

NEON
Speaks
FESTIVAL & SYMPOSIUM

The logo features a stylized graphic of a globe with several jagged lines radiating from the top, resembling lightning or signal waves. Below this graphic, the word "NEON" is written in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font. Underneath "NEON", the word "Speaks" is written in a cursive, script font. At the bottom of the logo, the words "FESTIVAL & SYMPOSIUM" are written in a smaller, clean, sans-serif font.

APRIL 20-22 2018
SAN FRANCISCO
OAKLAND

neonspeaks.org 🐦 [#neonspeaks2018](https://twitter.com/neonspeaks2018)

Welcome!

The Neon Speaks Festival & Symposium aims to raise awareness and promote information-sharing about the artistic legacy of historic neon signs and restoration best practices. Thanks for helping us make history to join what might be the first-ever festival and symposium about historic neon!

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, APRIL 20 2018

HERMAN MILLER SHOWROOM * 23 Geary Street, SF
5:30 PM Happy Hour Registration
6:00 PM Opening Reception & Letterland

SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 2018

TENDERLOIN MUSEUM * 398 Eddy Street, SF
1:00 PM Neon Symposium
3:00 PM Spotlight Forum

ROXIE THEATRE g 3117 16th Street, SF
5:00 PM "NEON" Documentary Screening

SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2018

NEON WORKS g 967 Grace Ave, Oakland
2:00 PM Neon Works Shop Tour
3:30 PM Neon Works Shop Tour

Acknowledgments



The Neon Speaks Festival & Symposium is presented by San Francisco Neon/Historic Neon Network and fiscally sponsored by the Tenderloin Museum.



San Francisco Heritage generously provided a grant from the Alice Ross Carey Preservation Fund. A matching grant was generously provided by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



National Trust for
Historic Preservation*

Many thanks to our sponsors! The symposium and shop tour are sponsored by the Art Deco Society of California in memory of Michael Crowe. The symposium is sponsored by Jason LaBerbara, by Stephanie Poteet, and by Charles Chapman and Annette Smith. The opening reception and Letterland event are sponsored by Adobe TypeKit.



TK Adobe Typekit



Co-Producers: Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan

Assistant Producer: Kate Widdows

Advisors: Katie Conry, Therese Poletti, Allen Sawyer, Jim Van Buskirk

Special thanks to Tod Swormstedt for the spark that produced this neon symposium and festival.

FRIDAY 4.20.18

HERMAN MILLER 23 Geary

5:30 PM Opening Reception

6:00PM Letterland Presentations

Opening Reception



MERIDETH GRIERSON

The opening reception slide show features photographs by Merideth Grierson from a proposed book, *Gas & Glass*, written by Erik S. McMahon about neon in San Francisco in the 1980s.

Merideth is a photographer who has lived in San Francisco since 1971. Her photographs have been widely published and exhibited. meridethgrierson.com

HEATHER DAVID

Heather is the author of two books of mid-century history and ephemera, *Bay Area Modern* and a new book, *Motel California*, full of classic motel neon! A cultural historian and the driving force behind the San Jose Signs Project guide book, Heather continues to champion the preservation of historic signs in San Jose, CA. facebook.com/sanjosesignproject/



Friday Book Signing

Letterland Presentations



SHELLEY GRUENDLER

Shelley Gruendler, founder of Type Camp, is a typographer, designer, and educator who teaches, lectures, and publishes internationally on typography and design. She holds a PhD and an MA in The History and Theory of Typography and Graphic Communication from the University of Reading, England and a Bachelor of Environmental Design in Graphic Design from North Carolina State University. typecamp.com or IG @typecamp

KATE WIDDOWS

Kate Widdows is a letterer, graphic designer, neon GIF artist, and neon sign designer. She has designed typefaces for Nike, record covers for Drag City and Sublime Frequencies, and neon signs for bars, art shows, and light festivals. She has made neon GIFs for the Huffington Post, Selena Gomez, and the Comic Strips TV pilot, and her GIFs have been exhibited internationally at design festivals, art galleries, and parties. Kate lives and works in Portland, Oregon.. kwiddows.com or IG [katewiddows](https://www.instagram.com/katewiddows)



DAMON STYER

Sign painter Damon Styer's hunt for the creative willpower to sustain a career in the arts has taken him across the globe. He started his sign-painting career as an apprentice at New Bohemia Signs, founded in 1992 by Steve Karbo and Yvette Rutledge, and currently the city's longest established source of exclusively hand-painted signs for buildings, vehicles and neon sign cans. Damon took ownership of New Bohemia in 1999, and continues to offer apprenticeships. newbohemiainsigns.com or IG @nbsigns

Neon Symposium Speakers

Much appreciation to all of the festival and symposium speakers who are out there preserving neon legacy signs, they all came on board to be part of the symposium without hesitation. A big round of applause to the festival and symposium advisors and volunteers for their brilliant support.

