

# Basic Detail Report

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## Sun and Moon

**Date**

1972

**Primary Maker**

Alexander Calder

**Medium**

Gouache on paper

### Dimensions

76 x 101 cm

### Description

Calder was born to artist parents - his father an acclaimed sculptor, his mother a painter - and although his creativity was encouraged from an early age, he qualified as an engineer before committing himself to becoming an artist. This technical skill is strikingly apparent in the mobiles, jewellery and wryly amusing wire sculptures for which he is renowned. Calder also produced numerous gouaches during his career, preferring the medium to oil and watercolour. Like Mondrian and Miro, a bold palette of primary colours characterise his oeuvre, of which this work is typical. In a palette confined to red, yellow, black and white, the sun and moon are boldly depicted, separated by a diminishing row of yin and yang motifs recalling the forms of the universe. The pronounced two-dimensionality and apparent suspension of the compositional elements, give them a weightlessness recalling Calder's mobiles, and illustrate his constant exploration of relationships between juxtaposed forms. Calder said, "The first inspiration I ever had was the cosmos, the planetary system". Sun and Moon, appears to reference an inspirational vision Calder had during a voyage to San Francisco in 1922 via the Panama Canal, when he woke on deck to see a large, red sun and bright, silver moon on opposite horizons.