

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

14 WEST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ESTABLISHES YOUNG PEOPLE'S GALLERY

With the opening of the Young People's Gallery on Wednesday, December 1, The Museum of Modern Art, 14 West 49 Street, will launch an educational experiment assisted by twelve secondary schools.

In announcing the new activity, Thomas Mabry, Executive Director of the Museum, said: "The Young People's Gallery forms only a part of the project to make the Museum's collections of painting, sculpture, architecture, industrial art and films more useful and more easily accessible to New York public and private schools in the teaching of art in general education. The project will also include a series of exhibitions to be sent out in rotation to the cooperating schools, and monthly conferences with the teachers at which special problems will be discussed. The project will be under the direction of Mr. Victor D'Amico, head of the Department of Fine Arts at Fieldston School, and members of the Museum staff."

The cooperating schools are:

The Brearley School
The Buckley School
The Chapin School
The Dalton School
Erasmus Hall High School
Evander Childs High School
The Fieldston School
The Horace Mann School
The Lincoln School
The Little Red School House
Music and Art High School
The Spence School

The exhibitions in the Young People's Gallery are planned to supplement the regular school work. Student juries composed of delegates from all the schools will select and hang the exhibitions. More material than will be used for each exhibition will first be assembled by Mr. D'Amico. The children will then make selections from this material, and after the first exhibition or two will make suggestions as to what kind of material they would like included in forthcoming exhibitions.

Four exhibitions will be given this year in the Young People's Gallery, the last one, in June, to be selected from the work of children in all twelve schools. The exhibition to open

on December 1 will be: Transitions and Contrasts in Painting and Sculpture, and includes such artists as Picasso, Redon, Hopper, Sheeler, Dix, Marin, Modigliani, Hart, Cézanne, Lachaise, Matisso, Archipenko and others. The works will be hung or placed at the students' eye level, and numerous seats provided so that they may study and enjoy the exhibition at ease. Explanatory wall labels will describe the exhibited material and, it is hoped, will be so written as to stimulate the students' imagination and aesthetic perception. An effort will be made generally to create a quiet, simple atmosphere which will counteract the usual museum fatigue and which will bring the students in intimate contact with the objects presented.

The exhibitions which will be circulated among the schools are in addition to those held in the Young People's Gallery. They will include Modern Architecture; Modern Posters; Animals and People in Art; A Brief Survey of Modern Painting; Graphic Arts; and Modern Theatre Art.

"The project," said Mr. Mabry, "marks only the beginning of what the Museum hopes to do in realizing the educational possibilities inherent in its resources. Many schools do splendid work in teaching art appreciation, but too frequently the approach to the subject is primarily intellectual and expository. We hope to help bridge the gap between learning about art and contact with works of art. We hope, insofar as we can, to make our material available to teachers both at school and at the Museum. The present experiment under Mr. D'Amico's direction has been made possible through the initiative and the generous aid of the Advisory Committee of the Museum."

Mr. D'Amico has been active in the teaching of art in progressive school education and is known as a writer and lecturer on the subject. He received his B.S. in 1926 and his M.A. in 1932 from Columbia University, where he taught courses in fine arts, theatre, and education at Teachers College. Under the auspices of one of the Foundations he has recently completed a survey of art education throughout the country. This experience showed him that very little is known of the factors which influence children in their appreciation of art. He is certain only that

children see art very differently from adults.

"Children are often more sensitive to art than are adults," Mr. D'Amico says. "Insistence on teaching from the adult point of view may stifle or frustrate the child's appreciation. If not interfered with, children's reactions are fresh and spontaneous; their responses are governed by highly personal motives. Their sensibilities have not been dulled nor have they become too sophisticated to comprehend simplicity of expression. Art is second nature to them; they have not divorced it from life. They respond to it as readily as they do to play--if they have not been conditioned against it or become so inhibited that they have lost the power to react.

"For the young child art is a necessity, not a luxury. It is essential to the proper development of his emotional and spiritual life. Experience has shown that disintegrated personalities may be rehabilitated by proper experience in some art expression. Perhaps this indicates that the more children we invite into our museums the fewer adults we shall be obliged to put into mental institutions."

For the present a section of the Museum's temporary quarters at 14 West 49 Street, concourse level, will be devoted to the Young People's Gallery. When the Museum's new building at 11 West 53 Street is completed it will contain a gallery especially furnished for young students. The series of exhibitions for the Young People's Gallery will be announced as each is selected and hung by the student juries. The first one, Transitions and Contrasts in Painting and Sculpture, will open December 1 and will continue until after Christmas. The general public will be admitted to the gallery except at those times when it is reserved for the groups from the twelve cooperating schools.