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**Design Unveiled for Calder Gardens
A New National and International Cultural Destination in the Heart of Downtown
Philadelphia on Benjamin Franklin Parkway**

World renowned design firm Herzog & de Meuron and acclaimed landscape designer Piet Oudolf have conceived a place where art and nature combine for reflection, contemplation, and learning



PHILADELPHIA (September 7, 2022) – The Board of Trustees of Calder Gardens today unveiled the design for its new site on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the heart of downtown Philadelphia. Featuring a building conceived by Pritzker Prize-winning design practice Herzog & de Meuron and gardens by internationally acclaimed Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf, the project is dedicated to the art and ideas of Alexander Calder, a native Philadelphian who is considered one of the most innovative and influential artists of the 20th century.

Featuring galleries illuminated by natural light, in a structure ensconced in a flowing landscape of native and flowering species, Calder Gardens will present a rotating selection of masterworks from the Calder Foundation, New York, including mobiles, stabiles, monumental sculptures, and paintings. “The esthetic value of these objects cannot be arrived at by reasoning,” Calder wrote in 1933. “Familiarization is necessary.” Installed both indoors and outdoors, Calder’s art will be in constant dialogue with nature and the changing atmospheres of the seasons. Calder Gardens will provide the public with a singular place for contemplation and reflection, as well as abundant opportunities for learning and community building through a schedule of inclusive public programs and special events.

“Our intention for Calder Gardens is not only to create the ideal environment for the public to encounter my grandfather’s work but also to elevate personal contemplation and reflection,” said Alexander S. C. Rower, President of the Calder Foundation. “Calder’s role as a pioneer of experiential art is essential to his legacy. For viewers who open themselves up to the possibilities of his mobiles and stabiles, the unexpected takes root. His objects continuously unfold in real time.”

Calder was born in Philadelphia in 1898, and his connections to the city are grounded in the rich artistic lineage of his family. A trio of iconic installations by three generations of Calders can be found along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway: at the southeast end, atop City Hall, stands the monumental statue *William Penn* (c. 1886–94) by the artist’s grandfather Alexander Milne Calder; at the midpoint sits *Swann Memorial Fountain* (1924) by his father Alexander Stirling Calder; and at the northwest end is Calder’s own 1964 mobile *The Ghost*, which hangs majestically in the main hall of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Thus Calder Gardens brings into the 21st century the legacy of a Philadelphia family whose work has defined and enriched the city for over a century.



About the Design

Crafted specifically for the presentation of Calder’s work, the landscape and architecture of Calder Gardens will unfold as a choreographed progression that moves visitors from the quotidian city context to a more contemplative realm beyond the traditional museum experience, allowing them to engage with art as a personal, real-time encounter—as the artist intended.

“This was actually an open-ended process rather than a finished concept based on a fixed program. A kind of conceptual path which made us carve out the ground rather than build forms and volumes above—we were looking for space to present Calder’s work in a new and unprecedented way,” said Jacques Herzog, founding partner along with Pierre de Meuron of Herzog & de Meuron. “That space in the making eventually grew into a whole sequence of different galleries and also rather unexpected spaces, niches and gardens; such as the apse and the quasi-galleries or open plan gallery, the sunken or vestige gardens. And not only galleries in the classical sense, but every corner and angle, every stair and corridor should be offering itself up as a place to put art.”

Discreetly nestled into the landscape, Herzog & de Meuron’s almost 18,000 sq ft structure will be sheathed in softly reflective metal cladding that blurs the boundaries between architecture and the natural world—the material and the immaterial.

Departing the busy Parkway, visitors will approach the building along a path that winds through a meadow-like landscape punctuated by trees, arriving at the main entrance on the building’s north façade. Beyond the threshold, a sequence of spaces will reveal themselves below ground level as distinct volumes that will house a constantly changing display of Calder’s most acclaimed works. Large windows will wash the interiors with natural light and frame both the shifting geometries of Calder’s work and views of different gardens conceived as outdoor galleries. A Sunken Garden and Vestige Garden, visible from within the building through expansive glazing that likewise permits visitors outdoors to see into the building’s exhibition spaces. Quiet but theatrical, Herzog & de Meuron’s design has been conceived to amplify the impact of the artworks—to encourage engagement with their kinetic properties by affording visitors many different vantage points—and catalyze discovery and reflection.

The seamless relationship between the built elements designed by Herzog & de Meuron and the gardens envisioned by Piet Oudolf is central to the philosophy of Calder Gardens. The site will be distinguished by its naturalistic four-season garden, intending to create an entirely different experience than all other cultivated, manicured gardens on the Parkway.

