The Art Gallery
of Western Australia

Tim Burns – The Kinetic Moment

Artwork Labels

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Introduction

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Wall text:

TIM BURNS – THE KINETIC MOMENT

This retrospective exhibition presents a window into the remarkable life and work of internationally acclaimed Western Australian artist, Tim '3rd degree' Burns (born Cunderdin, 1947).

Burns calls himself a 'context artist'. This position emphasises the way he sees the collaborative nature of his work, with the conditions that enable its creation and its subsequent cultural reception of equal importance to the object.

Beginning his career as a painter, Burns was taught by significant WA modernists who had a distinctive approach to the particularities of landscape. Robert Juniper (1929–2012) was his high school art teacher, and George Haynes (1938–) was his tutor when Burns studied at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT, now Curtin University) from 1967–69. Burns moved to Sydney in 1970 at the invitation of artist Brett Whiteley (1939–92) and began working in theatre, live casting and installation. After creating a series of performance interventions that attracted significant media attention, Burns departed Australia for New York in 1976, for much the same reason he'd left Perth; to 'change the context'. He stopped painting for over two decades, working instead in film, video and theatre. In the early 2000s, he

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returned to his home state and to the Wheatbelt where he still lives, off-grid, today.

Highlighting the multiplicity of his practice, *The Kinetic Moment* brings together over 35 works by Burns (and his collaborators). Paintings, films, photography and screenprints are accompanied by archival ephemera, including black and white documentation that appear like cinders, leftover from one of his many explosion works.

At the exhibition's conceptual core is *Resumé 73–77* (1980), the first work by Burns acquired for the State Art Collection in 1980 and until now, never displayed in full. A deconstructed single edition artist's book, its fragments offer a self-interpretation record of five key years of practice. The work paradoxically vouches for his artistic skills and exposes the volatility inherent in identity and the production of meaning.

What unifies Burns's work over the past six decades is that it has been ad-hoc, low-tech and politically engaged; his frantic style is always in direct conversation with an array of movements. Whether counteracting minimalism, embracing arte povera's collapse of high culture, questioning the politics of the conceptualists, or harking back to dadaist humour; Burns defies the modernist doctrine of medium-specificity and refutes the abstract-expressionist location of authority solely within inner experience.

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This exhibition's title comes from a phrase Burns uses when articulating his development from a painter and sculptor into a post-object or context artist. 'The kinetic moment' refers to both the audience's reaction to a given artwork— of surprise, connection, question, or retreat—and to the conduits between media that activate his practice.

The artist explains:

> I was becoming more and more fascinated by the kinetic moment, where the viewer is transformed into some form of action. I started to make works where the audience themselves became the real subject of the work.

and

> In 1969, at Hill 50 Gold Mine I was introduced to firing and handling Gelignite, Cordtex [a brand of detonating cord filled with PETN, pentaerythritol tetranitrate] and ANFO [ammonium nitrate]. This experience later inspired a number of my works to do with explosives or the trigger devices connected to them; the kinetic moment where fuses, electric detonators and other low-tech conduits were rigged to go off by trip wires, mouse-traps, pressure mats and burning cigarettes.

Wall text:

POST-OBJECT ART

Theorist, teacher, artist and critic Donald Brook (1927–2018) coined the phrase ‘post-object art’ in an essay in 1969. He describes the shift away from seeing art objects such as sculptures and paintings as valuable commodities and towards emphasising the society from which those objects came.

Brook’s essay “Flight from the Object” was initially presented as a lecture in Sydney. It provided the first dedicated theory of conceptual art written in Australia.

In a later catalogue entry for the 1974 *Concepts* exhibition in Adelaide, in which Tim Burns showed his performance installation *Anything You Want to Know About John Forbes* (1974), Donald Brook elaborated on his thesis:

> There has always been post-object art of some sort, and conceptual art as well, on some understanding of the term. What is new now is the extent and clarity of the recognition by artists, that what they are manipulating need not be in the medium of oil paint or stone, but may be a process, a system or some other insubstantial and spatially or temporarily extended stuff. The entities that they generate are not, for the most part, medium-sized, portable, inflation-hedging lumps of cult furniture.

Wall text:

PROTESTS & POLITICS

The Vietnam War (1955–75) was a cause of major social and political dissent in Australia. Beginning in Melbourne, demonstrations known as moratoriums (1970–71) united a range of social groups across the country in opposition to the war: religious clergy, academics, unionists, activists, teachers and students. Protestors made use of graffiti, poster-making and other guerilla tactics.

