

## THE ART OF BEER

## In Praise of Balance

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We live in an extreme world. There is a constant push to make cars quicker, buildings taller and burgers with more patties and strips of bacon. In the world of beer, high-alcohol, mega-IBU and super-sour beers grab all the headlines. I love all of this, but I also lament the fact that we seem to have lost balance in our lives. It's time to rediscover it.

In the world of beer, balance is epitomized by Dortmund, a style originating from the area around Dortmund, in western Germany. Ranging in alcohol from 4.5% to 6%, Dortmunders are gold in color, crystal clear and should pour with a substantial, white head. While they may look like pilsners or a Helles, Dortmunders are differentiated by their incredible balance. Unlike dry pilsners which are characterized by crisp hop bitterness, and unlike Helles, which are characterized by gentle malt sweetness, Dortmunders have both playing against each other in perfect balance. Dortmunders are the antithesis of extreme.

In the world of art, often ludicrous works that offend the sens-

ibilities are given prestigious awards while rousing public outrage. Some artists seem to feel that the only emotions worth stirring are anger and angst. But Alexander Calder (1898-1976) found a much more balanced way to express his artistic feelings.

Born in Lawton, PA to artistic parents, Calder's creativity was nurtured from a very early time in his life. He was gifted at taking scraps of metal and other found objects and creating kinetic toys from them. He could curve wire into intricate portraits and is well-known for large, outdoor, sculptures in public spaces. But he always had a penchant for sculptures that moved.

As a result, Calder is most famous for his mobiles. In fact, he is often credited with inventing the whole concept. Made from painted and unpainted aluminum, Calder mobiles are suspended from the ceiling and balance from a single fulcrum, even though they can range in size from just a few feet in length to as many as 75. They float and move based primarily on ambient wind currents, though some are driven by motor. The shapes are reminiscent of dragonfish

seahorses.

Calder mobiles can be seen in most renowned public art institutions including the New York Solomon R. Guggenheim, the Washington National Gallery of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Even a small Calder mobile will set you back a few million dollars from a private gallery or at auction.

When viewing a Calder mobile, take some time to observe the entrancing movement. Slow your life down to match that of the sculpture. Notice how balance is achieved through the various fulcrums for each arm of the mobile.

Most museums won't allow you to bring a beer into the galleries, but after you've viewed one, continue to bring balance to your life by enjoying a Dortmund at home or at a nearby beer bar. Commercial examples of Dortmund include the originals, DAB Export and Dortmund Union Export and domestic interpretations such as Great Lakes Dortmund Gold. Often, interpretations of the style don't include the word "Dortmunder" in the name. Look for Gordon Biersch Golden Export, SandLot Move Back and others.