“I see my gardens as living sculptures where change is constant,” Oudolf said. “The site is like a canvas to work on, and each plant has a personality that must work with the others. The composition of the garden is variable and will evolve through the seasons. For Calder Gardens, the horticultural design must also serve the works of art. My hope is that people will take the time to stand still and think here, to fully experience these elements together and have an

emotional reaction that stays with them long after their visit. It's not about what you see, but what you sense."



About Calder Gardens

The nonprofit Calder Gardens was launched by a group of Philadelphia philanthropists working in collaboration with the Calder Foundation and partnership with the City of Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. While governed by its board and curatorial committee, Calder Gardens will be operated by the Barnes Foundation—a renowned cultural and educational institution—to provide administrative, operational, and educational programming support when the new site opens to the public in what constitutes a new model for institutional sustainability and efficiency.

The Calder Gardens Board announced its selection of Herzog & de Meuron as Design Consultants in 2020. Ballinger will be the project's Executive Architects. Presented before the Philadelphia Art Commission this week, the Basel, Switzerland-based firm's design has been developed over the past two and a half years through intensive collaboration with the organization's board, the Calder Foundation, and, since 2021, Piet Oudolf. The shared goal has been to create a place where art and nature merge uniquely: the 1.8-acre Calder Gardens site—situated between 21st and 22nd Streets, across from the Barnes Foundation—will be a sanctuary-like retreat for Philadelphia residents and visitors alike, and a complement to the existing configuration of internationally acclaimed arts institutions that line the Parkway. "Calder Gardens marks a significant step toward realizing a long-held vision to not only create a permanent home for Calder's artistic contributions in his birth city but also to add yet one more jewel to the already

culturally rich Parkway,” said Joe Neubauer, Founder of the Neubauer Family Foundation and lead funder of the initiative.

In addition to lead funding from the Neubauer Family Foundation, the Calder Gardens project has been brought to fruition by numerous philanthropists and private foundations, including The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Estate of H.F. (Gerry) Lenfest, and an anonymous donor. The project is also supported by the Commonwealth’s Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. The \$70 million projected budget for Calder Gardens will include a substantial endowment to provide ongoing operating support and has been raised through the generous contributions of these patrons.

Sue Urahn, president and chief executive officer of The Pew Charitable Trusts, said, “Pew is very pleased to support Calder Gardens and we are excited to see the plans for it begin to take shape. The new public space will be a wonderful addition to the Parkway and enhance Philadelphia’s reputation as a world-class city in which to live, work, and visit.”

“The Calder family is integral to the history and now the future of Philadelphia. I am grateful for the range of partners that will bring Calder Gardens and the amazing art and ideas to the Parkway,” said Jim Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia. “This will continue to build upon an ever-growing arts and culture presence in our great city, further enhancing the city's cultural experiences for visitors and residents alike.”

Marsha Perelman, President of the Board, Calder Gardens, said of the design unveiled today, “To honor Calder’s work in a project of this significance, we engaged some of the world’s most respected and experienced talents. Herzog & de Meuron and Piet Oudolf are universally admired for their work on cultural sites. They know what it takes to create an unparalleled art experience and to challenge conventions to expand our minds and senses. I am thrilled that Philadelphians will be able to benefit from this unique experience in their own city.”

Calder Gardens is scheduled to open in 2024.

The public can learn more about Calder Gardens online at caldergardens.org and on social media @calder_gardens on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/calder_gardens) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/calder_gardens).



EDITORS NOTES

About Calder

Calder (b. 1898, Lawnton, Pennsylvania–d. 1976, New York City), whose illustrious career spanned much of the twentieth century, is the most acclaimed and influential sculptor of our time. Born in a family of celebrated, though more classically trained artists, Calder utilized his innovative genius to profoundly change the course of modern art. He began in the 1920s by developing a new method of sculpting: by bending and twisting wire, he essentially “drew” three-dimensional figures in space. He is renowned for the invention of the mobile, whose suspended, abstract elements move and balance in changing harmony. From the 1950s onward, Calder increasingly devoted himself to making outdoor sculpture on a grand scale from bolted steel plate. Today, these stately titans grace public plazas in cities throughout the world.

About the Calder Foundation

The Calder Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization founded in 1987 by Alexander S. C. Rower and the Calder family, is dedicated to collecting, exhibiting, preserving, and interpreting the art and archives of Alexander Calder. The Foundation’s objectives include furthering public knowledge and appreciation for the arts; conducting research in art history and related subjects and presenting those results to the general public; providing facilities and programs to assist the education and development of artists; and preserving Calder’s artistic legacy for scholarship, including the physical preservation of his works, archives, homes, and studios. Additionally, the Calder Foundation is dedicated to conserving natural resources and education in agriculture and sustainable environmental practices. The Foundation’s projects include collaborating on exhibitions and publications, organizing and maintaining the Calder archives, examining works attributed to Calder, and cataloguing the artist’s works. The Foundation also organizes its own exhibitions, lectures, performances, and events on Calder and on contemporary artists supported by the biannual Calder Prize and the Atelier Calder residency program in Saché, France.

