

Local General

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

PRESS PREVIEW: TUESDAY,
JANUARY 22, 2-5 p.m.

FOR RELEASE: JANUARY 23

520117-3

Registrations for classes at the People's Art Center are being accepted now for weekly classes for children and adults as well as joint classes for parents and children. Adult classes include painting, ceramics, jewelry, woodworking, life and special orientation classes for beginners. Spring term starts February 4.

AMATEUR ART WORK ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

WE CREATE FOR PLEASURE, an exhibition of art work by adult students at the People's Art Center of the Museum of Modern Art, will be on view at the Museum, 11 West 53 Street, from January 23 through March 2. The exhibition includes oil paintings, watercolors and drawings, pottery and ceramic sculpture, experimental designs in wood, paper constructions and mobiles done by members of 12 different classes at the Center. Statements written by the class members are to be displayed along with their work to explain how, without special ability or professional art interest, they have found personal satisfaction in creative activity and how that has influenced their jobs or their enjoyment of the arts.

The People's Art Center, under the direction of Victor D'Amico, was established in 1948. Almost 500 men and women now attend 27 weekly classes ranging from beginners' orientation courses through advanced painting and life classes and, in addition, work in jewelry, ceramics and woodworking, and joint classes for parents and children.

"The purpose of the exhibition," Mr. D'Amico says, "is to demonstrate how gratifying art activity can be to the layman who does not have special talent and who works only for his own satisfaction. Too many amateurs try to compete with professional artists, and when they realize that they do not measure up to professional standards in technical ability, critical acclaim or sales, they become discouraged. We try to help the average person find enjoyment in creating painting or sculpture and to gain a better understanding of the art of our time and of the past.

"The teaching methods of the Center - where individual creative development is encouraged along with knowledge of the basic concepts of art, and where each class is specifically planned for amateurs - are indicated by the great variety in styles of the work shown and by the comments of the various class members."

The exhibition will be divided into nine sections, each headed by a phrase taken from the comments of class members:

"We explore our creative power" is a section devoted to work from Orientation classes offered for people who wish to explore various phases of art to see which they will most enjoy. Art work from these classes includes 3-dimensional paper constructions, collages (materials of different textures and patterns pasted on a paper background), wire designs for jewelry, and paintings.

"I couldn't draw a straight line" is a section containing beginners' paintings and drawings done in the Experimental Drawing and Painting Class.

"We are learning to paint" consists of oils and drawings from beginning painting classes and shows through early and later work the progress made by individual students and by entire classes.

"We have more experience and gain better insight into painting" shows progress made by students who have attended three or four semesters at the People's Art Center.

"In clay we explore form and function" is the title of the section devoted to pottery and ceramic sculpture, showing the wide range in style and method used by individual students. Bowls, vases, tiles, ashtrays and sculpture of animals and figures have been made by coil, wheel and mold methods.

"A foundation for many arts" is the heading for the work of students in the Fundamentals of Design classes and includes 3-dimensional constructions, mobiles, color and line exercises and abstract shapes carved in balsa wood to fit the hand, as well as wire sculpture.

"I paint to enjoy painting better" is devoted to art work from the class Understanding Modern Painting by Painting, where students explore through special exercises, problems related to some of the major movements in modern art including Impressionism and Expressionism.

"I paint at home" shows work by one of the students who paints only at home and brings her work in for monthly sessions at the Center as a member of Criticism Classes in Composition and Techniques for the Amateur Painter.

"Our ideas concern people" is devoted to work from the Life Classes offered at the Center. These are not the usual professional life classes, although models are used. They are offered for amateurs who like to use people in their compositions and wish to acquire familiarity with figure drawing.

In addition to work from particular classes, special displays will show work by students representing a cross section of the various occupations of people enrolled in the Center. These will include a photographer, a student of dietetics, a parent and an engineer. Art work by some of the husband and wife teams who have taken classes together will also be shown.

Comments of Students

The students whose work is being shown have been asked to describe what they have gained from the classes and what difference it made in their daily lives. A consulting engineer, who took a class in Orientation, writes:

I approached my study of the visual arts in the spirit of intellectual curiosity, with little hope of ever acquiring much skill and with absolutely no illusions as to my aptitude or hidden talents. What I have found out since is that my curiosity has developed into a genuine interest, that my understanding and appreciation of efforts in the art field has deepened and grown, and above all I enjoy playing with various media and look forward with pleasure to the forthcoming class sessions.

A husband and wife who have taken the same classes for several years said:

We have found the guidance of our studies at the Center to be highly sensitive and evocative. Our experience has confirmed to us that with such guidance the study of painting greatly advances the amateur's judgment of all art forms, with a consequent heightening of his appreciation.

A New Jersey photographer says:

In photography I sometimes found it difficult to think up original ideas for interesting pictures....I felt a need for a better understanding of visual fundamentals. I chose the course in Principles of Design given by The People's Art Center as a chance to learn what elements made things beautiful and what mistakes to avoid....I not only gained a better understanding of visual fundamentals, but I also discovered many ways in which these principles could be used to make better photographs.

Another student wrote:

At 69 I find myself a freshman in your art class. After 43 years of pharmaceutical practice I find, in the stimulating yet relaxing experience of trying to learn the art of painting, a keen satisfaction.

The exhibition includes work done during class sessions as well as work done by the students at home.