

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
NEW YORK

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

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

November 1, 1941.

TO Art Editors
City Editors
Education Editors
Photo Editors

Dear Sirs:

During the past few weeks the Museum, owing to its many activities, has invited you to an unusual number of press previews. Due to circumstances beyond our control the small exhibition mentioned in this letter is following too closely on the heels of preceding exhibitions. We shall therefore be glad to send you a release and photographs if you do not attend or send a representative to the

PRESS PREVIEW
on Wednesday, November 5
from 2 to 6 P.M.

of Children in England Paint, a small exhibition of 52 watercolors by school children between four and sixteen years of age. Very few of the pictures reflect the war; instead, they use as subject matter daily activities and fairy tales.

in the Young People's Gallery of
The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street, New York.

This exhibition will be open to the public Thursday, November 6.

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

Sincerely,

Sarah Newmeyer

Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

BY CHILDREN IN ENGLAND

Like their elders, who in spite of bombs and blitzkrieg carry on "business as usual," the children of England cheerfully continue to paint the favorite subjects of childhood: fairy tales, games, circus and school scenes, and daily activities. This is shown in the exhibition of fifty-two watercolors: Children in England Paint, which will open to the public Thursday, November 6, in the Young People's Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art.

The exhibition has been arranged by the Museum's Educational Project in collaboration with the British Library of Information. The pictures were assembled under the direction of Alfred A. Longden, Director of Fine Arts of the British Council. The exhibition will continue at the Museum through Sunday, November 30, and will later be sent on a tour of the country.

The paintings are from forty-five schools in England both in the London district and in the provinces. The ages of the young artists range from four to sixteen years. Very few of the pictures reflect the war; the most prominent of these is one called simply Hess, painted with stark realism by a girl of twelve: a scene in a barn with a smoking lamp on a rough table, the farmer and his wife, and in one corner Hess wearing the iron cross and a swastika. The majority of the pictures, however, have such titles as Me and My Friends As Clowns, Football in the Snow, Elisha Praying for Rain, Old-Fashioned Family Group, The Butcher Shop, The Musician, and The Little Mermaid.

Herbert Read, noted British writer on art and member of the Selection Committee for the exhibition, writes as follows of the art of these children in England:

"Though the art of children may reflect the peculiarities of their environment and mode of life, it has nowhere any specifically national character. The child expresses universal characteristics of the human psyche, as yet unspoilt by social conventions and academic prejudices. It follows that, to those visitors who are familiar with the art of the children of their own

countries, these drawings from England will not strike any startling note of originality. It is not in the nature of the child to be 'original,' but only to express directly its own individuality; the individuality of a seeing and feeling being, but not the originality of a thinking and inventing being....

"The aim of the new method in teaching is to secure at all costs the child's enjoyment of this plastic activity which is the handling of a pencil or brush and the exploitation of colours. This can only be done by allowing the activity to become an instinctive one--which means, in effect, allowing the child to discover its own potentialities. The principal role of the teacher becomes suggestive. What is before all necessary is to create an atmosphere which will induce the child to exteriorize the rich and vivid imagery in its mind. This involves, in its positive aspect, the creation of self-confidence in the child; but there is a negative, or rather a preventive aspect, which calls for even greater skill and tact in the teacher. The child is an imitative animal, and picks up with incredible ease not only any idiosyncrasies which the teacher as an artist may possess, but also the more widely distributed sophistications of books, magazines and films. It is impossible altogether to exclude these influences, and perhaps not desirable; but the good teacher can lead the child to a recognition, based on perception and feeling, of what is genuine and unsophisticated in its own work....

"All types of school, from famous public schools like Eton and Charterhouse to elementary schools in the East End of London, have contributed to the exhibition. But any classification of the collection would bear no relation to a classification of the schools. The only possible classification is according to psychological types, and these types, when allowed free expression, are found to be quite evenly distributed. It is true that certain schools may, for example, show an obsession with war subjects. This is not likely to be due to the impact of war--children do not normally practice 'reportage.' It is much more likely to be due to the influence of boys' magazines, newspapers and films--that is to say, it is one of those forms of sophistication which the teacher has not managed to exclude. The few war pictures in the exhibition come from schools in areas comparatively remote from the war, and their realism is imaginative rather than documentary."