

Fred Herzog: Vancouver

June 26th to September 12th, 2008

at the Canadian Cultural Centre

Opening: June 25th at 6PM

with **Fred Herzog**

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The Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, in collaboration with Equinox Gallery (Vancouver, Canada), presents the first solo exhibition in Europe by German-born photographer **Fred Herzog** who immigrated to Canada in 1953. This European premiere follows the showing of *Vancouver Photographs*, the successful retrospective exhibition of the artist's work presented at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2007. The photographs of Fred Herzog were shown at ARCO this year by Trepanier Baer Gallery (Calgary) and were presented at two major exhibitions this past spring, at the Equinox Gallery and at the Laurence Miller Gallery in New York.

Vancouver brings together a selection of prints from the large photographic body of work that Herzog dedicated to Canada's West Coast capital, his adoptive city. In them, we see development, expansion, projects, people, extraordinary lights but also the darker side of a city that saw an uncommonly rapid expansion in the span of only a few decades, mainly due to immigration, most notably that of Asian newcomers. Herzog spent more than half a century wandering through the streets of Vancouver with his camera. His lens focussed particularly on marginal areas, peripheral to the splendours of the budding city: second-hand shops, abandoned lots, barber shops, greasy spoon diners, crowded areas full of dreams, but also of disillusion.

Fred Herzog's splendid images deploy a photographic vocabulary with roots in traditional documentary photography. Yet they are also, in some way, founders of the sought-after street photography genre in Vancouver, which many conceptual Vancouver photographers formalised by appropriating its codes and refusing all lyrical inclinations in its outcome. The bold use of vivid colours – uncommon in the 1950's and 1960's when art photography was essentially in black and white, and colour reserved for advertising – contributes to the visual power of this considerable body of work, which also constitutes an exceptional record of one of the West Coast's most fascinating cities.



Flâneur, Granville, 1960 © Fred Herzog

Fred Herzog is represented by **Equinox Gallery** (Vancouver) and by **Trepanier Baer Gallery** (Calgary).
www.equinoxgallery.com — www.trepanierbaer.com



CPR Pier and Marine Building, 1953 © Fred Herzog

“Seen through the idiosyncratic sensibility of an émigré – a sensibility that is simultaneously located inside and outside the psychic space of the city – these images present the city as a site of tradition and change, collection and dispersal, production, expenditure and alienation. Here, bodily gesture, the detritus of consumer culture and the architecture of the street take on a heightened resonance that speaks to the ongoing tensions underlying the surfaces of everyday urban life.”

Grant Arnold, Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs
(Vancouver Art Gallery / Douglas & McIntyre, 2007, p. 3-4)*

“In 1953 Vancouver, art was painting; to the informed, an abstracted landscape inspired by Nature herself. The idea of photographing Vancouver’s streets in the name of art would have been met with bemusement back then, despite the rich body of photographic work being produced in Europe and the United States. But Herzog saw something in this city that many took for granted. Indeed, it is likely that Herzog’s interest in photographing Vancouver’s streets – in colour, no less – was related to what Allied bombers had done to his hometown of Stuttgart during the Second World War, blowing a donut hole into the city’s downtown core, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives and, at war’s end, a rebuilding project that sought not to reassemble the city as it once was (with its crooked streets and historic soot), but, like modernism itself, make it new.”

Michael Turner, Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs
(Vancouver Art Gallery / Douglas & McIntyre, 2007, p. 138)*

Born in Germany in 1930, **Fred Herzog** emigrated to Canada in the early 1950’s and settled in Vancouver where in 1953, he began producing his first colour slides and photographs of the city. Herzog worked as a medical photographer before joining the University of British Columbia’s (UBC) Department of Biomedical Communications, which he directed for more than 20 years. He also spent 7 years teaching photography, first at Simon Fraser University (Vancouver) and then at UBC.

In the late 1960’s, Herzog’s work began gaining recognition from the Canadian professional art world. In the same year he was awarded a grant by the Canada Council for the Arts, collaborated on the *Piles* project by N.E. Thing Co. (Iain Baxter&) and participated in *Extensions*, his first group exhibition at the UBC Gallery. *Extensions* was later presented at the National Gallery of Canada and subsequently toured across the country. His first solo exhibition was presented in 1972 at the Mind’s Eye Gallery (Vancouver). His recent exhibitions include *Vancouver Collects - From Sun Pictures to Photoconceptualism: Photography from Local Collections*, Vancouver Art Gallery (2001); *Unfinished Business: Vancouver Street Photographs 1955-1985*, Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver (2003); *Place*, Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam (2006); *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs*, Vancouver Art Gallery; *Fred Herzog: Colour Photographs 1950’s – 1960’s*, Equinox Gallery, Vancouver (2007).

Herzog’s photographs of urban settings are part of several public collections in Canada including: the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Art Bank of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Vancouver General Hospital, the UBC Hospital Foundation, the National Film Board (Montreal) and Library and Archives Canada. Herzog has also received recognition for his exemplary medical photography (Canadian Medical Association, 1968 and William V. Gordon Award for Outstanding Achievements in Medical Photography, Ottawa, 1985).

Canadian Cultural Centre
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Open: Monday to Friday, 10 am – 6 pm,
Thursday until 8 pm - Free Admission

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*The exhibition catalogue, published by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas & McIntyre, with essays in English by Grant Arnold, Michael Turner and an interview with Fred Herzog, is available at the reception of the Canadian Cultural Centre (152 pages, colour photographs).