

Normand Hudon's legacy of satire

By Janice Scrim

Some people collect stamps, but not Westmounter Denis Lépine.

Normand Hudon caricatures from Denis Lépine's collection. For the last 15 years, the Redfern Avenue resident has been collecting the caricatures and drawings of the late Normand Hudon, and has recently assembled his collection into an exhibition in Hudon's honour.

"Normand Hudon wasn't a caricaturist, he was the caricaturist," Lépine said of his idol. "He had style and humour and he had a lot of guts. That's what I liked about him the most. He drew what others couldn't or just wouldn't, and a lot of his work was refused because it was too risqué. When he died, I had accumulated a lot of his work, so I decided to do something with it."

The exhibition features more 100 of Hudon's satirical cartoons that depict political and public personalities of the 20th century from Quebec and throughout the world. On display are many of the artist's inks, drawings, illustrated books, collages and most notably his series 'A la Potence', which is sure to bring back some familiar faces from the 1950s and '60s.

The opening night of the exposition was a great success, with more than 150 people in attendance. "Everyone seemed very impressed with the show," said Lépine. "So many people came up to me to thank me for displaying my collection, and to tell me how lucky I was to have such a great sampling of his work."

But Lépine is quick to point out that his collection is not for sale. "I can't put a price tag on something that means so much to me," h

e said.

"I would love to tour some museums, but my goal is really to help people remember Hudon. He was a great man and a great artist, and he shouldn't be forgotten."

And that should hardly be the case. Hudon, who died in 1997, made quite a name for himself working for Le Devoir, starting in 1958, and then moving to La Presse in 1961. He participated in several solo exhibitions, featured his work in different salons and galleries, and even showed his work at the Musée des Beaux-arts. He animated programs such as 'Maligne ligne' and 'Le p'tit café', which appeared on television over several years.

"This exposition is like Hudon's story of Quebec," said Lépine. "He had his favourite politicians and lawyers that he loved to portray, and many people remember him as a public figure who was, and still is, very respected."

'Normand Hudon: Profil d'une époque 50 ans de caricature' continues at La Maison de la Culture Marie-Uguay, 6052 Monk Boul. in Ville Émard, through August 25. Admission is free. Closed Sundays and Mondays. Info: 872-2044.