

# CHILD ART



AND  
FRANZ  
CIZEK



W. VIOLA



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BY WILHELM VIOLA  
FOREWORD BY R. R. TOMLINSON

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# F O R E W O R D

The Creative Art of Children has existed since the creation, but not until some fifty years ago was its existence recognised.

The purpose of this foreword is to pay a tribute to Prof. Cizek of Vienna, the pioneer, the discoverer of this creative ability—the birthright of Children of every nationality—and to wish his teaching continued success.

For many years he had to fight against both criticism and ridicule. He did so with courage and conviction, until the true value of his teaching became fully appreciated by educationists the world over; a success few pioneers have enjoyed during their lifetime.

Because of his high universal reputation as an authority upon the teaching of Art to children, a book dealing with his method of teaching has been eagerly awaited; the success of this, the first complete publication of his methods, written by his advocate and friend Dr. Wilhelm Viola, is therefore assured.

Although it is now some fifty years since this great discovery was made—termed by the discoverer “The Eternal Art”—many of those who read this book will realize for the first time their own lost opportunities. They will recall with regret the dull and sterile method of their own training. It is their duty

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therefore, especially those who are teachers, to assure that children committed to their care should be given the opportunity to express their own ideas in some suitable media and thus gain a confidence which will help them to face their future with equanimity.

To those who expect this book to provide a ready made course of training, it will prove a disappointment, for Prof. Cizek believes that each child is a law unto himself and should be allowed to develop his own technique, he cannot therefore be subjected to a rigid course of technical training. The child's innate tendencies, he contends, must be developed; the ideas and methods of expression of others must not, therefore, be imposed upon him.

What the discerning teacher will find, however, is the fundamental principles which the pioneer has discovered. It is left to them to use these principles in their own way.

I will indicate the most important of these.

Great creative energy exists in every child. This must find an outlet in expression, or repression will result. Children should be allowed to draw what they wish, what they see in their mind's eye, not that which others think they ought to draw.

Criticism should always be constructive and sympathetic. Children's efforts should never be subjected to ridicule.

The praising of mere skill is, however, dangerous. Art is not skill but creation. Anything produced which is the result of an inner experience is more worthy than the cleverest copy of the work of others.

Like all methods Prof. Cizek's teaching can be misinterpreted and misapplied. I feel I must, therefore, take advantage of the opportunity afforded to me by this foreword to give a warning which I am sure will receive the blessing of the discoverer himself: that is that children should not be left entirely to their own resources; they should be provided with a suitable environment, should be given suitable material and should be helped and guided by sympathy and understanding.

Teachers should also beware of the sophisticated, for even what is childlike, as well as the work of adults, can be imitated.

I also heartily subscribe to the belief that all children should be taught, before they leave school, to represent what they see with the physical eye, for although accurate representation cannot be called art, it is an international language, the value of which cannot be denied.

Although the literal copying of natural and fashioned objects is not art, their representation may become great Art when rightly interpreted.

Of the illustrations I have nothing to say, for children's drawings when they are genuine spontaneous efforts can and must speak for themselves.

April, 1936.

R. R. TOMLINSON  
CHISWICK  
LONDON, W. 4



I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. MADELEINE EKENBERG, to whom I am indebted for the idea of publishing this book. I also thank heartily Mrs. ELIZABETH HARGROVE and Miss EMMA CADBURY for their assistance in translating the text.

DR. WILHELM VIOLA



Brother and sister.

PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

Child Art, is there such a thing? The child and art, is that not a contradiction? For centuries Child Art was not known. The word itself is as yet not four decades old.

We can speak of "Child Art" under two conditions. We must first of all agree that art has nothing to do with skill, exactitude, or even a faithful repetition and copy of nature (that is at its best talent, technical skill), but art is creative, unique.

The second, perhaps the more important condition: when we regard the child simply as a future adult, denying him his own personality and the right to exercise a logic of his own (which from the point of view of the child is truer than ours, and there-



fore from the very nature of things different from that of the adult), then it is impossible to speak of child art.

If on the other hand we regard the child as a being with laws of his own, eternal laws perhaps closer to nature than those innumerable compromises, if not illusions, which dominate the world of the adult; and if we grant the child the right to express his own thoughts, his ideas, his personality without consideration for adults; and if we are truly convinced that the child as a part of nature is in many cases stronger and more creative than the majority of adults, then we may, we must, speak of Child Art.

Generations have despised and neglected the work of the child. The work of the child! For play is to the child—also the apparently playful scribbling, drawing, painting and modelling—an honest work, more honest than the professions of many adults. Children have been punished to make them stop this scribbling, this waste of time and paper, this “nonsense”. “Do something useful!” How many of us have heard this in our childhood! What treasures have been lost because no one has appreciated and kept these revealing drawings and paintings.

Respect for the child! Sometimes this saying has been greatly misused. But we must respect that most clear, fine and delightful expression of the child's soul: the drawings of the child who has not been under the influence of adult ideas. The child who has not been spoiled by adults, expresses his true self in his work, and is most true when representing the image of his thoughts, his often unconscious hopes, desires and fears. A child's drawing is a mar-



Prof. Cizek with pupils.

PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

vellous and precious document. We have no right at all to measure it according to our standard, to look at it with our unclear eyes, to criticize it from our point of view or above all to “correct” it.

The man who discovered the world of child art and who has devoted his life to the loving study and observation of it is FRANZ CIZEK. He was born in 1865 at Leitmeritz on the Elbe, in Bohemia, and has lived in Vienna since his nineteenth year. Cizek discovered child art and even named it. How did this come about?

