## FIRING THE IMAGINATION

Visiting Artists Program Instructs and Inspires

by Kathleen Tuck

They have different areas of interest, varying techniques and a range of artistic styles. But in the end, they all have one thing in common - dirty hands.

Since 1994, art professors Ron Taylor and Jim Budde have invited dozens of ceramists to the Boise State campus from across

the nation to present hands-on workshops for

students and community artists as part of the Visiting Artists in Ceramics program. The popular program was the brainchild of art professor John Takehara, who died in April at the age of 80.

Funded by proceeds from the semiannual Clay and Fire ceramics sale, the program fills a vital need in the community.

"The arts community in Boise is great for the size of the town, but it's not large enough to sustain a lot of ceramics shows," Budde says. "It's important that students see all the different ways you can handle clay and create different types

The two-day interactive workshops are offered free to faculty, staff, students and alumni, and for a minimal charge of about \$25 to community members.

> Comparable programs outside the university typically charge \$400-\$500.

The ceramists usually create unique pieces of art during their workshops, and often they are willing to sell or donate them to the university. The

pieces are kept either in the Art Department for student reference or displayed elsewhere on campus.

In addition to attending the workshop, students have a chance for one-on-one visits with the artists over lunch or at an evening potluck.

The program, which is unusual in its size, scope and access to campus and the community, has garnered enthusiastic responses from students over the years.

Patricia Breidenbach, who attended a 2003 workshop, wrote the following in her evaluation: "Through this workshop with John Balistreri, I found myself facing some creative issues that had been repressed. He opened a can of worms, so to speak, that is now making me think on a deeper level when approaching clay."

For Joy Fingerlos, who attended a 2001 workshop, the experience was liberating: "The Robert Brady workshop gave me new inspiration. I am determined to play more and fear less. I'm going to force myself to work until it doesn't feel like work anymore."

Budde hopes the program will thrive and continue to inspire students for years to come.

"This has always been rewarding for me," he says, "and it's great in what it brings to Boise."



Visiting artists often create unique pieces while on campus. Clockwise, from left, are works by Susannah Israel, Harris Deller and Eva Kwong.