Artist and curator Julie Ewington remembers the protest activities happening in Sydney:

> People were involved a lot in anti-Vietnam street theatre with revelations for various demonstrations: the Vietnam War period and also the Springboks. Colin Little, Tim Burns, Mitch Johnson and Jim McDonnell were all involved in really extensive harassment of the Springbok team. They used to follow them around in cars and hold up placards. [...] One couldn't talk about them as it was totally illegal, and the police were after them. This was 1971, before Australia pulled out of the Vietnam War.

In 1971, the South African rugby team (the Springboks) toured Australia. The team only accepted white-skinned players under the racial segregation policy known as apartheid, an Afrikaans word meaning apart-hood

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or separateness. Demonstrators in Australia took to the streets and ovals to interrupt games, voicing their opposition to the Liberal government's endorsement of the tour and to South Africa's state-sponsored system of discrimination.

Protesters recognised parallels with Australia's own treatment of First Nations peoples. After all, as Gumbaynggirr activist Gary Foley has noted, apartheid was consciously modelled on the various 'Aboriginal Protection Acts' implemented by most Australian colonies and states, beginning in 1896 until around 1909.

Wall text:

PRINTMAKING & POETRY: THE TIN SHEDS

The Tin Sheds in Sydney were a meeting place for groups of artists, artworkers, writers, students and activists from different backgrounds. The sheds were the University of Sydney's Art Workshop, founded by Professor Donald Brook with sculptor Bert Flugelman, who worked as the coordinator from 1968–73. Poets like John Forbes and Pam Brown spent time there, along with Optronic Kinetics (c1970–72), a group of engineering students and artists that included Julie Ewington, Jim McDonnell and David Smith.

The political urgency and social upheaval of the era birthed several printmaking poster groups who worked from the Tin Sheds. Earthworks Poster Collective operated from 1972–80 led by Colin Little, along with screenprinters Chips Mackinolty, Mark Arbuz and Toby Zoates. Later, Redback Graphix (1979–94) was run by Michael Callaghan with Marie McMahon and Toni Robertson from the Sheds.

These artists used printmaking and poster art to mobilise public opinion. They linked anti-war sentiments with broader social issues, like the ongoing fight for Indigenous land rights, anti-nuclear energy campaigns, women's rights advocacy and support for workers' unions movements.

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Toni Robertson remembers her time as a student artist at the Tin Sheds:

> Tim Burns gave me my only lesson on screen printing. He was wearing a sarong. He showed me how to hinge a screen to a backing board and explained why it was important. Everything else [I've learned] is self-taught.

The original shed buildings can be seen in the opening sequence of Burns's film, *Against the Grain: More Meat than Wheat* (1980) which stars printmaker Michael Callaghan in the lead role. Optronic Kinetics member Jim McDonnell also appears in *Against the Grain*, demonstrating how to blow up a system with a video tape towards the end of the film.

Wall text:

PAPER PUBLISHING: ARTIST BOOKS

Artists' books are intended to be viewed as works of art in their own right. In the early twentieth century, the Futurists and Dadaists made use of self-published materials to express radical ideas about art and society. They combined text and images, which had historically been considered separate entities.

In the 1960s in America, the conceptual art movement relied on artists experimenting with typography and new copying processes. The introduction of technology such as the first colour Xerox machine (photocopier) in 1973 offered an affordable way to quickly produce multiples of a work.

Artists' books are often independently published, unique objects or produced in limited edition print runs. They became a popular choice of medium as they were portable and offered an intimate experience that could be revealed at the viewer's own pace. Copying processes also meant artists' books could be widely distributed, enabling the maker or publisher to find audiences outside of traditional and commercial gallery spaces.

Wall text:

“PROPERTY IS THEFT”

This phrase recurs throughout Burns’s oeuvre in spoken, painted and conceptual forms.

It first appeared in a text written in 1840: *What Is Property?* by the self-educated son of a peasant family, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65). This landmark publication resulted in significant developments in nineteenth century socialist thinking and anarchist theory.

Two key ideas Proudhon developed were that property allows an owner to exploit its user and that property creates authoritarian and oppressive social relationships between users and owners.

Take, for instance, this anecdote about Tim Burns at the Tin Sheds from workshop supervisor Bert Flugelman (1923–2013):

> This was probably 1969, possibly 1970. Earthworks Poster Cooperative was working by then. Tim Burns was there. And it was a fairly radically [sic] political scene. These boys were radical! And one of the things they said [to me was] you’re not to lock your bloody office. You can’t lock tools, you can’t lock anything, because property is theft. I had built an office and a door. I had all my private gear in there and I locked

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> it at night. Each morning I'd come back and they'd taken the door off the hinges, lent it next to the frame and written on it, 'property is theft'.

