



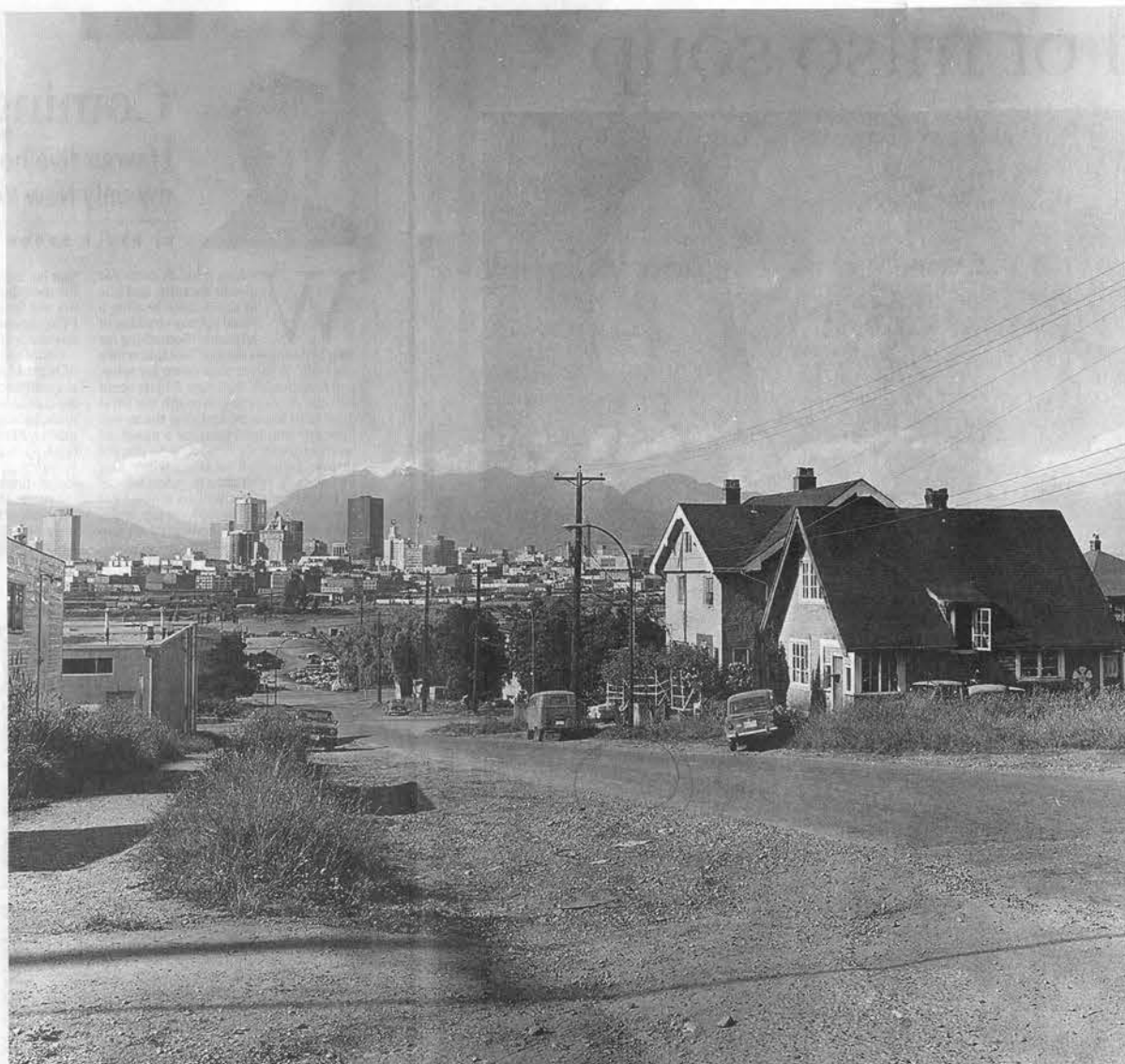
Lions Gate Bridge looking south, spring 1961, by Dick Bellamy



CPR Regional Office, 1972 by Tony Westman.



Lower Lonsdale, North Vancouver, 1976, by Brian Stablyk.



View of Downtown from near Fourth and Cotton, 1972, by Curt Lang.



The Green Door Restaurant, 1970, by Henri Robideau.



Hastings Street, 1958, by Fred Herzog (original in colour).

The street in focus

A new show of Vancouver street photographs is part of the global documentation of urban environments

By BILL JEFFRIES

Street photographs raise questions about cities, the functioning of societies, the nature of communities and the aesthetics of photography — they are powerful social documents dense with information, open to conflicting interpretations.

The importance of the street photograph has been reconsidered in recent years, beginning with the *Open City* exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford (England) in 2001, which surveyed street work done around the globe from 1950 to 2000. The events of Sept. 11, 2001, added another layer to international interest in street images and to the critical understanding of their potential meaning.

