

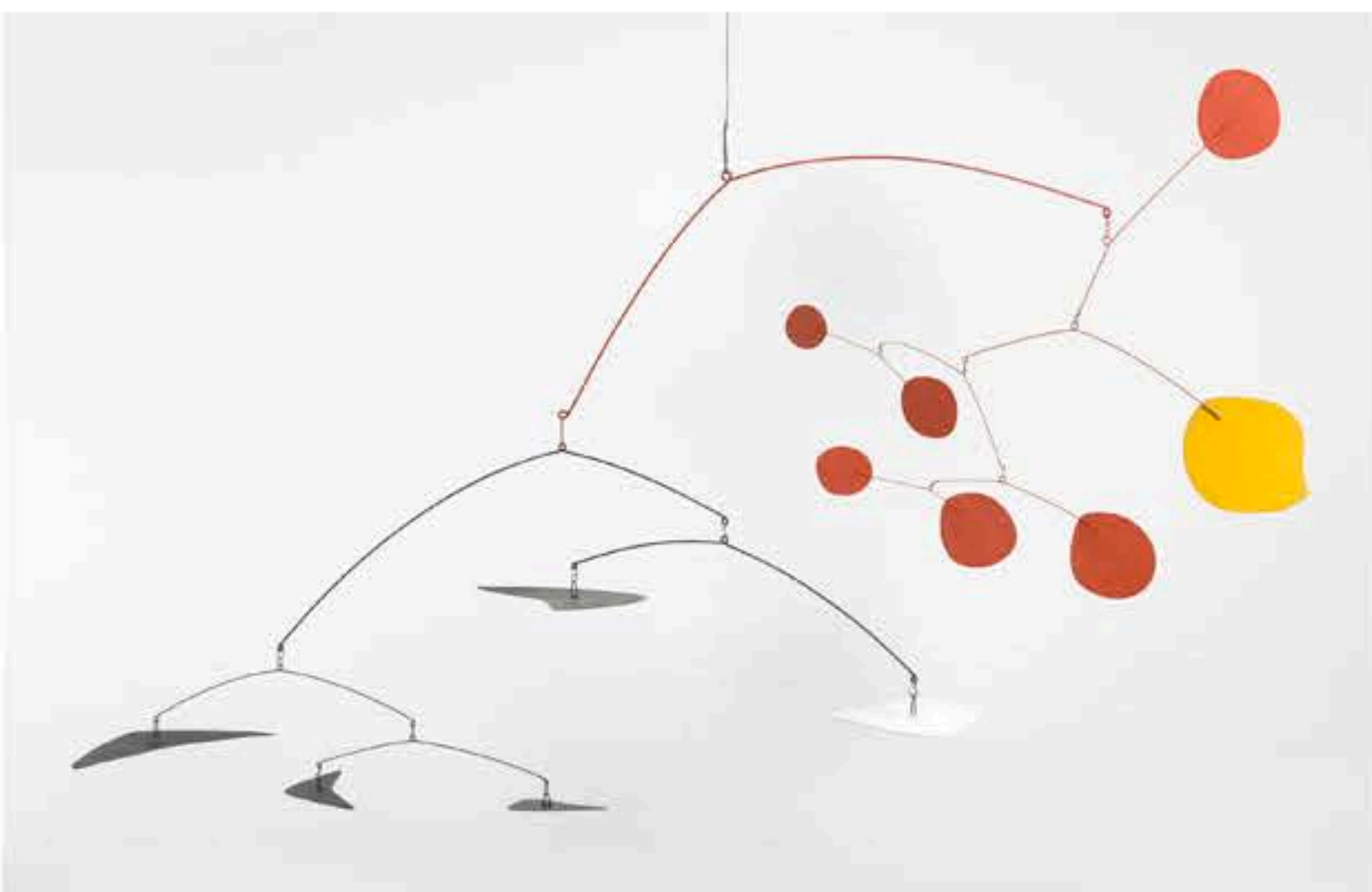
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Art Events Alexander Calder undiscovered work on show

## Alexander Calder undiscovered work on show

A new gallery specialising in rarely seen art uncovers Indian sculptures after 10-year search



Alexander Calder, Guava, photographed by Mike Bruce. © 2012 Calder Foundation, New York/DACS, London 2012

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### DETAILS

Ordovas, London, United Kingdom

ordovasart.com

From: 31 May 2012  
Until: 3 August 2012

Calder in India

Opening hours:  
Tuesday – Friday: 10:00 – 18:00  
Saturday: 11:00 – 15:00

### GALLERY



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An Alexander Calder exhibition is not unusual. The great American sculptor is rightly known as an art world great, and his work – mobiles and free standing geometric sculptures in bright, often primary colours – has been widely exhibited. Most of his work, at least.

In 1954 Calder received an invitation to India – to the rich and progressive city of Ahmedabad specifically, where the textile-producing Sarabhai family, renowned for their art patronage, hoped to offer the artist a studio from which he could both work and travel. Calder wasn't the first to have been asked. Invitations had been previously extended to John Cage, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Rauschenberg and Le Corbusier, among others, all of whom ventured to the rapidly developing country eager to make a mark. Calder, too, accepted the offer, intrigued by its opportunities, and, with his wife Louisa in tow, travelled to the city in January 1955.