This three-word phrase is spoken aloud by Michael Callaghan in *Against the Grain* (1980). It is also the title of an ongoing landscape painting series Burns commenced in the mid-2000s.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Hill 50

1969
oil on board

Courtesy Robert and Sue Burns 2026/E126

Whilst studying sculpture and painting at WAIT from 1966–69, Burns travelled and worked in the mining industry during the summer holidays. At the Hill 50 Gold Mine in Western Australia (now known as Mount Magnet Gold Mine) he was employed as a shotfirer, handling and using explosives. This experience inspired a number of his later works.

Hill 50 was Australia's most profitable gold mine between 1955 and 1961. This painting depicts the weariness and camaraderie of mine workers during a change of shift. By focusing on human labour, Burns foregrounds the social relations underpinning capitalist extraction, rather than glorifying its end product. This painting was shown in his first solo exhibition at John Gild Galleries in 1969. It is now too fragile to hang on the wall.

PUNK PICTURES: NO WAVE CINEMA 1976–87

No Wave was a fleeting underground filmmaking movement that originated in the Lower East Side of New York City, an area Burns moved to in 1976.

It was associated with an artists' group founded in 1977: Collaborative Projects Inc., or Colab. This collective emphasised independent artistic control and had one rule: absolutely no curators.

No Wave films often crossed into other art forms, particularly music and literature. The genre is known for its punk aesthetics; using cut-ups, collages, and a guerilla filmmaking approach that privileges unrehearsed immediacy. No Wave plots combine elements of documentary, experimental film and narrative and usually feature stark confrontational imagery.

Most No Wave actors were untrained, hired friends of artists or musicians, who took on lead roles without any prior experience. Films were independently produced on limited budgets. They screened to audiences comprised of the makers' friends, playing in bars, nightclubs, theatres, and loft spaces like Max's Kansas City, St Mark's Cinema, CBGB's and Tier 3.

Some well-known No Wave figures include Lydia Lunch, James Chance, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Debbie Harry,

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Richard Hell, Steve Buscemi, Nan Goldin, Cookie Mueller, Bette Gordon, Amos Poe, Jamie Nares, Charlie Ahearn, Jane Dickson, Eric Mitchell, John Lurie, Rene Ricard, Beth B and Scott B, and Gordon Stevenson.

No Wave bands James Chance and the Contortions and Suicide (Alan Vega and Martin Rev) both feature onstage in Burns's film, *Political Transmission* (1978).

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Mullaloo Beach, 1974, Postcards

1974
artist's book, edition 1/1

Purchased, 1975, Collection of
Flinders University Museum of Art 658 2026/E029

In 1974 and 1975, Burns travelled frequently around Australia. Postcards became his chosen medium as they were portable and economical.

The backs of the exploding Mullaloo dune postcards became a separate artwork in their own right. Burns used the cards to introduce people he knew to one another, encouraging recipients to make contact.

As he explains, "I could carry the cards with me and work on the backs of them wherever I went. The idea

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was to connect people across the continent, creating some kind of artistic network by means of the Australian postal system."

This conceptual work of mail art created an analogue network and a map connecting people rather than places. It anticipated aspects of social media, four decades before its emergence.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

The possibility of a private/public space

1975
photographic print: gelatin silver print on paper, from a performance presented at the National Gallery of Victoria, 1975, with assistance from Judi Stack

Gift of the artist, 1975,
Collection of Flinders University Museum of Art 722 2026/E030

Situated behind a curtain in a storage alcove within the National Gallery of Victoria's Australian Contemporary section, Burns identified a 'negative space' where audience barrier ropes were usually stored, then transformed the alcove into a makeshift camp, hiding behind the curtain and waiting for passers-by.

He sometimes jiggled the curtain to provoke their curiosity, prompting visitors to peer inside. They might find Burns unexpectedly close to the curtain, leering at them, or lying on the floor; occasionally, he invited them in for a conversation.

Like *A Change of Plan* (1973), staged inside a disused air-conditioning duct at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, this work appropriated existing spaces in a manner recalling the anti-art strategies of the Dada movement.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Exploding sand dune, Mullaloo Beach, Western Australia, January 1974

1974
print; screenprint, ink on paper

Gift of the artist, 1975,
Collection of Flinders University Museum of Art 842 2026/E031

The artist explains:

“I used Cordtex along the top of a sand dune at Mullaloo Beach, north of Perth, digging it into the sand about four inches. My sister and friends helped. I took eight photographs and turned them into a series of postcards. I sent them out to one hundred friends, one by one, with the final postcard image being the exploding dune. The idea was to slow down a moment in time, stretching it into weeks, with hopefully a surprise ending to what appeared to be an obscure set of actions.”

