



## MEDIA RELEASE

September 23, 2011

### Neon Vancouver | Ugly Vancouver

An exhibition on Vancouver's love/hate relationship with neon signs

**(VANCOUVER, BC)** – Explore Vancouver's gritty, urban past at the Museum of Vancouver's (MOV) upcoming feature exhibition, *Neon Vancouver/Ugly Vancouver*. Opening October 13, 2011 *Neon Vancouver | Ugly Vancouver* presents a fascinating look at the rapid growth of neon signs throughout the 50s, 60s and 70s, and the visual purity crusade that virtually banished them from Vancouver streets.

"The exhibition raises interesting questions about how we collectively construct the way our city is portrayed," says *Neon Vancouver | Ugly Vancouver* curator, Joan Seidl, Director of Exhibitions and Collections at MOV. "There was a real push in the 60s and 70s to redefine Vancouver as a green, natural space. While we may love neon today, there was a real outcry against neon signs, which represented a more industrial, urban city."

*"We're being led by the nose into a hideous jungle of signs. They're oversized, outlandish, and outrageous. They're desecrating our buildings, cluttering our streets, and — this is the final indignity — blocking our view of some of the greatest scenery in the world."*

- Tom Ardies, "Let's Wake Up from Our Neon Nightmare," *Vancouver Sun*, 1966

Curated by Joan Seidl and designed by Resolve Design, *Neon Vancouver | Ugly Vancouver* reaches into the riches of MOV's historic neon collection to resurrect some of the city's former sign magic. Signs on display show the lost art of neon, and include long-time favourites like the Regent Tailors, Owl Drug, and the Drake Hotel, complimented by recently acquired signs such as Clark's Beauty Salon (Main Street) and the Blue Eagle Café (East Hastings Street). Visitors can also enjoy the Smiling Buddha in the History Galleries. This gritty, urban side of Vancouver's past is also explored through the photography of Walter Griba, on public display for the first time.

On Wednesday, October 12, 2011, MOV presents the *Neon Vancouver | Ugly Vancouver* Opening Party at 7:00 pm to members and special guests. To purchase a membership or find more information about the exhibition, visit [www.museumofvancouver.ca](http://www.museumofvancouver.ca).

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Images of MOV's neon signs and street photography by Walter Griba used in the exhibition are available exclusively to media for print, online and video use. For tours and interviews with Curator Joan Seidl, please call 604.730.5304 or email [amccuaig@museumofvancouver.ca](mailto:amccuaig@museumofvancouver.ca).

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## **Biography**

**Joan Seidl** / Director of Collections and Exhibitions

Joan began working at the Rock County Historical Society in her hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin during high school. She worked in the Education Department at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts and as a curator at the Minnesota Historical Society before moving to Vancouver in 1983 as the trailing spouse of an academic. After having a couple of kids, Joan began working as Curator of History at the Museum of Vancouver (then Vancouver Museum) in 1992. In 2008, she became Director of Collections and Exhibitions. Joan holds a degree in history from Grinnell College and a Master of Arts degree in geography from the University of Minnesota.

**Resolve Design** / Exhibition Designers

Resolve Design tells strategic stories through motion design, film, and exhibit design. Resolve's creative director, Darren Carcary, has art directed and produced more than 50 shows for clients including The Four Seasons, Intrawest, The Lyle Anderson Company, Del Mar Development, ParkLane Homes and Vancity. He has helped establish the branding of national broadcast productions for Discovery Channel HD and Global Television. [www.resolve.design](http://www.resolve.design)