

NEON *Speaks* 2021 Schedule

Join us for the 2021 Neon Speaks International Festival & Symposium!

Register for an all-event passport at neonspeaks.org

DAY 1

Saturday, September 11 **All Times Pacific**



Bakersfield, Kern County Museum. Photo: SF Neon

INTRO TO NEON: Beginning to See the Light

10:00—11:00 am PDT | Saturday, September 11, 2021

First time attending Neon Speaks? This session is a great way to find out what the neon buzz is all about. Two illustrated presentations will reveal many mysteries about neon signs and why these glowing signs are so captivating. Neon history will be illuminated, and the basics of neon science explained. Special attention will be given to the brilliant connection between vintage neon and the small businesses that form the unique character of cities and small towns. Hosted by Corrie Siegel of the Museum of Neon Art with co-hosts Dydia DeLyser and Paul Greenstein, authors of *Neon: A Light History*.



Photo: SF Neon

The Businesses Behind the Signs

11:15—12:15 am PDT | Saturday, September 11, 2021

Behind many iconic neon signs there are legendary but endangered shops, eateries, or watering holes. Now more than ever, many of these anchors of the city's cultural richness face an uncertain future. Woody LaBounty and Kerri Young of San Francisco Heritage will give us the big picture on the organization's efforts to protect and preserve legacy businesses. Ben Leech of Preservation Action Council San Jose gives a preview of their sign preservation projects and recent publication, a self-guided walking tour of vintage signs in downtown San Jose.



San Francisco. Photo: SF Neon

VIRTUAL TOUR: Richmond SF Neon

5:00 pm-6:15 pm PDT Saturday, September 11, 2021

From bamboo bars to the Pacific Ocean, take a virtual walk through the historic corridors of the outer avenues of San Francisco's Richmond District. This historic district is populated with vintage signs that light up the night to create a sense of time travel. The tour features historic photos, film clips, and ephemera with architectural and graphic design insights about San Francisco's "Outside Lands" surviving neon signs. Co-hosted by SF Neon and Nicole Meldahl of the Western Neighborhood Project.



Artwork: SF Neon

OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATION: Preservation Forum

6:45 pm—8:30 pm PDT Saturday, September 11, 2021

An all-star lineup of speakers at the forefront of vintage neon preservation share stories of rescue and restoration. Neon signs have evolved from advertising to art and now serve as landmarks of the day-to-day human experience within communities. The artisans and advocates working on neon preservation projects have adventures and advice to share. Participants include Will Durham/Nevada Neon Project, Jeremy Ebersole/Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, Tracey Farrell/Park Theater Trust, Maribel Ramirez/Excelsior Action Group, Jim Rizzo/NeonWorks, Corky Scholl/Save the Signs, Tod Swarmstedt/American Sign Museum, Martin Treu/*Streets, Signs, and Storefronts*.

NEON *Speaks* 2021 Schedule

DAY 2

Sunday, September 12



Pocatello. Photo: [Dave Van Hulsteyn](#)

BEHIND THE SCENES: Light up the Night in Pocatello **10:00 am–10:30 am PDT Sunday, September 12, 2021**

There is a neon movement called Relight the Night in Pocatello Idaho to keep their vintage neon signs glowing to light up the night. Randy Dixon leads the way to show us this impressive collection of restored neon signs in the vibrant streetscape of Pocatello.



Photo: Neon Museum, Las Vegas

BEHIND THE SCENES: Neon Museum of Las Vegas **10:30 am–11:00 am PDT Sunday, September 12, 2021**

Join Derek Weis for a behind-the-scenes peek of the Neon Museum that you normally won't get to see on a typical visit to this museum, aka the Neon Bone Yard. This online tour features storage spaces like the Boulevard Gallery, Ne10 Studio, and more.

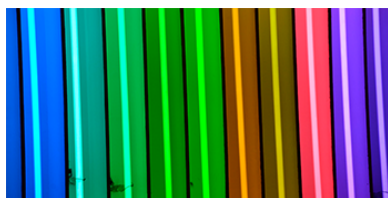


Photo: SF Neon

NEON CURIOSITY LOUNGE PART 1 **11:15 am–12:30 pm PDT Sunday, September 12, 2021**

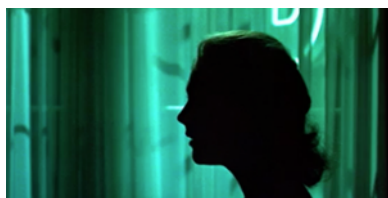
Part art exhibit, part makers fair, part science project, this virtual Neon Curiosity Lounge is a bevy of sign-makers, artists, and historians with lots to show and tell. Marvel at the strange and wonderful forms of neon light, technique, art, and ephemera into neon illumination. Satisfy your neon curiosity! Part 1 features Robert Haus, Christine Ryan, Matt Soar, Red Ibérica en Defensa del Patrimonio Gráfico (Iberian Network for the Preservation of Graphic Heritage), and Barbara Dechant of the Buchstabenmuseum in Berlin.



