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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NEW YORK

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

SARAH NEWMAYER, PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

November 12, 1942.

TO Art Editors
City Editors
Education Editors

Dear Sirs:

You are invited to come or send a representative to

Press Preview of a small exhibition in the
Young People's Gallery of the Museum:

CHILDREN'S PAINTING AND THE WAR

Tuesday, November 17
2 to 6 P.M.

The exhibition will open to the public Wednesday, November 18.

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

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer
Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OPENS EXHIBITION OF
CHILDREN'S PAINTING AND THE WAR

What the war means to children between the ages of six and thirteen can be seen in terms of their own painting when the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, opens in its Young People's Gallery Wednesday, November 18, an exhibition of Children's Painting and the War. Bombs and airplanes burst in air, parachutes zoom earthward, heavily helmeted soldiers man anti-aircraft guns, submarines break in two on rocks at the bottom of the ocean, buildings in large cities collapse under air attack, and on a snow-covered, blood-stained battlefield on the Russo-Finnish front an oversized Eskimo dog peers cautiously from behind a rock.

About fifty of these paintings have been selected by the Museum's Educational Project from the work of art classes in Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Wisconsin. Children all over the country paint battles on land, sea and air, interpreting in their own way the information they have gleaned about the war from the daily papers and the movies. Their pictures show an amazing familiarity with battle tactics and considerable knowledge of war machines and how they work.

A boy of ten in Delaware painted a dramatic and vivid interpretation of a fight in the air between one American and several Nazi planes. Because of the abundance of Nazi planes and the single American, several adults foolishly protested that either David or his teacher must be pro-Nazi. David, however, explained with simple logic that although there was only "one United States plane and the Nazi planes were attacking it, it was a pretty good plane and it was getting away. Land guns were protecting it too. One Nazi plane was already down and another one coming. There was a gun in the front and in the back of the United States plane."

Victor D'Amico, Director of the Museum's Educational Project, comments on the exhibition as follows:

"These paintings show that the war is very much on our children's minds. Parents and teachers are often alarmed at the manifestations of awareness which they sometimes construe

as cruelty or fear, and wish to divert the children from such expressions. But we must accept the fact that children live in a war world and that their environment and daily events will impress them. To try to insulate them against reality or to make of art an escape from life would be to weaken American youth and to deprive art of its greatest power. On the other hand it would be equally harmful and impractical to urge children to paint war themes or to distort the place of the war in their experience. Left to their choice it takes its place naturally and proportionally in their experience.

"These war paintings have been done with the same daring spontaneity and exuberance common to children's work when they are allowed free expression to paint what they wish and feel in their own way. Children still love to paint pictures of their pets and their friends, of home and the community. The war has only added a new stream of ideas for creative expression in what is to them a wonderful and exciting life."

There are two pictures in the exhibition that were painted by a Chinese boy, a refugee to this country, about six years ago when he arrived here at the age of 13. These were painted in the Gramercy Boys Club. Let one of the boys who was a member of the club at the same time tell the surroundings in which the young Chinese, who has now gone to war, painted these pictures:

"At first Louie's war was a distant war but it soon came close to us because it was close to Louie. Months and months passed by but Louie didn't hear a word from his Mother or his Father. In fact he never heard from them - never one word. That's how the war was with Louie.

"Then Italy went to war. Most of us had folks in Italy. Lots of us were born there. Pretty soon my Mother and Father didn't hear from their Mother and Father any more - just like Louie.

"We lived near the water and we knew a lot about the boats. One of the things that affected us most was the change in the boats. First they painted the big flags on their sides and then they painted them grey and mounted guns all over them.

"It seems that soon after that we all suddenly grew up. In fact some of the kids, who were ten years old when we started painting, are now gunners on big freighters like those we used to draw down by the water front. Some of those who used to draw the airports in all the bright colors are camouflaging real ones now.

"The little kids now are painting boats the same as we did at their age - except that all their boats are grey. They don't understand the war but they feel it just as we do."

The exhibition of Children's Painting and the War will be on view at the Museum through December 10.