Cizek became a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1885 after completing his studies in Leitmeritz. He lodged with a carpenter's family where fortunately there were children. They came to his room and wanted to draw and paint. He gave



them paper and pencil, paints and brushes as they asked for them, just as he still does today in his famous Juvenile Art Class. Those children set to work at once producing most unusual things, but always of the same type, which startled Cizek. By chance, opposite his house in the 8th district of Vienna was a wooden fence where the small boys in the street made drawings with chalk, which they had probably taken from school. Sometimes there were fights over the right to draw on the fence, which showed how important this drawing was to the children. Again Cizek observed a strange thing: all children drew similarly, but not schematically. ("Only adults are schematic", says Cizek.)

On journeys, in Bohemia and later also in other countries, Cizek found again and again that children drew the same things, in the same way, as those children in the carpenter's family and the small boys in the Florianigasse. It seemed that all children unconsciously followed eternal laws of form.

At this time the younger generation of Austrian artists in common with those in other countries, broke away from the traditions of the older generation, the so-called "Akademiker", and founded the "Secession" in 1896. They were searching for new art forms. Cizek was in close contact with the leaders of the Vienna "Secession", particularly Otto Wagner, Olbrich, Moser, and Klimt. He showed these young painters and architects some of the work of his children. There was great rejoicing! Some went so far as to say that these were the foundations of the new art education. Why go back to the Chinese, Japanese, ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, and Negroes? Here was that which they

sought. Cizek was encouraged to open a private art school where child art should have its home. According to regulations he had to ask the permission of the Education Authorities in order to found such a school. He was requested to submit his programme. And Cizek wrote down the memorable programme: "LET THE CHILDREN GROW, DEVELOP AND MATURE." It is needless to add that this programme was regarded as inadequate.

To let children grow, flourish and mature according to their innate laws of development, not haphazardly, is the quintessence of Cizek's views and "method"; if one may use the word "method" in connection with Cizek. To be a gardener, that is all. Can we, by the way, be anything more and better than that for the child? To remove weeds, tactfully to promote that which is useful for the growth of the child, nothing more. We have no right to hasten the growth of the child by hot-house culture. It is a crime to bend or to break the children according to our wishes. The result will always be deplorable.

So Cizek opened his Juvenile Art Class (at that time a private school) in 1897, having at last received permission to do so. Naturally such a school as soon as it became known was received with considerable opposition. About the same time, in 1896, Cizek was appointed art teacher in the Realschule of the 7th district of Vienna. He likes to describe what he was forced to do with these eleven to eighteen year-old pupils, according to the official curriculum, such as copying ornamental designs, drawing plaster models, but secretly he allowed his pupils to work independently. Fortunately visitors from abroad, among others Goetze from



the Hamburg Society for Art Education, interested themselves in this new type of art teaching. (In Austria much has been left for foreigners to discover.) Goetze brought this young art teacher to the notice of Hartl, then Minister of Education. Another fortunate circumstance was that Myrbach, the director of the State School of Applied Art, came to hear of Cizek. Myrbach boldly incorporated Cizek's Juvenile Art Class in his "Kunstgewerbeschule". This happened in 1904. The children, regular school children, attended the art class there on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings.

Before we further describe the Juvenile Art Class we must consider for a moment the way drawing was taught in the schools of the period. At seven years the pupils were given books with dotted pages, these dots were to be connected with straight lines. The older children were given drawing books with the dots further apart. Later on designs were copied from the blackboard. To draw something from imagination, even to draw from nature, was never thought of. Those over thirteen were expected to copy plaster models and printed designs, the ideal being to train the child to copy exactly. It was a training in skill without any regard for creative work.

This was the rigid system of "art" teaching which the artist Cizek found. One need not be surprised that from the very beginning he met with the strongest opposition, particularly from the art teachers. Here we may quote the Austrian author Hermann Bahr: "An expert is a man who has learned something and does not understand it." It was particularly the drawing teachers who fanatically opposed him, even sending petitions to the Minister



Three and five years old.

PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

of Education to prevent this "corruption" of youth, writing against him in educational journals and the daily press. Ridicule was the mildest form of attack.

The same man who was ridiculed and attacked for two decades, later became the shining example, though not until the name of Cizek was well-known and respected abroad, a fact which many Austrians do not know even today. First came twenty years of struggle against a hostile majority, proceeding mainly from a lack of understanding. "Nemo propheta in patria sua." These words may be true for all countries, but without doubt are true in Austria, witness Mozart, Schubert, Ressel, and Kress. Cizek has found a kindly explanation for the fact that so many prominent Austrians have been forced to fight all their lives for



recognition, even for existence. He says with some truth that Austria has too much genius and talent. The Austrian tragedy! There have been times when the fate of Cizek's Juvenile Art Class, today known throughout the world, has hung by a thread, though every year hundreds of teachers from every part of the globe, come to visit it. Here it must be stated that without the support of England and America, the Juvenile Art Class would probably no longer exist today.

Cizek is one of the great men of our time. His discovery of child art will make his name immortal.

Cizek is first of all the liberator of the child from the slavery of the senseless and boring "art instruction" which deadened spontaneity and even endangered real talent. Cizek has freed millions of children from "art" drill. And more, he has liberated the tremendous creative energy of the child which had been neglected for untold generations.

