



Serge Chapleau, profession
cartoonist, at the McCord

Description

The exhibition looks back at 50 years of Quebec popular culture and current affairs

Explore the world of **Serge Chapleau** in the first major retrospective devoted to the creative work of this icon of cartooning: **Chapleau, profession: Cartoonist**, at the McCord Museum, until March 7, 2021. With his incisive pen and devilishly sharp strokes, Chapleau shows us the hilarious side of Quebec society. Politicians, celebrities and other public figures—everyone is fair game for the Montreal cartoonist's scathing humour.



50 years of popular culture in cartoons

The exhibition, which features over 150 original cartoons, sketches and illustrations, reveals unknown facets of this multidisciplinary artist. The cartoons, the real stars of the show, have been selected to document the main topics, including the follies of his youth, his sources of graphic inspiration, his irreverent portraits, how his drawing technique has evolved as seen through the lens of his editorial cartoons and, of course, the various incarnations of his iconic character, **G rard D. Laflaque**.

With the focus inevitably on satire, the exhibition looks back at 50 years of Quebec popular culture and current affairs.

Serge Chapleau





Serge Chapleau and Terry Mosher during a promotional photo session for the Aislin & Chapleau – Caricatures exhibition, McCord Museum, 1997.

Born in Montreal in 1945, Serge was the youngest in a family of seven – all boys. Chapleau often jokes that on the day he made his appearance, six years after his youngest brother, his father left the hospital a disappointed man. Raised in the working-class neighbourhood that would later be dubbed La Petite Patrie, he has often compared his childhood to the one portrayed in Jean-Claude Lauzon’s film *Léolo*, but minus the poetry.

Drawing nevertheless occupied a major place in the modest family home on Drolet Street, and it was there that Serge learned the rudiments of what would become his profession. After studies at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal and subsequent work experience in graphic art, he began making his name as a cartoonist, working for a wide range of publications and eventually becoming, in 1996, cartoonist for *La Presse*.

What people are saying about it

“The exhibition highlights the versatility, talent and technical mastery of Chapleau...”

Éric Clément, *La Presse*

“A must see!”

Eugénie Lépine-Blondeau, *Radio-Canada*

Follow Serge Chapleau behind the scenes of his creative work as a cartoonist.

A visit to the drawings vault with Chapleau

By **Christian Vachon**, Curator, McCord Museum

“What’s your secret? Is it the cold air in the vault that preserves you?” This was the first thing Serge Chapleau said to me when I met him at the McCord Museum in 1996. I had just said that I clearly remembered the fantastic cartoons he published in the magazine *Perspectives* in the early 1970s. I was 35 years old, and he thought I looked much too young for this to be true!



Christian Vachon, Serge Chapleau and Michel Barrette at the McCord Museum on October 6, 2017.

Chapleau had just given the Museum a large number of drawings, and I had been asked to take him on a tour of the vault where we preserve works on paper so I could show him other cartoons, including some by his friend [Terry Mosher, aka Aislin](#), editorial cartoonist for The Gazette. In fact, it was Aislin who had suggested that he give his drawings to the McCord. Chapleau had previously made several small donations to the public archives in Ottawa, now known as Library and Archives Canada.



We accepted his drawings because they were created and published in Montreal, and because they complemented



our growing collection of Canadian cartoons. That day, he brought 759 original cartoons published between 1972 and 1996 in various Montreal publications: *Perspectives*, *Le Dimanche*, *Nous*, *L'actualité*, *Le Devoir*, *7 Jours* and *La Presse*. This first donation to the McCord has been followed by 18 others. The vault, which is kept at a constant temperature of 18°, currently holds over 7,000 Chapleau drawings.



Some 20 years later, Serge Chapleau stepped back into the vault to launch the 5th season of *Viens-tu faire un tour?* Broadcast on Radio-Canada, this series invites well-known personalities to revisit meaningful locations from their past, arriving in a vintage car driven by host Michel Barrette.

The show aired May 20, 2018, on Radio-Canada. Click here to watch this episode of *Viens-tu faire un tour?* The director, who had received special permission to enter the Museum's high security storage areas with his film crew, wanted the visit to the McCord to end in the vault housing Chapleau's drawings. On his cue, I pulled out some of Chapleau's oldest cartoons in an attempt to provoke an on-camera reaction. I could not resist showing him the one of Hi! Ha! Tremblay, Barrette's popular stand-up character, dressed as Darth Vader.

Measures for the safety of all

The Museum is now open, and the whole team is happy to see you again!

Get your ticket to visit the Museum at the time of your choice.

In order for us to offer you a safe and more intimate visit, we ask that you plan your visit to the Museum by



purchasing your ticket in advance through our virtual ticket office.

Enjoy your visit!

Chapleau, profession: Cartoonist

Temporary Exhibition

June 23, 2020, to March 7, 2021

McCord Museum

690 Sherbrooke Street West

Monday: closed

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10 am to 6 pm

Wednesday: 10 am to 9 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 10 am to 5 pm

The Museum will open on July 1, 2020.

For more information, visit the exhibition site at musee-mccord.qc.ca

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Images courtesy of McCord Museum

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*The **McCord Museum** celebrates life in Montreal, both past and present—its history, its people and its communities. Open to the city and the world, the Museum presents exciting exhibitions, educational programming and cultural activities that offer a contemporary perspective on history, engaging visitors from Montreal, Canada and beyond. It is home to over 1.5 million artifacts, comprising one of the largest historical collections in North America, organized into the following departments: Dress, Fashion and Textiles, Photography, Indigenous Cultures, Paintings, Prints and Drawings, Material Culture, and Textual Archives. mccord.qc.ca*



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