Silver Fish.
Darting Silver.
Carry the moonlight down the
dark ways of the sea.
Flash through the tall standing sea-
wed that covers the turreted shells.
Wind over the brown bones of ships.
Silver fish.
Darting silver.
Carry the moonlight down the dark
ways of the sea.

Art
in
an
Experimental
School

C. Pollock

It is difficult to isolate for discussion the art program of an experimental
school since art plays so integral and important a part in the entire school
program. The painting, clay, or shop teacher may discuss intelligently his
particular function and purpose in the program, but he can not do so unless
he relates the multiplicity of the children's experiences to their group activi-
ties and to their individual and social experiences.

Beginning with block building and excursions into their immediate city
environment—activities which are rich in possibilities for young and eager
minds—children are led to explore and gather knowledge with which to
picture their world. Block building gives the first opportunity for objecti-
ifying these early impressions. Here develops, along with muscle coordina-
tion, constructive group activity; the first creative expression of ideas; the
first struggle with recalcitrant material and technique.

As the group activities become increasingly more complex, their expres-
Art in an Experimental School

sions of these experiences take on an analogous complexity and color. Also, since the need for this expression arises naturally and without compulsion, the character of the expression presents an unforced freshness and individuality.

The practice of teaching art in its many forms at the City and Country School grows out of a firm conviction of the need for developing all forms of expression as the child's natural, cultural heritage. Experience has shown us that the way to a full creativeness in children is by allowing their expression to develop naturally from their experiences and knowledge. This requires, at the minimum, a situation which is conducive to this development.

The first essential for this development is a rich and full program. The second is ample time, quiet and freedom. Time, quiet and freedom to paint, model, dance, sing and dramatize so that the child may bring to fruition an emotion or fleeting image which may have started yesterday in the classroom discussion or the week before while on a trip to the river with its whistling tugs and strange excitement.

Approached in this manner, children seldom fail to find for themselves some way in which to express their ideas creatively. For this reason we have found it unnecessary to use special apparatus and such trick mediums as finger painting, colored papers and the dozens of other commercial preparations. For our school, poster colors, crayons, and pencils serve excellently.

The children paint in their classrooms, sometimes on easels, often on the floor, and occasionally on the walls. There are frequent free periods in which they may choose one of several activities to fill their needs. As their further needs arise, and as they demonstrate their ability to organize their time and to use well their opportunities, the children's fields of activity are extended, both for individuals and for groups.

Experience in painting needs to be as spontaneous as possible. This is possible within the classroom, especially with the younger children where the group teacher is careful and intelligent. The special teacher, visiting the classroom occasionally, may be a stimulant; he may suggest new attacks; he may offer encouragement where it is called for; in general, he may set as high a standard as is compatible with the group interests and equipment.

Children realize for themselves that the praise of parents is seldom impartial. They respond to an impersonal estimation of their work and progress—the aim of the school and of the special teacher. But there should not be any lessening of the bonds of sympathy and warm friendliness between teacher and child because of this aim.

Drawing, as such, is not taught. Children's most absurd conceptions are not challenged, provided that definite progressive growth is indicated in the painting. Children acquire prejudices and preferences just as adults do, and where these tend to hamper development a way is found for breaking them. For example, to the average child of six, seven or eight, the sky always is blue. The age at which he discovers for himself that the sky is, in fact, at dif-
different times almost any color, or may be painted so, varies considerably. Similarly, their reactions to the world about them expand as they grow. Grass, for example, at first is always represented as green, but later other colors are discovered by the children themselves. Here the approach may not be a question of accuracy or the lack of it, but simply one of richness of expression.

The painting of six-year-olds usually becomes more marked in character than it was formerly. In our school this group also experiments tentatively with clay and with the tools and materials of the shop—workbench, saw, hammer and bits of wood—while still engaged in their block building.

The seven-year-olds are prepared to expand their program, so the special activity rooms are opened to them—music, clay, shop, and science. Their block scheme becomes a real city with houses and factories constructed in the shop and wired for electricity with the aid of the science teacher. Their simple stories, reading exercises which are printed for them by the eleven-year-olds, are bound together and illustrated. Painting now becomes a fixed need, rich with ideas, humorous and full of character.

Art experiences are not escapes into the unreal nor a refuge from harsh experience. Painting, for instance, is a normal form of emotional expression, a creative activity which is definitely a part of the process of learning and understanding. In addition to being considered as a normal expression of a normal child, painting also has a therapeutic value in the emotional readjustment of certain children. Very often it is successful in readjusting the child who is emotionally centered in people's reactions to him and who finds emotional release only in the free execution of his ideals in an art form.

**Two Interesting examples come to mind of children who found emotional release through painting.** The one was intensely interested in adult attention, was concerned mainly with imparting to others his tremendous store of miscellaneous information, and was in mortal fear of meeting with child or adult disapproval. Painting afforded him an opportunity for a non-verbal form of expression and, although his paintings were dominated by his interest in information rather than in ideas, he found a definite emotional outlet in working alone and without having to face possible disapproval. Dramatics were even more helpful in releasing him as they provided a natural outlet for his verbalism and gave him a genuine opportunity to create roles, costumes, and stage sets which met the unqualified approval of his teacher and group.

The second boy, on the other hand, was extremely non-verbal and had no particular drive for information except as it served a purpose, but he was intensely interested in experimenting with new forms and techniques. Painting was one of his dominant interests, athletics another. To show his superiority to the other children in his group, he bullied them continually during yard period. Finally, to substitute another emotional outlet, he was given the special privilege of working in the studio during this period. In time the bullying stopped, due in part to the discipline, but mainly to
The Fun of Handling Materials

Clara P. Reynolds

Within the last year my own understanding of the philosophy underlying the stimulation of children of all ages to creative effort has been greatly enriched through the words of two men: Dr. Eugen Steinhoff, formerly of Vienna, now with the Beaux Arts of New York, and Dr. H. A. Overstreet.

Dr. Steinhoff presents his ideas of art education very clearly, emphasizing the value of individual creative work—getting away from the tendency to copy art styles from other nations. His stimulating characteristic statements have a direct bearing on the teaching of art work to young children:

Art belongs to life. It is born out of our souls. Art is an unfolding process. It is an expression of our inner selves. We need to experience different materials in order to best express our inner thoughts. Materials arouse feelings as food does appetite.

So we tried our hand at carving deep in plaster; at drawing with big sticks of graphite, one in each hand; at pottery on the wheel, with casting and moulding; at painting with our fingers in a wide range of color. And there was great satisfaction in it.

To strengthen this idea of the need of many materials to assist in the unfolding process came Dr. Overstreet's "A Guide to Civilized Loafing" with a whole chapter on "The Fun of Handling Materials":

This is what it means to handle materials. To yield ourselves to them; and they give us back our reward. It is a sad thing that so much of this has gone out of our modern life. We have learned to press buttons and send checks—and presto, we have what we wish. But excellent as are many of the commodities that come to us, and difficult as our life would be if we could not thus easily secure them, there remains the need to keep ourselves intimately associated with materials. We need to handle earth, to handle wood and stone.

Indeed, there is something quite special about the quality that enters into life when we are much given to intimate handling of materials. It is the quality of consideration.

There is doubtless no more character-forming occupation than to work affec-