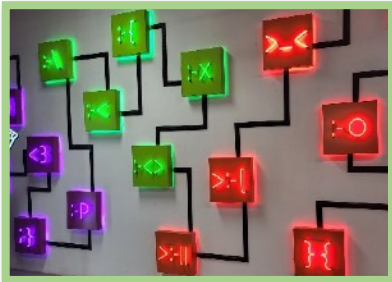


The Artistry of Neon Art

AACA SoCal visits Lisa Schulte's *Night of Neon* studio



Emoji wall

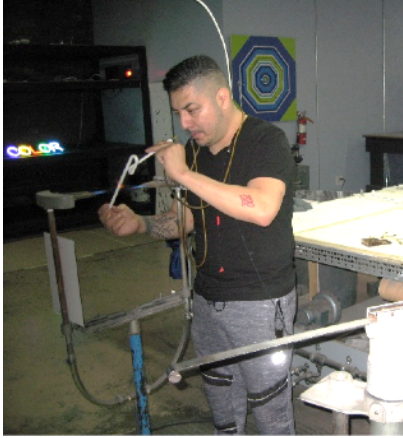


Desert scenes

Neon was the first gas used to make light, which is why all gas filled tubes are now called neon lights. Neon art contains as many colors as the designer wants, using a combination of gases, colored glass tubing, and fluorescent powders. On the periodic table noble gases, those which are non-reactive and stable, are on the left column: neon, argon, xenon, radon, helium and krypton. Each gas has its own color. Neon is red, helium is orange, argon is lavender, krypton is gray or green and xenon is gray or blue. Adding a tiny amount of mercury intensifies the color.



So much to see, so much to learn



To create neon art, the designer first draws the pattern on the computer to gauge if the size, font, and design are feasible with the tubing required. Then the designer draws a pattern full scale for the glass blower/bender to follow. The pattern is drawn in reverse with the electrode locations and blackout paint areas. One letter can take several bends to create. If the bender makes a mistake, he can't fix it. Once the glass has heated, it can't be reheated because its molecular structure has changed. Attempting to refire a bent portion can cause the glass to break.



Clients' requests are only limited by their imagination. This client sought an infinity mirror for a bathroom and Lisa with her team made it happen.

Lisa is explaining how this infinity mirror was executed. Only 7" in depth, the illusion is produced by the front installation of a two way mirror along with one set of neon tubing.

An artist's eye is constantly scanning the environment for idea and objects to complete that creativity.

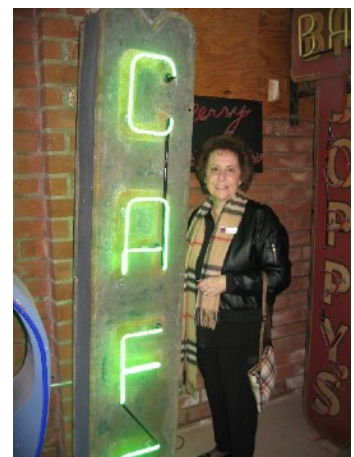
These dried pods from a Queen Palm Tree look beautiful and emit enough light to be functional and an art piece. In the background are pieces of drift wood with tubing draped on and around them.



Neon signs are made of glass tubes through which electricity travels in a closed circuit. An electrical current travels from one electrode to the other. The electrical current excites the gas molecules and causes them to emit light. Neon signs or art work run on "street current" of 110 volts.



Where to look first?



Nights of Neon host over 15,000 neon pieces. All pieces are made or restored in-house from the smallest neon sign to the largest movie marquees. Lisa, producing or restoring neon for forty years, is well known throughout the county by individuals, corporations and the movie industry.



Neon flowers in the greenhouse

Art Show displays

Abstract art



In many neon signs, images blink on and off to create the illusion of movement. This is done with an “animator” or “flasher”. It connects different circuits and pulses electricity selectively through them. When the switch is on, that part of the sign glows, when the switch is off, it goes dark. The sound of the switches going on and off creates a clicking sound.



As the automobile became more a fixture in American life, the demand for the signs grew. Road trips and commuters could read the neon signs from a distance and while speeding on the interstate. Neon signs first appeared in the 1920s and 1930s. Neon tubes were frequently used with incandescent light bulbs. In the beginning neon letters were confined to a box or rectangle

Since neon is fragile, pieces are shipped in a wooden box or crate and assembled on site.



Our members were all enthralled with the tour of *Nights of Neon* and appreciative of the time Lisa took during her busy schedule to explain the process of creating these works of art. Our thanks to everyone involved at the studio for answering our questions and demonstrating their particular expertise.

