

TITLE: NEON, 52'

DIRECTOR: Eric Bednarski

WRITER: Eric Bednarski

PRODUCER: Dorota Przyłubska, Paweł Potoroczyn, Ryszard Urbaniak

OVERVIEW: Neon showcases the remarkable Polish neon design of 1960s and 1970s Warsaw. In communist times the bright colours and lights of neon signs were seen as a relief from the dullness and darkness of everyday life. Was it possible to truly advertise in a system where shops were frequently empty and brands and services were state run? What distinguished “socialist” neon advertising from neon advertising on the other side of the Iron Curtain? After 1956, and well into the 1970s, the Soviet-backed Polish regime took it upon itself to brighten up a city which for the most part had become dark and drab. Following its grim post-War Stalinist reconstruction, Warsaw, it was decided, was to be "neonized." The neons were intended to convey a feeling of modernity and progress in a country cut off from the West. Socialist-blessed, they nevertheless mimicked the colour, dazzle and glamour of post-War capitalist cities. Today, these neon signs are celebrated and much sought after. In recent years interest in them has grown not only in Poland, but also abroad. This has not stopped the majority of the Warsaw neons being neglected and forgotten, however. Where there were once hundreds of original neon signs, fewer and fewer functioning ones now grace the buildings of the Polish capital.

DIRECTOR: Eric Bednarski is a Warsaw based film director/writer. Born in Halifax, Canada, Bednarski studied history and filmmaking in North America and Europe.

His documentary film work with the National Film Board of Canada has garnered him a Gemini Award and a Writers Guild of Canada Award nomination, and he was awarded the Decoration of Honour "Meritorious for Polish Culture" by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Bednarski's films have been broadcast across the world and have also screened at international festivals, at the United Nations, the European Parliament and the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

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