The child is creative. Even the smallest has a desire to shape and to make things. The old-fashioned art teaching smothered all that was creative in the child, whether intentionally or unintentionally is beside the point. But I could almost imagine that in a period in which to be a child, to be young was regarded "per se" as almost a crime, and only age was respected, there must have been a conscious effort to suppress the creativeness of the child as far as possible. (In order not to be misunderstood: the reverse conception, the deification of youth which is common today, is of course just as false.) There will doubtless be some readers who at this stage will ask: "Is every child really creative?" The inten-

*Interview*

sity and the direction of these original, creative powers in the child may be different; but they exist in every normal child. We adults are responsible if this creative power is not developed and made use of.

A ten year old girl in the Juvenile Art Class comes to Prof. Cizek and says to him: "Herr Professor, I can't draw. I can't!" Now let us pause for a moment. What would the average old-fashioned schoolmaster have replied? "You can't draw? You must draw. It will go all right. It only needs practice."—And Cizek? He hesitates for a moment and then has a genial thought: "How would it be if you embroidered what you want to draw?" After some time a wonderful piece of embroidery in glowing colours is produced without any previous drawing of a design.

Some children fail with one medium but succeed with another. And there are various media! There is lino-cutting, wood-cutting, paper-cutting, silhouette-cutting, wood-carving, modelling, embroidery, crochet, embroidery in wool, even etching; there is painting with distemper (really better for children than with water-colours), chalk and pencil drawing. "From every material something creative can be made." Why shouldn't the child have choice of material when his creative capacity is thereby furthered? This again is Cizek's "method".

Equally important is the question: Why should we dictate to the child what he has to draw? Why shouldn't the child be allowed to express what he feels? Now and then in the Juvenile Art Class so-called classwork will be given, that is to say, some subject which all the pupils work upon, perhaps "Christmas",



"Holidays", "Carnival", "Procession", but generally the child draws, paints or models what he likes.

When children do only what they wish there is the danger that they may copy or imitate or may be influenced by tradition; or if they are older, become illusionists. And it encourages their creative ability if they have to form something new to them.

Cizek was the first to discover that many children like to begin with colours without having made any previous drawing. To paint creatively without having done any drawing before was regarded by the old school as almost immoral. (The old school was not in every way bad, but knowingly or unknowingly it missed very much.) Cizek allows the children, when they wish, to use the brush straight away, and thus beautiful work is often produced.

I have had the good fortune to be allowed to watch Prof. Cizek and his children in the Juvenile Art Class. Thousands of visitors will agree with me: the Juvenile Art Class is not a school in the ordinary sense of the word, because the teacher retires completely into the background. Cizek stresses again and again that he learns from the children. In this class which is about twice as large as the usual school-class, one may perhaps see him standing before the easel of a girl who is explaining to him what she is drawing, what she means and what she wishes to represent. Or with his kindly face he leans over a tiny creature earnestly discussing his work with him, that is to say, Cizek is listening to what the child is explaining. What contact there is between him, the grown-up, and the little child! What confidence, what love the



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

children have towards him, because he has love for and trust in them. He looks on his children as fellow-workers, as equals. He has innate tact and kindness and respect for every honest little worker.

No child is forced to attend the Juvenile Art Class, but how happy they are in it! I have seldom seen schools where the children were so enthusiastic and worked so steadily. And with this there is no school discipline and hardly any other authority but the work itself. During these two hours the children in the Juvenile Art Class are allowed to visit each other as they like. Of this permission they make very little use, because every child is so occupied with his work. Once I saw in the class some girls who had brought their cat with them. Nobody found anything extra-



ordinary in this. It sometimes happens that children suddenly go to the next room in order to play on the piano without asking any permission. Sometimes Prof. Cizek sets the gramophone going (a present from a foreign visitor), because in his opinion nothing so helps the work as good musical rhythm.

Now the question arises: who are these Cizek children? They are regular Viennese school children from five to fourteen years old, girls and boys, who come once a week for two hours to the Juvenile Art Class. They are not so-called "talented" children, but they are creative children. Once in a while it happens that an uncreative child finds his way to Prof. Cizek. He is not compelled to leave but usually, after a short time, he stays away of his own accord, because he does not feel at home in the class. The children are divided into two groups, not according to their ages, but according to their development, though as a rule age and development synchronize. When working, the children are together in quite free groups. Now and then former pupils come to visit the class and to refresh themselves by seeing the work of the younger children.

Many children are poor. The school fee is now sixteen Austrian shillings a term, but the money does not go to the Juvenile Art Class, but to the School of Applied Art. All the material is put at the disposal of the children by Prof. Cizek free of charge. Prof. Cizek finds that children from the poorer sections of the city are generally more original and more creative than the children of wealthy parents. A richer environment is as a rule destructive to what is creative in the child. Too many books, pictures, vis-

its to theaters, cinemas etc. are bad for the child. The child is so strong and rich in his own imaginative world that he needs little else. A child not yet spoiled by grown-ups once asked him: "What does a meadow look like?" Prof. Cizek answered: "Lie down in it, shut your eyes and live the meadow!"

Choice of materials and subjects are left to the children, but Cizek advises those to whom a certain medium becomes too easy and who run the risk of becoming too skilled in that medium, to try another which presents more difficulties to them.

Cizek distinguishes between media which stimulate creative ability, and those which only give training in the use of materials. There are media which promote skill, for instance clay, which is easily modelled, and water-colours, and others which restrict mere skill in handling, for instance wood and plaster of Paris. Fundamentally, only those media are excluded which are not suitable for children, requiring a long training. He prefers media which further creative power.

Cizek teaches no technique. His pupils must work out their technique themselves and make it their own. And the children find their technique often much more easily than most teachers believe. In Great Britain I was often asked after my lectures, if Cizek has no models. Of course not! If he had models the children would only thoughtlessly copy. If a pupil asks: "How shall I do that?" Cizek has only one answer: "I do not know. If I had to do it I should know at once." Most questions a pupil asks without thought. This answer makes him think. And the ways and means come to him.

