



PARKLAND COLLEGE

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Champaign Contact: Paul Young, pyoung@parkland.edu

Movie Media Contact: Faythe Levine, signpaintermovie@gmail.com

Book Publicity and Sales: Margaret Rogalski, margaret@papress.com, 212/995-9620

SIGN PAINTERS: THE MOVIE to make local premiere at Parkland Theatre

Info: <http://www.parkland.edu/signpainters/>

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. -- There was a time, as recently as the 1980s, when storefronts, murals, banners, barn signs, billboards, and even street signs were all hand-lettered with brush and paint. But, like many skilled trades, the sign industry has been overrun by the techno-fueled promise of quicker and cheaper. The resulting proliferation of computer designed and digitally cut vinyl lettering and inkjet printers has ushered a creeping sameness into our landscape.

Fortunately, there is a growing trend to seek out traditional sign painters and a renaissance in the trade. In 2010, filmmakers Faythe Levine, co-author of *Handmade Nation*, and Sam Macon began documenting these dedicated practitioners, their time-honored methods, and their appreciation for quality and craftsmanship. SIGN PAINTERS: THE MOVIE, the first anecdotal documentary of the craft, features stories and interviews of more than two dozen sign painters working in cities throughout the United States.

This 80-minute independently produced film was released May 2013 and is currently making the rounds at film festivals, film societies, museums and specialty cinemas in Turkey, Singapore, Spain, New Zealand and across the US. In Champaign, SIGN PAINTERS: THE MOVIE will premiere Wednesday, Sept. 4 at Parkland Theatre. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; the film will start at 7 p.m. A panel discussion about the film and this almost-lost art form will be held immediately following the screening.

Local sign painters from Champaign-Urbana, Pontiac and Mt. Pulaski have been invited to participate on the panel. Among the panelists is Mack Kite, son of the late Bill Kite, who many in the profession consider the premier sign painter in the region.

The Champaign premiere of SIGN PAINTERS: THE MOVIE is a benefit screening for Parkland's Fine and Applied Arts department. The requested donation is \$7 per person; net proceeds will benefit students in FAA's art, graphic design, music, theatre arts, and communication programs.

Parkland's Graphic Design program presents the screening with cosponsors Champaign-Urbana Design Org. (CUDO), Surface 51, Adams Outdoor, and WPCD Radio.

A companion 184-page book with a foreword by legendary artist (and former sign painter) Ed Ruscha was also published in November 2012. Like the film, this vibrant book profiles sign painters young and old, from the new vanguard working solo to collaborative shops such as San Francisco's New Bohemia Signs and New York's Colossal Media's Sky High Murals. *Sign Painters: The Book* will be available for sale at Champaign's local Barnes & Noble.

About the codirectors/authors:

Faythe Levine is an artist, photographer, filmmaker, and curator based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is the founder of Art vs. Craft and curates Sky High Gallery. Levine's first film and book, *Handmade Nation: The Rise of DIY, Art, Craft, and Design* was published by Princeton Architectural Press.

Sam Macon is a Milwaukee-born, Chicago-based filmmaker, photographer, and writer. He received his BFA in film from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and directs music videos, commercials, short films, and documentaries.