Balance and Movement: Alexander Calder

What is Balance?

Can you stand on one foot with your arms to your side? What about with both arms out? Physically, balance is the equal distribution of weight. It is how we stay upright!

In the visual arts, BALANCE is a PRINCIPAL OF ART that means the equal distribution of visual weight.

Symmetrical Balance - both sides have the same Visual Weight.

In this painting by Perugino, what do you see that creates a sense of balance?

Asymmetrical Balance - sections of the artwor are different in shape, size, or placement, yet still feel visually equal and stable.

In this painting by Van Gogh, what do you see that creates a sense of balance?

Alexander Calder

- Born in Philadelphia in 1856
- Worked in Kinetic sculpture - or sculptures that move. Credited as first to create a mobile as artwork.
- ASYMMETRICAL balance - where both sides are not the same, but balanced.
- Often used bright colors and geometric shapes

THE MET Art, Explained

How can we create a mobile with balance and movement?

We will cut out shapes from thick paper. You need 2 of each shape to paste together

With thin wire, we will create the “stems for each shape. We can bend loops to attach wire to wire. Experiment until you achieve balance!

Then we glue the shapes to the ends of the end of the stems. This will change the balance a bit, keep experimenting!