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Five artists, will paint for money: Not for themselves, of course.
Vancouver's Group of Five created these prints to fund scholarships for the Emily Carr College of Art and Design

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Illustrations: Graphic/Diagram: Douglas Coupland / Douglas Coupland's piece.

Graphic/Diagram: Angela Grossmann / Angela Grossmann's piece.

Graphic/Diagram: Graham Gillmore / Graham Gillmore's piece.

Graphic/Diagram: Derek Root / Derek Root's piece.

Graphic/Diagram: Attila Richard Lukacs / Attila Richard Lukacs's piece.

Vancouver's Group of Five hadn't been together in the same room for 15 years. Then, last Christmas, "Ricky," more often known as Attila Richard Lukacs, Canada's bad boy artist, was in town from New York for a show and they found themselves sitting around the Epicurean Deli reminiscing about art school.

The group, which comprises Douglas Coupland, Angela Grossmann, Derek Root, Graham Gillmore and Lukacs, used to hang out, work, live and travel together before graduating from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 1985. From there, they were launched into influential, high-profile careers living variously in Berlin, Paris, New York.

Except for Coupland, who graduated in sculpture and went on to international fame for writing books like *Generation X*, the other four are painters. After graduating, they became known as the "young romantics," the brat pack of West Coast visual artists voted by many in the art world most likely to succeed.

At their lunch last Christmas, Lukacs came up with the idea of a print series that would provide the funds for a scholarship for art students attending Emily Carr, starting next year. And so the 85-5 Visual Arts Foundation Scholarship was enthusiastically founded.

The etchings are being sold through Vancouver's Diane Farris Gallery (\$2,000 for a set of five). Half of the series of 25 has already been sold. The 85-5 Visual Arts Foundation Scholarship hopes to raise \$20,000 annually for graduating students.

"It was like kindergarten," says Coupland. "We all showed up one day to actually make these things, and they actually work despite coming together from five different poles of experience."

The black and white copperplate etchings reflect an eclectic range of styles from five very different artists. "If they did these prints in 1985, it would have been hard to tell them apart," says Coupland. "They were fiercely competitive with each other and as the years have gone by, their voices

have become highly specific and their work really has nothing in common anymore."

For those familiar with their work, the etchings are like name tags. No one, for example, could mistake Lukacs' etching, which evokes the dark sexuality that has become his artistic trademark. Likewise with Grossmann, who depicts the face of a prisoner that is an homage to her 1996 series on petty criminals.

Even Coupland, who has just started creating visual art again after a 12-year hiatus, has his signature on the etching of a Japanese pop star whose face is obscured by vertical lines that resemble a barcode or static from a television.

But if their work has become increasingly distinct, their relationships have largely remained the same. "It was like no time had passed," says Root of the four days spent last year at an Emily Carr studio working with his old friends. "All the old jokes were the same and everyone's character is even more defined. Now we just compete for laughs."

"We wanted to encourage emerging artists," says Grossmann, who now teaches part-time at Emily Carr. "It's really difficult once you get out of school to find your way."

It wasn't so difficult for Grossmann or any in the Group of Five. They all had their work exhibited at the Vancouver Art Gallery shortly after graduating. But, says Grossmann, "we all had money from scholarships, grants and sales that gave us a springboard."

Now, more than ever, says Grossmann, artists need the encouragement to go to art

school and not worry about finding a more financially secure career. "It doesn't seem to be a rational thing to do to graduate in painting now," she says. "In the '80s, art school was an end in itself."

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