

Tour of Vancouver

You can point at the steam clock through a linear miasma of rain from the awning of the Starbucks and the idea comes across, it's not like a fine bronze statue of antiquity whose sex organs have been rubbed to gold that you absolutely must touch to have experienced it's mainly there to teach us that steam still rises even when rain falls through it. Glassy cobblestones are they lying about how Vancouver once was why did they decide Gastown was the old part of the city while everywhere else was subjected to imaginary slabs of concrete with their inane vintage stamped in them. Another tourist, other than you, may stumble out of that Old Spaghetti House drunk and feel the bas-relief of history in the cobbles and fall prey to the delusion that you're in some Disney Christmas Carol there's still a guy who comes one by one and lights these streetlamps really? no.

It's a photo destination it locks you to time and vapour pouring back into the hydrosphere and this spout anti fountain fountain against the rain perches out from this historic stuffed bear district to connect Vancouver and its steampunk identity to the cycle of water through the world up the mountains and down the streams and in the ocean and cruise ships hello look that building looks like god's floaty when he visits a gulf somewhere it's the convention centre best view of the yellow powder pile in the city but I don't really come here that often.

Vancouver's actual the third biggest producer of yellow powder and that's the biggest yellow powder pile in the world really? no but I wonder how many times I've seen it completely alter like how quickly do they cycle through a whole pile of yellow powder and how often does it completely change? Have I ever seen no yellow powder pile there and forgotten that there usually is a yellow powder pile there

when there's a shortage of yellow powder? Like there's been supply chain issues up from Yellowstone where we get the yellow stone to make the yellow powder and that's actually why it's going to pop some day and probably yeah here will be crater just about the rest of the world will have memorials for this city and the Greater Crater Faters, us and the other cool west coast cities really? kinda.

we're the nature sibling city with the nature it's really it's a gem up over here a gem hidden in the mountains washed and silkily eroded into a glistening gem of a city nestled in place by a dalmatian coast I thiiink that's what they're going for in making these sharp crystalline buildings all in an off-jade, it's meant to look like a vein of valuable lattice in aerial photos that they show investors across the world on a blue background of a powerpoint pitch saying something like, "well wouldya look at that," or some dialectic equivalent.

Let's goooo, whaddaya feel? I don't really know wheeeehre we should, let's let's back track. Shit did anyone I know see me point like that? It's hard here you have to be careful, tread carefully, there's a scene of, you know, puritanism has evolved into a deformed backwards twin of itself, orr shamey it can become shamey and guilty and I become differently in different settings, I'm probably different to how I used to be, but that was so long ago now. There, I touched on the shoulder, a connection to the past has been made and can be harked to now. Everything is good.

This was like a major weed spot for a while some fucker opened it and like championed it and weed people flocked here it was a real major hippy spot here for a while? I think the weed thing here is tied to draft dodgers, don't reeaally know but yeah this was an early spot I guess, you'd buy pot and would have to smoke it there in the cafe upstairs and this place there's like a shaman I guess jeez yeah urban shaman jeez, it was 2012 I last said those words I swear, but yeah bought salvia there once and it was it was I did it at a big house I lived in with people in Kerrisdale of all places we probably won't go there, but up the hill and far away I took that salvia where there's a bit more forest nearby and it's a bit more like some township vibe with quaintish kind of alleyways it feels very North American or at least it did this must kind of feel pretty North American to you but what even this is maybe the most European part of the city a park like this with a war memorial and yeah I guess more cobblestones over here let's yes let's there's a nice bookshop up here do they? do they have books yet back home? have books made it big there yet? huh?

I'm just joshin I don't really come here all that much I don't read as much as I used to my time here has become facile and too integrated with the physical Vancouver is a gilded prison for my mind wherein I think only of my ethical appraisal and have ideas only of judgment and gossip, but if that got out I'd be toast so I'll buy books like this have you read this? to hold in a coffee shop or a park and glance over to see if people will notice they know me and we can chat and I can secure myself in the webbed plateau of an echelon or scene. It's the way you walk down the street here or what shoes you wear but it's changing but perhaps I'm just ageing or I'm sure I'm completely naive and this is just what living in a city is like and they're hotbeds of judgment and personal hierarchisation or perhaps that's just what humanity's about but doggone it I feel it here everyone's searching eye trying to figure out who I am and why I'm here but who is anyone here and why are they here? you know? It's not ours it's a fabrication sprawled over stolen valuable real estate you know? it's difficult to think about coming from somewhere renowned for its colonial enterprises and creation of global land disputes and whose cities germinated millennia ago. This here is a stolen gem embedded in the crown at once dazzling in its sharp cut and perfidious in its maleficent tinge.

