

stylewatch



These stained-glass-effect pumps by Peter Fox for Fox & Fluevog, circa 1973, could probably tell a tale or two, as could the other wild footwear at the Museum of Vancouver's new show, Fox, Fluevog & Friends: The Story Behind the Shoes. Rebecca Blissett photo.

koolthing

> BY AMY LU

WHAT: Plaid bikini separates
WHERE: Gap (various locations)
PRICE TAG: \$36.50 per piece
WHY: Beach season is fast approaching, so it's time to start peeling off your winter layers and wrap your head around slipping into a swimsuit. If that idea terrifies you, just remember that nothing will inspire you to get to yoga faster than having a two-piece to tie on. This sweet suit will have heads turning when you hit the surf or sand: plaid is one of this summer's hottest motifs, and the rope and wooden accents are darling. For a breezy day at the beach, wear it with cutoffs, a wide-brimmed hat, and boat shoes. If you feel like glamming up your look, pair it with chino shorts, super-sized sunglasses, and wooden wedges. It also comes in a green plaid.



stylenotes

> BY SARAH ROWLAND

Museum steps back to Fox & Fluevog's killer-cool past

◀ Wondering why John Fluevog and friends deserve their very own exhibition at the Museum of Vancouver? Well, imagine the late-'80s Luv-A-Fair goth scene without the those witchy Swordfish shoes or how about the '70s disco period without any Fox & Fluevog platforms. In other words, our club kids would have been total Transit disasters from the ankles down had it not been for Fluevog and co. That's why they are more than deserving of this tribute. Even the somewhat modest guest of honour recognizes his role in Vancouver's fashion history. That said, when the *Straight* catches up with Fluevog during his first sneak-peak tour of the exhibit, he's a little blown away by the immensity of this official city exposition of his work.

"It's weird—totally weird," he says, before admitting he hasn't done much in the way of preserving his own heritage. "I'm not that sentimental, personally. I was in the business of selling shoes, not keeping them. And there's also a sense that I wanted not to look at old things that I've done, so that I could move forward. So I didn't really keep them. But I have been a little more diligent in the last 10 years."

But, as Fluevog points out, this show, which opens tomorrow (May 14) and runs to September 26, isn't about the last 10 years. It follows his career from 1970 to 2000. Laid out in a semi-chronological order, Fox, Fluevog & Friends: The Story Behind the Shoes starts off with the decade of disco decadence. That's when Fluevog and then partner, Peter Fox, were running their own shoe store in Gastown. Among the standouts in this section are the men's sky-scraping *Saturday Night Fever* specials with the multicoloured stained-glass leather pattern on the killer dance-floor platforms. Back then, these bad-boy boots would have set you back about 300 bucks—a pretty hefty price tag for that period.

By the early '80s, Fox and Fluevog had gone their separate ways. Fox went on to set up a successful shop in SoHo, where he specialized in silk-and-satin Louis-heeled shoes. Meanwhile, the early '80s were a bit of a bust for Fluevog. But not for long. The designer struck shoe gold with the flat, ultra-pointy-toed Euro trend. These bunion-burners were everywhere, and you can see a healthy selection of them on display at MOV.



There's even a retro catalogue that features the needle-nosed Fluevog Classic Cowboy boot (something every cool high-school chick had to have on her feet in '87-88). And Fluevog's ability to predict trends didn't stop there. According to the designer, he and Fox were the first to import Doc Martens into North America in the late '70s. Which, of course, gave Fluevog a nice little head start on the grunge explosion in the early '90s. Speaking of, it was around that time he was also getting it right with his signature brightly hued, Art Deco, Minnie Mouse—on-crack

The sky-scraping Munster shoe was designed by John Fluevog in 1990.

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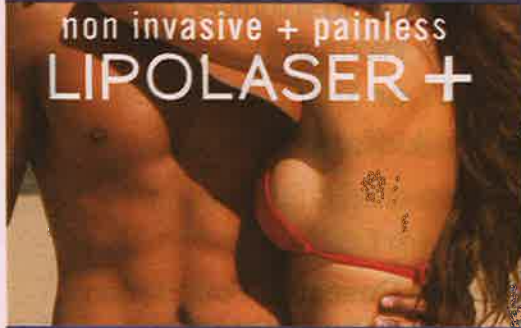
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(Left to right:) John Fluevog's toe-flirty Peep slingback pumps made a splash in 2000. Peter Fox tapped into beribboned raw-silk pumps circa 1990 to 1995; and Fox & Fluevog's Jane high clogs rocked 1973. Rebecca Blissett photos.

Style notes

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platforms, the likes of which attracted celeb customers—most notably Madonna. (As some will recall, Madge flaunted her new Fluevogs in 1991's Truth or Dare.)

In addition to a whack of shoes, Joan Seidl, MOV's director of collections and exhibitions, dug up plenty of rare Fluevog memorabilia, including the "Fluevogs Ten Commandments", which he drafted for his store employees. All of Fluevog's doodles

and scrapbooks offer some interesting insight into his revolutionary mindset during different periods of his career. But it's Peter Fox's sketchbooks that provide the most detailed glimpse into the mind of a highbrow, shoe-savvy designer.

"He always had them," says Seidl of Fox. "But he didn't realize how fantastic they were in terms of documentation.... They're sort of incredible artworks in and of themselves."

Fox himself remains humble, and a bit respectfully nonplussed about the whole thing. "I'm getting a bit old for

being excited," he says, calling from his East Van home. "I mean I recognize that it's principally for John and sure I was the originator of it maybe, but that was 40-odd years ago."

But Fluevog concurs with Seidl about those sketches: "Peter's are perfection and mine are all kind of helter-skelter in comparison," he says, before reading out one of his old rebellious doodles: "You may not like these shoes. Too bad. I do."

"Yeah," he says with a thoughtful pause, "sounds exactly like something I'd say." ♦



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