

ART

Device Teaches Drawing

Used in convalescent hospitals, the combination stereoscope-drawing board is helping returned veterans learn the first steps of commercial art or illustration.

➤ VETERANS recovering from war disabilities in government hospitals can relieve the boredom of slow convalescence by learning new skills and handicrafts. To the already familiar work in wood, metals, leather and textiles has now been added an opportunity to learn freehand sketching. Young men have a chance to take at least the first steps towards interesting jobs in magazine illustration, commercial art, or even full-fledged careers in portraiture and landscape painting.

Floyd V. Cornaby, specialist in pre-vocational shop retraining in the Veterans Administration, believes there is a good deal of undiscovered art talent among the young veterans now in the hospitals.

To help them through the first and most discouraging steps in learning how to draw, a new device is now being tried out in veterans' hospitals. It aids the beginner in getting a feel of proportion and perspective, and shows him how to translate what he sees of a three-dimensional object into terms of lines on a two-dimensional sheet.

It has been given the trade name "Artiscope." The device is an ingenious combination of a stereoscope and a drawing-board. Into the stereoscope, which is mounted on a light metal frame above the board, the student puts natural color slides that come with the set. These give three-dimensional views of models, landscapes, still life groups—anything that an artist might want to draw. Looking into the stereoscope, the student sees his model projected into space as it would be in nature. A book of instructions tells all the essential tricks of the trade.

One great advantage of this device is that it can be used anywhere—on a table in the convalescent ward, on a board over the arms of a wheel-chair, even braced on a patient's lap in bed.

Another advantage is that actual models are not required, so that the student can make progress under the unavoidable limitations of life in a hospital. Neither does a teacher need to be constantly at the student's elbow; an occasional critique keeps him on the right track.

There is no magic in this kind of art instruction. The student is not making a mechanical copy; he has to employ what talent he has, and strive to improve it as he goes along.

Science News Letter, October 12, 1946

SAFETY

Caution, Science Aid In Preventing Fire

➤ HALF of America's destructive fires are in homes. For that reason the scientists have devoted much of their energy to the problem of making homes less of a fire hazard. They have developed wallboards for interior and exterior uses that have a high degree of fire resistance. Some contain glass fiber, some contain asbestos, others are of cement or plaster composition and contain non-combustible non-metallic minerals, and still others are made of some of the new heat-resistant plastics.

The National Bureau of Standards has found recently a chemical treatment by which lumber is made less combustible. In it the wood is impregnated with solutions of ammonium salts, borax or boric acid. The treatment may double the cost of the material but the process is worth while for lumber to be used where the fire hazard is high.

Well-painted surfaces are fire-resistant. The U. S. Navy, by experimentation, has found that if aluminum powder is added in the priming coat, the fire-retardant properties of the paint coating are improved. The practice is now followed on all interior painting in Navy ships.

There are many steps to decrease fire hazards that home-owners can take, scientists state. The fire danger may be from the outside or inside. Fire-resistant coverings on outer walls of a frame house, to lessen the danger from grass and other outside fires, are helpful. Good paint, particularly with the aluminum powder priming coat, is one. Asbestos siding, or covering of other noncombustible or slow-burning materials, is better. Slate, asbestos, or certain other special shingles will protect the roof from flying sparks.

Chimney construction should include a tile flue within the brick and mortar; brick and mortar alone crumble and leak with excessive heating.

Science News Letter, October 12, 1946



ARTISCOPE—Looking through the lenses of the stereoscope, the young veteran sees a three-dimensional image of the model projected into space. The nurse-instructor gives him hints.