Does Cizek criticize? Yes and no! First and foremost, his criticism is positive, promoting creativeness. In every case he encourages the creative side of the pupil and discourages thoughtless imitation. Now and then a set of class-work is hung on the wall and the children themselves are allowed to criticize, even adversely. (A parallel idea: corporal punishment by grown-ups is a terrible thing; but who would object if healthy children of the same age should thrash each other?) Very soon there is a class-feeling and a class-culture. This raises the general level of the class. But the essential thing is the creative atmosphere which Prof. Cizek induces, an atmosphere in which the children feel happy, in which they can be creative: unfortunately this is not yet to be found in all schools.

Cizek is against the old—or shall we say—the purely intellectual school. He has never denied that.

Why did Cizek become an opponent of the intellectual school? Because of the conviction that it gives nothing to the child but deprives him of something, so that the children generally leave such a school poorer than they entered it. That kind of school is part of the tragedy of our modern civilization.—A child is so pliable. How easy it is to make patterns and comfortable “citizens” out of these little children’s bodies and souls! A child has his own handwriting, his own laws and his own ways of creating. How often this has been misunderstood! Our modern civilization tends already too much towards producing as quickly as possible bored little adults, able only to consume, out of originally creative and gifted children. Perhaps that is the reason why in recent



A child explaining her work to other pupils.

PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

years Prof. Cizek gives his greatest love to the three to seven year-olds. In a great capital like Vienna, the eight or nine year-old child is, according to Cizek, influenced by a thousand other things. In the very little ones, the really childlike, Cizek finds a wonderful world of pure creativeness uninfluenced by adults, free from all imitation and lies. Especially significant is the fact that most of the visitors to the Juvenile Art Class—and they are kindly, understanding people—often smile at the apparently clumsy scribbings and drawings of the three to four year-old children. They appreciate only naturalism and skill in work, but in reality the work of the youngest is the purest manifestation of artistic creativeness.



The most beautiful things of all that children produce are the so-called "faults" which in reality are the expression of eternal laws, says Cizek. "The most wonderful thing is that the more the work of a child is filled with so-called 'faults', the more beautiful it is. The more a teacher removes these faults from the productions of the child, the more tedious and lacking in individuality they become." Cizek once tried the experiment of having the picture just made by a child "corrected" by an Academician. "The man really made the picture absolutely correct, but it was a hideous work, tedious and terribly banal, whereas the child's drawing was full of creative life and personality, in a word, a work of art! One might go to India and correct the marvellous Buddhas. What would be the result? Tedious, academic stuff!"

In observing the ever recurring faults in the work of unspoiled children, Prof. Cizek discovered special laws of the mental working and logic of the child. (See drawings on page 49.) How splendid that all the human figures are at right angles to the ground! The child draws a figure at a right angle, that is the strongest, most pronounced, angle in relation to the ground. A child loves the strongest contrasts. Let an unspoiled child draw a mountain that tourists are climbing. One will inevitably find that all the climbers are drawn at a right angle to the slope of the mountain and not in the perpendicular.

The unspoiled child also knows no perspective. Perspective is a matter of geometry, as anatomy is a matter of medical science. Cizek goes so far as to say that he regards perspective in the work of a small child as an unfailing sign of the lack of a

gift for drawing. Why does the work of the primitives appear to us so strong, despite the lack of perspective? Why do the works of the ancient Egyptians appear to us so strong? Because they are created according to the same laws as children's drawings.

By the way, another opinion of Cizek's is, that there is a relationship, even an absolute parallel, between the art of the ancients and primitives and the art of the child. Only with the ancients and primitives there is no break in creative power at the age of puberty. Cizek believes that the unbroken art of the primitives is due to the fact that they are not spoiled by schools.

It is a fact not to be denied that many city children lose their creative ability in drawing and painting in the years of puberty. (Rural teachers have however, assured me that they have not noticed this phenomenon with peasant children.) Might it not be an explanation that puberty, that period of struggle, so absorbs the whole of the adolescent's being, that nothing is left for creative activity? Again, it may be that the old type of school, ignoring puberty as it ignores so many other things, is partly responsible for the fact that boys, after the twelfth or thirteenth year, and girls, after the fourteenth or fifteenth year, can no longer produce.

And this is the answer to the question asked by many people: "Is it true that Cizek usually has interest only for children before the age of puberty?"

Cizek makes a difference between creativeness and "Gestalten", the art of giving form. The loss of instinctive creativeness may be—also according to his opinion—a consequence of puberty.



Cizek prefers to receive the children when they have not yet been spoiled by an intellectual school. But are they then subject only to his influence? Is not the effect of the four to five hours a day of intellectual schooling much stronger than the two hours a week of work in the Juvenile Art Class? And then, the school gives marks whereas the Juvenile Art Class does not give any marks at all. School is compulsory, but the children go to the Juvenile Art Class of their own free will. We must not be surprised if the creative capacity even of the Cizek children sometimes changes in image and conception and representation in the course of years. Too many people meddle with his children. If he were living with his children on a desert island in the ocean and could let them go on creating, he is convinced that he could bring all his children to the purest development of their creative ability. But his children are living in a civilized world with many unfavourable influences. Now what is finally stronger, the environment of the child or the brief influence of Cizek? A clever educationalist once said: "The child should not be adapted to the world around him but the world to the child."

I do not think that it is by chance that people call an artist an eternal child. Only those, who really have remained children will preserve their creativeness to the age of maturity. That means only one in a thousand.