Film Still from "Sweet Smell of Success" by Alexander Mackendrick

VIRTUAL TOUR: Cinematic NY Neon **5:00 pm–6:00 pm PDT Sunday, September 12, 2021**

Neon is the lens for this illustrated talk that glows with film clips investigating cinematographers' use of neon signs in classic films. Hosted by Thomas Rinaldi and Rolando Pujol. Using scenes from "New York" movies both classic and obscure, Rolando and Tom will explore the ways in which film makers have used neon to set a certain tone in their work. While earlier films use neon as a touchstone for all things bright, clean, and modern, later films perpetuated neon's fall from grace, which seemed to coincide with the onset of urban decay in New York and other cities. More recent depictions seem to reinforce the popular association of old storefront neon with the New York's quintessential, character-defining commercial institutions.



Film Still from "Vertigo" by Alfred Hitchcock

VIRTUAL TOUR: Cinematic SF Neon **6:30 pm–8:00 pm PDT Sunday, September 12, 2021**

San Francisco's robust cinematic history meets neon's luminous past in this program of excerpts from such famous films as Orson Welles' *Lady from Shanghai*, Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* to classic North Beach (CGI) neon signs in Tim Burton's *Big Eyes*. Co-hosted by Jim Van Buskirk, author of *Celluloid San Francisco* and Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan of SF Neon.

NEON *Speaks* 2021 Schedule

DAY 3 Saturday,
September 18, 2021



Seattle. Photo: Thomas Hawk

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT: Bea Haverfield 10:00 am to 11:00 am PDT | Saturday September 18, 2021

Seattle's celebrated "Queen of Neon"—Bea Haverfield — designed many of the iconic signs in the Emerald City's neon landscape, the creative force behind the Elephant Car Wash, Ivar's sign at Pier 54, and Dick's Drive-In. Join us for an informal interview with Seattle_Artifacts historian Brad Holden, and Bea's daughter, Kathleen Wolff, who preserved her late mother's portfolio of sign design drawings.



Tucson. Photo: Ignite Sign Museum

BEHIND THE SCENES: Ignite Sign Museum 11:15 am–11:45 am PDT | Saturday, September 18, 2021

Jude and Monica Cook, four-decade veterans of neon, take us on a trip through projects-in-progress at Tucson's Ignite Sign Museum.



Laurens, SC. Photo: Echo Project

The Echo Theater Restoration: Rehabbing Hate 11:45 am to 12:30 pm PDT | Saturday September 18, 2021

Morgan Crook and Dannielle James tell their story of restoring the neon marquee for the Echo Theater in Laurens, SC. The troubled and triumphant journey of ownership of the Echo Theater — from a former Klansman to a black Baptist minister — serves as an inspiration of healing over hatred. The Echo Theater Project will become a museum and event space whose mission is to illustrate the centuries-long struggle for justice by detailing the history and dark legacy of racial violence and inequity.



Photo: SF Neon

VIRTUAL TOUR: SF Neon Downtown 5:00 pm to 6:15 pm PDT | Saturday September 18, 2021

The surviving neon gems of downtown San Francisco are survivors of a time when after-work nightlife was ablaze with neon. Hosted by the authors of *San Francisco Neon: Survivors and Lost Icons*, this neon-illuminated presentation investigates some of the oldest neighborhoods in the downtown district. Starting on Front Street and ending at Union Square, this tour features local history with architectural and graphic design insights.



Lake Tahoe, Photo: Heather David

HIGHWAY LIFE: CA Motel Journeys 6:45 pm–8:15 pm PDT | Saturday September 18, 2021

Support your local small motel business when you hit the road and appreciate these awesome vintage motels with neon signs. Throughout the state of California, these motels are usually family-owned businesses keeping the artful landmarks of Americana glowing and preserving highway culture. Co-hosted by Heather David (*Motel California*) and J. Eric Lynxwiler (Museum of Neon Art) with special guest Chris Nichols.