Today, there is new interest, especially among galleries and book publishers, in "the street." Images from any city, familiar or not, are part of the collective urban experience and are the most important communicator of our equally collective awareness of the fragility of cities everywhere.

The photographs here, which demonstrate this renewed attention to our streets, are a sample of the hundreds of images in the exhibition *Unfinished Business: Vancouver Street Photographs 1955 to 1985*, which opens today at Presentation House Gallery in North Vancouver. Of the photographers, several no longer live in Vancouver: Greg Girard is in

Shanghai, half of the N.E. Thing Company; Iain Baxter is in Ontario; Robert Flick in Los Angeles and Bruce Stewart in Victoria. The rest, with the exception of Curt Lang, who died in 1998, and Jack Dale, who died in 2002, are all still living in Greater Vancouver: Ingrid Baxter, Dick Bellamy, Michael de Courcy, Christos Dikeakos, Fred Douglas, Svend-Erik Eriksen, Fred Herzog, Henri Robideau, Brian Stablyk, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace, Tony Westman and Paul Wong.

Vancouver street photographs are part of the global documentation of urban environments. As the urban make-up of the city has changed, Vancouver artists have responded to the changing conditions on the streets, creating work that explores the city as a source of sociological meaning. Vancouver street photography, however plentiful it is, has been a largely unexamined part of the city's cultural history.

The post-1955 "mean streets" photography of Vancouver, such as the work of Lynn Phipps and Terry Hoffman in the late 1970s, Cheryl Sourkes in the early '80s and Lincoln Clarke more recently, often took the form of particular projects rather than documentation of the daily life of the city. By contrast, *Unfinished Business* is an attempt to bring together an overview of everyday Greater Vancouver street life from this period, and to explore its links to global street photography and the photo-conceptual work produced here since the early 1980s.

These photographs take Greater Van-



Earles Corner Grocery, 1972, by Curt Lang.

couver's pulse in its last years as a small town on the coast. They register its sometime emptiness, its sometime lack of a vibrant street life, its reliance on the car and the use and evolution of its public spaces from 1955 to 1985. All the signifiers that allow one to take stock of a place — the fashions, the quality of building, the expressions on people's faces — are here for the reading.

The street is a symbol for Vancouver's functioning both as economic engine and as social space. The aim of the exhibition is to provide a kind of "thick description" of Vancouver's transition from resource-extraction based village by the sea into the partially urban quasi-modernist cultural mosaic that it is today.

Bill Jeffries is the Presentation House Gallery director/curator.

Unfinished Business: Vancouver Street Photographs 1955 to 1985 runs from today to March 2 at Presentation House Gallery, 333 Chesterfield Ave., North Vancouver.



Man Carrying Bag, Cordova Street, 1975, by Greg Girard.



Corner, Davie and Denman, 1971, by Bruce Stewart.



700-block Hawks Avenue, 1969, by Bruce Stewart.



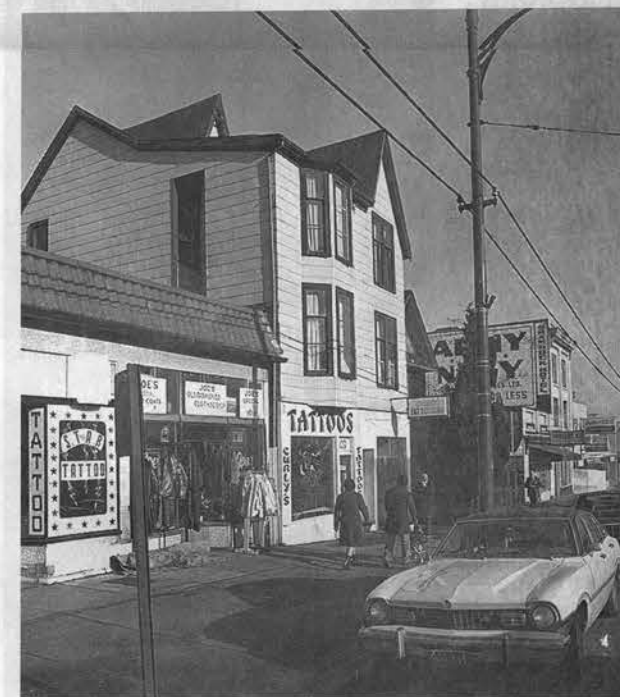
41st and Victoria, ca. 1970, by Fred Douglas.



Image from Landscape Manual, 1969, by Jeff Wall



Hastings and Carrall, late 1960s, by Jack Dale.



Two Tattoo Shops, 1979, by Fred Herzog.



On the Trail, Homer at Dunsuir, 1976, by Michael de Courcy.