



Wednesday, April 28, 2021

MOVIRTUAL: LIVESTREAM EXHIBITION TOUR SERIES –

NEON VANCOUVER, UGLY VANCOUVER with John Atkin

Is there a catalog of all the neon signs that were made and displayed in Vancouver?

There isn't a comprehensive catalog, but SFU sponsored a group of photographers who did a neon survey in the 1970s and I recorded surviving signs in the 1980s. Not sure where the SFU survey resides.

Tell us about the movie "Glowing in the Dark" please John!

Glowing in the Dark was Harry Killas and Allan Goldman's documentary on neon in Vancouver, Vegas and L.A. Many a cold night of filming on the streets, but it captures Vancouver quite well. Interviews with artists, neon benders, designers etc. It is still available from a couple of sources.

Are there companies creating neon signage in Vancouver now?

There are a number of firms including the the Pattison Group (Neon Products), Signcor, Galaxy Signs and smaller shops like Concept Neon in Marpole

Is the East Van sign made of neon and what is the story of the construction of it?

East Van is neon and it's a commissioned piece of public art by the City of Vancouver and the artist is Ken Lum.

There was a Neon tour with an App awhile back that was done through MOV- did you record any of the information that public shared about their knowledge of Neon signs in Vancouver? I know that people could participate with the app as a tour and also to share their stories/knowledge of the signs.

This app called *Visible City* was built as an Augmented Reality extension of MOV's current *Neon Vancouver, Ugly Vancouver* exhibition. People could walk downtown and use augmented technology to "see" where the old neons used to live. However, the technology became obsolete very quickly. MOV is currently developing an exhibition on neon opening downtown in the near future that will feature neons from MOV's collection that haven't been displayed yet. So stay tuned!

Is the Smilin 'Buddha sign still in the collection?

Yes it was added a few years ago after being on loan and it's in the 1960s/70s gallery.

Do you have a sign from the historic Seven Seas Foating Restaurant??

The *Seven Seas* was sitting in a storage yard in North Vancouver. There were discussions about restoration and reinstalling it somewhere, but the project went nowhere. I took photos.

I have a unique piece from a sign company...how could I find out where it is from?

Sharing a photo of it, there are folks out there that might know.

Why did Canada follow a leasing plan rather than the US ownership model?

The repair/maintenance of signs generates a continuous revenue stream for the sign companies. in a smaller market like Vancouver this helped companies stay in business. At one time there were 12 firms making signs and the lease method helped in a competitive market. Plus you could push upgrades and new signs when the lease renewed...

Can I contact John via email?

Sure: johnatkin@shaw.ca