

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
NEW YORK

11 WEST 53rd STREET  
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900  
CABLES: MODERNART, NEW-YORK

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

December 8, 1941.

TO Art Editors  
City Editors  
Education Editors

Dear Sirs:

You are invited to come or send a representative to the

Press View and Announcement  
of the Prize Winners  
in the Museum's recent nation-wide  
Silk Screen Print Competition,  
Pictures for Children

in the Young People's Gallery  
on the 3rd floor of  
The Museum of Modern Art  
11 West 53 Street

Tuesday, December 9  
from 2 to 6 P.M.

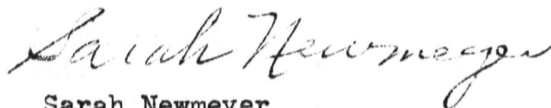
The prize winners have been selected by child juries, aged from 5 to 12 years. The ten prize-winning prints and ten Honorable Mentions will be on public exhibition beginning Wednesday, December 10, and afterwards throughout the country.

There will also be a demonstration of the silk screen printing process with children making prints.

Several small children who have served as jurymen in the judging of the Competition will be at the Museum from 2 to 3 P.M.

For further information please telephone me at Circle 5-8900.

Sincerely,



Sarah Newmeyer  
Publicity Director

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CHILD JURY SELECTS PRIZE-WINNING PICTURES AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Child juries representing two age levels--five to eight years and nine to twelve years--have made their selections of the prize-winning silk screen prints for which the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, held a competition from September 3, 1941 to November 20, 1941. From the selections made by the children an adult jury chose ten to receive purchase prizes of \$25.00 each and ten for Honorable Mention.

These twenty prints and a demonstration of the silk screen printing process will be exhibited in the Young People's Gallery of the Museum from Wednesday, December 10, through Sunday, January 25, after which the exhibition will be circulated throughout the country. The Museum will sell the prints at prices ranging from \$2.00 to \$10.00, all proceeds going to the artists.

The judging of the competition revealed the close affinity between modern art and children in the younger age group (five to eight years). These children voted largely for pictures having the same characteristics as their own drawings and paintings--pictures based on fantasy such as prize-winning Juliet Kepes' lion-artist with his fancifully curled mane. The lion is painting a portrait of a lioness gracefully clasping flowers to her bosom, while on the wall behind the artist is a portrait of "Cousin Leopard." The picture suggests, without too great a stretch of the imagination, Picasso's Artist and His Model. Another picture which was a great favorite with the little children was Chet La More's Hi, diddle diddle, where the vividly colored cow and dog and cat have just enough distortion to delight the fresh humor of a young child.

Realism, however, was the great cry with children in the older level (nine to twelve years). The adult world has begun to close in on them and they have already been affected by the desire not only to be but to see like everyone else. These children seem to be in revolt against their own earlier youth and both demand and paint pictures which come as close as they can contrive to photographic reproduction. "Paint real, paint real!" is their impatient cry. With the

younger group, however, both in their own painting and in their choice of other paintings there is an unconventionality, a directness of technique and a freedom of the imagination which is often the envy of adults.

The prize-winning print which received the greatest number of child votes was Elizabeth Olds' Fire. It is a large, highly colored picture showing a blazing building. Firemen are scattered about on the street and on ladders set against the building, directing streams of water on the fire. It is very realistic and, although the figures of the firemen are comparatively small, the entire picture presents a unified impression of activity, excitement and color.

The juries were composed of 126 children from schools in New York City, plus an adult jury of six which made final selections after the children's votes had been counted and attached to each entry. In making the awards the adult jury considered the children's choices as an important factor, even in some cases waiving artistic standards in favor of the youthful jurors. This was in accordance with the announced object of the Competition, which was to obtain pictures which would appeal to children between the ages of five and twelve years. The children's votes were classified under younger and older group headings and boy and girl preferences. These four classifications showed marked differences in choice. The prize winners and Honorable Mentions are as follows:

Prize Winners:

HELFOND, Riva.	<u>Who's Who in the Zoo,</u>	\$10.00
JULES, Mervin.	<u>Seal and Penguins.</u>	\$10.00
KASAI, Amy.	<u>Jungle Gym.</u>	\$ 2.00
KEPES, Juliet.	<u>Lion M.A.</u>	\$ 5.00
LA MORE, Chet.	<u>Hi, diddle diddle.</u>	\$10.00
OLDS, Elizabeth.	<u>The Fire.</u>	\$10.00
PYTLAK, Leonard.	<u>Rockport, Mass.</u>	\$10.00
ROBBINS, Hulda.	<u>Winter in the City.</u>	\$10.00
STERNBERG, Harry.	<u>The Zoo.</u>	\$10.00
WALD, Sylvia.	<u>Tag, You're It!</u>	\$10.00

Honorable Mentions:

BEYER, George.	<u>Boy with Colt.</u>	\$10.00
COHN, Max Arthur.	<u>Mexican Boy.</u>	\$10.00
HARARI, Harariah.	<u>City Signs.</u>	\$10.00
HELFOND, Riva.	<u>Circus Grounds.</u>	\$10.00
HOPF, Ernest.	<u>Land of Sunshine.</u>	\$10.00
LA MORE, Chet.	<u>Farm.</u>	\$10.00
LANDON, Edward.	<u>Shipwreck.</u>	\$10.00
OLDS, Elizabeth.	<u>Noah's Dory.</u>	\$10.00
STENVALL, John F.	<u>Farm At Night.</u>	\$ 6.00
STIRISS, Pauline.	<u>Ski Class.</u>	\$10.00

As a necessary preliminary to the competition the Museum last summer made a survey of thousands of children throughout the country

between the ages of five and twelve. These children were asked: "If an artist promised to paint you a picture, what would you like him to paint?" The children's replies, definite and specific, were tabulated in detail to provide the basis for the competition. A circular stating these preferences and giving the rules of the competition was mailed to 1,500 artists throughout the country. The folder urged them to pay particular attention to the children's preferences in making their paintings for the competition. In many cases, however, artists neglected to do this, and the Museum feels that the competition and the individual artists would have been much more successful if they had taken the children and their expressed desires more seriously.

For example, not one picture submitted had a dog as the point of interest. Only one picture showed a horse (in this case a colt) as the focal point; this picture received a high number of votes from the children. There was a scarcity of boats and domestic animals and almost no pictures of children playing with domestic animals. All of these subjects were overwhelmingly demanded by the children in the Museum survey.

Victor E. D'Amico, Director of the Educational Project of the Museum, commented on the competition as follows:

"The children's choices revealed some important facts. First and foremost, subject matter was of greatest interest at all age levels but, of course, the subject matter differed for each. The younger children sought pictures of animals, especially cats and dogs and zoo animals. Not one print was submitted which featured a dog. The element which attracted them most with respect to animals was the charm of younger animals and especially affection shown by animals toward their young. In both age levels the greatest appeal was for a picture which showed a child's tenderness toward animals. An example of this is in the print by George Beyer, Boy with Colt, which received a large number of votes. Circus and zoo were very popular and a number of prints on these subjects were submitted.

"The children seemed to crave pictures of landscapes and seascapes with vistas, particularly views of hills and trees and groups of children playing among them. The beach with people enjoying themselves bathing or sitting in the sun, probably reminiscent of vacation days, was particularly desired. Only one such picture was submitted, Land of Sunshine by Ernest Hopf, and this received a large number of votes. The major factor of the appeal in such pictures is the atmosphere produced by such features as wind blowing clouds and sails, cool water, waves dashing on the rocks, white sails in the sunlight.

"While many of the pictures had general appeal to both young and older children, as well as to boys and girls, some made a greater impression on one age level, or on boys or girls. Boys, for example, wanted pictures with boats, but only a few were submitted. Shipwreck by Edward Landon was eagerly received, indicative of the extent of the appeal that might have been satisfied if more pictures on that subject had been designed with the interest of boys in mind.

"The younger child in some instances chose pictures

which had the spontaneous and imaginative conception of their own pictures such as Lion M.A. by Juliet Kepes, in which a lion is painting a portrait of a lioness, and Farm at Night, by John F. Stenvall, an abstraction made up of farm motifs. Through their choices the older children showed their indifference and even their antagonism to childlike things, which confirms the general psychological principle that children about the adolescent level revolt against their own childhood in their desire to be adult.

"Artists who undertake to produce works for children would be much more successful if they studied child development more closely and took into consideration children's personal, intimate preferences. Often the works that we know as masterpieces miss fire with the child because they lack some of these elements of appeal. Inclusion of these personal elements need not impair the standard of the artist's work. For example, the print Who's Who in the Zoo by Riva Helfond was very pleasing to children because it showed a mother giraffe with her offspring and two children looking at them through the fence. In addition, the print is a fine example in good design and technique. Sentiment can properly infuse good design and achieve both child satisfaction and esthetic merit.

"This Competition serves but to open up fields of great possibility for the artist's effort and for child education. The Museum of Modern Art hopes that this initial undertaking will encourage more attempts of this kind to provide works of art of high merit attuned to the fantasy and imagery of childhood."

The adult jury was composed of:

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum of Modern Art

Victor E. D'Amico, Director, Educational Project of the Museum of Modern Art

Belle Boas, Director of Art, Horace Mann School, New York

Harry Gottlieb, painter and graphic artist

Virginia Murphy, Director of Art, Public Schools, City of New York

Ray Faulkner, Head of the Department of Fine and Industrial Arts, Teachers College, Columbia University.