Thanks to the Tenderloin Museum and Director Katie Conry for the faith and sponsorship to make the Neon Speaks Festival & Symposium a reality; and for giving it such an appropriate home. The Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco has an abundant collection of historic neon signs.

WELCOME: AL BARNA & RANDALL ANN HOMAN

Festival hosts and presenters Al Barna & Randall Ann Homan are local neon historians who advocate for the preservation of the artistic legacy of historic neon signs via consultations, talks, tours, events, and exhibits. Al and Randall Ann are the authors/photographers of *San Francisco Neon: Survivors and Lost Icons*. sineon.org or IG @neonbook.xyz



MODERATOR: JOHN LAW

John is an artist and raconteur in San Francisco, and he is absolutely a "sign man." John has restored and maintains three of the most iconic neon signs of the Bay Area: the Ferry Building neon letters that spell Port of San Francisco and the Hills Bros Coffee neon roof sign on the waterfront. He also maintains the Tribune Tower neon letters and clock. John's office is located in the top of tower. John is the co-founder of the Billboard Liberation Front and Central Sign Services. johnwlaw.com or IG @johnwilliamlaw.

J. ERIC LYNXWILER

J. Eric Lynxwiler is an L.A. native and long-time docent for the Los Angeles Conservancy and Art Deco Society of Los Angeles. As a board member for the Museum of Neon Art, he continues to celebrate L.A.'s neon heritage by saving historic neon signs from the wrecking ball and dumpster. As its affable host, Lynxwiler guides the museum's famed "Neon Cruise" through the illuminated streets of the city – now in its nineteenth year. Lynxwiler researched the book *Wilshire Boulevard: Grand Concourse of Los Angeles* and co-authored *Knott's Preserved: From Berry Stand to Theme Park, The History Of Knott's Berry Farm*. He celebrates the little-known stories of Los Angeles and has just released his third book, *Spectacular Illumination: Neon Los Angeles, 1925-1965*, with photographer Tom Zimmerman. neonmona.org or IG @jericl



TENDERLOIN MUSEUM

398 Eddy Street, SF

1:00 PM Neon Symposium

3:00 PM Spotlight Forum



Debra Jane will be signing her new book *Vintage Signs of America* on Friday and Saturday.

DEBRA JANE SELTZER

Debra Jane Seltzer has been documenting vintage signs, buildings, and statues for more than 18 years. She has logged well over 450,000 miles maniacally gathering photos from 48 states. Her comprehensive website RoadsideArchitecture.com features more than 2,500 pages and over 60,000 photos. For more than 10 years, Debra Jane has written the features and news columns about electric, neon, and plastic signs for the Society for Commercial Archeology's publications. She honed her writing skills at New York University where she obtained a B.A. in Journalism. Born and raised in Southern California, Debra Jane lived in New York City for most of her adult life. She now lives in Ventura, California but loves every city, big or small, equally. Her passion for old gas stations, mid-century modern architecture, fiberglass statues and the like is exceeded by only one thing: her four dogs. Debra Jane's pack of active terriers are amusing and amazing. They accompany her everywhere she goes. roadsidearchitecture.com or roadsidenut.wordpress.com

CORKY SCHOLL

Corky Scholl founded Save the Signs in 2012 after seeing several historic neon signs in Denver demolished or altered beyond recognition. His mission in starting the Save the Signs Facebook page was to contribute to a culture that values vintage signs as historic works of art, so that more signs are not destroyed in the future. So far, he has saved 11 large neon signs from Denver and elsewhere in Colorado and is working toward the goal of restoring them and displaying them in a setting where they can be enjoyed by the public once again. facebook.com/SaveTheSignsOnColfax

**TOD SWORMSTEDT:
KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Tod Swormstedt of the American Sign Museum in Cincinnati will show us, step by step, what it takes to restore a vintage neon sign. Tod founded the museum as a "mid-life crisis project" following 26-years on staff at *Signs of the Times* magazine (@STsignmag), the first issue of which was edited by his great grandfather in 1906. americansignmuseum.org
IG [americansignmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/americansignmuseum)



Spotlight Forum Speakers



Serginho Roosblad is a documentary film maker and photographer in the SF Bay Area. Previously from Cape Town, Kampala & Amsterdam, he is currently working on his thesis project at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism '18. He created a video feature about San Francisco Neon Tours and Peterson Neon as a project for his internship for station KQED. roosblad.com or IG @sroosblad



Randy Shaw led the effort to create the national Uptown Tenderloin Historic District and the Tenderloin Museum. He is also the author of *The Tenderloin: Sex, Crime and Resistance in the Heart of San Francisco*. He has been a driving force in the effort to restore historic neon hotel signs in the Tenderloin, an island of primarily low-income, ethnically diverse residents in a city of ever increasing wealth. How does it survive? Randy's book tells the story of a neighborhood that persists against all odds. tenderloinmuseum.org or IG @tenderloinmuseum



Stephanie Cisneros was born and raised in Southern California, she relocated to the City by the Bay three years ago to pursue a career as a Historic Preservation Planner with the San Francisco Planning Department. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and a Master's degree in Heritage Conservation. sf-planning.org



