

# Artists for Kids goes Camping

— by Mona Houle

An attitude of discovery. That's all you need at Paradise Valley Summer School of the Arts. Founder and director Bill MacDonald of Artists for Kids Trust, which hosts Paradise Valley, is proud as he talks about this second annual summer camp. He's keen about art and kids — and it shows.

"Bringing in top names such as Ted Harrison, David Blackwood and Pat O'Hara gives kids a chance to learn from the best," he says. "The essence is to foster positive beliefs in kids about art and themselves."

The artists have a lot to offer. "They know the difference between what's good and what's good enough. They know what to look for, how to access skills and assign specific objectives. They are artists themselves who can work with kids enthusiastically. "Quality deals not just with art, but with critical thinking, historical connections and interrelations with their emotions, the earth and each other.

Getting nationally acclaimed artists to come to a kids' summer camp in Brackendale, British Columbia is not hard for MacDonald to do because of the success of last year's (first) camp. "Persuading the first three top names was the challenge," MacDonald says. "With names like Bill Reid, Jack Shadbolt and Gordon Smith behind you, others were easily attracted."

But the "big name" artists like Robert Bateman or David Blackwood don't seem to intimidate the campers. Bill says they don't understand the significance until the artists leave.

The one-week camp is set up for a well-rounded cultural experience. Age groups are from 9-18 years and the camp is equipped for special needs students.

The structure of activities allows both open-ended and focused projects to develop. Painting and drawing are usually more open-ended for shaping

personal imagery, intuitive calling and individuality. O'Hara will work in the outdoors which will provide greater awareness of form in nature and gives students an opportunity to develop structurally.

David Blackwood, printmaker, explores the traditional time-honoured process of etching which requires great concentration due to the technical depth of etching. Students will be able to strengthen their graphic ability and individual personas in this age-old practice.

Students can choose to mentor with an artist of their choice, participate in planned recreation or work in-depth on their own.

The recreation component of canoeing, hiking, archery, and cave exploration is for balance. "The atmosphere of the farm and the animals are especially good for urban kids to be a part of."

Helping our kids believe in themselves, give them a chance to develop their skills, foster positive ideas about art and meet peers of similar interests: all under the direction of Canada's leading artists. That's what Paradise Valley is all about. And all you need is an attitude of discovery. ☺

*Monica Houle is a freelance writer living in North Vancouver.*

For more information about Artists for Kids contact Bill MacDonald at 687-6667.

Pictured below is Laura Marshall, 11, at the first Paradise Valley Summer School of the Arts.



## "Summer At Gaget"

### Members Group Show

June 15 to  
September 10, 1995

Opening Reception:  
Thurs., June 15, 1995 5-9 pm

### GALLERY GAGET

1134 Granville St. Vancouver  
687-2468 Thurs - Sun 12-6pm