It sometimes happens that Cizek children become painters and sculptors, but Prof. Cizek neither encourages nor discourages this. It cannot be said too plainly that it is not the task of the Juvenile Art Class to produce artists. In Cizek's opinion we have enough



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

painters and sculptors, especially in Austria. Every child in the Juvenile Art Class, whatever his profession may be later in life, has been given the opportunity to be creatively active. The child can use this creative faculty in every activity of his future life. In every profession we need today actively creative people, not imitators or automata. When once I said this in London, they replied: "How can a working-man who makes the same movement with his hand for eight hours on end in a factory, be creative?" My reply was: "Such a working-man naturally cannot be creative in so terrible a profession. But he has, besides his eight hours of sleep, still eight hours free. And can he not fill these with real creative activity, that is to say not only drawing or painting but every kind of creative activity, such as gardening, all sorts of amateur



handicrafts and so forth?" But here we already touch on a social question. Artistic creation is of course for the born artist.

To avoid misunderstanding: Cizek regards himself not as a psychologist, a sociologist, or an educationist, but as a creator. He is undoubtedly also an educator as is every great artist, and an artist as every real educator at least should be. Our whole school problem would be solved if all teachers were artists (which does not mean practising painters or poets), instead of, often merely mechanical instructors: in other words, a teacher should not be a bureaucrat. It will be said that not every teacher can be a Cizek. I agree, Cizek is a unique creator, but he shows the world what an educator can be. We must set up high ideals in order to obtain even moderate results.

Cizek regards himself, as we have said, only as a creator. Since 1925 he has not painted a single picture; presumably because he believes that the artistic culture of the people is essentially more important than exhibiting a dozen or more pictures. He holds also that the present age is entirely unfavourable to art. In his opinion in the place of present-day art an entirely new art will come into being. And this new art will reflect the immense changes of our time and will express the desires and longings of the period. This will be accompanied by a corresponding development in the technical sphere. This is borne out by the fact that for years there have been more girls than boys in the Juvenile Art Class, which has proved less attractive to the "technically" interested boys.

I once saw Cizek sitting with a book by which he was completely carried away. If I remember correctly the title of the book



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

was "Picture Book of an American Architect". There was nothing to see except long streets of giant American cities, bridges, grain elevators, trains, etc. "That is creative", he said. "But painters should be forbidden to imitate or copy nature, which can be done much better by photographers. Art can only come out of creativeness. Then it is strong and elementary. Otherwise it is not art."

The child who is not influenced by grown-ups has this strong type of art. Therefore the child from three to nine or ten years of age should be encouraged to make what he feels he must "bring out of himself". When the child begins to copy, and then only—according to Cizek—the task of the teacher begins. The children who continue to create should be allowed to go on creating. The others, however, should receive drawing lessons from an expert. Every human being should be able to draw, and



“represent”, as well as to read and write. Every school pupil should be brought so far that he can represent with a few strokes what he has seen and experienced, or what he wishes to express, as well as he can describe an experience in words. But the ability to show a carpenter with a few lines, “I want this chair made so and so”, has nothing at all to do with art. And another important statement: The average school generally underrates the number of creatively gifted children.

I was once present when a mother brought her nine year old girl to Prof. Cizek: “Herr Professor, I do not believe that my little daughter can draw, but the teacher in the school said that I should bring her to you.” Cizek asked the mother to leave the child. He had the child sit at a table, gave her a piece of paper and a pencil and said: “Now draw something that you will enjoy!” We went into the adjoining room where Cizek usually sits, and after half an hour this child who had never been in Cizek’s presence before, had made a wonderful drawing. This also is Cizek “method”.

Cizek early made the discovery that little children draw in symbols. We often know their meaning. Sometimes the child will tell us what it means, and sometimes we cannot find out what it is all about. But in any case we must respect the child. Older children invent types for themselves, but this has nothing to do with imitation. Only grown-ups draw and think in patterns.

When children scribble on parts of their drawings it is a sign of uncertainty: the child is not clear as to the form he wants to draw. (See the first pictures on page 49.)



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

It is sometimes said that it is not difficult for Prof. Cizek because Viennese children are especially talented. There can be no doubt that cross-roads of culture like Vienna (such were also old Venice and Byzantium) are especially conducive to the development of art. But the laws which Cizek discovered from Viennese children apply to all children in all times and to all peoples. Just as all fairy tales and the games of children of all races are in essence the same.

A few years ago a Dutch art inspector, Toot, made an experiment with little children in the Dutch-East-Indies. The drawings of all these children evidenced the same laws.

The colours that the Viennese children use may often be much bolder than those used by English children. But English teachers



who have been with Cizek have given their children the possibility of working with the same absence of influence as the children in the Vienna Juvenile Art Class. The results were pictures, the colours of which were as strong as those of the Cizek Children's pictures. The child chooses strong colours because he himself is strong and not complicated.

Speaking of colours, here is a delightful experience of the Juvenile Art Class. A child was in a circus, and afterwards painted an elephant and painted it purple. Grey did not seem to him the right colour for so exotic an animal. Cizek of course agreed with him.

Inheritance plays a great role in the artistic creation of a child. And Cizek as a rule knows at once from a quick glance at the work of a child what his extraction is and what his surroundings are like, etc. Why should children's drawing express less than their writing? However, that is not the main point, but rather that all children draw and paint according to the same laws. Therefore Cizek's discoveries are of value not only for Austria but for the whole world.

Cizek is one of the outstanding men we have in Austria, an idealist who will tolerate no compromise. Despite his seventy years he is one of the youngest of men. He is a new man each day because he reacts to every new thing like a very sensitive instrument.

