

## Vacation Week

### Create a Calder-Inspired Artwork

American artist Alexander Calder first trained as an engineer before studying art. He's known for his playful, airy works made of simple shapes cut from sheet metal.

Some of them include moving parts and he called those "mobiles." Stationary constructions he named "stabiles." Calder was also a painter, creating watercolor works and murals.



Alexander Calder, *Stabile (Standing Mobile)*, 1957, paint on sheet metal.

#### Learning objectives:

1. Art-making is a form of play as well as a learning experience
2. Learn that there is more than one way to solve problems
3. One single project can touch on multiple fine motor skills, such as cutting, coloring, painting, shaping, and gluing.
4. Math skills are used for counting shapes.
5. Children learn to process emotions, both external and internal.
6. Practice the ability to bounce back – to make mistakes and work with them without giving up or starting new, thinking of them as “happy accidents.”

## Project 1: Standing Mobile

**Duration:** 30 minutes

### Materials:

- Wire or pipe cleaners
- Paper of different weights and colors
- Mobile shapes (buttons, foam, plastic, or paper)
- Scissors
- Pencil or hole punch
- Glue or stapler

### Instructions:

1. Fold or cut paper to desired size and shape for your stabile base, such as flat, conical, tubular.
2. Fold the bottom portion of your base about one inch and snip a few cuts to make it easier to fold over, especially if you want a curved shape.
3. Apply glue to this section on the outside facing side of paper.
4. Glue the folded piece of paper down on a stiff paper base or cardboard. Make sure to keep your desired shape while you glue down your base.
5. Put wire through the sculpture in desired places. Pierce with a pencil or paper punch.
6. Hang some small shapes of foam, paper, plastic, or buttons off the wires.
7. Think of color, interesting shapes, and balance. Experiment and have fun!



Samples from our Museum 101 students taught by Museum Educator Val Rodgers

## Project 2: Wire Signature

**Duration:** 15 minutes

### Materials:

- Wire or pipe cleaners
- Paper
- Stapler or glue

### Instructions:

1. Draw your name on a sheet of paper with all letters connected. Cursive works best.
2. Form the wire or pipe cleaners to the letters on the paper.  
You can also form “in the air” if this is easier.  
If you run out of wire, just connect more to the end.
3. When you are done, staple, or glue on a contrasting stiff colored paper.



## Project 3: Wire Sculpture

**Duration:** 15 minutes

### Materials:

- Wire or pipe cleaners

### Instructions:

Manipulate wire or pipe cleaners to the desired shape and form. It may be abstract or realistic.

Some ideas include: person sitting, standing, or dancing; an animal; a thing like a flower, car, bicycle. Try to make the sculpture three-dimensional. Secure into stiff foam or cardboard base. Play with your ideas!

