The University of Western Sydney Art Gallery is on Penrith Campus at Werrington North, in the Community and Administration Building (AD). The UWS Art Gallery is at the street level and is open every weekday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Exhibition proposals for this gallery can be forwarded to the Art Curator, Monica McMahon.

Entry fee: Free entry
Parking fee: $6.00 daily

The Artist and the Social Order
Venue: UWS Art Gallery, Building AD, Werrington North, Penrith campus
Dates: 21 September 2009 - 27 November 2009
Open: Monday - Friday, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Throughout history, artists have chronicled and interpreted society, concerning themselves with the examination of social and political mores of the time. The exhibition, The Artist and the Social Order, focuses upon the influence of the artist, writer and unionist, Ian Burn.

Burn was a major figure in Conceptual Art in New York, organizing artists associations, publications and actions. He became affiliated with the Art and Language collective when he moved to London in 1964 and remained a part of the group when he moved to New York City in 1967. In 1977 Burn returned to Australia to teach at the University of Sydney. In the 1980s he began to work for the labour movement in Sydney in groundbreaking activities that combined cultural activities, industrial and political action.

A major component of the exhibition is Documentary Wall 1967 – 1993 which is comprised of seven panels designed by Julie Clarke, who worked closely with Ian Burn at Union Media Services in Sydney. It was created for the exhibition Artist’s Think: The Late Works of Ian Burn, curated by Ann Stephen which surveyed the body of Burn’s work and was co-hosted by Monash University Gallery and Queensland Art Gallery, opening in late July 1996.

The Documentary Wall reproduces book covers, posters and journals from the years 1967 to 1993, providing a visual record of a broader cultural history spanning local and international art works, artists organisations, publications and events. Burn’s return to Sydney coincided with a period of renewed cultural activism, the emergence of the Artworkers’ Union, The Australia Council, ACTU Art and Working Life program and the proliferation of local art magazines.

The exhibition also comprises of posters created at the Tin Sheds Art Workshop, University of Sydney. During the 1970s and 1980s, poster collectives or print media organizations were particularly prominent world wide. These organisations were fundamentally committed to ensuring access to control of information by people whose interests and concerns were under presented or not represented at all in the then dominant media forms of television, radio and newspaper.

The move toward a cultural democracy in both participation and access within the arts were major pillars of Australian Labor Party’s policy initiated by the Whitlam Government in the early 1970’s in order to develop and empower communities in Australia. Community Arts gained much political ground at this time, encouraging community involvement in creative activity was seen as a move toward cultural democracy.

Image above
Ian Burn (1939 - 1993)
Documentary wall 1967 - 1996
Digital print
120 x 150 cm
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