

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR WEDNESDAY RELEASE

EXPERIMENTAL CHILD ART FROM NEW YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Paintings by children from 4 to 12 years, resulting from an experiment in the New York Public elementary schools have been selected by Victor D'Amico, Director of the Museum's Educational Program, for exhibition in the Museum's second floor gallery from October 13 to 27. A very apparent creative power, latent in these children but as yet barely tapped, is indicated in the original work shown which ranges in child expression from colorful splashes of the very young to the symbolic and expressionistic statements of the older child.

New York's elementary schools in general do not have art teachers as do the high schools. There are only four teachers to direct the art for 573 elementary schools, only 16¢ for art materials per child per year. In the one school now conducting experimental work in painting experience, two easels, poster paint, brushes and large paper are set up in a classroom of 25 to 35 desks. Children take turns painting while other studies are going on, and each one gets a chance to paint with complete freedom at least once a week. The child explores both his real and imaginative world and communicates it in his own inimitable style without fixed lessons in art or drawing. Children look forward to these art sessions, and grade teachers receive training that stimulates and directs creative activity in the classroom.

Miss Virginia Murphy, Director of Art in the New York Public School system, makes the following statement about learning through painting:

"Painting is a way of learning. The child learns not with his mind alone, not from the second-hand report of others, but rather through his own personal experience. He learns through his hands, his eyes, his feelings and his mind all working together.

"The young child learns how a brush works. He finds that it will make solid shapes as well as lines. He learns that liquid paint drips if he uses too much, that wet paint will run into wet paint and change the color. He learns to be inventive and original in painting.

"He also learns to be independent and to take care of all things by himself: to put on his apron or smock, to tack up his paper, to choose his own colors, to take his turn at the easel and to leave materials in good condition so other children can enjoy painting.

"As children grow in ability to think clearly, to select, to organize ideas and to handle materials, they will gradually grow in ability to express their ideas and feelings in art forms. Some may never use a truly realistic form but will prefer to reveal their growing sense of color, texture and arrangement by the original decorative or non-realistic design they create."

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