

The Entertainers

Children are Bernard Poulin's favorite subjects



"In a world of his own" by Bernard Poulin

By Carolyn Fouriezos

Bernard Aime Poulin finds artistic inspiration by "noticing things most adults overlook. I learned to do this from kids," he says. "they see things clearly. I try to be just as observant." What the artist overlooks, his young subjects notice. For example, 12-year-old Michael, who posed for "In His Own World", said "Don't expect boys to sit up straight." Bernie heeded his advice and in this study of a boy reading, slouched down at his desk. Is typical of children, anywhere.

Kids are Poulin's favorite subjects. His interest derives, in part, from his work as a child specialist. Concerned with parenting, he is preparing another family structure course on its evolution in the '80's. "I don't want to get away

from this area because I want to continue painting people's feelings," he says.

"Feelings" dominate the work at his upcoming exhibition at Galerie Gauthier. For instance, "Last Look at Summer" shows a boy staring forlornly out the back window of a bright yellow school bus. Bernie's ambivalence about the school system found a source of inspiration when he noticed a line of vehicles waiting to transport their charges to school after the summer holidays.

"Schools need to change if children are unhappy about returning," he says.

An often glimpsed but seldom noticed metaphor for the amount of time children spend waiting is realized in "Bus Stop."

The bored child leans against the pole, waiting to go - where? On the other hand, "Corneob" is an hilarious look at a boy who, anything but bored, has found something to do. The forbidden puff was suggested by the pipe-smoking artist's memory of his own first indulgence. Yet the little circus acrobat, a painted Pierrot in emerald green tights, evolved because, Bernie says: "I wanted to do a clown face."

The myriad of faces does not imply that Bernie has abandoned the glowing landscapes and still-lives he does so

well. "Snow Dunes" is a spare composition in which the focal point, dried brown bush-weed, pushes bravely through silver-shadowed snow. In "Camouflage", a row of canoes, dappled by sunlight and paint, captures the spirit of John Island children's camp.

The tall sheers, the elaborately detailed "Afghan", thrown over Bernie's daughter napping on a salmon velvet love-seat, depict a warmly elegant interior. In "The Red Ball", a neighbor's fluffy, black cat invites a petting.

These are just a few of the fifty works comprising Bernie's show - his first in two years because he has been busy with "an enormous number of commissions." They include a large painting for Acme Construction's 50th anniversary, the twelve Sudbury scenes in our Centennial Calendar, several book illustrations and, of course, the "Mig" cartoons. A series of delightful hasty notes, illustrated with "A letter for Tante Germaine" are currently available for Christmas giving. Bernie's large reproductions are now being handled by a Denver publisher because "I cannot devote the time to business and still concentrate on my art."

Another occupation that requires concentra-

tion is writing. Bernie's play, "Flannel-lined, elastic-waistband, corduroy pants", is in its final draft. It will be performed first by the enrichment class at "Our Lady of Fatima" school. "The feedback I get from this production will enable me to finish the book which requires 43 drawings," Bernie says.

In addition to these projects, Poulin is planning exhibitions in Denver and Toronto. Still, he is optimistic about Sudbury, his adoptive home. "It is very much alive and very much involved in the arts," he says. Bernie's involvements are a credit to his city, proven by the art on display at Galerie Gauthier. The exhibition runs from November 26 to December 16. Don't miss it!