There are very few people who judge and understand other people with the heart of an artist. A talk with him has an incredibly rejuvenating effect.

He was a painter for fifteen years, before founding the Juvenile Art Class. He made journeys to study art in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, France, and England. He created a sensation in 1908 in London, in 1912 at the art education congress in Dresden. In 1914 there was an exhibition of his children's work in Cologne, in 1920 in Munich; 1923 in Montreux (Congress of the New Education Fellowship), and in Holland, 1920, 1924 and 1929 in Vienna. From 1921 to 1924 an exhibit travelled in Great Britain which was visited by the Queen of England. In 1925 the Juvenile Art Class took part in the great Applied Arts Exhibition in Paris. In 1924—1929, the Cizek exhibit was shown throughout America. Entire museums were emptied to make place for it. In 1933/34 there was a travelling exhibit in Holland; in the summer of 1934 in South Africa; in May and November in England, Scotland and Wales; in 1935 in St. Gall, Zurich and Berne, and again in England.

An English art critic wrote recently that Cizek's name belongs to those of the very few contemporary Teachers who are known to the whole world.

Now some people may easily say: "That is all very well, a reformer of school art teaching." Even if it were only that it would be something. Art is more important than other school subjects. But Cizek is much more than a reformer of instruction in drawing. He was the first artist who insisted on the creative capacity of the child as a basis of art instruction. And to the school that believes in an artificial and schematic education he has restored Goethe's belief in nature and natural growth.



Again it may be asked: How should, how can, the average school which has an entirely different task, apply Cizek's ideas?

No school should be indifferent to the life-work of this pioneer. To the teaching of every subject Prof. Cizek's discoveries can be applied.

I wish here to quote as exactly as possible some sentences from talks with Cizek:

"In our day the art of the child does not develop quite as a matter of course into that of the grown-up, because the more mature child usually either copies from nature or works in an affected artificial way. In the first place, instead of a picture, an imitation of nature is produced; in the second place something artificial.

"There is an art that children create for themselves. The child makes pictures and drawings, not for grown-ups, but to make real his own desires, inclinations and dreams.

"I do not want to train infant prodigies, because they skip important steps in the development of youthful creativeness, and because they are really little grown-ups from the start. The most important stages remain undeveloped in the infant prodigy.

"The Juvenile Art Class is not a school, it is a work centre to which the children come of their own free will and where they can work just as their talents and inclinations prompt them. My educational task consists in furthering the creative giving of form, and preventing imitation and copying. A drawing or any other product of a child is good, if the work accomplished accords



Modelling in clay.

PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

with the child's age and is altogether uniform in quality and when it is honest and true in every single detail. The old masters showed this honesty and uniformity in the highest degree, for instance, Dürer and Rembrandt. Really bad is the work of a child that tries to paint as grown-ups do.

"Further the Juvenile Art Class is intended to lead the children to an understanding of art later on. We learn to understand art largely from what we ourselves have achieved in the field of art.

"I am the friend of my pupils. They are my fellow-workers and I learn from their work.

"Children's work contains in itself eternal laws of form. We have no art that is so direct as that of children. Even the old



Egyptians are not stronger. In Egypt no one was allowed to break the laws of art. Everything there was compulsory. But with children art comes naturally. A curse of our intellectual school is the usual loss of this art in adolescence.

"The child thinks optically-logically. The adult thinks comprehensively-logically. This fact is generally denied in the teaching of drawing and therefore the effect of some drawing teachers is so disastrous to the child.

"Man is an image of God, only when he continues the creative work of God; then, and only then, and not when he copies or imitates with inadequate media, because in any case he cannot do it as well as nature can. But by art he can truly create. Therefore one is deeply moved by the greatness, the wonder of manifestations of art.

"I know no rule. I do not do this and I do not do that, but the moment itself dictates my method of teaching.

"By false treatment the child can only be upset or spoiled, but by right treatment he can be helped forward. I enter into the logic of the child and feel myself one with him. That is the whole secret, and the approach of most grown-ups is a wrong intervention.

"To a really creative child who wants to draw a horse and comes to me, I would simply say: 'You know already how you should do it. Just do it and it will be good.' The pupil needs this kind of conversation with his teacher, who must adapt himself to every different pupil-personality. This constant adapt-

ation of the teacher to the personality of the child is the essential thing.

"It is much easier than most teachers think.

"When the child is used to drawing a tree, he masters his task as if it were play. When he is not used to doing it, he has to struggle for it. However, I put before the child now and then tasks to which he is not accustomed. Why? Because that which is creative begins where the child commences to struggle for the form, when he must work to create the form. If he makes a form without any difficulty, the form will be empty and artificial. Mere skill is very dangerous. When I say to the child: 'Make a design which you have never made before,' then the result is a really childlike design.

"All copied things are worthless. The slightest thing produced which is the result of inner experience, is worth more than the cleverest copying. Therefore I reject school-children who are admired for their skill. Skill can be a hindrance to the creative in art.

"The teacher must avoid every form of compulsion. The child is everything. But when the teacher cannot restrain himself and follows his own ideas then the catastrophe has already taken place. The child will be influenced and then that most precious thing, the child's conception, is lost. It is replaced by the teacher's <sup>Felicitat</sup> <sup>Docent</sup> conception which will then be carried out by the pupil. One sees in so many 'talented' pupils' drawings that they are nothing else than the execution of the conceptions of the teacher.