NEON Speaks 2021 Schedule

DAY 4 Sunday,
September 19, 2021



Photo: Museum of Vancouver

BEHIND THE SCENES: Museum of Vancouver 10:00 am–11:00 am PDT | Sunday, September 19, 2021

Vancouver was once home to an estimated 19,000 neon signs, second only to Shanghai. These glowing signs were seen as glamorous/exciting as well as tawdry and garish, putting them at the center of intense debates. City leaders clamored to have them restricted or removed, which resulted in many of the legendary signs being left to rust in scrap heaps. Some of these signs have since been rescued and found their way into the collection at the Museum of Vancouver. Local historians Angus McIntyre and John Atkin will take you through the Museum of Vancouver's exhibit showcasing a cross section of restored signs from their collection and look at a few new signs coming to the streets soon.



Image: Eisler catalog cover detail, collection of Robert Haus

NEON CURIOSITY LOUNGE Part 2 11:15 pm–12:45 pm PDT | Sunday, September 19, 2021

Part art exhibit, part makers fair, part science project. This virtual Neon Curiosity Lounge is a collection of neon sign-makers, artists, and neon with much to show and tell. Participants include Christopher Lawing, Englewood Arts: Brandon Schnur, Teresa Cosgrove, Curtis Shaddox, and Tod Swarmstedt.



Carlos Club, San Carlos. Photo: SF Neon

CLOSING NIGHT CELEBRATION FOR PASSPORT HOLDERS 6:45 pm–8:00 pm PDT | Sunday September 19, 2021

Bring your favorite beverage, your questions, and your observations to the festival's closing celebration. Presenters and passport holders are invited to join in as we give a toast to the past, present and future of neon light and reflect on the festival. Featuring conversations with Chris Raley/Route9Signs, Kate Widdows, Bill Concannon/Aargon-Neon, and Debra Jane Seltzer/RoadsideArchitecture.com.

NEON T-SHIRTS! If you need t-shirts go to neonspeaks.org/shop



NEON Speaks 2021 Schedule

SYMPOSIUM

PANELISTS/PRESENTERS

John Atkin, Vancouver
Jude and Monica Cook, Ignite Sign Museum, Tucson
Bill Concannon, Aargon Neon, Crockett
Katie Conry, Tenderloin Museum, San Francisco
Morgan Crook, Echo Project, South Carolina
Heather David, Motel California, San Jose
Barbara Dechant, Buchstabenmuseum, Berlin
Dydia DeLyser & Paul Greenstein, Neon: A Light History, LA
Randy Dixon, Relight the Night, Pocatello
Will Durham, Nevada Neon Project, Reno
Jeremy Ebersole, Milwaukee Preservation Alliance
Tracey Karsten Farrell, Park Theater Trust, Lafayette, CA
Robert Haus Noviol Journeys, Anchorage
Brad Holden, Seattle_Artifacts
Woody LaBounty, San Francisco Heritage
Christopher Lawing, Charlotte Signs Project
Ben Leech, Preservation Action Council of San Jose
Eric Lynxwiler, Museum of Neon Art (MONA), Glendale
Angus McIntyre, Vancouver
Nicole Meldalh, Western Neighborhoods Project, SF
Rolando Pujol, New York City
Red Ibérica en Defensa del Patrimonio Gráfico (Iberian Network for the Preservation of Graphic Heritage) Spain
Maribel Ramirez, Excelsior Action Group, SF
Chris Raley, Route 9 Signs, Fresno
Tom Rinaldi, New York Neon, New York City
Jim Rizzo, Neon Works, Oakland
Christine Ryan, Jet Set Neon, Washington, D.C.
Corky Scholl, Save the Signs, Denver
Brandon Schnur, Englewoods Arts, Independence, MO
Corrie Siegel, Museum of Neon Art (MONA), Glendale
Debra Jane Seltzer, RoadsideArchitecture.com Ventura
Matt Soar, Montreal Signs Project
Tod Swormstedt, American Sign Museum, Cincinnati
Derek Weis, Neon Museum Las Vegas
Kate Widdows, PDX Neon, Portland
Jim Van Buskirk, San Francisco
Kerri Young, San Francisco Heritage



Neon Speaks 2019 at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco. Photo by Paula Wirth.

STAFF BOX

HOSTS/CO-PRODUCERS

Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan, SF Neon.

ADVISORS

Thanks to our wise advisors: Charles Chapman, Katie Conry, Heather David, Dydia DeLyser, Allen Sawyer, Alex Spoto, Tod Swormstedt, Jim Van Buskirk, and Kate Widdows.

Thanks to our dedicated and talented support staff:

WEB DEVELOPMENT: Gary R. Weisberg

SOCIAL MEDIA & TICKETING: Emily Emerson

VIDEO ARCHIVE: Evatt Carrodus