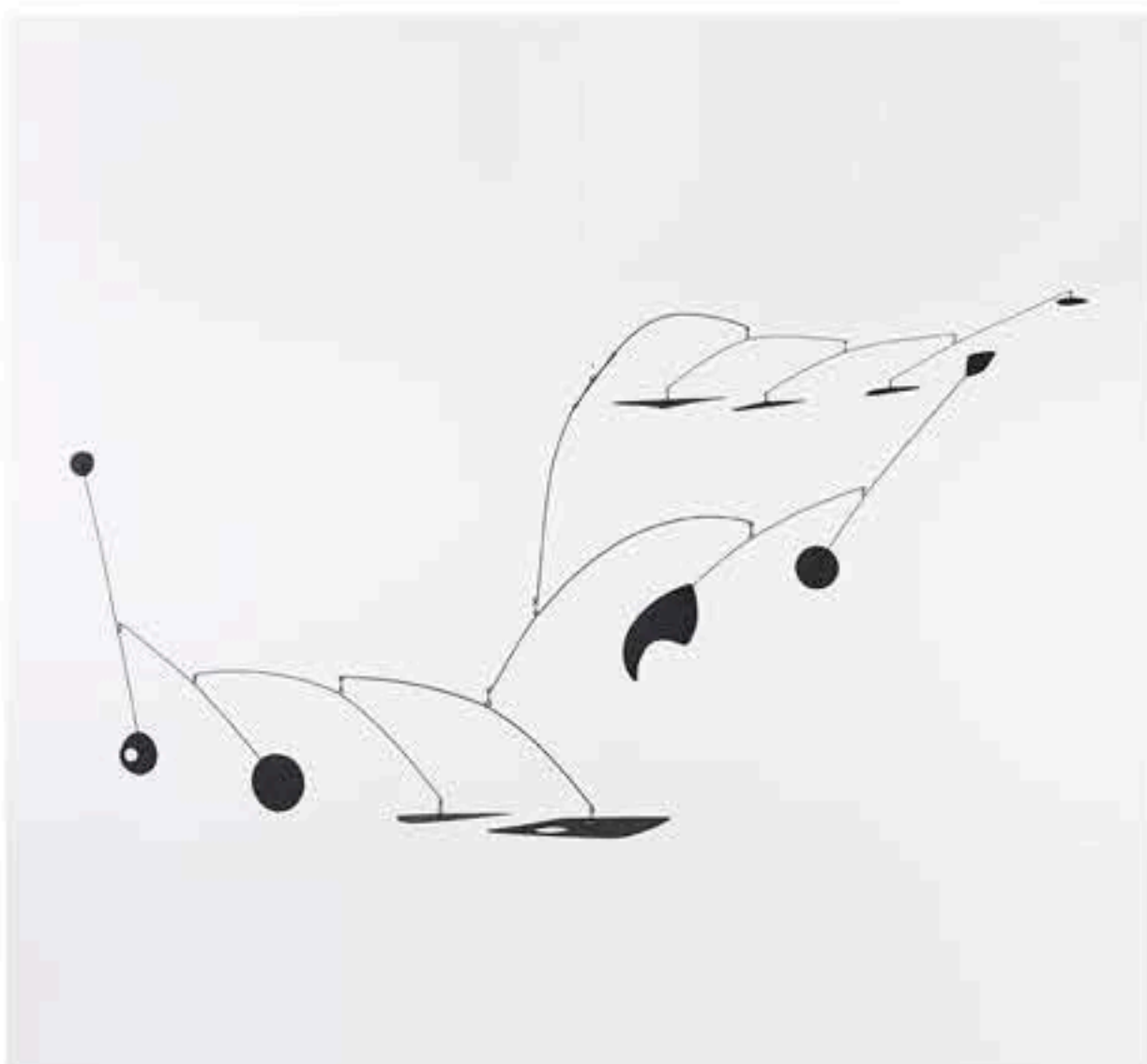
Alexander Calder, Franji Pani, photographed by Mike Bruce. © 2012 Calder Foundation, New York/DACS, London 2012

The artist set to work as soon as he arrived. In a three week period spent working in an idyllic garden workshop situated within the Sarabhai family compound, the artist produced nine large-scale sculptures – two playfully named for the trees that surrounded his studio (Franji Pani and Guava), and a third, titled Happy Family, warmly depicting the family with whom he stayed.



Alexander Calder with Kamalini, Gautam and Gira Sarabhai in Gautam's garden, 1955

Happy Family is the only sculpture from the period not included in Calder in India, an exhibition upcoming at Saville Row's Ordovas gallery that finally brings this particular body of work to light. The ten sculptures on show (eight from India, two completed before his trip) have not been seen in public since the year they were made. And they've never before been shown in the West.



Alexander Calder, Claw, photographed by Mike Bruce. © 2012 Calder Foundation, New York/DACS, London 2012

"The show is the result of 10 years' work," gallerist Pilar Ordovas tells Phaidon, justifiably proudly. "Ten years spent persuading collectors, 10 years of fitting all of the pieces of the puzzle together." Ordovas first heard about the work from a Sarabhai family member, who relayed the story of Calder's three-week output first hand. The gallerist was immediately hooked, and has been searching for the sculptures (all hidden within private collections) ever since. "When you've been dreaming about something for so long, to see it in reality is unbelievable," Ordovas explains. "Slowly it will become more real, when the show opens to the public and people are able to view the work for the first time."

Ordovas is something of a name in the art world, mostly for her tireless work at Christies (in a 10 year stay she oversaw nine of the auction house's ten biggest sales) but also as the director of the London Gagosian (from 2009–2011). She opened her gallery in October last year, opposite art world behemoth Hauser & Wirth, but she doesn't see them as competition, nor any of the other galleries in the area. While everyone else focuses on the super contemporary, Ordovas presents a unique historical programme of museum-quality exhibitions. And, unlike the others, it's a public gallery, really meant for the public. "I run three exhibitions a year, which look at aspects of an artist's work that are either previously unknown or, for whatever reason, under-seen, as in the case of Calder in India. The gallery is a public programme – a whole lot of work for the public to enjoy." We're sure they will.

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