"There are many women who have a delicacy of feeling which enables them to feel with the child. They may not know so much



as a man but they intuitively sense the right thing because they are closer to the child than he is. Though they can hardly help the child, at least they do not hurt him. And therefore countries which give preference to women in the teaching profession are right.

"Once more, the teacher must be the most modest and humble of persons who sees in a child a miracle of God and not pupil-material.

"I said to the child: What you do is good. To the parents I showed the creativeness of children. I kept the parents away from the children.

"No admittance to grown-ups.' Parents and teachers have formerly suppressed the most essential in children. I have not freed the children as a teacher, but as a human being and an artist.

"The child comes into the world as a creator and creates everything out of his imagination.

"I have extricated children from school in order to make a home for them, where they may really be children. I was the first person to talk about 'unschooling of the school'. School is good only when it commits suicide and transforms itself into active life. Parents and teachers should preserve the child from transforming creativeness into mannerism, or imitation. Among the old Egyptians the illusionistic was punished.

"With children of ten years of age who come to me from schools, where they have already been trained to copy one cannot do other than prevent that this condition becomes still worse. One can try to lead some of the children back to themselves. That is



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

Embroidering.

In the middle of the background Frau Professor Staudek, teacher of needle work in Prof. Cizek's Juvenile Art Class.

one of the foundations of my 'method'; to bring the child always back to himself.

"An uncreative child is allowed to work from nature. But there are people who are still creative in the presence of nature, for example Dürer's 'Hare' and 'Mother', and Michelangelo's 'Moses'. If the child draws from nature and recreates nature that cannot be hindered.

"That the child acquires his own technique should be such a matter of course that every word said on the subject is superfluous. In my class the children cut in plaster. A child has never yet asked me:



'How does one do that?' I show no child a technique. A mother once came with her child to Rembrandt: 'My small boy wants to paint and would like to know how it is done.' Rembrandt answered: 'One takes the palette and a brush and simply begins.' The Juvenile Art Class is an experimental class. The children themselves try out their creative ability in various materials and techniques. The Juvenile Art Class has the task of making it possible that the purely creative work of children is done by children who are uninfluenced by grown-ups. In the Juvenile Art Class the eternal forms of creation and its laws should be revealed. I wish to carry on the art of the small child into the art of youth and to keep away the influence of grown-ups as far as possible.

"All culture is based on creative ability. The significance of my work lies in the fact that for the first time children in my class were allowed to be creative (1885). The Juvenile Art Class is not playing and I do not merely wish—as some people think—to provide the children with some happy, sunny hours. It is often a desperately serious matter."

Giving children sunny hours! I do not believe that we should underestimate the side issues of their work. It already means something if children from six to fourteen years are given two or four wonderful, beautiful hours a week, hours of uninterrupted struggle for form and expression, hours in which they are allowed to do that which as a rule one makes so difficult for them—to work, to be active and to create. And how children value this happiness in the Juvenile Art Class! Here we may quote some of the pupils themselves:



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

In the background visitors to the Juvenile Art Class.

What a seven year-old child says:—

It is very nice at the Juvenile Art Class. I love going to it because we can paint such pretty things there. I have painted a picture; in it there is a horse and a cart and a woman. Whenever we have painted really pretty pictures or have made something well, we all get prizes. On Andrasek's birth-day we got sweets.

RESI BANY.

What the ten and eleven year-old children say:—

I like the work done by the quite little children best. I saw, amongst their work, a picture called "Street Seen from Above". In it the people were lying on the pavement, and a carriage was standing on the street. The little artist wanted to draw its wheels as well. How did he do it? He drew them lying beside the carriage.

AMOS VOGELBAUM.



The best of it is that we are not treated here as we are when at school. We are always asked: "What would you like to do?" We can choose whatever we like. Everybody is so kind to us that I often do not notice how little I know.

LIESELOTTE RITSCHEL.

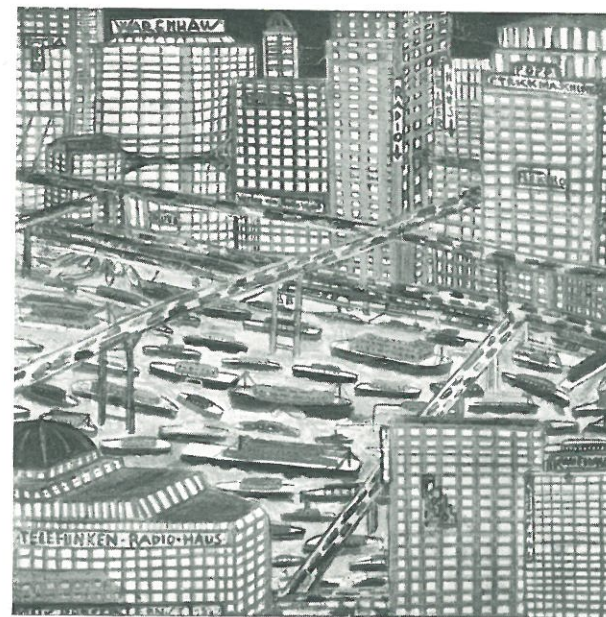
I have drawn a dunghill. On it there is standing a big cock and a woman, who is feeding the hens. There is a hen-house on it, too. I shall describe what the woman and the fowls are doing. The woman on the dunghill has sunk down a bit into the dung. The cock watches her greedily as she scatters the food about; his beak is stretched wide open as much as to say "I want it all". The woman gives him some of the food, thinking as she does so "you shan't get it all". The cock is very big, for he reaches right up to the top edge of the paper. A hen, who has just hatched some eggs, is in the hen-house. Another one is scrambling up the ladder into the hen-house, she looks very funny. I shall try to describe her a little. She has stretched her head forwards and on it you can see her beak. In the middle of her head she has one eye. Her comb and her tail are bent backwards, and her feet forwards. Another chicken is pecking at a newly-laid egg. There are many hens walking about on the dunghill. One is walking to the left, another to the right and a great many are flying towards the woman. There are big hens, little hens, fat ones and thin ones. The picture is very amusing.

