

ART AND ORGANISED LABOUR

20 OCTOBER 1990
–
21 JANUARY 1991

Banners, Badges, Photographs, Films,
Cartoons, Posters, Paintings, Sculpture

Images of working and trade union life in New Zealand



Unity by D. K. Turner, 1948 (Courtesy Northern Labourers Union)

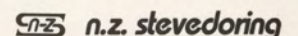
WELLINGTON CITY ART GALLERY

A Wellington City Art Gallery exhibition organised with the assistance of the Trade Union Education Authority and the Trade Union History Project

50–52 Victoria Street, PO Box 2199, Wellington New Zealand
Telephone (04) 724-599 • (04) 732-625, Fax (04) 732-644
Open Daily 10a.m. – 6p.m. Until 8p.m. on Wednesday

Supported by the New Zealand 1990 Commission and the exhibitions programme, visual arts, Queen Elizabeth II Art Council of New Zealand.

Sponsored by Union Shipping Group Limited and New Zealand Stevedoring Company Limited. A core of the exhibition is touring nationally in 1991 – 1992.



FOREWORD

Art and Organised Labour testifies to Wellington City Art Gallery's commitment to explore the nature and diversity of contemporary visual art issues and activity.

This major and challenging thematic exhibition project is the first New Zealand survey of the rich, significant but largely undervalued and ignored body of visual art created within a specific social and cultural context. Working class artists, both individually and collaboratively give expression to distinct traditions and values, providing a cultural perspective to conditions surrounding the art-making process. Issues of cultural identity are also articulated in the work of some of New Zealand's more significant artists.

The exhibition acknowledges often marginalised groups in society such as Maori and women and selected artworks depict working-class life in New Zealand, and incorporate imagery that has emerged out of working-class politics.

An exhibition of this extent and complexity demands the willing support of many people and organisations.

Special acknowledgement needs to be made to the NZ 1990 Commission and the QEII Arts Council for their substantial financial contribution to and enthusiastic endorsement and support of the staging and national tour of Art and Organised Labour. Our appreciation to Union Shipping Group Ltd and NZ Stevedoring Co Ltd for their generous sponsorship of the exhibition and its national tour.

The gallery is indebted to artists, private collectors, and institutions who have so generously loaned work to make this exhibition possible. We also extend our thanks to the Trade Union History Project and Trade Union Education Authority whose involvement and co-operation throughout the planning and preparation of the exhibition has been invaluable.

Research for Art and Organised Labour began in 1989 under previous Director John Leuthart, and I would like to thank him for his contribution to the project.

Principal acknowledgement is due to the Exhibition Curator Gregory Burke and Research Curator Ann Calhoun, and to each member of the City Art Gallery for their individual and combined expertise.

Paula Savage
Director

ART AND ORGANISED LABOUR

Art and Organised Labour is the fourth in our series of 1990 exhibitions that focus on the relationship of art to contemporary New Zealand culture. The exhibition has grown out of an initial desire to examine the role that visual art has played in the history of the Trade Union movement in New Zealand. From this starting point the exhibition has developed its aims to cover the relationship of art to organised labour in a broader sense. This is a relationship that is certainly affected by the bi-cultural basis of New Zealand society, gender-based divisions of labour, as well as differing class views of the value, functions and cultural determinations of what we term art.



Maritime Strike March, Wellington, 1913. Alexander Turnbull Library image.

The exhibition pivots around dual and overlapping concepts of *historical moment* and *identity*. Within the first category the exhibition examines and presents art and imagery produced from and through significant *historical moments* in the history of the labour movement in New Zealand, often as a result of labour protest and struggle. Exhibits in this category include banners, photographs, cartoons, posters and films.

Identity, the second category of the exhibition explores images produced from a range of cultural perspectives that have created a visual identity for working people and the labour movement. This category initially considers and presents images produced by organised labour and union groups to represent the ideals and aspirations of organised labour in particular and working class culture in general. This category is extended to consider art and imagery produced on the edges and outside the labour movement that aims to represent working life.

By presenting such a range of images and by investigating distinct cultural and social determinations of art and its relationship to working people the exhibition acknowledges a largely unwritten art history in New Zealand.

The preparation of this exhibition has depended on the assistance of an extraordinary number of people and organisations. These include museums, unions, artists and lenders to the exhibition. Particular acknowledgement needs to be made to Bert Roth, Cathy Marr, Miro Bilbrough, Athol McCredie and Joan McCracken for their invaluable research for the exhibition, and to Irihapeti Ramsden the Maori curatorial adviser. The exhibition catalogue will fully credit all those who have been involved.

Gregory Burke
Curator

EXHIBITION STRUCTURE

Historical Moment

This area of the exhibition broadly titled *Historical Moment* focuses on a selection of key events, struggles and disputes in labour history that have and continue to motivate the making of images. Banners, photographs, films, cartoons and posters feature in this area which is divided into the following sections:

1890: Maritime Strike and Sweating Commission
1912/13: Waihi and Waterfront Strikes
World War I
The 1930's Depression
World War II
1949/51: Carpenters and Watersiders strikes
Contemporary Issues
Unemployment/Temporary Work

Identity

Images that have created a visual identity for working people and the labour movement are presented in this area of the exhibition. The images are grouped into a number of categories to suggest that the visual identity of working people is produced from a range of cultural and social perspectives within and outside the labour movement.

