

# Ken Dryden's mythical mask to be presented for the first time at the MNBAQ

*to celebrate the LEMOYNE. Offside exhibition*

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Québec City, Wednesday, October 27, 2021 ✕ Have you ever dreamt of seeing Ken Dryden's mythical mask? If so, visit the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) from **October 28, 2021 to January 9, 2022**.

For the first time, the legendary Montreal Canadiens goalie who contributed to the hockey team's six Stanley Cup victories in the 1970s has agreed to loan his face mask in conjunction with the *LEMOYNE. Offside* exhibition, a major event that celebrates the work of the unclassifiable seminal Québec artist Serge Lemoyne (1941-1998). The exhibition proposes a thematic circuit assembling 100 archives and nearly 200 works. It is an outstanding overview of the artist's at once playful and striking output and includes the emblematic hockey-themed blue, white, red series.

## *Lemoyne's blue, white, red series*

Lemoyne perceived hockey as more than a sport. It is the phenomenon par excellence that affects the greatest number of people, regardless of background: intellectuals, blue-collar, white-collar and red-collar workers, and the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. It was in conjunction with a performance organized in London, Ontario in 1969 during which Lemoyne transformed the 20/20 Gallery into a hockey rink that the “blue, white, red” cycle inspired by the colours of the Montreal Canadiens hockey team was born, and continued until 1979. *Slizzler rouge* (1969), *Sans titre* (1975), *Bleu, blanc, rouge continu 1, 2, 3* (1976), *Lafleur Stardust* (1975), *Béliveau* (1975) and, obviously, *Dryden* (1975), are among the outstanding works from this series included in the exhibition.

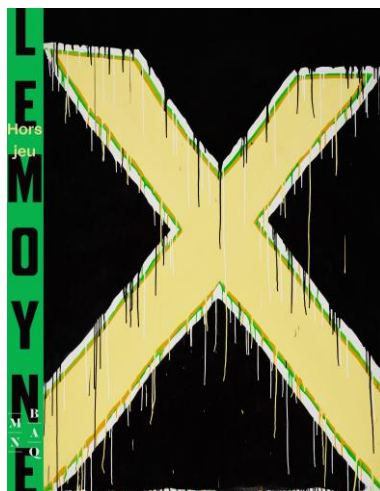
## *Lemoyne's Dryden*



In *Dryden*, the masterly painting produced in the 1970s, which remained in Lemoyne's personal collection until his death in 1998, the artist employs pop vocabulary akin to the sports-inspired visual art and approach of Andy Warhol, a former New York advertising executive. The hockey star's posture and strength are immediately recognizable in a tight close-up of his mask, leaving the rest of the body outside the frame, like sports photography in which athletes in motion are captured in a fraction of a second.

The work's genius lies in several daubs of colour emblematic of the Montreal Canadiens, their distribution on the surface of the impressively large painting, and the dynamic composition, which reveals the instantaneity of the moment. This gives the viewer the impression of replacing the puck, which the goalie will assuredly not allow to enter the net.

## *An interview with Ken Dryden in the LEMOYNE. Offside catalogue*



To complement the *LEMOYNE. Offside* exhibition, a publication will enhance the pleasure of discovering the artist. The 280-page, abundantly illustrated book includes 260 photographs of works and archives. It

contains five essays, a detailed chronology of Lemoyne’s career, and also proposes an interview with Ken Dryden.

Hockey player, lawyer, politician and author Ken Dryden has received numerous awards and honours, including the Order of Canada, in 2013. Above all, he is known for his outstanding performance as the Montreal Canadiens goalie and his contribution to the team’s six Stanley Cup victories, before he retired in 1978.

In the publication, he tells art historian and independent curator Sylvie Lacerte what led him to design his own protective mask: “I needed a new mask. The first one I wore, which I was already using at the university, was of mediocre quality. It did not protect me sufficiently. It was about that time that the mask’s design started to gain importance. It was no longer a simple protective tool but an object that could assume an aesthetic dimension, imbued with a certain look. I wanted to use the “C” in Canadiens in blue, white, and red and arrange it concentrically around the mask. I asked a designer and a manufacturer to give concrete expression to my idea. I wore this mask during my last five years with the Canadiens.”

He also recounts his first contact with Lemoyne’s work: “My God, it’s enormous! It was on the wall at the back of the room and was impossible to miss. I had to keep cool to approach it and examine it in detail. It was very moving to see it for the first time.”

In a stimulating discussion, Ken Dryden recounts the story linking him to the work of Serge Lemoyne, his initial contact with the work, his relationship with art, and the political context in which he developed with the Montreal Canadiens. Above all, the interview reveals how an artist who was a hockey enthusiast seeking to build bridges between sports and art was inspired by a top athlete to create an emblematic work in the history of art in Québec.

Distributed by Dimedia, *LEMOYNE. Offside* is a French-language publication available in Québec at the MNBAQ bookstore-boutique, and in bookstores, for \$59.95. ISBN: 978-2-551-26681-4

*Presented from October 28, 2021 to January 9, 2022, the exhibition LEMOYNE. Offside is organized by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.*

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INFORMATION: 418 643-2150 or 1 866 220-2150

Page 1 – Ken Dryden's protective mask. Photo: Denis Legendre

Page 2 – From top to bottom: photo: Serge Lemoyne, *Dryden*, 1975. Acrylic on canvas, 224 x 346 x 5 cm. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Purchase, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' Volunteer Association Fund (2000.8.1-2) © Serge Lemoyne Estate / SOCAN (2020). Photo: MMFA, Jean-François Brière