

The Museum of Modern Art

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PIONEERING IN ART EDUCATION

An exhibition illustrating Victor D'Amico's art education program for The Museum of Modern Art during the past thirty-two years will be on view at The Art Center of the Museum at 4 West 54th Street, from October 30 through January 30. Photographic panels and recent student work illustrate the pioneering programs introduced by Mr. D'Amico and his Department of Education to meet the urgent need to expand and enrich art education at various levels--classes for children and adults (begun in 1937), the New York City Program of Circulating Exhibitions for High Schools (begun in 1937), the Children's Art Carnival (created in 1942), and classes for parents and children (begun in 1948). Display copies of ten books published for parents, teachers and art amateurs, such as ART OF THE YOUNG CHILD and EXPERIMENTS IN CREATIVE ART TEACHING, are available for visitors to the exhibition to inspect. The exhibition also previews some future programs which Mr. D'Amico is now developing. PIONEERING IN ART EDUCATION has been installed by Frank Vitullo and is a special tribute to Mr. D'Amico, who is retiring in June 1970.

Art Classes For Children and Adults

Art classes for young people were initiated in 1937 with high school students, and were followed in 1940 by classes for children of preschool and elementary years, at a time when there were few art teachers in the public schools. Since its beginnings the Department of Education's aim has been to develop each individual's sensitivity to the fundamentals of art, thus increasing not only his own creativity, but also his awareness of contemporary art and art of the past. Most creative classes have included use of a variety of materials and methods--painting, collage, clay modeling and assemblage. Classes in puppetry, ceramic sculpture and drawing have been offered for those wishing to pursue these in some depth.

The Museum was the first to introduce classes for parents and children working together. In small groups parents participate in the same kind of art work as their children, but on an adult level. The object of these classes is to help parents understand their children's

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creative abilities and to stimulate and guide them to work at home. The children's ages range from two-and-a-half to five years, and classes have been limited to a maximum of eight parents and eight children.

The Art Center has developed new approaches and techniques for adults--both beginners and advanced students. As an exhibition last spring was devoted to adult classes, the present exhibition concentrates on work from the children's classes.

The Children's Art Carnival

The Children's Art Carnival, a dramatic demonstration of art education methods that have been used successfully in various parts of this country and abroad, consists of an area equipped with toys especially designed by Mr. D'Amico and other artists and designers to introduce the child to the elements of art and a studio-workshop area, where he participates in an art activity--painting, modeling in clay, and making collages and 3-dimensional objects.

Created by Mr. D'Amico in 1942 to demonstrate art education techniques and philosophy as developed in the Museum's Art Center, the Carnival also serves as a training workshop for teachers and offers parents and teachers an opportunity to observe children while they are engaged in a variety of creative activities.

The Carnival, presented in New York City at the Museum periodically for more than twenty years, was also enjoyed by children at International Trade Fairs in Milan and Barcelona in 1957, and at the Brussels World's Fair in 1958. In 1962, a replica of the Carnival was given to Mrs. Indira Gandhi for the National Children's Museum in New Delhi on behalf of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art and The Asia Society. The Carnival toured major cities in India and is still being enjoyed by thousands of Indian children and by teachers who come from all parts of India for special training in art education.

A version of the Carnival opened last spring on St. Nicholas Avenue at 141st Street where it serves Harlem children from Headstart programs, day care centers, public schools and numerous neighborhood organizations. Free to all children, the Harlem Carnival is housed in space provided rent-free by The Harlem School of the Arts. It is being financed for a three-year period by the Museum and by contributions from individuals and foundations,

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including The Ford Foundation, The New York Times Foundation, The New York Fund for Children, the Van Amerigen Fund, and the Heckscher Foundation for Children. Betty Blayton Taylor, the Carnival's Executive Director, is assisted by Consulting and Advisory Boards comprised of Harlem residents. Mr. D'Amico is the Carnival's Consulting Director.

The Children's Art Caravan

Mr. D'Amico's most recent art education project, The Children's Art Caravan, is based on the concepts and methods he developed in the Art Center and The Children's Art Carnival. Two models of this mobile teaching center are displayed in the exhibition. Financed by a grant from The JDR 3rd Fund, and still in its preparatory stages, the Caravan consists of two trailers, each eight feet wide by forty feet long. It is designed to provide equipment for creative art experiences for children around the country who attend schools which lack these facilities. Conceivably, the Caravan could reach the remotest village or penetrate the most economically and culturally deprived city slum. Like the Carnival, the first trailer will contain a motivational area with teaching toys designed to stimulate the child's aesthetic sensibilities and introduce him to the elements of art, and an area where exhibitions could be correlated with the humanities or other studies. The second trailer will contain a studio where the child can develop his creative aptitudes by making paintings, sculpture, collages and constructions.

As the teacher and the teaching aids are basic to the Caravan's function, the program includes preparation of extensive visual aids and texts. By functioning as a workshop for teachers, in addition to children, continuity of leadership and qualitative art education can be insured.

Kearsarge Art Center

A large photo blow-up in the exhibition shows the former Navy barge beached at the edge of Napeague Harbor in Amagansett, Long Island, now the home of the Kearsarge Art Center. Remodeled in 1961 by Mr. D'Amico and converted into large studios and laboratories with outdoor decks for painting, the Kearsarge Art Center, under the Museum's auspices, provides an opportunity for students and teachers to study art in a vacation setting. Meeting on a part-time or full-time basis, classes are offered in painting, sculpture,

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and drawing. Classes for teachers are sponsored by Southampton College of Long Island University and offer graduate and undergraduate credit.