GRETE SWOBODA.

(See picture on page 49.)

What the fourteen year-old children say:—

I entered first of all the eight to ten years old group of children. We generally did class work. We drew with crayons, and with lovely coloured chalks, and sometimes we painted with water-colours, or made pretty



"Vienna in the future." Distemper. By Ernst Mitsdorfer, age 14.

pictures or designs with coloured paper. The first big picture, which I painted with water-colours, represented a scene in a large city—it had a frame covered with paper. Later on, I painted still bigger pictures, almost always of skyscrapers, birdseye-views of cities, streets, processions or other such like scenes. Sometimes we made all sorts of things of clay and we always had great fun and the gramophone played beautiful songs.

ERNST MITSDORFER.

My first work consisted in making plaster and clay figures. Later on, I embroidered little houses with hedged in gardens, on net. My second last work was in metal and represents two musicians, one with a concertina and the other with a trumpet.

ELISABETH PROKOP.



What former pupils say:—

When I became a pupil of the Juvenile Art Class at the age of ten, I was astonished to see boys and girls working in the same room. What astonished me most of all, however, was that we were allowed to leave our seats and wander about at our own sweet will and that we could talk to one another while we were at work and could look at one another's work. There was one little boy, who never spoke to anyone and who always drew wonderful pictures of robbers, so well that we were half afraid of them. Once, at the time of the downfall of our monarchy, he even drew a picture of a revolution. Then there was another boy, who modelled two men on horseback, fighting together. Then there was a girl from Tyrol, who nearly always painted pictures of peasants, and another one, who nearly always painted madonnas and angels.

I can remember even now, how sad we all were when Bella Vichon's sister died. Prof. Cizek had an exhibition of her work. He said some wonderfully beautiful things about her and we listened and couldn't realise that Gisi would never be with us again.

During the last years we had a gramophone in the class, and many beautiful records, gay ones and sad ones. We often used to beat time or sing. Often, after a specially lovely record, one of the children would go up to the Professor and catch hold of his hand and drag him along to the gramophone and say: "Do play that again, it was so beautiful!"

When you enter the classroom you are dazzled by the bright coloured pictures on the walls. They are decorated from top to bottom by work of every description. There are pictures painted or made of bits of brightly coloured paper, embroidery and wood carving. On a table there are all sorts of things, modelled in clay and plaster, or cut out of various other materials. Often there are flowers too, which have been brought to the class by the children. The whole room looks as bright and gay as a fairy palace.

ILSE BREIT.



PHOTO R. J. BOHL, VIENNA

Pupils of Miss May's American School in Florence, visiting Prof. Cizek's Juvenile Art Class. The Professor on the right.

Always at the end of the week came the best thing of all: pencil in pocket, and a roll of paper in hand, off to Fichtegasse! Some of us had a long way to go to get there; whoever lived in Grinzing has to go quite a long way by tram. Sometimes it was not a roll of paper, that one took to the class, but a portfolio or a box, containing all the things we had drawn or modelled at home. Prof. Cizek spread everything out before him and sat down and made us children all sit round him. For we hadn't seen one another for a whole week and of course had to see and hear, what each of the children had made and done during that time. Some of them kept on producing thing after thing out of their satchels, it seemed as if they would never finish. It never once happened that a child said: "I haven't had any time. I haven't done anything." For there was nothing we liked better than working for our art class.

Some of us kept diaries and drew pictures in them, and you can easily imagine what gay little books they were. We pasted into these little books every one of our little treasures that could be pasted in—any specially



lovely bit of silver paper, any uncommon stamp, a beautiful flower, which we had picked, or any little picture which we had drawn as a remembrance of our summer holidays. Every child ought really to keep such a diary, at any rate for a time. Merely by looking into one's diary one remembers things, that are not even mentioned in it.

Whoever opens the big doors of our class room will have lots to see. The walls are simply covered with pictures, painted either quite lately or some time ago. There are glass cases containing embroidery, plaster and wooden figures, and there are things standing on the tables because there isn't room enough for everything in the glass cases. As a rule we are allowed to do whatever we like; each child can do a different thing. Of course it is not very quiet in the class-room. There is a scraping and scratching, a hammering and knocking and—just a little chattering too. Every now and then, we can't do what we like, for Prof. Cizek sets the whole class some special task. He tells us, for instance, to draw a picture of the circus, which once passed through the city with all its animals. Sometimes we have lovely music, for we have a piano and a gramophone and a number of records which the American children gave us. I expect they had such a happy time here with us, that they wanted to be remembered by us sometimes. We have often guests from other countries.

Every week one or other of the former Cizek pupils pays us a visit. When they see us at work, they often feel sorry to think that they have grown up so quickly. But they really ought to be glad, for they could easily have grown up without ever having had this happy time at all, and without it, many of their lives would have been less rich and beautiful.

BELLA VICHON (Thale am Harz).

Cizek began at the end of last century to explore and to find out a new art. He discovered the art of the child. Millions of children and the whole of humanity will thank him.

All the following pictures are the work of pupils of Prof. Cizek's Juvenile Art Class, Vienna, done either in class or at home. The home work is so indicated. The majority of the pictures were made between 1910 and 1924.

