

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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POST-WAR PICTURES BY JAPANESE CHILDREN TO BE SHOWN AT MUSEUM

The occupation of Japan appears to be a major influence on Japanese children as shown in their art work to be exhibited in the Young People's Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art from November 2 through November 27. The 48 pictures shown, done in crayon, chalk and water-color by Japanese children were selected by their teachers and sent to America through the Supreme Allied Command at the request of the American Association of University Women. Following the showing at the Museum, the exhibition will go on an extended tour of branches of the Association throughout this country.

The most striking aspect of the exhibition is the number of pictures which reveal a free and creative approach to art similar to the work done in some American schools. They include scenes of daily life and experiences such as Jumping Rope, My House, A Vegetable Store, and of major events in their school life such as Field Day, An Athletic Meet, or trips by groups such as The Aquarium. Yet there are two distinct influences shown in these pictures of intimate scenes: the traditional and the new, the oriental and the occidental. It was not until 1946 that the new creative approach was introduced into Japanese schools to supplant copying from textbooks and imitating the highly formalized adult art. The new policy of the Ministry of Education is "to base art education on the life experience of children and let it serve to enrich their daily living." Relating art experience to daily life for children of a defeated nation presents a difficult problem, according to Mr. Yutaka Yamagata, Secretary of the Ministry of Education. In a statement accompanying the exhibition he says, "The present-day living of Japanese has no definite pattern in clothing, food or housing. A confusion of styles of living, old and new, occidental and oriental, is reigning."

But though many of the paintings resemble the work of school children in western countries, there is often a sophistication far beyond the work of American children of the same age. This is probably due to the teaching methods rather than to the child's own perception, for it is apparent that most of the projects and subject matter was dictated by the teacher. This accounts for the repetition of some themes in the exhibition.