

ON EXHIBIT

NORMAND HUDON

OR THE FOREVER CHEEKY YOUNG MAN



"TROIS THÉOLOGIENS", 1990, 14 x 18 in.

It is difficult to imagine Normand Hudon as either old or out of the spotlight. A recent portrait did reveal a salt and pepper head of hair and thick mustache. Many will always remember him as a caricaturist, devilishly gifted in shaking the pedestals beneath public figures. More than a humorist, more than an artist whose brush strokes bite, Normand is a poster artist, illustrator, adman, actor, radio and television host, author, and the list goes on. However, no matter what Hudon was doing, he was always painting.

Born in Montréal in 1929, Normand Hudon eventually reached the *École des beaux-arts de Montréal* and then the *Académie Montmartre* in Paris (1949). In the *City of Light*, he met many influential personalities including Picasso and Léger.

Normand's talent as a caricaturist surfaced early. While still a student, his work was published in *La Patrie* and *Le Petit Journal* newspapers. His caustic drawings appeared in several dailies, weeklies and periodicals, such as *La Presse* and *Le Devoir*. The subject of many articles, Hudon has also pub-

lished alone or in collaboration with others albums of caricatures.

All of this makes us neglect the fact that Normand Hudon has been exhibiting his work regularly since 1947 at the *Salon du Printemps* of the *Montréal Museum of Fine Art*, and on several other occasions, elsewhere in Québec, in Canada and abroad. Among the first galleries to accept Hudon's work were Agnès Lefort's and Waddington's. Today, the caricaturist stands behind the increasingly well-known painter.

Over the years, children, fantastic houses, awkward priests and quixotic

lawyers have filled his canvases revealing an exquisite sensitivity and tenderness rather unexpected in this pitiless opponent.

Not surprisingly, drawing is essential to his compositions. Hudon works to deform the familiar to express his point of view. His apparent naiveté can not hide the critic within the artist.

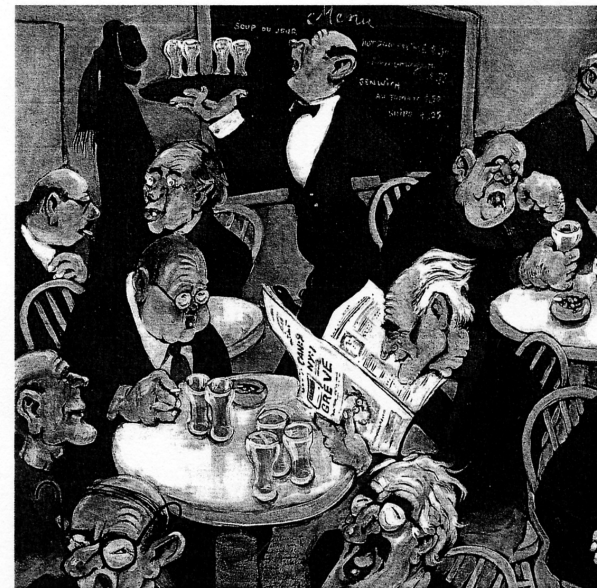
Hudon often uses mixed media. His colours, both sombre and highly contrasted, underline the purpose of the drawing. The black of clothing (priest's and lawyer's robes) offsets red noses and ruddy cheeks. Using people and objects for his own purposes, Hudon constantly shows movement. His compositions show obliques and staircases. The overall impression the spectator gets from Normand's work is one of laughing naughtiness. The artist draws upon daily life in popular neighbourhoods where the authentic can be picturesque. Hudon's irreverence strikes the dull world of clerics and judges where solemn silliness and conservatism take refuge. The artist and his imitators have helped open the minds of our society, more than our public figures, politicians or others.

Normand Hudon is a figurative painter. A title which meant he has been criticized by abstract art lovers. Of course other caricaturists have encountered similar prejudice, e.g. Julien, LaPalme (Québec), Daumier, Forain (France).

Hudon's signature looks like an insect armed with a spear at each end. Most viewers will always imagine it with a smile on top! **I**

Paul Gladu

The Balcon d'art de Saint-Lambert is planning a major exhibit of Normand Hudon's work. His paintings are permanently on display at the following galleries: Archambault Gallery, Lavaltrie; Michel Bigué, St Sauveur; Le Chien d'Or, Québec City; Le Portal Gallery, Québec City; Au P'tit Bonheur, Pointe-au-Pic; Fawcett-Langdon Gallery, Burlington; Kaspar Gallery, Toronto; Koyman Galleries, Ottawa; Kathleen Laverty Gallery; Edmonton.



"QUELQUES TRAVAILLEURS", 1991, 24 x 30 po.