American Artists Lesson Plan – Alexander Calder

Lesson Title /Project:	Grade Level:
The Fish Calder Inspired Wire Sculptures	4-6

Art Media Used:

Wire and miscellaneous found objects and assorted materials

Lesson Objectives:

ART Teaching Points:
Contour line can be interpreted / represented through the use of wire.
Various widths of wire can be used in different ways to add elaboration to a piece of sculpture.
American artist Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures are regarded as being amongst the earliest manifestations of an art that consciously departed from the traditional notion of the art work as a static object and integrated the ideas of motion and change as aesthetic factors.

Art Standards:	Vocabulary:
EALR 1: The student understands and applies art knowledge and skills. **GLE: 1.1.2** Remembers, applies, and creates the elements of visual arts when Producing a work of art. **Elements of Visual Arts**: Line, ***Shape and Form***, Color, Value, Texture, Space > Explores, identifies, uses, and produces shapes and forms in a variety of media and artworks to discover: > Geometric shapes and forms. > Organic shapes and forms. **EALR 2:** The student uses the artistic processes of creating, performing/presenting, and responding to demonstrate thinking skills in dance, music, theatre, and visual Arts. **Component 2.1** Applies a creative process to visual arts. (Identifies, explores, gathers, interprets, uses, implements, reflects, refines, and presents) **GLE: 2.1.1** Applies a creative process to visual arts. Demonstrates a creative process: > Uses ideas, skills, foundations, and techniques to create works of art. > Presents works of visual arts to others in the school and community. **EALR 3:** Visual Arts - The student communicates through the arts *(dance, music, theatre, and visual Arts)* **Component 3.1** *Uses* visual arts to express feelings and present ideas. **GLE: 3.1.1** Understands that visual arts are used to express feelings and present ideas and applies this understanding when creating artworks... > Expresses and/or represents in works of art/design what is perceived and experienced through the senses (seen, felt, smelled, tasted, and/or heard). **EALR 4:** The student makes connections within and across the arts to other disciplines, life, culture and work. **Component 4.2** Demonstrates and analyzes the connections among the arts and between the arts and other content areas. **GLE: 4.2.1** Remembers and understands skills, concepts, and vocabulary that the discipline of visual arts has in common with other content areas. > Finds and identifies concepts and attributes that are common to the arts and other areas.	Abstract Form Geometric Shapes Organic Shapes Space

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Recommended Materials:

Wire (depending on the age use either pre-cut 18" floral wire (available at floral suppliers, Wal-Mart and Michaels). I call this super-fine and flexible wire 'sewing wire' because it is fine enough to pass through sequins, beads and window screen.
sculpture wire 14 gauge (I use this roll from Blick), one 3 ft. piece per student
for younger students order covered colored wire:
http://www.dickblick.com/products/twisteez/?clickTracking=true#description
pre-cut 18" floral wire, 20 or 22 gauge, 'bright' (silver-colored aluminum)
embellishments: buttons, beads, sequins, aluminum pot scrubbers, pipe cleaners, aluminum window screen.
sketch paper (we use 8.5"x11" copy paper)
markers for sketching
optional: Ziploc gallon-size storage bags for storing unfinished work between sessions

Instructional Sequence:

We begin by looking at this Calder wire sculpture Powerpoint.
Next students sketch a contour drawing of a rocky beach Northwest Intertidal Animal on copy paper. The sketch should touch all four edges of the paper and should be simple.
Then students trace the contour with 14 gauge sculpture wire, overlap the ends and twist to secure.
Trace marker sketch with wire.
They can string shorter wires or pipe cleaners with beads, sequins and buttons across the center.
Encourage kids to experiment.

We link up the sculptures in a chain (using my favorite paper-clip 'S' hooks) and suspend from the ceiling. Instant group Calder mobile!

Helpful Resources:

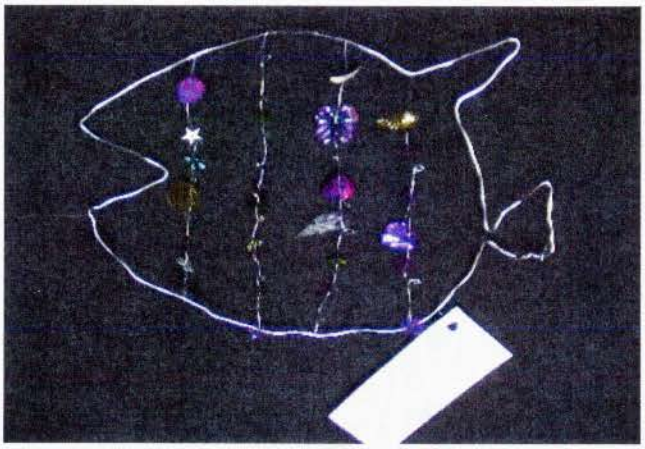
Vocabulary Art Terms:
Abstract – A style of art that is not realistic. Abstract art usually contains bold colors and lines with geometric and organic shapes
Form - An element of art, such as you would see in a sculpture that has three dimensions
Geometric Shapes – Any regular shape or form consisting of measurable lines and angles or shapes from geometry; shapes with names
Organic Shapes – Any shapes or forms that are irregular; suggestive of shapes or forms found in nature
Space – The area around, between or within objects in an artwork; three dimensional space can be created with color, overlapping of objects and the amount of detail in the artwork

Elizabeth Berrien's online resource Teaching Innovative Wire Sculpture:
http://www.wirelady.com/berrienwirehowtopage.html.
clip from the video from the Whitney Museum's exhibition "Alexander Calder: The Paris Years, 1926-1933" available on You Tube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6jwnu8Izy0
Inspired_Wire_Sculpture_Lesson_Plan_October_2009.pdf

San Diego Museum of Art

Adaptations K-3: Use covered wire "Twistees" and simple embellishments.

Calder inspired fish



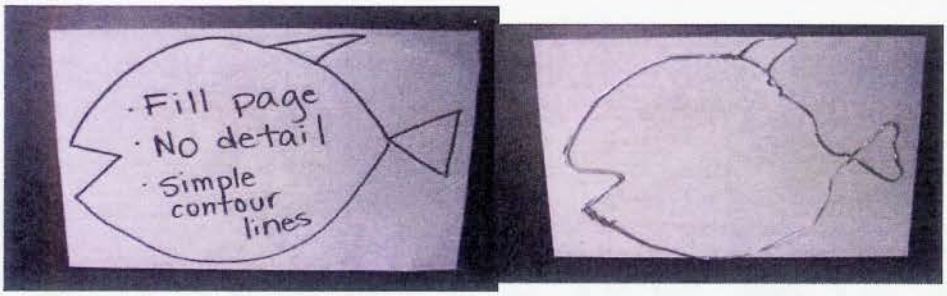
Notes on wire: When buying wire, the higher the gauge, the thinner and more flexible the wire. The wires below are soft enough for students to cut with our blunt-tip school scissors!

Simplify your life and buy **pre-cut 18" floral wire** (available at floral suppliers, Wal-Mart and Michaels).

- sculpture wire, 14 gauge (I use this roll from **Blick**), one 3 ft. piece per student
- for younger students order covered colored wire: **http://www.dickblick.com/products/twisteez/?clickTracking=true#description**
- pre-cut 18" floral wire, 20 or 22 gauge, 'bright' (silver-colored aluminum)
- pre-cut 18" floral wire, 26 gauge. I call this super-fine and flexible wire 'sewing wire' because it is fine enough to pass through sequins, beads and window screen.
- embellishments: buttons, beads, sequins, aluminum pot scrubbers, pipe cleaners, aluminum window screen.
- sketch paper (we use 8.5"x11" copy paper)
- markers for sketching
- optional: Ziploc gallon-size storage bags for storing unfinished work between sessions

We begin by looking at this **Calder wire sculpture Powerpoint**. Next students sketch a contour drawing of a rocky beach Northwest Intertidal Animal on copy paper. The sketch should touch all four edges of the paper and should be simple. Then students trace the contour with 14 gauge sculpture wire, overlap the ends and twist to secure.

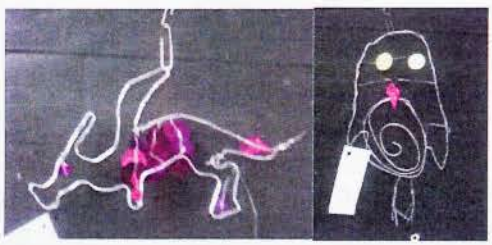
Contour + wire sketch

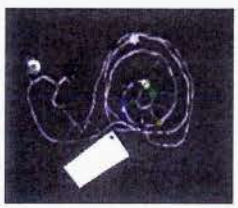


Trace marker sketch with wire.

They can string shorter wires or pipe cleaners with beads, sequins and buttons across the center. Encourage kids to experiment.

snail





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Calder's art is so varied and interesting, you could do an entire unit: a mobile lesson, stabile lesson, a wire sculpture lesson, a circus lesson, even a jewelry lesson.