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About the Neubauer Family Foundation

The Neubauer Family Foundation (NFF) invests in people and data-driven, evidence-based initiatives intended to achieve transformational impact. Philanthropic initiatives include strategic investments in Philadelphia’s school system, violent crime prevention, innovative leadership of arts & cultural organizations, institutions of higher learning and advancing new opportunities for Israeli-Arabs to participate in Israel’s high prestige, high income scientific revolution.

About the Barnes Foundation

The Barnes Foundation is a nonprofit cultural and educational institution that shares its unparalleled art collection with the public, organizes special exhibitions, and presents programming that fosters new ways of thinking about human creativity. The Barnes collection is displayed in ensembles that integrate art and objects from across cultures and time periods, overturning traditional hierarchies and revealing universal elements of human expression. Home

to one of the world's finest collections of impressionist, post-impressionist, and modern paintings—including the largest groups of paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Paul Cézanne in existence—the Barnes brings together renowned canvases by Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani, and Vincent van Gogh, alongside African, Asian, ancient, medieval, and Native American art as well as metalwork, furniture, and decorative art.

The Barnes Foundation was established by Dr. Albert C. Barnes in 1922 to “promote the advancement of education and the appreciation of the fine arts and horticulture.” A visionary collector and pioneering educator, Dr. Barnes was also a fierce advocate for the civil rights of African Americans, women, and the economically marginalized. Committed to racial equality and social justice, he established a scholarship program to support young Black artists, writers, and musicians who wanted to further their education. Dr. Barnes was deeply interested in African American culture and became actively involved in the Harlem Renaissance, during which he collaborated with philosopher Alain Locke and Charles S. Johnson, the scholar and activist, to promote awareness of the artistic value of African art.

Since moving to Philadelphia in 2012, the Barnes Foundation has expanded its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and social justice, teaching visual literacy in groundbreaking ways; investing in original scholarship relating to its collection; and enhancing accessibility throughout every facet of its programs.

The Barnes Foundation is situated in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape people. *Read our [Land Acknowledgment](#).*

About the Pew Charitable Trusts

The Pew Charitable Trusts is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. We are an independent nonprofit organization—the sole beneficiary of seven individual trusts established between 1948 and 1979 by two sons and two daughters of Sun Oil Company founder Joseph N. Pew and his wife, Mary Anderson Pew. Informed by our founders' entrepreneurial and optimistic spirit, Pew has evolved with the challenges and demands of the times while remaining true to the Pew family's enduring interest in research, practical knowledge, and a robust democracy. Today, Pew is a global research and public policy change agent that remains nonpartisan and dedicated to serving the public.

About Herzog & de Meuron

Established in Basel in 1978, Herzog & de Meuron is a partnership led by Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron together with Senior Partners Christine Binswanger, Ascan Mergenthaler, Stefan Marbach, Esther Zumsteg, and Jason Frantzen. An international team of over 500 collaborators including the two Founders, five Senior Partners, ten Partners, and 48 Associates work on projects across Europe, the Americas and Asia. Our main office in Basel is supported by our studios in Germany in Berlin and Munich; in Hong Kong; in the UK in London; and in the USA in New York and San Francisco; and by our site offices in Copenhagen and Paris.

The practice has designed a wide range of projects from the small scale of a private home to the large scale of urban design. Many projects are highly recognized public facilities, such as museums, stadiums, and hospitals, and they have completed distinguished private projects including offices, laboratories and apartment buildings. Awards received include the Pritzker Architecture Prize (USA) in 2001, the RIBA Royal Gold Medal (UK), the Praemium Imperiale (Japan), both in 2007, and the Mies Crown Hall Americas Prize (USA) in 2014.

About Piet Oudolf

Considered a renegade in the landscape industry, the Dutch landscape designer Piet Oudolf (b. 1944) has revolutionized the way perennial gardens are designed and viewed in landscapes today. With a new planting style and meticulous attention to the plants, Oudolf has forged the ability to break the rules when his eye finds it necessary to do so.

Some of Oudolf's most influential works in the United States include The Highline perennial plantings, New York; Lurie Garden, Chicago; Oudolf Garden Detroit; and the perennial plantings at Battery Park, New York. Among the many awards he has received, Oudolf was the recipient of the prestigious Prins Bernhard Culture Prize, an award given by the Prins Bernhard Culture Foundation to a person who has made an extraordinary contribution to culture in The Netherlands. Oudolf continues to design perennial gardens while also serving as a guest professor at numerous prestigious universities around the world.