Crazy how parking lots globally subscribe to brutalism basically. You think it'd be cool if public toilets also advertised themselves with a huge 'P' sign? I think that'd be pretty cool. More hilly here than back home eh, well not moore hilly but the landscape's different. Obviously, right, but you forget what land looks like when you're in a city and everything seems like a choice someone made. Just funny how places are different.

Up here up here, look that there is one of the city's cultural institutions, and look at it it looks like a high school so short and prefab. It's nice inside don't get me wrong and the front is a bit nicer but cmon like we're downtown there's a stadium just over there. This huge empty lot is slated to be a spiffy new art gallery a herzog and demeuron but it's run into all sorts of delays and holdups and dirty deals getting broken and who knows what else the prospective plummet in arts funding if and when conservatives take power usually they love breaking ground here they're licking their lips at brick or wood or old concrete buildings here imagining them massive holes in the ground where they can burrow away hundreds of cars and maintenance elevators abreast of slick rubber butted loading docks

with booths for security details all down in the nutsack of what will inevitably be a huge building fit like a puzzle to most maximize profitability but I guess that's all in the spirit of the city huh but I swear these apartments they put in them aren't even nice, nice amenities sure but small and dinky and poorly built they're just a commodity that for whatever reason has been valued incredibly aggressively it's a gold rush being manufactured of the sky, tiptoeing on pockets of land. The mayor's a fucking real one for zoning I tell ya is so determined to see a different city when he's done with it makes you wonder if he even loved it in the first place. Hopefully they'll leave the CBC building here alone I love shit like this totally flaunting the value of air space diagonal shit like I understand why buildings subscribe to the right angle like it's effectively gravity's angle right? but this nice 45 0000 and the concrete concrete really opened it all up for us, us the coloniser builder takers shapers yeah jeez that's the crossroads paradox just there hard to appreciate architecture when it's actually nice when you find it so abhorrent when it's ugly and just in general you think the project it's pursuing is flawed and germinated from a selfish decision somewhere way back when you feel? but the building's nice I gotta agree with every parking lot in the whole world I do like brutalism don't find it brutal at all they're the buildings most likely to be built by a kid at a beach like look at that compared to the deloitte building over there like that's a building built by a toddler with bricks in some stupid tiny condo apartment way up high the parents refuse to indulge in bright colours that will interfere with the room's minimal aesthetic so they get their kid these blocks of blue glass like the one they live in and see if the kid can stack em it's intentionally kinda slapdash though I guess I do kinda like it it's pretty funny also breaks some right angle convention I suppose it is just a little arrogant but I guess that's the name of the game the thing is the architecture here is just so difficult to interpret so often it just seems as though they cheaped out on the actual architecture all of the money goes towards materials and the land cost they just didn't have any left for an actual design of a building they're all kinda much of a muchness not so much deloitte there that's more of a big money business skyscraper than the type of buildings I'm talking about like those look over there beyond yonder empty lot we just passed, these towers that if they were in brick or concrete would look no different to council estates in London or projects in New York, their being built of glass just kind elevates them for whatever reason and makes them

exorbitant it makes no sense because I would argue they look far worse but I guess the notion is the windows are huge and the unencumbered views give you a real sense of ownership dominion lion king shit? like the act of not peering one's head out of a little window and instead just standing in the middle of your room arms akimbo and just seeing the vista is like more powerful? crazy though cos eventually all you haveta look at is a wall of other people eating up their views and you're a part of their dominating view as much as they're a part of yours like doesn't that detract from the sense of accomplishment like all you're looking at is a mirror of yourself projected being held up by the hard work of other humans in the sky like a veritable god except there are thousands of you all vying for the view crowding it making it look desperate so you end up closing your vast canvas drapes and facing your almost burlap sensation sectional couch the other way, facing into the room instead of out and people will shit when they see the view when they come over it's just generally not a view people get that often unless they also live in fucking yaletown ya dig but really it kinda gnaws at you and probably fundamentally alienates you from yourself your animal body and motion and labour like the opposite of the alienation of the working class or a manifestation of it for the middle class, alienation from production, like here I am high up in my treehouse in this jungle community we've got except I have no understanding really and took no role in the tree that I'm on like where did it come from? gotta read coupland again I guess even though coupland is literally the last thing I gotta read.

Let's keep moving I'm getting distracted it's just too bad I guess I wish I was an architect I guess I gotta settle for showing you around and chewing your ear off about it but you know what no. This is what Vancouver is like as far as I'm concerned and I'm the one giving this tour and you don't seem too like sick of it or anything right? just been so long since we've seen one another the first explanation it seems fit to give you is how much I understand this city you're now visiting that I moved to way back when you remember, like this is what I've been up to in the interim, on a very basic environs level. What ha we got up ere then eh? hmm maybe let's yeah let's goo straight down here it'll take us to yaletown itself the core of this new typical developmental Vancouver style and here we got Robson that's kinda perfect this is like the big shopping street here its like Oxford Street all the big names

