

Vancouver bus stops turned into art

By Michael Mui, 24 Hours Vancouver

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Find some of Seung Woo Back's artwork at 15 different transit shelters around the city. Seung Woo Back/Vancouver Biennale

A South Korean artist has created a local transit shelter art exhibition based on his experiences of following people from transit stops around the city — and snapping photos of their destinations.

About a year ago, photographer Seung Woo Back spent four weeks in Vancouver taking public transit and exploring to produce his exhibition, *Cross Vancouver*, which has transformed into a series of five images located at 15 bus stops around the city.

The pictures might seem odd to Vancouverites, one of them is of an actual bus stop — and many others are simple streetscapes that nearly all local residents would be familiar with.

In each photo, there is always a person with their face turned away from the camera, unaware a photographer has been trailing them since they left a transit stop.

"The location scattered along the bus and subway lines, open to the public, are always one of the most interesting place to me ... the place where people seeks and leaves by their necessity shows the characteristics of city itself very well," the artist said by email.

"There is no particular reason for following certain person. I just followed people who arouse my personal curiosity."

Another obvious theme is how almost all street signs in the photographs have been blanked out — an attempt to make familiar places in Vancouver unfamiliar again, Back said.

One reason for this, he said, is how many modern cities are becoming more "vague" — strip away the signs, and they look like any other.

His work, which will be shown until Feb. 21, is also the source of a contest held by the Vancouver Biennale with the prize of a one month, two-zone transit pass. To participate, snap a photo when you see one of Back's images and email the photo to info@vancouverbiennale.ca