

FOX THEATER (1949)

Inglewood's Fox Theater has a long and proud history. The first theater at 115 N. Market Street, the Granada, opened in 1924. Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style by architect Leonard Jones it was built by the General Construction Company of Glendale. Destroyed in a fire in 1945, the theater shell was purchased by the Fox West Coast Theater Company to build a new theater. They teamed veteran theater architect S. Charles Lee with Fox Theatres in-house designer Carl G. Moeller to create a movie palace showcasing Hollywood glamour and luxury and seating 1008 in unsurpassed comfort.

The Fox opened on March 31, 1949 after construction delays due to post-war materials rationing. Legendary actors Shirley Temple and Clifton Webb were at the opening premiere of their movie *Mr. Belvedere Goes to College*.

The Fox was the first theater in Inglewood to have air conditioning. It also featured automatic lobby doors, CinemaScope widescreen projections, assistance for the hearing impaired and a soundproof for mothers with crying children. Inglewood's luxurious Fox was often used for Fox Picture's full premieres and sneak previews. The theater remained in operation for over 40 years under diverse owners, but tastes and times changed. It finally closed in 1988.

Architect

S. Charles Lee

Interiors

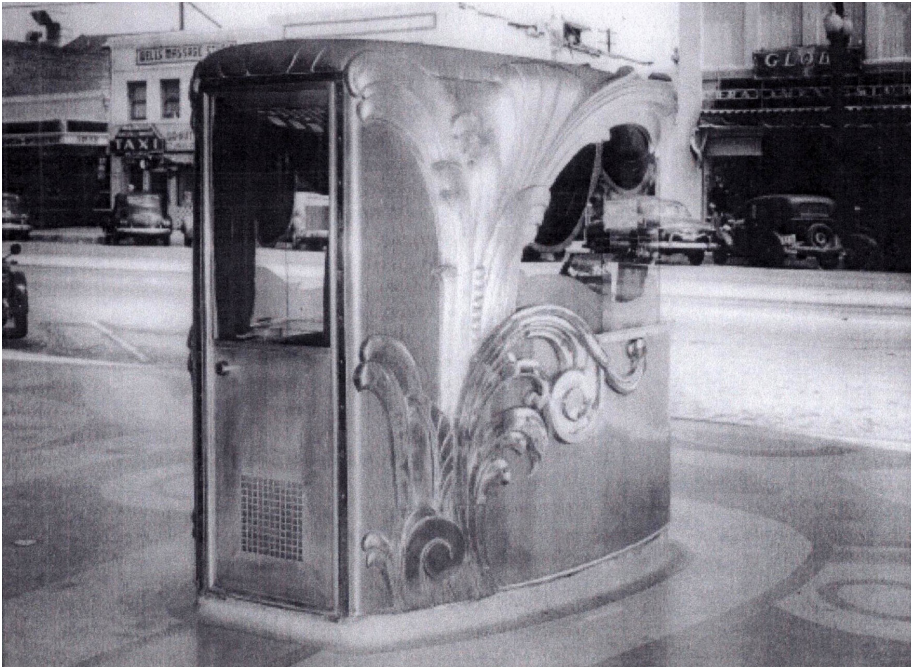
Carl Moeller

Landmark

National Register of Historic Places

Designated 2014

115 North Market Street
Inglewood, California



The Fox Inglewood was often used for 'Sneak Previews' to gauge audience reactions to new Fox pictures as well as for full premieres. Although it would change ownership several times, the theater would remain in operation for over 40 years, finally closing its doors in 1988.

The 1990s brought a major civic effort to rehabilitate downtown Inglewood and specifically Market Street. Historical buildings were surveyed and street improvements were made. The shuttered Fox Theater became central to redevelopment proposals by the local Community Redevelopment Agency.

To raise awareness about this cultural landmark, Inglewood residents recently founded the non-profit Inglewood Historic Preservation Alliance, aided by the Los Angeles Historic Theaters Foundation. The Fox Theater was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014.



Top Photo: Box office 1949 - Courtesy Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and Inglewood Historic Preservation Alliance

Bottom Photo: Bottom Photo Interior, 1990's



S. Charles Lee

Simeon Charles Levi Lee was born in Chicago in 1899. His first job was with Henry Newhouse, an architect specializing in theater design. He served in World War I and returned to Chicago to study at the Armour Institute of Technology at the Art Institute of Chicago.

He changed his name to Lee and moved to Los Angeles in 1922 to find work for the early Hollywood studios which were in the midst of building theater chains for film distribution. His first major movie palace was the Tower Theater in downtown LA in 1927. Its success launched his career in theater building which spanned two decades and resulted in Lee designing over 300 theaters mostly in California, but also in other cities across the US as well as Latin America.

His other commissions too including the Municipal Light, Water and Power Buildings in LA. He formed a partnership with Sam Hayden in 1948. They went on to develop the industrial district near LAX. He died in 1990.

Carl Moeller

Little is known about the biography of Carl Moeller other than he began to work with Fox West Coast Theaters immediately prior to World War II. His only notable pre-war design work attributed directly to him was at the Hawaii Theater on Hollywood Boulevard. His interior design work appears in the majority of the 200 theaters built or renovated during the post-war 'Skourasization' period where Charles and Spiros Skoras had a massive campaign to expand and modernize the chain's theater group.

Market Street

wInglewood Public Library Collection