visitors can wheel around. Pick one and find the original version of your toy in one of the display cases in the gallery. The toys in the cases were made by Calder himself. The Gould manufacturing company then made many copies of these originals and sold them. What differences do you notice between the originals and the replicas (copies) that are on display for you to use? Why do you think they are different?

Engineering Scavenger Hunt

A fun way to consider how these toys were made, thinking about tools and materials. (This worksheet is included at the end of this document).

Activities: Grades 3 - 5

Engineering Scavenger Hunt

A fun way to consider how these toys were made, thinking about tools and materials. (This worksheet is included at the end of this document).

Things You Don't Want to Miss ***While You Are in the Calder Toy Gallery***



Calder's Original Toys in the Display Cases

Alexander Calder's original prototypes of push and pull toys were made in the 1920's. The Gould Manufacturing Company in Oshkosh, WI produced them for the mass market. Though trained as an engineer, Calder began to focus on making art soon after graduating from college. In the meantime, he had to make a living. Even as a boy, Calder had always enjoyed tinkering with bits of wire to make imaginative toys with moving parts, so he created a series of playful wooden pull toys for children, eventually finding a company willing to manufacture them.



Pull Toys That Visitors Can Try!

The Berkshire Museum created replicas of the original toys, so that visitors could wheel them around the gallery.



The Fish

The fish is one of the many whimsical toy replicas that you can actually play with in the gallery. Eccentric wheels, with the axle placed off-center, create this toy's bobbing, wobbling motion.



The Frog

The frog appears to be swimming, thanks to a series of levers linked to the front and back legs of the toy's wheels, creating a crank mechanism. This toy also features rotating wheels in the form of castors.

Discussion Questions

While You Are in the Calder Toy Gallery

What animals do you see? How are the animals moving? What kind of colors, shapes and patterns do you see?

Calder's pull toys use different kinds of wheels. What different kinds of wheels do you notice? What different kinds of movement do they create?

After trying the replicas of Calder's toys, are there any changes or improvements you would make to the toys?

If these toys were manufactured today, how might they be different? Why?

Alexander Calder was an artist and an engineer. Engineers often make something, test it out, and then change it to make it work even better. Do you see places on Alexander's original toys where he changed things?

If you were going to make a moving toy, what would you make? How would it move?

Programs in the Alexander Calder Toy Gallery
While You Are in the Calder Toy Gallery

Programs are available for groups of ten or more students Monday - Friday, with starting times from 10 am to 3:30 pm. Reservations required. Call (413) 443 - 7171, ext. 11.



Toy Works with Simple Machines*
Grades 1 - 2

Investigate the mechanisms that make Alexander Calder's toys work. Observe the functions of wheels and axles, levers, and wedges by setting toys in motion. Whether things go straight, zigzag, or round-and-round, find out how force affects motion and what work has got to do with play.

[MA Frameworks Science and Technology/Engineering Strand 3; Standards 3. Strand 4; Standard 1.3. Visual Arts Strand; Standards 10. NY MST Standard 1. Standard 4 Science Physical Setting 5. Standard 5 Technology 1.]

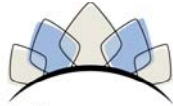


Playing Around with Simple Machines*

Discover how simple and complex machines make Alexander Calder's push and pull toys spin, bob and wobble. Students are challenged to play with Calder toy replicas and identify the mechanisms that make them work. Participants will also test unusual wheels to see what kind of motion they create.

[MA Frameworks Science and Technology/Engineering Strand 4; Standard 1.3. Visual Arts Strand; Standard 10. NY Math, Science, Technology Standard 1. MST Standard 4 Science Physical Setting 5. MST Standard 5 Technology 1.]

***Available September – October, 2004 and January – June, 2005**



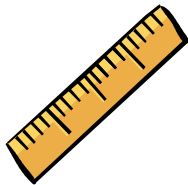
Berkshire**museum**

Alexander Calder: An Artist at Play

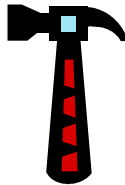
Engineering Scavenger Hunt for Grades 1 - 2

Name _____

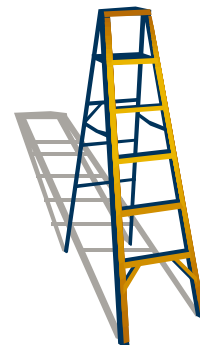
Circle all of the items below that could have been used to make the push and pull toys in this exhibit.



ruler



hammer



ladder



ice cream cone



screw



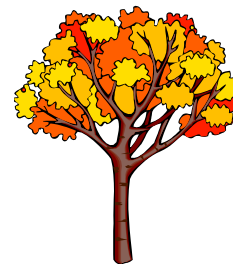
paint



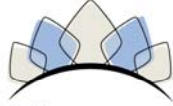
clay



saw



wood



Berkshire**m**useum

Alexander Calder: An Artist at Play

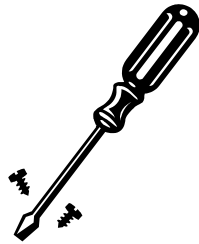
Engineering Scavenger Hunt for Grades 3 - 5

Name _____

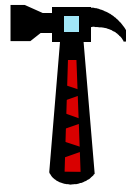
Circle all of the items below that could have been used to make the push and pull toys in this exhibit.



lever



screwdriver



hammer



tweezers



ladder



C clamp



ruler



screw



springs



balloons



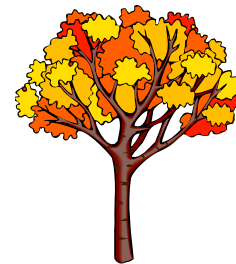
ice cream cone



saw



compass



wood



paint



clay



beads



wrench