

# Typical Canadian is proof that the "c

By Gerry Yampolsky  
Canadian University Press

He is a man who attacks with pictures and one liners. His arena is four inches by three inches and allows for one or two lines of print, yet he uses that space to convey a message more powerful than even the characters he satirizes.

Terry Mosher, better known as Aislin, proves that the quill is mightier than the pen, which leaves the sword far behind in the modern pecking order.

His cartoons, if they can be defined as such, educate the reader while tickling the funny bone. He uses images rather than words to point out the wrong doings of people and institutions in the news.

Aislin is published three times a week in the Montreal Gazette and does freelance work for other interests.

Mosher's office speaks loudly of the man. It is messy, but organized and very interesting. The walls are cluttered with awards, posters and buttons. Buttons from everywhere and for anything. Old political campaigns, old movies, old stars, new businesses, and one that simply states the "Mary Brown has the best legs in town," a vestige of a modelling agency's creative push.

His collection of baseball hats and vast

*He is a man who attacks with pictures and one liners.*

library remind visitors they are dealing with a crazed intellectual who can comfortably discuss the roots of Country and Western, European art, or Civic Politics.

Mosher's hair and beard are speckled with grey and he reminisces about the Yippies and underground newspapers. He is not a radical in the bomb-throwing sense,

yet his art does tend to shake up the establishment from time to time.

He is not easy to place, his age

somewhat between the frolicking twenties and the crisis-ridden forties. His energy is enormous and when he laughs it is in a deep resonant voice that surprises and envelopes the listener. He throws his head back, his eyes light up and on goes the volume. If he isn't talking to you, he is on the phone to someone across Canada, swigging Scope from a bottle and spitting it into a nearby pail ("Ever since I quit heroin I've taken to Scope," he quips) or smoking a cigarette without ever flicking the ash.

His success and recognition come after years of hard work and many hungry weeks when cartoons, caricatures or other works did not sell.

That has all changed. Mosher proudly talks about the new second hand Mercedes sports coupe he has just purchased. He then shrugs and grins "Every second printing deserves a Mercedes, even if it is

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second hand." Then he throws back his whole body and the laughter booms out, rattling the windows.

"I think I'm in the big leagues (he mimics strictly tongue in cheek), I've always enjoyed putting out books, and if they made some money, so much the better. Now, they're finally starting to be popular, and making lots of money. Somewhere down the line I'd like to do *only* books, something that will really knock the world on its ass.

Don't you get tired of doing the same cartoons?

Not really, you can only do Levesque and Drapeau so many times, but they are interesting. I guess my favorite character has been Levesque, but Ryan is coming in fast. It has to do with the person being "in the spotlight."

I sense that with the coming of Ryan,

there is a new severity emerging in Quebec. Levesque had a bee in his bonnet about separatism, but he is really a social democrat.

What you look for are mistakes. Levesque made many, but Ryan is new, and I think he will make a pile of them.

What about the beginning of Aislin? The name is my daughter's. I

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graduated from Grand Ecole de Beaux Art in Quebec City. I used to earn cash by drawing caricatures of tourists.

Then I hitched down to New York and knocked on the door of Paul Krassner and he liked my work. Krassner managed to get me a double page spread in a rock magazine, now defunct, named *Cheetab*. There was also some work for a coffee house in Boston, some other work published in Saturday Night, the Toronto magazine, but here I am in Montreal. I am the typical Canadian, born in Ottawa on Remembrance day.

How did you start with the newspapers in the city?

When I arrived in Montreal, I went to see Frank Walker at the Star. The other cartoonist, McNally, broke his ankle and they called a few weeks later for a cartoon, that was my first piece published in the city.

There are rumors circulating that I was working in university papers and underground press (Logos), but that came only after the Star. I was willing to work for anyone, both for experience and the exposure.

The money was pretty tight; about fifty to a hundred dollars a week was good. Then I started doing more freelance stuff for the Star and artwork on their ads.

Walker called me in and said that "we might as well hire you full time for all the



AISLIN AT WORK . . . Dam it's typical

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