

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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

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An exhibition planned to show parents how they can help their child's creative development will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from December 8 through January 15. ART WORK OF THE YOUNG CHILD includes original pictures, mobiles and constructions made by children from 3 to 5 years old, arranged to illustrate the process of growth between these years; examples of poster paints, brushes, paper, clay, collage and construction materials best suited to this age level; and large photo murals showing young children engaged in a variety of creative activities. Explanatory captions point out some of the important values parents and teachers can look for in the art expressions of young children and the ways in which their attitude, their language and the art materials they select can aid creative development.

The exhibition is under the direction of Victor D'Amico, Director of the Museum's Department of Education and of the Peoples' Art Center where classes for children are held throughout the year. Mrs. Jane Cooper Bland, teacher at the Museum school and outstanding authority on art education, assisted in preparing the exhibition in co-operation with other members of the teaching staff.

In summarizing the purpose of the exhibition, Mrs. Bland says:

"One has only to observe a young child freely using art materials to realize that he is having a vital and pleasurable experience. He loves to brush rich colors on paper, or to mix them and discover new colors. He loves punching, squeezing, and building with clay. More important, however, through these materials, he can express in concrete form his feeling about what is happening to him in the process of living. What he has done may be incomprehensible to adults because they cannot find anything recognizable in it. Their acceptance of and respect for it, however, is vital to his feeling of pleasure, adequacy and achievement. Once one gains an understanding of the contribution which such art expression can make toward growth of a child, one can give this necessary acceptance and respect."

The three to five year old level is emphasized in this exhibition, Mr. D'Amico adds because concepts and habits of creative activity are established early in childhood.

One section of the exhibition is addressed specifically to parents, as the child's first teachers. Beneath a large photo mural of a family working together are arranged a variety of materials best suited for three to five year olds: poster paints, brushes and paper for painting pictures; a variety of materials such as scraps of velvet and silk, rough textured sandpaper, shiny tin foil and soft feathers which can be used to make "feeling pictures" or collages; and moist clay and construction materials such as pipe cleaners, wire mesh, buttons and shells that can be used to make "3-dimensional pictures," mobiles and stabiles. "One of the best ways of encouraging children is for parents to work along with them," Mr. D'Amico points out, "but there must be a distinction between their separate expressions and a respect for the difference in point of view and performance." In this connection, ART FOR THE FAMILY, a recent how-to-do Museum publication is displayed. Designed to further the

creative interests of the family as a group, ART FOR THE FAMILY contains many suggestions for helping parents understand their childrens' creative efforts, as well as ideas for what to do and how to work along with their children.

Original paintings, sculptures, collages and constructions made by children attending classes at the Museum's art school are included in the exhibition to illustrate some of the characteristics of creative expression that are typical of three year olds, four year olds and five year olds. The chronological arrangement also illustrates the process of development between these years.

Another part of the exhibition, illustrating the process of teaching young children, points out that "although the teacher does not teach in the formal sense of setting up problems....she is establishing the fundamentals of perception and workmanship without naming them or making them overt. The average adult may think this is just playing because the teaching process is so natural and sociable."

Captions accompanying color transparencies of childrens' paintings and sculpture and photo murals showing children in the process of making them, point out various values to be looked for in the two and three dimensional expressions of young children:

"The tendency is often to think of the art work instead of the child. The real value of the work is the pleasure and experience it has given the child."

"Children work spontaneously, trying out their ideas and their tools....They apply colors in their own way...."

"Often a four year old will work over his painting again and again....until the result is a brown or gray smudge....while this may seem to obliterate the effect, or destroy the picture, actually the child has been concerned with the pleasure in seeing the colors change and his own ability to make them different, rather than in making a picture. This is the important part of learning."

Making mobiles and constructions, through which the child's experience with elements of motion and texture is broadened, are discussed in another part of the exhibition where works of this nature made by young children are displayed. The exhibition also includes color transparencies of work by two three year olds, shown in an automatic projector, which demonstrates their comparative development over an eight week period.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. Circle 5-8900.