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PRESS RELEASE

## Phillips to Feature Monumental Calder Mobile in May Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art

39-50 To be Offered Publicly for the First time in Nearly Three Decades



**Alexander Calder**  
39-50, 1959  
Estimate: \$10,500,000 - 14,500,000

NEW YORK – 28 MARCH 2022 – After nearly three decades in a private collection, Alexander Calder's monumental 39-50 will be offered at auction in Phillips' New York Evening Sale of 20th Century & Contemporary Art on 18 May. Executed in 1959 and estimated at \$10.5-14.5 million, the mobile resided in the collection of French entrepreneur François Pinault for more than a decade, and it was included in the landmark retrospective of Calder's work in 1964 at the Guggenheim. When offered at auction in May, 39-50 will carry one of the highest estimates ever assigned to a hanging mobile by Calder.

**Robert Manley, Deputy Chairman and Worldwide Co-Head of 20th Century & Contemporary Art**, said, "Part of Alexander Calder's enduring appeal is how timely and fresh his works feel, even decades after they were created, and that is very much the case with 39-50. It's a historically important work that is directly related to and a part of one of the artist's most sought-after series, and boasts both distinguished ownership and exhibition histories. And yet, Calder's ability to capture harmony and tension, here in simple white, is incredibly contemporary. It's a combination that is certain to appeal to both established and new collectors."

Between 1946 and 1959, Calder created approximately 11 *Snow Flurry* mobiles based on the snowfall at his home in Roxbury. The present work is distinguished from the series with its distinct title. 39-50's singular title encapsulates both the number of elements and the intimate story behind the work's journey from the artist's studio. In 1961, Calder's close friend Peter Bellew requested a mobile with 50 white elements in celebration of his wife's 50th

birthday. Since the artist did not have a sculpture with 50 elements available, he gave the present work to Bellew with its current title.

Alexander Calder's *39=50* is a magnificent example of the artist's unique ability to capture both the harmony and tension innate in the natural world and its forms. Closely related to Calder's highly coveted series of *Snow Flurry* mobiles, the work comprises 39 white discs that delicately flutter in space in a masterful triumph of balance and kinetic poetry. *39=50*'s cascading discs, like the natural forms they so cunningly emulate, dance before the viewer's eyes as the slightest gust of air or beam of light arouses the sculpture's infinite visual possibilities. Arriving to auction for the first time in nearly 30 years, *39=50* notably featured in Calder's major 1960s retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Milwaukee Art Center, Wisconsin, and Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris - the most comprehensive exhibition on the artist at the time.

The *Snow Flurry* mobiles have established formidable institutional interest, with 10 out of 11 works residing in institutions across North America, South America, and Europe. *39=50* is the first sculpture with Calder's "Snow Flurry" design to come to auction in a decade. In 2012, *Snow Flurry*, 1950, sold for \$10,386,500 in New York - the highest price ever achieved for a hanging mobile at the time and currently within the artist's top 10 auction records to date.

In advance of the exhibition in New York, the work will go on view in Taiwan alongside Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Untitled* and Matthew Wong's *Day 1*.

**Auction:** 18 May 2022

**Auction viewing:** 30 April - 18 May

**Location:** 432 Park Avenue New York, NY 10022

**Click here for more information:** <https://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/NY010322>

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium; prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

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