Program For New York City High Schools

The program for the high schools of New York City began in 1937 as a privately financed experiment involving the participation of ten schools and The Museum of Modern Art. It included exhibitions sent to the schools and a Young People's Gallery at the Museum containing exhibitions designed for and by young people. The activity is now financed jointly by the Museum and the Board of Education. Approximately sixty schools are supplied with more than 100 visual aids, including exhibitions, slide talks, teaching models, teaching portfolios and films, which are seen by more than 350,000 school children each year. Exhibits such as OBJECTS OF GOOD DESIGN: WHICH DO YOU LIKE?, IMAGINATION IN ARCHITECTURE and HOW THE ARTIST SEES HIMSELF; lending libraries of color reproductions and Museum books which students can borrow and take home; teaching portfolios designed for classroom use on such subjects as modern sculpture and texture and pattern; slide talks on such topics as NEW FORMS OF OUR TIME, ADVENTURE IN MODERN ART, and WHAT IS MODERN PAINTING? prepared for easy use by teachers; and art films are among the materials circulated. "The record of this program," Victor D'Amico says, "and the exhibitions are a tribute to the Board of Education teachers whose interest sustained the program and whose cooperation with the Museum over the years has been an adventure." The former Director of Art of the Board of Education, Olive Reilly, called the program "an outstanding example of the fine contribution that a museum, through its educational department, can make to public school education." A sampling of classroom exhibitions, models and portfolios is displayed in the exhibition.

Publications

PIONEERING IN ART EDUCATION also includes publications written and edited by the staff of the Museum's Department of Education. Included are such familiar titles as ART FOR THE FAMILY, EXPERIMENTS IN CREATIVE ART TEACHING, both by Mr. D'Amico, and ART OF THE YOUNG CHILD, by Jane Cooper Bland. Publications now in preparation include THE ART OF ASSEMBLAGE by Victor D'Amico and Arlette Buchman, and a series of guide books for teachers to accompany the Caravan, written by five members of the Art Center staff--Jean d'Autilia, Jane

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Cooper Bland, Arlette Buchman, Hilde Siegal and Muriel Silberstein.

Through The Enchanted Gate

In 1952 and 1953 the Department of Education produced a television series, THROUGH THE ENCHANTED GATE, under the joint sponsorship of the Museum and NBC. An experiment in teaching art to children at home through television, the series consisted of twenty-four programs presented over a period of two years. Kinescopes were made of all the programs, a number of which are now being circulated to schools by the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art.

Other Activities

In 1939, Mr. D'Amico's book, CREATIVE TEACHING IN ART, was published. Still used internationally as a textbook in colleges and universities, the publication has inspired thousands of teachers throughout the world to integrate the teaching ideas of Mr. D'Amico into their own classrooms.

The idea of the War Veterans' Art Center was conceived by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and established by the Museum in 1944 when the Department of Education was located in rented quarters at 681 Fifth Avenue. A service aimed at helping veterans adjust to civilian life, the Center offered classes in sculpture, ceramics, painting, drawing, wood engraving, book illustration, lettering, layout, typography, graphics, woodworking, jewelry and metalwork. In 1948 the War Veterans' Art Center became the People's Art Center.

Citing one of the numerous Museum exhibitions sponsored by the Department since 1937 featuring the work of children, John Canaday wrote about ART EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD (1960) in The New York Times: "All of this should delight any child, should edify any adult who has never given much thought to what art education is all about, and should--but probably won't--give pause to many a painter who is capable of seeing beyond the end of his nose but has never bothered to do so."

In 1960 The Institute of Modern Art was formed as a separate non-profit organization to assume responsibility for the Museum's education program and to develop new activities in the field of art education. Mr. D'Amico is Director of the Institute, and its Board members are: Henry Allen Moe, Chairman; Joseph Revson, Vice President; H. Robert Mandel,

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Treasurer; Mrs. Olive Lyford Gavert, Secretary; Mrs. Walter Hochschild; Richard H. Koch; Mrs. Bliss Parkinson; Mrs. James H. Scheuer; and Arthur Young.

The Museum of Modern Art has always terminated programs when their purpose is achieved or adopted by other individuals or institutions. For example, the War Veterans' Art Center was terminated shortly after the end of World War II, and the National Committee on Art Education, founded in 1942 by Victor D'Amico to encourage the advancement of art education, was turned over to the International Society for Art Education in 1954.

This year the Museum has shifted part of the emphasis in its educational programs by establishing the Children's Art Carnival in Harlem and by extending its services to schools to include group visits of public school children to the Museum collections and current exhibitions. Sylvia Milgram, on the staff at the Museum through the Board of Education, will continue to take New York City public school classes through the galleries. A special orientation gallery is being planned for these children. Major emphasis is then being placed on the development of the Children's Art Caravan, which will extend creative teaching in art everywhere and anywhere it is needed and desired. Mr. D'Amico will continue as Consulting Director of the Children's Art Carnival in Harlem and as the Director of the Kearsarge Art Center. He will remain on the faculty of New York University.

Additional information and photographs available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Susan Bernstein, Associate Director, Department of Public Information, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 (212) 956 - 7501, 7294.