It’s Elementary!
Empowering Youth Through Art

October 12, 2006 – February 25, 2007

Featuring Paintings by Children From Throughout the World, 1950 – 2006
Exhibition Overview

The Fall 2006 KidSpace at MASS MoCA exhibition—it’s Elementary!—offers a look at how children (ages 6–17) from around the globe make visual their enjoyment of, and concerns for, the world in which they live. KidSpace brings together historic and contemporary artwork of young students from many nations, marking the first time that the gallery will feature a totally youth-made art exhibition with historical components (some artwork dates back 50 years).

The themes found in the young artists’ imagery will lead visitors of all ages to increased consideration of young people’s thoughts and feelings, as well as their modes of artistic expression. Themes represented in the exhibition range from the interests of the individual to community and global concerns including People, Places, and Experiences.

This exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Art and Art Education Department, Teachers College Columbia University, and features over 50 works of art drawn from the following collections of children’s art:

**Teachers College – Edwin Ziegfeld Collection** – works by teenagers post-World War II from: Morocco, Japan, South Africa, Trinidad, Luxemburg, Egypt, The Netherlands, Canada, Austria, Scotland, the U.S.S.R., Germany, and the U.S.A.

**Teachers College – Angiola Churchill Collection** – paintings (1950-1960s) from Japan and the U.S.A.


**New York University Child Study Center** – contemporary works made by children 11–17 years old from New York in response to 9/11.

**Iraqi Child Art Exchange** – contemporary works made by children 8–12 years old in Iraqi refugee camps and hospitals, along with drawings made by American children sent to the Iraqi children, and photographs.

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**About KidSpace at MASS MoCA**

KidSpace opened in January 2000 as a collaborative project of the Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, Williams College Museum of Art, and MASS MoCA. It is a contemporary art gallery and art-making space for children, teachers, and families. School programs and educational materials are designed for elementary schools in North Adams, Florida, Clarksburg, and Savoy, Massachusetts, as well as Stamford, Vermont. KidSpace organizes an after-school artist mentor program for 6th – 10th graders in the North Adams and North Berkshire school districts. Working with KidSpace staff and artists, students and teachers learn new ways to connect contemporary art to their classroom activities and to their everyday lives.

The public is welcome at KidSpace to view exhibitions and to create their own art. During the school year, public hours are Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 4 pm, plus holiday hours. The rest of the week is reserved for school groups. Admission to KidSpace is free. Public art classes and special workshops are offered during school breaks, and arrangements can be made to hold birthday parties in KidSpace. Please call KidSpace at (413) 664-4481 ext. 8131 for more details on hours, programs and program fees, and exhibitions. Also, check out the KidSpace web site at: www.massmoca.org/KidSpace.
More than Meets the Eye: A Look at Children's Art

Dr. Judith M. Burton, Professor,
Art and Art Education Department,
Teachers College Columbia University

Thinking through art makes the world a meaningful place and helps us to know and understand each other.

Children throughout the world make art. They make patterns in sand, model in clay or mud, and construct with twigs, string, and any scraps that may come to hand. They also make paintings and drawings that offer us a window on their world. If children are supported in their artistic endeavors, and if teachers and parents become partners to this end, artistic sensibilities are kept alive. As we see in the paintings in this lovely exhibition, the practice of visual arts offers us a privileged window on children's worlds. Through this window we see how and what they observe, investigate, and imagine.

We see how children use paint in so many different ways to invent forms and create compositions that embody their hopes, dreams and fears. We see, too, how they think and feel and how they form ideas and make judgments.

Above all, we admire the way that children capture the expansiveness of life, the bravery of their ideas and the sheer intelligence of their imaginations. As spectators to children's art, we recognize that they depict the "livingness" of their subjects. They invite us into their art to engage with their ideas about relationships and work, about important places and the activities that go on in them, and about the worlds they create through their own imaginations.

Why do children create art and do so the world over? Art practice is one of the few educational arenas through which children can make the world of experience meaningful for themselves and share those meanings with others. Making art integrates the way children think, feel, and perceive; it offers them a context in which to explore, test ideas, and make their own courageous and complex journeys of development. Art-making is not simply for the talented few, but central to the development of all young people; it offers them a language through which to reach out to others, to construct and communicate their ideas, and participate knowledgeably in their culture. With thoughtful teaching, art practice opens young people's minds to the life styles, values, and beliefs of people from others times and nations.

To most grown-ups the many and brave ways in which children open themselves to their imaginations as they form their ideas and thoughts may be what we admire most. But as we see in this exhibition, children also speak to each other across time and place, and do so eloquently. Many of these works were made in countries other than the U.S.A., and many were made over half a century ago. Here we see how the language of art and the shared sensibilities of childhood merge and transcend national boundaries offering insights into the human dimension of life. Would that the grown-up world could retain the depth of children's sensibilities to human life and the language through which to engage thoughtfully with each other! The lesson to be learned from this exhibition, perhaps, is that we need to redouble our efforts to support the practice of art-making for all children everywhere in the world and throughout all their years of schooling.

Judith M. Burton
About The Collections

Teachers College Columbia University, New York
The Ziegfeld Collection of International Artwork of Adolescents from the 1950s

New York University Child Study Center, New York
Children's Art of 9/11

International Child Art Foundation
Washington, D.C.

Iraqi Children's Art Exchange Project,
Northampton, Massachusetts
Contemporary Art from Iraq and the U.S., www.us-iraq.org/iraqart/lehlo

Flora's Barley
James Davis, age 10
Kunio Maki, Wilkes-Barre, PA, 1956-1960

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About The Ziegfeld Collection
The collection contains more than 100 works on paper, drawings, graphics, and collages made by young people ages 8 to 18 years, representing 32 countries of the world, some of which, like the U.S.S.R., now exist under new names. The collection was assembled by Professor Alan Ziegfeld, Dean of Art and Teaching Teachers College Columbia University. At the time, Ziegfeld was the Dean of the School of Education at Teachers College. He was particularly interested in the development of a national and international appreciation of the arts, and in the education of future educators. From these goals, he founded the Ziegfeld Collection and the Ziegfeld Foundation. The collection was originally housed in the Ziegfeld Hall, a building on the campus of Teachers College. It is now located in the Ziegfeld Hall, a modern facility that provides visitors with a unique opportunity to experience the art of adolescence from around the world. The collection includes works by well-known artists such as Pablo Picasso and Robert Rauschenberg, as well as works by lesser-known artists. It is a testament to the diversity and creativity of young people, and a reminder of the importance of art education in schools. The collection is open to the public and is available for study by researchers, educators, and others interested in the field of child art.