Luke Spray is the Corridor Manager for the Portola Neighborhood Association, which recently renovated the façade, neon marquee, and blade sign of the Portola's historic Avenue Theatre. He is a nine-year resident of San Francisco and has a degree in Urban Planning from San Francisco State. He has a passion for improving communities through empowerment, innovation and strategic partnerships. In his spare time Luke can be heard co-hosting a radio show about San Francisco called Roll Over Easy at bff.fm. portolaf.org/avenue or IG @lukespray



Rebeka Rodriguez is an artist, curator, and cultural producer. She designs and implements creative programming responsive to the social, historical and geographic contexts in which she works. She is currently the Civic Engagement Manager at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and is the Director for AIR-SF, a nonprofit project committed to producing relevant public art projects and expanding civic participation. Rebekah will talk about a Food Justice project that involves teen artists designing neon. ybca.org or IG @ybca



Shawna Peterson has been perfecting the art of tube bending for neon signs and sculptures for 30 years. She started out sitting behind the front desk of a retail neon shop, when her boss insisted she learn tube-bending during downtime. She continued working in different neon shops before opening her own operation in Oakland 19 years ago. Her neon art can be seen as part of She Bends, an all-female exhibit at the Midway Gallery in San Francisco. petersonneon.com or IG @petersonneon

TENDERLOIN MUSEUM

398 Eddy Street, SF
3:00 PM Spotlight Forum



Will Durham, a native of Reno, is a preservationist of vintage neon signs from throughout Nevada and other parts of the United States. After graduating from the University of Nevada, Reno, Will worked in film and commercial production in Los Angeles, and moved back to Reno in 2005. An exhibit of selected neon signs from Will's collection appeared at the Nevada Museum of Art from October 2012. [facebook.com/Nevada-Neon-Project](https://www.facebook.com/Nevada-Neon-Project) or IG @nevadaneonproject



Lannette Schwartz is a preservation consultant with a focus on conserving historic signs. Armed with a Master of Heritage Conservation degree from USC and a decade of historic preservation advocacy work, she has launched several successful sign conservation projects in Hollywood, California. Lannette is currently the Sign Committee Chair for the Broadway Hollywood Building and is an active public speaker on citywide historic sign programs. historicsignconservation.com



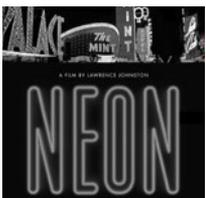
Dydia DeLyser & Paul Greenstein are at work on a book about the history of neon in the US. Their collaborative research has revealed that the widely mythologized Earle C. Anthony "Packard" sign in downtown Los Angeles was in fact not the first neon sign in the US (though a sign in San Francisco may have been). Dydia is a historical geographer at Cal State Fullerton and Board member of the MONA and the American Sign Museum; Paul has been designing, fabricating, installing, and restoring neon signs in Los Angeles for over forty years. geography.fullerton.edu/faculty/Profile_page/Dydia_DeLyser.aspx



Darcy Bender has a professional degree in architecture and brings a diverse background to her current role as the Project Manager of SF Shines, a storefront improvement grant program that has awarded 9 grants for neon sign restoration projects across the city since 2012. SF Shines is a program of the Invest in Neighborhoods team at San Francisco's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. oewd.org/sf-shines



Juan Carlos Cancino is a San Francisco native who attended the City's public schools before earning his B.A. and J.D. at Stanford. He currently works as a Project Manager on the Invest in Neighborhoods team at San Francisco's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, with a focus on Central Market Tenderloin. In addition to his support for neon restoration in the Tenderloin, he also project managed the restoration of the Avenue Theater, including its neon sign, in the Portola neighborhood. oewd.org/neighborhoods



NEON Documentary

5:00 PM Saturday, April 21 Roxie Theatre, 3117 16th Street San Francisco

Written and directed by award-winning Australian filmmaker Lawrence Johnston, NEON celebrates the beauty, color and vibrant history of these beloved illuminated signs that are disappearing. Neon lovers, designers, and architects: don't miss this. Q&A to follow.

SUNDAY 4.22.18

2:00 PM Neon Works Shop Tour

3:30 PM Neon Works Shop Tour

NEON WORKS
967 Grace Ave, Oakland

Neon Works Shop Tours

JIM RIZZO

Master signmaker Jim Rizzo of Neon Works will be guiding a tour of their 17,000-square-foot neon workshop in Oakland. Jim has been rescuing and restoring Bay Area neon signs for decades, and he only opens his shop for tours once in a blue moon. neonwks.com



AMY PALMS

Neon bender and artist Amy Palms of Neon Works will be demonstrating the art of tube bending. Amy has been a bender at Neon Works since 2004, but began bending in college for her artwork. IG @amyplans

Amy Palms and Shawna Peterson both have neon sculptures in the current group exhibit "She Bends" at the Midway Gallery in San Francisco. themidwaygallery.com



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