

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORIGINAL POSTERS ON INFANTILE PARALYSIS BY 23 ARTISTS

TO BE SHOWN AT MUSEUM

The first exhibition of educational posters as the joint effort of a national health group and an art museum will be held from November 1 through November 20. Posters produced in co-operation with the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis will be on view on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York City. The 23 original posters, by painters, photographers, designers and a sculptor invited to participate, cover many phases of polio information with particular emphasis on the importance of patient care, of scientific research and of public and professional education. Three of the posters will be awarded prizes of \$1,000, \$750 and \$500, to be announced on October 31 when photographs of the winners and their posters will be available to the press.

An additional prize of \$250 will be awarded by popular ballot taken during the 3 weeks of the exhibition at the Museum. The National Foundation is at liberty to select any or all of the posters for national or local reproduction and distribution, regardless of whether or not they are award winners. All prize-winning posters and also those selected for use by the National Foundation will be retained on exhibition for an additional week, from November 20 to November 27.

ORIGINS OF THE PROGRAM:

The program arose from discussions with the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis regarding its educational program and the need to familiarize the public with its many functions. Artists, having no special knowledge of the National Foundation's field of work but possessing a special ability to interpret, would be able to present these functions to the public from a layman's point of view. A Committee of Selection chosen by the Museum drew up the list of artists. There was unanimous acceptance from the artists invited to participate, although there have been 2 or 3 changes in the list due to illness.

BACKGROUND FOR THE ARTISTS:

The artists all met as a group last June with the Committee of Selection and medical and other professional personnel of the National Foundation. They learned facts about polio and the methods of combating it, and also where they could seek additional information at any time during their work. The only restrictions placed on participating artists were the poster size and the need to show somewhere on each poster the name, address and symbol of the National Foundation.

APPROACH BY THE ARTISTS:

Based on the information received and their own subsequent research, all the artists worked out their own slogans and legends and made their own layouts, which are those appearing in the final form of the posters. Many artists went to hospitals either in New York or near their own homes for first-hand study and observation of patients. A number requested and received extensive photographic material and additional factual information from medical personnel. Some simply observed neighborhood children.

The painter Milton Wynne, for example, knew he wanted to portray a typical polio patient who must look forward to the time when, with proper care and help, he can find a place in the world. He therefore used as a model a polio patient who is an adult already facing this problem - a young man of conglomerate national background from Wynne's own conglomerate neighborhood. He holds on his lap a photograph of President Roosevelt, and the caption reads: "We polios can fill almost any job."

Helen Levitt, on the other hand, did not know at all what category her approach should enter. But she felt that she knew her streets of New York, and that on them something would appear to fill her need. She walked and walked with her camera, looking until she found an unposed scene which dictated its own category: a small boy with a leg brace playing cops and robbers with other small boys on the side of a parked truck. She captioned it: "Back with the gang."

Margaret Bourke-White's photograph was the result of a day in which she took more than 100 pictures at Warm Springs. She worked patiently, often taking the same child over and over again. A beautiful shot came out of it, showing a thoughtful young girl learning to paint while both her arms are hung in suspended braces. Her caption, written on the poster in a child's handwriting, reads: "My fight isn't over."

RESULTS IN POSTERS:

A surprisingly wide variety of themes resulted from the differing approaches of the artists in their different media. Half a dozen emphasized the possibilities of recovery; three others stressed the need for facts to combat fear and ignorance if the fight against polio is to succeed; two artists brought out the courage required of polio patients; three mentioned the National Foundation's basic premise of treatment for all regardless of race or creed; three are specific appeals for the need for scientific research.

Among the media represented in the exhibition there are five posters and one photo-montage. Ten are posters by painters, six are designs and one is a sculptural medal.

In announcing the exhibition, Monroe Wheeler, the Museum's Director of

Exhibitions and Publications, said:

"Who can tell the many-faceted story of the National Foundation and its fight against polio? How can the human, scientific and educational factors be translated into terms that will appeal to a vast public? Who can relate the efforts of the many skilled hands that are serving this great cause? And the polio patients themselves; how can their valiant fight to return to normal lives be told?

"The Museum of Modern Art believes that only the creative artist, applying his probing insight, his deep understanding and vivid imagination, can tell the whole story in visual terms."

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

Ackoff, Milton
Allner, Walter
Bayer, Herbert
Bourke-White, Margaret
Bubley, Esther
Carlu, Jean
Evergood, Philip
Hoban, Tana

Karp, Leon
Koerner, Henry
Larsen, Hazel-Frieda
Lawrence, Jacob
Levitt, Helen
Matter, Herbert
MacIver, Loren
Martin, David Stone

Nitsche, Erik
Rand, Paul
Shahn, Ben
Sharrer, Honoré
Smith, David
Watkins, Franklin
Wynne, Milton

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION:

From the Museum:

Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of the Museum Collection
Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., Adviser to the Director of the Department of
Architecture and Design
Edward Steichen, Director of the Department of Photography
Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications
Philip C. Johnson, Director of the Department of Architecture and
Design
Mildred Constantine, Director of the Poster Program

and also:

Georgy Kepes, Professor of Visual Design, Massachusetts Institute
of Technology
Charles Coiner, Art Director and Vice President of N.W. Ayer & Son

JURY OF AWARDS:

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Design
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and also:

Sally Lucas Jean, Consultant in Health Education, National Foundation for
Infantile Paralysis
Charles Coiner, Art Director and Vice President of N.W. Ayer & Son