Origins

This section investigates the sources of imagery used to represent union ideals and aspirations.

Banners of Identity

Presented in this section are a selection of old and contemporary banners as well as mastheads, badges and photographs of banners in use.

Contemporary Photographers

A range of contemporary photographers who have documented aspects of working life are included here. Photographers include Bruce Connew, Glenn Busch, Ans Westra and many others.

Contemporary Film and Video

Film and now video have been significant media in documenting working life and history and the struggles of the trade union movement in New Zealand. This section features *Vanguard Films* and video artist Darcy Lange.

Working Conditions

This section presents a range of historic photographic images that depict working conditions since the 1890s.

Significant Historic Photographers

Presented in this section are a selection of historic photographers who have produced major collections of images related to the subject of work. Gordon Burt and John Pascoe are among the photographers included.

Murals

Unions and artists have worked together in New Zealand to create murals, a tradition which is growing today. This section features images by Dennis Knight Turner, Judy Evans/Guy Harding, Lois White and others.

Domestic/Unpaid Work

This section acknowledges in particular mothers as workers as well as those involved in unpaid work. Artists here include Vivian Lynn and Robyn White.

Wellington Media Collective

Since 1978 the Wellington Media Collective have produced numerous posters for unions and groups involved in broad left politics. Their work is acknowledged in this section.

TAONGA TUKU IHO

The Gifts That Are Handed On

This section is an especially commissioned photo essay by Ngapine Tamihana Te Ao. It acknowledges the work of Maori in organising and preparing food for hui.

MA TE OHU E WHAKĀMA NGA MAHI A Group of Volunteers Will Make Light the Work

This group of exhibits celebrates the collective nature of labour in Te Ao Maori.

Picturing Workers

This section explores the depiction of workers in popular culture, in the media, and in public places.

The Worker in Art

Historical and contemporary paintings and sculptures that address the theme of work are presented in this section. Artists include Christopher Perkins, Rita Angus, Garth Tapper and Warren Viscoe.

A feature of this section is an especially commissioned photo-mural by Mary-Louise Browne and Frank Stark. This mural focuses on women in the workforce and the ways women have been represented in the visual history of work in New Zealand.



Auckland Tramways Union banner, 1938.



Christopher Perkins, *Employed*, c1930. Collection: Auckland City Art Gallery.

Don't Miss the Opportunity to see this Major Exhibition in Wellington.

The exhibition and its accompanying programmes will be substantially scaled down for the national tour 1991-1992. Due to their fragility many key exhibits will not tour.

Exhibition Catalogue

A comprehensively illustrated catalogue to accompany the exhibition and its tour will be launched in November. The catalogue will document the exhibition and its project aspects. Catalogue essays cover topics such as murals, banners, film and painting. Catalogues can be ordered from the Gallery.

Wednesday Night Programme

October 3 – December 19

A comprehensive programme of forums, talks, video, presentations and performance that explore and expand on themes in the exhibition.

Free Guided Tours

Gallery Guides will conduct thematic tours starting November 1. Thursday 12.30 pm and Saturday 1.30 pm.

Free Guided Tour on Tape

You can tour the exhibition yourself at your own pace. Audio cassettes will be available on request from the reception desk.

SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES

Exhibition Tours

Education Staff will take students through the exhibition with activities designed to stimulate the students interest and develop their confidence and understanding of the exhibition.

Street Tour

A package tour guide with map and activity sheets is available for classes to explore working art outside the gallery in Wellington's streets.

Education Kit

Containing information about the exhibition and pre-gallery visit or post-gallery visit activities designed to make the gallery visit more worthwhile.

For bookings etc please phone Reihana MacDonald or Sarah Shackleton at the Gallery, 732-625, extension 824.

Film Programme

Since the 1940s a number of groups, from unions through to TVNZ, have made films that document workers and their lives and interpret key events in the history of the labour movement. The film programme to the exhibition is a series of documentary films ranging from *Coal from Westland* produced by the National Film Unit in 1943 to *Shattered Dreams*, a film about the 1951 Waterfront Lockout, produced in 1990 by the Trade Union History Project. As a programme these films reveal a range of attitudes to workers and their histories.

Films screen daily at 12.15 in the audio-visual gallery. Contact the gallery for a programme.

Video

Co-produced by the Learning Media and Wellington City Art Gallery, the video will introduce key exhibits and expand on some of the major concepts in Art and Organised Labour.

It is designed as a cross-curriculum education resource accompanied by teacher notes. It will be available through Learning Media.

Director:	Paula Savage
Curators:	Gregory Burke, Ann Calhoun
Exhibition Designer:	Leon van den Eijkel
Education Curators:	Sarah Shackleton, Reihana MacDonald
Audio Tape Producer:	Jill McIntosh
Guide Convenor:	Wiebke Heuer
Exhibition Manager:	Mark Roach
Exhibition Secretary:	Catherine Shakesby
Exhibition Technicians:	Gerda Nana, Mark Kent, Beverly Eng



The raised hammer, symbol of the FOL.

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