

Cartoonist Anthony Jenkins display at Dufferin museum

By Constance Scrafield

You no doubt remember them: the funniest caricatures, by Anthony Jenkins, of all the people you love to hate but will never meet, for years in *The Globe and Mail*.

Politicians, actors, celebrities ? the famous and the infamous have all come under the gun of Jenkins' witty pen.

They are about to be on display at the Dufferin County Museum and Archives (DCMA), beginning with an opening reception June 25 at 6 p.m.

It was always black and white at *The Globe* until he was informed, as he told us, 'Then, they said, 'we're going to colour.''

However, over the years, Jenkins had been travelling far and wide, largely in the Third World. He was very impressed with the wonderful colours everywhere in Africa, Asia, South America, not only in the land itself but even more the people and what they wore ? the marvellous cloths and weavings of their many cultures.

In the 1980s, he spent several months in Africa, with Mali, at the southern edge of the Sahara Desert, as one of his first experiences of all this colour. The travelling and the richness of what he saw influenced his take on how he would 'colour' his caricatures.

'It couldn't be faces that were an orange blob with hair on top ? I just threw wild colours ? there's no rhyme or reason ? I just do it, which is the way artists work, I guess.'

After 40 years in the business, his body of work has simply collected in boxes at home.

'I thought, 'Why should they sit there in boxes? I should get them out and show them,' he commented.

How the exhibition at the museum came about, Jenkins explained, 'I just approached them. It was just shy of 40 years with *The Globe and Mail*. It was my only job, just out of university ? a dream job, being paid to draw. So, I have this big collection to display.'

'For years, I had an inky hand,' he said. But now? 'Yeah, I still do,' looking at his fingers, 'now.'

'Now I'm freelancing and my wife suggested I draw local people, hopefully to promote the show,' he went on. 'I do fairly straight work as well and am willing to take commissions ? I do that too. I'll do portraits.'

His technique: 'I will draw the figure (or the face) in lines and then, paint them out.'

As you will learn when you go to the Museum and here, by the bye, Jenkins has a book out of his drawings, entitled *A Fine Line*.

He loves the lines, which are very simple.

'It's nice to see most of your work between covers in a book,' was his remark about it, 'Then, I look at one and think ? that's pretty good.'

'There's a bit of a fraud involved.' He said it almost like a confession. 'It looks like I did it in five minutes. You have to think about what to leave out ? what you can leave out and still make a pleasant image.'

Even as a child, he said, 'I always wanted to be a caricaturist ? *Mad Magazine* was my bible ? the drawings are still killer ? they're caricatures with ideas. ?

'I've always liked faces,' he added. 'I have a wall of 50 faces, taken from (my travels in) Africa, Asia and South America, photos I took ? wonderful faces in the Third World.'

He related something of his trip to India.

'I was in India for only 30 days,' he said. 'I was always travelling with a sketch pad and decided I would draw a face a day. So, I would sit on a curb, drawing a person but there were so many people everywhere and, all of a sudden, I'd have 50 people standing around, some behind me or the person I was drawing ? so, the pressure was on to finish the drawing. Sometimes, I'd give it to the person I had done.'

On another adventure, he travelled from Alaska to the southern tip of South America, along the Pacific 'spine' of the continent.

Coming across one of the early borders from Alaska, a border guard asked him where he was going and he replied: 'Tierra del Fuego. And the guard got really angry and gave me a really hard time.'

'I love all the colour in the Third World ? the rest of us are so dull ? the Third World, people are poor but it is not dull.'

Naturally, about the upcoming event at the Museum, 'I'm thrilled. It's nice to have your stuff on display. What I love in any exhibition of art are the flaws or mistakes ? where something is covered over or adjusted. I can see the humanity in there. It humanizes the work.'

This is a rare opportunity to see and visit the years of caricatures from the *Globe and Mail*, as well, of course, as the many other publications to which Jenkins contributed.

As he encouraged us: 'For lovers of the drawn line, I've got all this stuff; come and see it.'

And not only them, but all of us.

For information about the exhibition, titled like his book, A Fine Line, or tickets to the opening reception, Jenkins' caricatures and other drawings and paintings are on display from June 25 to Aug. 20, call 877-941-7787 or online at info@dufferinmuseum.com
The museum is at the intersection of Airport Road and Highway 89.