

The Museum of Modern Art

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The Museum of Modern Art is planning a major shift in its educational services beginning next fall, Bates Lowry, Director of The Museum of Modern Art, announced today. Programs for the thousands of public school children who visit the Museum galleries free of charge each year will be expanded while teaching activities, long a prominent part of the Museum's educational department, will be concentrated on teacher-training programs and programs for New York City school children and children in disadvantaged areas.

The new teacher-training plans are based on developing a Children's Art Caravan, a traveling version of the Children's Carnival of Art developed by Victor D'Amico, Director of Education since 1937. The regular classes for children and adults will be replaced by special intensive experimental classes for pre-school, elementary, and junior high school students. These classes will serve as a laboratory for the development and adaptation of new teaching techniques and equipment for the Caravan and for the accompanying six to eight teacher manuals which Mr. D'Amico will prepare. The Caravan is supported by a grant from the JDR 3rd Fund.

The shift coincides with a change in title and duties of Mr. D'Amico who reaches the retirement age this June. Mr. D'Amico will remain on the staff to develop the Caravan and to be a consultant to the Children's Carnival which the Museum established in Harlem this spring. He will also continue to conduct the summer school on Long Island at Amagansett. Ann Hanson, who became Director of the Museum's International Study Center last year with responsibilities for developing new educational services for the visiting public, will operate the program of exhibitions circulated by the Museum to 55 New York City Public High Schools.

Space released in the Art Center at 4 West 54 Street, where the regular classes for about 1,000 children have been held since 1964, will be made available for special facilities for public school groups. In the past ten years the number of public school groups, which are admitted free, has tripled. In 1967-68 about 10,000 students and adults visited

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the Museum free in groups, an additional 30,000 students and 16,000 adults visited the Museum at reduced rates in groups. Heretofore the Museum has had no facilities for these groups such as orientation galleries, briefing or conference rooms, and separate entrances. Beginning next fall all groups will enter the Museum at 4 West 54 Street. The space will also be used to relate the exhibitions, traveling throughout the schools, to the students visiting the Museum galleries.

The Carnival, and its future form, the Caravan, grows from Mr. D'Amico's 32 years experience conducting classes for children, young people, adults, and teachers at the Museum. Basically it consists of two sections: a place where children play with toys especially designed to introduce them to some of the basic elements of art--form, line, color, light, and movement; and an adjacent studio workshop where the children make collages, three dimensional constructions, paint, and make puppets.

The revolutionary aspect of this educational method is that children are introduced to art on a level in which they can participate and understand and at which they cannot "fail" in the conventional sense of the word. That is, they do not need special talent or training to benefit from the Carnival. Thus the initial experience of art become available to all young children.

Mr. Lowry expressed the pleasure of the Museum Board and staff that Mr. D'Amico will remain with the Museum. "Under Victor D'Amico's direction the school has served as an important pilot program in art education. Today many of its pioneering concepts and ideas are incorporated into the public and private school programs throughout the country. Through his books such as Creative Teaching in Art (1937), Experiments in Creative Art Teaching (1960), and publications under his direction such as the recently reissued Art of the Young Child, by Jane Bland, a teacher at the Museum for many years, and the TV series 'Through the Enchanted Gate,' these concepts have reached an even wider audience.

"The success of the Carnival in Harlem, which was presented at the Museum for many years, the adoption of Mr. D'Amico's concepts, now much more widely available for parents who can

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afford tuition fees, convinced us that the time had come to concentrate on teacher-training courses, which will further spread the influence of the school, and to confine any direct art teaching to children in disadvantaged areas on a tuition-free basis, and to try to extend our services to the thousands of public school children who visit our galleries each year.

"The Museum is grateful to the staff of the school and to those parents, children and adults who have been part of its program. Without their enthusiastic participation, we could never have reached this stage where we feel confident we can carry the school well beyond the bounds of 53 Street and indeed put it on wheels to move throughout the country."

The classes at Amagansett, held in the summer on a converted barge, will continue under Mr. D'Amico's direction with increased emphasis on teacher-training. From 1963 through 1966, Mr. D'Amico, in cooperation with New York University, offered courses for credit. Since 1967 the courses are given in cooperation with Southampton College of Long Island University.

The Museum school, started in 1937 with four classes, grew over the years until this semester more than 1,000 children and young people were enrolled, and approximately 500 adults. Tuition fees ranged from \$50 up and classes have always been limited in size.

The experimental classes being set up for the development of the Caravan will also charge tuition and will be limited in size. It is projected that between 35 and 45 classes will be offered next year for two semesters in which about 400 children will participate. The teaching staff working with Mr. D'Amico will number, on a part-time basis, between 8 and 12.

The program of preparing and circulating special exhibitions in the visual arts to the public schools in New York was begun in 1937 in cooperation with the Board of Education. Mrs. Hanson will continue and, if possible, expand this program which has always been periodically revised as needs in the schools changed. The exhibitions are prepared by members of the Museum's curatorial staff and guest directors. The subjects are selected in cooperation with art teachers in the public schools and range from Old Masters to Modern,

Objects of Good Design: Which Do You Like, and Elements of the Modern House.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information,
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