News of the arts

Canadian cartoonists among the best

A survey of the development of Canadian political cartoons as an art form is currently being shown in major art museums across the country. Canadian Political Cartoons is on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario until November 12.

Organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery, where it opened in October 1977, the exhibition shows some 200 cartoons by more than 40 of Canada's best cartoonists. Works by such artists as Aislin (Terry Mosher) of The Montreal Gazette, Duncan Macpherson of The Toronto Star, and Len Norris and Roy Peterson of The Vancouver Sun have consistently won awards from international juries for their insights into the foibles of political figures.

While the earliest work shown, The Mitred Minuet, appeared in 1774, the exhibition emphasizes the beginning of a Canadian cartoon tradition in 1849 with the publication of Punch in Canada. This tradition became established about the time of Confederation through publication of Canadian Illustrated News in 1869 and, in 1873, Grip, a weekly produced by cartoonist John Wilson Bengough, who became famous for his acute perceptions of Sir John A. Macdonald.

Material since the Second World War centres upon the subject of separatism both from traditional and current points



The Great Nazi Orchestra (Die Zeitung, London, September 4, 1942) by Walter Trier.

of view. For example, in 1963, The Winnipeg Free Press published a cartoon by Peter Kuch in which a Canada Goose is obediently followed by nine goslings while a tenth, carrying a knapsack, rebelliously swims off from the others. More recently, Edd Uluschak of The Edmonton Journal depicts René Lévesque and Pierre Trudeau riding a tandem bicycle with Lévesque scattering thumbtacks under Trudeau's wheel.

Among the other cartoon artists represented are Sid Barron, Charles Bell, Jack Boothe, Robert Chambers, John Collins, Andy Donato, Ed Franklin, Jan Kamienski, Rusins Kaufmanis, Victor Roschkov and Merle R. Tingley.

Wartime cartoons

The first Canadian exhibition of wartime political cartoons by acclaimed illustrator Walter Trier is being shown along with Canadian Political Cartoons.

Political Cartoons by Walter Trier includes some 30 drawings the artist produced for the German weekly newspaper Die Zeitung, which was published in London, England during the Second World War. Trier revealed a deft, satirical eye when interpreting such figures as Adolph Hitler, Hermann Goering, Joseph Goebbels and Benito Mussolini.

Born in Prague in 1890, Trier received recognition for his drawings at the age of 19 when he was published in Munich by the satirical magazine Simplicissimus. Commissions followed for publications in Berlin, where he lived for 26 years.

To escape Nazi Germany, Trier and his wife, Helen, moved to London in 1936, where the artist soon became a popular figure for his covers for Lilliput, about a man and a woman and their dog. The Triers moved to Canada in 1947 to join their daughter Gretl and her husband Nicholas Fodor. The artist was soon creating witty posters for Canada Packers and illustrations for Saturday Night magazine. Hart House at the University of Toronto presented an exhibition of Trier's work shortly before his death, in 1951, at his home outside Collingwood, Ontario.

"Trier originated in Prague," wrote long-time collaborator Erich Kästner, "the Prague of Kafka, Werfel, Kisch and Max Brod.... He was a quiet, serious man with a child's eyes. Everything he drew or painted - a chest of drawers, an apple, a grandfather clock, a lady's hat - smiled and laughed Trier had that rarity, the 'kind eye'."



...and I say why even consider running a northern pipeline down some wilderness valley when you can put it down the middle of the Alaska Highway...'