

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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## THREE PRIZES AWARDED IN POLIO POSTER PROGRAM

Herbert Matter, New York photographer, has been awarded first prize of \$1,000 in the polio poster program sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

The award was made in the Museum Auditorium last night by Basil O'Connor, President of the National Foundation. Herbert Matter was awarded the first prize for his photo-montage, "One of them had polio," in which one of the children shown - the one who had recovered from polio - was his own son. Second prize of \$750 was awarded to Henry Koerner, Brooklyn artist, for his painting, "Maybe soon"; while a third prize went to Herbert Bayer, designer living in Aspen, Colorado, for his design, "Polio research."

Mr. O'Connor in making the awards declared the posters struck a blow against ignorance and superstition that have created fear of infantile paralysis.

"There have been times, I am sure, when the dread of infantile paralysis has been worse than the disease itself," he said. "The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis has recognized from the beginning that one of the major obstacles to be overcome in alleviating the suffering caused by polio has been the very human, though somewhat illogical, panic that can generate and spread with the rapidity of fire wherever the disease strikes.

"Human reaction to polio epidemics is inclined to be highly emotional. Yet more than 37,000 people already have been stricken in this year's widespread polio epidemics and there has been no panic. For twelve years we have neglected no opportunity to place before the public every known fact about infantile paralysis. Today emotion, instead of spilling over into negative hysteria, is directed into positive channels, quickly transformed into concrete action to help the stricken and to organize the resources of the community in a common defense against the disease.

"The presentation of these awards has made me realize anew that the old fear and dread of polio has given way to an inspiring attitude of public confidence. These splendid works of art will be placed on exhibition here at the Museum and will then travel to other galleries throughout the nation. They will tell the story of polio again and again, and each time the story is told we will draw nearer and nearer to eventual conquest of the disease."

Rene d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum of Modern Art, acting as Chairman, pointed out that this was the first time a museum had co-operated in this way with a national health foundation. He also stated that the Museum was proud to have the opportunity to aid in putting the creative talents of such outstanding artists to work in so worthy a humanitarian cause.

*Herb Matter*

Dr. Alice V. Keliher, Professor of Education at New York University, presented the educator's point of view in her talk, "The value of this program." Dr. Keliher was one of the originators of the program, making the initial plans in conjunction with Miss Sally Lucas Jean, Consultant in Health Education of the National Foundation, and Miss Mildred Constantine of the Museum, Director of the Poster Program.

#### THE ARTISTS:

Herbert Matter, winner of the first prize, was born in Switzerland in 1907. Originally a painter and sculptor in Paris, he also studied typography and layout. Later he turned from painting to photography. He came to this country in 1935 and continued to work in photography in New York where he arranged exhibitions for the World's Fair and for the Museum of Modern Art. He has had one-man shows of his photographs in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. He is at present connected with Condé Nast Publications and in addition is developing his latest interest: the medium of the film. His first film is about the artist Alexander Calder and his work. His 7-year-old son, who appears in his poster, is named Alexander Nehru Matter and is called Pundi, because Matter was angry that Nehru was thrown into jail, and this happened on the same day his son was born.

Henry Koerner is an American born in Vienna in 1915. He came to the United States in 1938. During the war he worked for the Office of War Information until 1943 when he joined the Army. After the war he worked as a civilian with the graphic unit of Military Government in Germany. He won first prize in a Cancer Poster Contest, as well as two prizes in war poster contests conducted by the Museum of Modern Art. The children he used as models for his poster are neighborhood friends in Brooklyn whom he frequently paints and who love to pose for him.

Herbert Bayer was born in Austria in 1900. He studied at the Bauhaus School where he later became an instructor. He has had exhibitions of his work in Paris, Salzburg and London. In this country he designed the installation of "Road to Victory," an exhibition organized by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art in 1942. He recently had an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art. As Mr. Bayer is in Aspen, Colorado, his award was accepted for him by Monroe Wheeler, Director of the Museum's Exhibitions and Publications.