

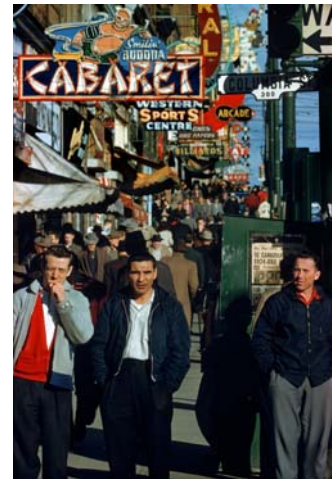
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Vancouver Art Gallery to Present Landmark Retrospective ***Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs***

80,000 photographs, 50 years, 1 photographer and 1 city

Media Preview January 25 at 9 AM

VANCOUVER, BC — No artist has chronicled Vancouver's urban life as comprehensively and with such sustained insight as photographer **Fred Herzog**, whose work will be featured in the **Vancouver Art Gallery** exhibition ***Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs*** from **January 25 to May 13, 2007**. Since 1953, Herzog has produced more than 80,000 colour photographs of the city's urban life – the second-hand shops, vacant lots, neon signage and crowds of people who have populated the streets over the past fifty years. Originally created as slides, recent innovations in digital technology have allowed Herzog a new freedom to print his images on a large scale, opening his photographic world to a wider audience. The first retrospective to survey his complete body of work, ***Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs*** will feature more than 100 images covering the artist's entire career.



Fred Herzog, *Untitled (Hastings and Columbia Street, Vancouver)*, 1958

“Fred Herzog’s use of colour photography to depict urban life over an extended period of time is unique,” said exhibition curator Grant Arnold, the Audain Curator of British Columbia Art at the Vancouver Art Gallery. “I’m not aware of any body of street photography that incorporates colour during such an early period. His photographs provide a profound sense of lived experience of urban space in Vancouver and, by extension, of modern cities in general.”

Herzog’s imagery gives heightened resonance to bodily gesture, the detritus of consumer culture and the architecture of the urban landscape, highlighting the underlying tensions that exist in civic life. His views of Vancouver, including its crowded sidewalks, isolated individuals, cluttered thrift shop windows, front stoops, industrial ports and cacophonous signage, carry the viewer through public space as an empathetic passerby. Acting as a narrator, he presents a dispassionate view of the city as a site of tradition and change, collection and dispersion, production, expenditure and alienation.

Herzog’s use of colour film was unusual in the 1950s and 60s, when art photography was almost exclusively associated with black and white imagery. Much of the artist’s work was produced on Kodachrome, a colour slide film difficult to work with in a spontaneous fashion. Using this film with extreme skill, Herzog was able to capture fleeting moments with exceptional sharpness and tonal range that could not be reproduced in prints. His use of colour at this early stage makes Herzog a forerunner of “New Color” photographers such as William Eggleston and Stephen

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Shore, who received widespread acclaim in the 1970s. Herzog's work can also be seen as a precursor to that of such contemporary Vancouver photographers as Roy Arden, Karin Bubaś, Christos Dikeakos, Arni Haraldsson and Jeff Wall, who have all focused their cameras on Vancouver's urban landscape.

Herzog was born in 1930, the second child of a middle-class family in Stuttgart, Germany. The Second World War left him a virtual orphan. His mother died in 1941 and his father, away from home throughout the war, died shortly after returning to Stuttgart in 1946. After his father's death, Herzog began to pursue photography as a serious amateur. He first became aware of Vancouver through an article in a high school textbook describing the city's maritime industry. Intrigued by a Canadian job offer received by a relative, Herzog left Germany in 1952, travelling to Montreal and then on to Toronto. After a year in Toronto, where he continued to make photographs and learned basic techniques of medical photography, Herzog left for Vancouver in May of 1953. He worked as a medical photographer from 1957 to 1990, and as a photography instructor at local universities. Usually presenting his work in slideshows, Herzog shared his photographs with university art classes, informal gatherings of artists, meetings of the Vancouver Arts Club and the Lions' Gate Camera Club.

While over the years he participated in group exhibitions at the National Gallery of Canada, Vancouver's Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery and the University of British Columbia Fine Arts Gallery, the difficulty of projecting slides in a gallery setting and their insubstantiality as objects for display limited their possibilities for exhibition. Although active in Vancouver's art scene for more than forty years, only with recent developments in digital photography has Herzog been able to make prints that can accommodate traditional modes of display and ownership. It is this development that has allowed for the presentation of this landmark exhibition.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated book co-published by Douglas & McIntyre that includes an in-depth interview of the artist by exhibition curator Grant Arnold and essays by Arnold and Vancouver novelist Michael Turner, whose books include *Hard Core Logo* and *The Pornographer's Poem*.

The Gallery is grateful for the generous support of the Aymong Family, Presenting Sponsor of *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs*.