



## The Zeon Files: Art and Design of Historic Route 66 Signs

By Mark C. Childs, Ellen D. Babcock

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In the mid-twentieth century Eddie's Inferno Cocktail Lounge, Bunny Bread, Paris Shoe Shop, and many other businesses throughout New Mexico and the Southwest displayed eye-catching roadside signs created by the Zeon Corporation. These works of commercial art featured unique designs, irregular shapes, dynamic compositions, and neon light. The legendary fiesta dancer at the Albuquerque Terrace drive-in theater, for example, was well-known for the grace of its lines, its enormous size, and its flashing neon skirt. Created during a time before the simplified icons of major chains, many of these culturally significant artworks no longer exist. *The Zeon Files* rescues these historic artifacts from obscurity, presenting a collection of the working drawings of historic Route 66-era signs. In addition to presenting a visually rich archive, the authors discuss the working methods of design and construction and the craft of drafting techniques during this innovative era of American sign making.

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### Editorial Review

Review

“For the artist, design buff, or Route 66-kicker on your list, it’s a must have.”? *American Road*

“A colorful glimpse of Albuquerque’s past. . . . Route 66ers will delight in finding original drawings for Route 66 sign survivors.”? *Route 66 News*

About the Author

**Mark C. Childs** is an associate dean and a professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of New Mexico. He is the author of *Urban Composition: Developing Community through Design, Squares: A Public Place Design Guide for Urbanists*, and *Parking Spaces: A Design, Implementation, and Use Manual for Architects, Planners, and Engineers*. He is a Fulbright Scholar and has won awards for community engagement, teaching, public art, heritage preservation, and poetry.

**Ellen D. Babcock** is an associate professor of sculpture at the University of New Mexico. She has exhibited at numerous New Mexico and California venues, including the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe and the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery and the Southern Exposure Gallery in San Francisco. She founded Friends of the Orphan Signs (FOS), an organization that sites collaboratively produced public art in abandoned signage.

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**Rose Warfield:**

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**Betty Giuliani:**

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