

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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No. 8

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART CHILDREN'S CARNIVAL GOES TO MILAN

The Children's Carnival held annually at the Museum of Modern Art in New York will be presented in Milan, Italy, this spring from April 12 through April 27 as part of the International Samples Fair. Under the sponsorship of the Office of International Trade Fairs, U. S. Department of Commerce and the Museum of Modern Art, this popular Carnival that has delighted thousands of children in the United States will demonstrate to Italian teachers and parents the Museum's extremely successful method of art education.

Groups of Italian school children will play with specially designed toys, trim a miniature wire tree, make string designs, 'paint' with colored light a space man flying through clouds of angel hair, make designs on a magnetic board, assemble jigsaw puzzles and make their own paintings, 'feeling pictures,' or collages and mobiles in a specially scaled and equipped gallery workshop.

The Children's Carnival was first created in 1942 by Victor D'Amico, Director of the Museum's Department of Education. Mr. D'Amico will accompany the Carnival to Milan where he will direct the installation and classes with the assistance of Italian teachers.

The toys with which the children can play and the workshop area where they make their own pictures and mobiles will be set in the Fair area and although parents are not allowed inside the Carnival, they will be able to watch from outside. The toys were designed to introduce young children to an awareness of texture, pattern, color and motion on a level they can understand and in a way which involves their own active participation. (Detailed description attached.) Also shown here are two sculptures by Ruth Vollmer, a furry cat that arches his back when stroked and a dancing metal rooster, which are placed on the floor so that the children can touch them. After playing with the toys the children go into the workshop area where they may paint, or make collages and mobiles from a variety of materials, including colored paper, straws, string, sponges, pipe cleaners and cellophane. The walls of the workshop area will be hung with color reproductions of paintings that particularly appeal to children, and the collage tables, stools and easels will be painted bright colors.

The aim of the Department of Education is not to discover the specially talented child but to encourage an enjoyment of art as part of the general education and growth of all children. The children respond to the stimulation of the Carnival with an eagerness and absorption that delights their parents.

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GALLERY OF TOYSSpace Man Flying Among the Planets

A two-foot-tall space man, made of plastic and metal, rotates when the child pushes a button. Over the space man's head are three planets and around him are clouds of angel hair. By pushing more buttons, the child can change the color of the lights shining on the space man and create twilight, dawn or sunset for his flight. This is a new toy designed by Toni Hughes to give children an opportunity to "paint with light" and see the different effects of yellow, red or green lights on the same moving object.

Color Players

Two of these popular toys that also involve "painting with light" are in the Carnival. To operate the Color Player the child sits before a large box containing two tree-like structures on which he hangs abstract shapes, animal forms, birds and designs. After lowering a translucent glass window in front of the box, the child then changes the colors that shine on his trees by punching four different keys with his hands. By pushing foot pedals his trees revolve, thus adding motion to the color pattern. One color player is fitted with cool colors, one with warm. They were designed by Victor D'Amico.

Wire Tree

This small tree is made of thick wire and the child can easily bend the branches to make any shape he likes. In front of the tree are a selection of ornaments which he can then hang on the branches. Designed by Victor D'Amico.

Elastic String Design

In this toy the child makes a three-dimensional construction out of six pieces of elastic string, each fixed at one end only in a large shadow box. The other end of each string is equipped with a small ring which he attaches to any one of a number of hooks in the walls and ceiling of the shadow box. After creating his design -- based on tension rather than gravity -- the child can hang a variety of three-dimensional decorations on the strings. This toy was designed by Victor D'Amico.

Magnetic Board

The magnetic board gives children an opportunity to try many different arrangements of color and pattern by placing bright colored metal shapes, both abstract and representational, on the white surface of the magnetic board. This was designed by Leonard Nelson.

Furry Cat and Dancing Rooster

Children are encouraged to play with these two sculptures, designed by Ruth Vollmar. The furry cat arches his back when he is petted and the rooster, a metal spiral construction, dances when a lever is jiggled.

Shelf of Small Toys

Along one gallery wall there is a shelf of small experimental toys. They include a building toy by A. F. Arnold and a group of jig saw puzzles made by using color reproductions of some of the paintings in the Museum Collection which especially appeal to young children, so that when the child finishes putting the puzzle together he has made a picture he enjoys seeing.

WORKSHOP GALLERY

This studio, or workshop gallery, is designed to give children an opportunity to try out for themselves the use of color, texture, pattern and movement seen in the toys. Easels have been set up around the walls, equipped with large brushes, large paper and poster paints, all suitable for children between the ages of four and eight.

In the center of the room is a large table on which a great variety of materials is arranged -- feathers, pieces of tin foil, scraps of velvet and silk. Here the child can make "feeling pictures" or collages, by pasting different kinds of material on paper to form a pattern or can make three-dimensional constructions or mobiles.

On the walls of this section of the Carnival are hung color reproductions of modern paintings in many different styles, selected to give children an understanding of the great variety that exists in the art of our time.

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