Pearl at Home

This art project is designed for family fun, for suggested ages of 10 and up to be completed at home with easily-accessible art materials.

CALDER STABILE SCULPTURES

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976) is an American artist best known for adding movement to sculptures. His two most popular forms of sculpture are mobiles and stabiles. His mobiles often hang from the ceiling or a solid support structure, and are moved by air currents or by touch.

Stabiles are sculptures that are stationary – they do not move. These were usually made out of sheet metal in the form of simple, abstract shapes. Calder intended for his large stabiles to be seen from all sides. The movement comes from the people viewing the sculpture; they can walk around – or even under! – the stabiles.

In this project, we’ll create a small sculpture that mimics the shapes and spaces created by Calder’s famous stabiles.

**MATERIALS**

- Cardstock or cardboard
- Scissors
- Glue or glue stick
- Pencil
- Black Sharpie marker
- Medium of your choice: Markers, colored pencils, crayons, acrylic paint, or watercolors

**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

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In this project, we’ll create a small sculpture that mimics the shapes and spaces created by Calder’s famous stabiles.
1 Prep your cardstock

*You can skip this step if you are using cardboard.*

Glue two sheets of cardstock together to make a thicker paper. This will ensure that markers or other media do not bleed through to the other side.

Let this dry completely before moving on to the next step.

2 Draw and cut out your shape

On your cardstock or cardboard, use a pencil to lightly draw a large oval with a flat bottom.

Cut out your shape.

3 Create the “legs”

Lightly draw two or three overlapping arches (depending on how many “legs” you want your sculpture to have). Decorate the legs using the medium and colors of your choice. Your sculpture can have solid colors or patterns. The legs can be decorated the same, or they can each be unique – the design is up to you!

If you are using paint, let the paint try before moving on. If your paint has covered up your leg lines, redraw them with a pencil or Sharpie.
4 Decorate the reverse side
Since your sculpture is meant to be seen on all sides, decorate the reverse side as well. It can match the design on the front or be completely different. If using paint, let it dry completely before the next step.

5 Create the sculpture’s legs
This next step will help create movement in your sculpture. Mark a spot in the middle of each leg line that will serve as the pivot point – the point where the leg will be able to twist.

Cut along your leg lines – but not all the way. Leave a small spot (about 1/8 inch) connected at your pivot points, so that the legs are still attached. Now you can turn your sculpture’s legs and prop it up for display.

Optional:
Make another stabile, but with a different structure! Instead of the stacking U-shapes, try the format in this diagram. The finished example is in the photo directly above it.