

# Out on the Town

## Suburban Culture at PoCo Rococo

What do shopping malls and suburbs have to do with art?

In the traditional sense of museums, galleries and symphony halls, not much. In terms of popular culture — movies, rock music and sports — suburbs are thriving and shopping malls are the centre of attention.

The idea that culture emerging in the suburbs promotes artistic development in the city is the theme of Poco Rococo.

Presented jointly by Vancouver's or Gallery and Port Coquitlam Senior Secondary, Poco Rococo is an art show for suburban audiences.

Curator Ken Lum wants to demonstrate the link between popular culture and fine art by presenting professional art works in a shopping mall.

Coquitlam Centre Mall's patrons can see an art show on their way to a movie or

bar which reflects on the culture they are participating in.

Because high school students work and play in this mall the work of the seventy student artists in the show is of special significance.

Many of the professional artists in the show attended highschool in the suburbs and they want to share knowledge and experience with their younger counterparts. In a statement prepared for the exhibit they said:

"Highschool students are particularly involved with mass culture and this shows in their art work with a directness that expresses the actual conditions of their lives.

"This directness is a symbol for a new generations' form of artistic invention. We want to learn from this process and contribute to it."

While the three art

teachers from Poco Senior Secondary share the artists' concern for a dialogue between generations they have a special concern.

Funding cuts to art programs combined with stiffer graduation requirements for university-bound students are stopping students from taking art courses, the teachers charge.

Graphic arts, sculpture and ceramics teacher, Myra Eadie says she hopes the show will present this problem to the public.

"I know a girl who can't take Grade Twelve art because it will prevent her from fulfilling the requirements for university entrance. Without the final year of art instruction she won't have a presentable portfolio for art school," Eadie says.

Fellow teachers Lorne Whorley and Tuk Caldwell will exhibit works in drawing and wood sculpture, respectively.



Poco Rococo features work by lots of local students, like Leah Wilson's (above), and from left to right, Steve Goode, Karen Johnson, and Wilson again. The show is on display at Coquitlam Center and it emphasizes the flourishing suburban talent as an alternative to urban galleries and museums.

### A Special Report By Trish Webb

