

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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An exhibition illustrating creative methods of teaching art to children will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from March 14 through April 17. The fundamentals of art education, which concern parents and teachers, are presented in the exhibition in a series of photographic panels, three-dimensional color slides, actual examples of children's work and caricatures by the well-known artist, Robert Osborn. DEVELOPING CREATIVENESS IN CHILDREN, prepared under the direction of Victor D'Amico, Director of the Museum's Department of Education, and members of the national Committee on Art Education, will circulate throughout the country after the New York showing.

The basic premises of the exhibition are that just as each child is an individual so does his art work reveal his individual feelings about the world and that art is more than a special subject to be studied or a gift to be developed but has an important part to play in the growing up process for all children.

To dramatize this theme, twenty-six photographic panels, caricatures and three-dimensional displays use explanatory captions such as: "Children are not 'artists'; they are children who think and feel in their own way. They must be judged as children - and their work as the efforts of children." and "We should respect their creative efforts no matter how immature they look." or "In the creative process children don't copy the work of other children, artists, the teacher because copying destroys self confidence, builds false skills, hinders initiative, atrophies the imagination."

While the exhibition stresses the constructive elements in today's art education, it also cautions the parent and teacher against influences both in and outside the school which hinder creative activity. For example, two panels illustrate the dangers of the indoctrinary methods of teaching widely used in the past and still practiced in some schools; in one panel, children are imitating their teacher in a perspective problem; in the following panel, a photograph of Hitler youth marching in unison is superimposed over the pattern of the stereotyped drawings made by children in the first panel. Another panel shows children at home copying an artist on television. The deteriorating effect of competition, imitation, and adult pressures toward professional results are brilliantly exposed in caricatures made for the exhibition by Robert Osborn.

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Victor D'Amico, Director of the exhibition, says: "The creative development of children is the concern of the parent as well as of the art teacher. If they both understand the values of creative teaching and work together, art will have a more vital role in the growth of the child. It is especially important today that parents understand what creative teaching really is because with the invasion of the home by television, magazines, and comic strips which appeal directly to the child, the efforts of the school can be hindered or completely undermined by formal and imitative practices. However, too often creative education is expressed in pedagogical language that is dreary and meaningless to parents. Creative education, while having a scientific basis, is a dynamic and human process which in actual experience is stimulating and exciting to see.

"This exhibition endeavors to reveal this dramatic process by bringing the observer face to face with creative children, by looking over their shoulders as they produce their engaging creations, and by seeing the finished works in the context of a human process that begins as soon as the child can manipulate materials and grows in richness and meaning as the child grows toward maturity.

"The exhibition is a composite of the ideas and experiences of the Committee on Art Education as a whole, but especially of the small group who planned and executed it."

The panel layouts for the exhibition were designed by Helen Federico. Marion Palfi, Len Rosenberg, Arthur Rothstein and other photographers contributed time and work to the exhibition.

Note: Photographs available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City. CI 5 - 8900.