

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK 19, N.Y.
48114-2
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

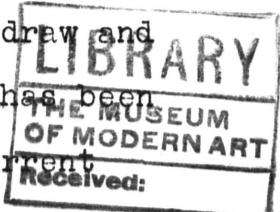
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FRENCH CHILDREN'S PAINTINGS SHOWN AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A multiple, miniature picture of France, painted by her children during the past eleven years, will be shown on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, when it opens an exhibition of PAINTINGS BY FRENCH CHILDREN Wednesday, January 14. The forty one watercolors in tapestry-rich colors and detail depict Paris street scenes and country landscapes, workers on farms and in cities, churches and monuments, fairs, sports, the Liberation; in short, the life of France as seen by her school children from 1935 to 1947.

The exhibition has been selected by the Museum from the collection of the French color-manufacturing firm of J. M. Paillard of Paris, which has held annual competitions since 1935 to encourage children to paint--to record their ideas and impression of the world around them, and to reveal innate talent. Children in all French schools where painting is taught were eligible. Every year a different subject or theme was given the young artists. From the thousands of paintings submitted from all over France a jury of distinguished artists and art critics selected the best for annual exhibition in Paris and, later, in museums and schools throughout France and in other European countries.

The Twentieth Century has been called "The Century of the Child." The child mind and its creative urge have been explored as never before. Nearly every country has recognized the advantages of encouraging children to understand and enjoy art and also to draw and paint; an international institute for children's drawings has been established in Zurich. The paintings which comprise the current exhibition are by children of from five to sixteen years of age.



Mr. D'Amico, Director of the Museum's Education Program, was in charge of the selection. Commenting upon the exhibition Mr. D'Amico says:

"Looking at these paintings by French children we find, in general, a powerful creative urge to express the essence of the thing seen, often using detail decoratively like a mosaic. These paintings reveal impulses that are fundamentally creative. They bear evidence of the child's ingenious transformation of realistic subject matter into original and personal expression. The approach is imaginative and uninhibited, they show an extraordinary sensibility not only to color but to pattern and texture as well."

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"In comparison with the works of American children, which are generally larger in concept and bolder in execution, the French work is small in size and exceedingly rich in detail. This difference probably derives not only from custom but from different approaches on the part of the teachers. American teachers now encourage bold free expression in large dimensions because they think it comes more naturally to the child and is more conducive to originality. But there are periods in a child's growth when he is preoccupied with detail and some children habitually work in this way. But the influence of the teacher is often permanent, and it is apparent these French children have had remarkable guidance. The artistic aptitude of children flourishes under creative and understanding teachers and these pictures demonstrate the results that can be obtained when children are given intelligent encouragement and freedom. This exhibition will be of particular interest to parents and teachers who should find in it renewed faith in the child's esthetic potentialities."

None of the paintings is for sale; all remain part of the Paillard collection indefinitely. After the exhibition closes at the Museum March 21 it will be circulated for a six-month period, first to Baltimore, and then to museums and art galleries throughout the United States.

Themes of Paintings

<u>Competition</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1935-36	Streets
1937-38	The Seasons
1938-39	Fairs
1939-40	Churches and Monuments
1940-41	Sports
1941-42	Work on the Farm
1943-44	Waterways
1944-45	The Liberation
1945-46	Trades
1946-47	Cities and Villages