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Rosemère caricature fest to focus on editorial freedom



This year's Biennale internationale de caricature will have events designed to appeal to adults as well as children.

Freedom of expression, a concept that came under attack in January when France's satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo was the target of Islamist extremists, will be the theme of the third biennial caricature festival to be hosted by the Town of Rosemère at the municipal library on June 5-6 and 7.

Unique in Quebec

Announcing the festival to members of the local media at the library last week, Mayor Madeleine

Leduc said that she and other town officials felt it would be appropriate to focus on freedom of expression at this year's Biennale internationale de caricature de Rosemère given the terrible events in France just a few months ago.

While festivals of editorial cartooning are apparently quite popular in Europe, to date Rosemère is the only community in Quebec where such an event takes place. "Over the years, Rosemère has always distinguished itself through a rich cultural life," said Leduc.

"The attacks against cartoonists have provided us with an occasion to reflect on freedom in all its forms: freedom of speech, of association, of movement, of opinion and in the press. The Town of Rosemère would like to make a contribution in its own way to the debate which has been underway for several months now."

Cartoonist from Le Devoir

For this year's festival, Rosemère was able to persuade one of Montreal's most outstanding political cartoonists to be the Biennale's 2015 patron of honour. Michel Garneau, who draws and skewers politicians and other public figures for Le Devoir, has accepted the role. Although it's been only three years since the first caricature festival was held, it's picking up steam and Rosemère's reputation as the sponsor of such an event is growing.

"This Biennale is one of the rare occasions in Quebec to celebrate caricature by exhibiting it, creating it and analyzing it in all its forms through presentations and discussion groups," said Garneau. "The theme of freedom of expression is all the more relevant in 2015 since this year began with a barbarous attack at the editorial offices of Charlie Hebdo. These events which outraged cartoonists from all continents, but also those who have freedom of expression at heart, raise questions that go beyond the world of editorial cartooning. It will thus be a moment to reflect on the difficult conditions under which this art is now practised in several parts of the world."

Rosemère gaining status

"With this third edition, the Town of Rosemère passes another milestone in getting to be known as a destination of choice for all those who are fans of caricature art," said town councillor Normand Corriveau who played a key role in launching the first caricature festival. "With each new edition, the number of visitors increases, with some coming from as far as Gaspésie to be here to take part. This has become a distinctive event that is accessible to people of all ages."

This year's Biennale internationale de caricature will have events designed to appeal to adults as well as children, including displays of caricatures and drawing workshops. Indoor activities will be taking place at the municipal library, with some outdoor events taking place in Rosemère's Parc des Pionniers just next door. There'll also be a workshop in digital caricature creation and caricaturists will be on hand to draw in real time.

History of cartooning

In addition, visitors will be invited to attend and take part in a presentation led by the conservator of Montreal's McCord Museum, David Vachon, and there'll be a presentation by historian Robert Aird on editorial cartooning and censorship during times of crisis in Quebec. An exhibition of caricatures by the late great Quebec political cartoonist Normand Hudon of Le Devoir from a permanent collection belonging to Denis Lépine will also be presented.

At some point during the three days, the organizers plan to hold a discussion forum where political cartoonists will be asked to explore the concept of freedom of expression. An entire room at the library is going to be set aside for the display of cartoons and caricatures related to events that took place following the shooting incident at Charlie Hebdo's offices in France.

Cartoonists in show:

Caricatures by the following editorial cartoonists will be exhibited at this year's Biennale internationale de caricature: Aislin (Montreal Gazette), Ygreck (Journal de Québec), Beaudet (Journal

de Montréal), André-Philippe Côté (Le Soleil), Bado (Le Droit), Jacques Goldstyn (Les Débrouillards), Fleg (Le Soleil), Pascal Élie (Montreal Gazette), Chapleau (La Presse) and Roland Pier (retired from the Journal de Montréal).

ABOUT AUTHOR

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