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# E-TODAY



## Twins pique

Conjoined sisters musical act Evelyn Evelyn is the latest brainchild of theatrical punker Amanda Palmer  
**STUART DERDEYN B2**

### ENTERTAINMENT

CAREY GILLETTE (EDITOR) • 604-605-2307 • cgillette@theprovince.com | SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2010

# HEEL YEAH!


**AT MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER:**  
Story of the partnership between iconic shoe designers Peter Fox and John Fluevog finally told in new exhibit

**DANA GEE B3**



Sketches like this one, which accompany the shoes, are a big part of the exhibit Fox, Fluevog & Friends. Curator Joan Seidl says obtaining them was 'amazing!' — SUBMITTED PHOTO

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by Alan Janas and Rob Bettinson

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Peter Fox (left), John Fluevog and their shoe designs are the stars of a new exhibit at the Museum of Vancouver. JON MURRAY — PNG

**Dana Gee & John Fluevog**

A great part of Vancouver's fashionable history lays literally at the feet of John Fluevog.

The famed shoe designer has been delivering soulful soles for 40 years. He started back in 1970 when he and Peter Fox combined cash and skills, and formed the iconic and very cool partnership of Fox & Fluevog. That creative connection spawned other creative connections, ones that are celebrated in the new Museum of Vancouver show Fox, Fluevog & Friends: The Story Behind the Shoes. DGTV spent some time at the show with the legendary John Fluevog. Check out the video at [theprovince.com/dgtv](http://theprovince.com/dgtv) or [youtube.com/user/theprovinceonline](http://youtube.com/user/theprovinceonline)



# This partnership a story with sole

**FOX & FLUEVOG:** Tale of how iconic shop attracted city's shoe lovers to Gastown now told

BY DANA GEE  
STAFF REPORTER

## Exhibits

### Fox, Fluevog & Friends: The Story Behind the Shoes

**Where:** Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut St.  
**When:** Until Sept. 26  
**Info:** [museumofvancouver.ca](http://museumofvancouver.ca)

When Peter Fox wanted to open his own shoe store 40-plus years ago, he borrowed money from a friend — but there was a catch.

He had to take a kid along with the cheque.

The financier was Sigurd Fluevog, the kid was his son, John, now the legendary shoemaker.

That 1970 deal turned out to be the start of the groundbreaking shoe business Fox & Fluevog, a flourishing relationship that lasted until 1981 and ended amicably.

"I went to John's dad — I knew him then, and asked him for a loan to start the store," said Fox, who worked along with John at Sheppard's Shoes on Hastings Street. "He said fine, but I had to take John with me."

So with \$14,000 on loan from Fluevog, John and a bunch of imported, high-fashion shoes and boots he had purchased from his former employer, Fox set up Fox & Fluevog in Gastown.

"Yes, it was a great name, worked from the beginning. Even 20 to 25 years later, people remember it,"

said Fox, who did divulge the other name he put forth, but only if I would keep it a secret. Put it this way: Fox & Fluevog was a much better choice.

It's also a name that deserved an equally memorable store.

"It was one of the first non-shoe shoe stores," said Fox, referring to the two-storey store's appearance of a grand library and bedroom. "The store was really decorated. People hadn't seen anything like it. It was more like an old English mansion."

And, according to Fox, the principals acted like the floor was their living room.

"What was good about John and I is we were like Laurel and Hardy," said Fox, who admitted he was wear-

ing bedroom slippers for this phone interview. "We ad libbed together so freely with each other on the floor. We seemed to groove together with humour. We liked doing that and the customers, I think, liked that."

The customers also liked the unique designs, something not seen in the relatively staid shoe salons of the city.

Soon Fox & Fluevog's turn on Victorian high-buttoned boots and dandy men's shoes, along with custom-made clogs by pal Ken Rice, had a following. People collected them and celebrities coveted them.

"The first real argument we had was who was going to polish Julie Christie's boots," laughed Fox, referring to the time that Christie, director Robert Altman and Warren Beatty were in town shooting *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* in 1971. "I ended up polishing Altman's and Warren Beatty's. John was much bigger than me."

These days there is no arguing between the pair. They separated in the early 1980s as friends and remain so today.

In fact, Fox, who opened his own Peter Fox stores in New York and California, recently helped Fluevog with some restorative work on Flu-

evog's antique Austin.

"I was there at the beginning of John's career," said Fox, who immigrated to Canada from London in 1956. "People used to say when we were together that John's got the looks and I had the brains. After we parted, it was obvious John had the looks and the brains."

To celebrate this unique collaboration and the creativity that they inspired, the Museum of Vancouver has launched the exhibit Fox, Fluevog & Friends: The Story Behind the Shoes.

"I've known about Fox & Fluevog for years as a unique company," said Joan Seidl, curator of the MOV show. "This is an opportunity to look at it in depth and how they came about."

Seidl points out that Fox & Fluevog's early years are also reflective of an era in Gastown's history.

"It takes us back to the salad days of Gastown in the 1970s," said Seidl. "They deliberately sought out Gastown in 1970. Set up shop in Maple Tree Square, No. 2 Powell. There was a real sense of discovery then. There was a synergy down there, a lot of young entrepreneurs set up. Of course, though, many of them didn't

have the same staying power."

Three years in the making, the MOV show is a combination of shoes, drawings and stories.

To build the show, Seidl turned to the designer's own collections.

"I went to Peter Fox's house and he had the most amazing cache of stuff," says Seidl. "He kept all his sketches. So to match sketches with actual shoes was amazing."

"Linda had a picture of every sample," Fox said of his wife and often co-designer. "She's like that — she's a superb filer. It brought back a lot of memories."

Fluevog finds were discovered in the basement of the designer's flagship store.

"John had shoes in what he calls his Flueuseum in the basement of the store in Gastown," said Seidl. "We dug through it. He's tidying that up now."

Like all worthy curators Seidl is herself a collector and quickly owns up to owning a few of both Fox's and Fluevog's shoes.

"It made me very happy to work on this," said Seidl, laughing. "This is about making art part of your everyday life."

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