Tim Burns and Mandy Martin

Conceptual art is progressive only in bourgeois terms

1974

print; offset lithograph, ink on paper

Gift of a private donor, 2013,
Collection of Flinders University Museum of Art 4795 2026/E032

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Extra fancy

1971
oil and silkscreen on cotton

The University of Western Australia Art Collection,
Acquired with the assistance of the Visual Arts Board of
the Australia Council, 1977 2026/E033

This work was included in Burns's second solo exhibition at John Gild Galleries, Perth, in 1971. The painting foreshadows his later explorations of film and surveillance through its suggestion of voyeurism and attention to the charged act of looking, evidenced in the inclusion of multiple 'frames', silhouettes and windows. The repeated imagery evokes the sequential structure of a celluloid film strip, anticipating the artist's subsequent exploration of moving images.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Death of a Miner

1969
oil on canvas

The University of Western Australia Art Collection,
Gift of Miss Margaret Feilman, 1982 2026/E034

This work was included in Burns's first solo exhibition at John Gild Galleries, Perth, in 1969. Burns recalls painting it left-handed after breaking his arm in a motorcycle accident. Following the death of his father Charles in 1962, the artist became interested in historic family photographs, researching them in the State Archives at the Battye Library. He could trace his family lineage only "as far back as the mines". In the archives Burns found he was particularly drawn to "highly staged photos of mine bosses and their workers" that visually articulated relationships of power and class.

The composition is heavily influenced by Sir Sydney Nolan's painting *Perished* (1949), also in the University of Western Australia Art Collection.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Not ceasing to loiter

1975
artist's book, photography, photograph, spiral-bound

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E049

The artist explains this work:

"I was arrested on the charge of 'not ceasing to loiter' at a pool hall in Adelaide because I complained about the treatment the police were dishing out to a guy there. This started an ongoing series of self-defence performances that have been based around several court cases. I placed posters around town and sent out invites to my performance defending myself. I got a lot of legal help in the preparation of the case. It went on a couple of times over a few months and ultimately I lost... But I was later pardoned by the Attorney General of South Australia when he called me in New York and invited me out for a drink.

See the thing is, you never lose if you turn it into artwork. You tend to get something back, and you can also devote real energy to it because it is now part of what you do as an artist. I have been able to produce something out of a negative event. Instead of brushing it under the carpet, I celebrate misfortunes and make them 'the work'. "

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Exploding TV, Boya Quarry

1974
gelatin silver print on ivory wove paper

Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales - Gift of Lisa Havilah 2017. Donated through the Australian Cultural Gifts Program

2026/E050

This work was a safety test and rehearsal for the exploding television performance *For the Sake of Art* (1974). At Boya Quarry, Burns figured out the amount of detonating cord required to safely destroy a television, while determining how much film would be needed to capture the process. Boya Quarry, also known as Mountain Quarry, is located in Darlington, Western Australia.

The black and white television sets exploded at Boya Quarry had been sourced from roadsides. Burns and friends (including artists Robert Juniper and Robert Dorizzi) collected the monitors as they were being widely discarded by Australian households, in preparation for the introduction of colour television on 1 March 1975.

Sydney Arts Workers Collective (Pam Brown, Tim Burns, Dave Morrissey and Nigel Roberts)

Contributors include:
Ranald Allen, Ken Bolton, Pam Brown, Joanne Burns, Ted Colless, Alex Danko, John Forbes, Gaby, Ponch Hawkes, Mitch Johnson, Rae Desmond Jones, Bruce Latimer, Colin Little, Frank Littler, Carol Novack, Netta Perret, πO, Nigel Roberts, Garry Shead, Noel Sheridan, Jon Silkin, Richard Tipping, Ken Unsworth, Cornelis Vleeskens and Michael Wilding

A Package Deal: assembly book

1974
screenprint on colour offset-lithograph

Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
Gift of Noel Sheridan, artist, 1980 2026/E051

A Package Deal: assembly book

1974
artist's book

Private Collection 2026/E245

With 58 participants, the goal of this book was independence: material produced, distributed and controlled directly by the artists, without interference. The book's slogan was "every contributor will be a distributor."

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The work was modelled on a series of American ‘assemblage’ publications, developed by Richard Kostelanetz (b.1940). Each artist was responsible for their own production, with contributors submitting their pages, which were collated by the organisers into an ‘unedited’ publication.

Printmaker Colin Little (1952–82) quickly silkscreened a cover on the day it was due. As poet Pam Brown recalls, “there was often an immediacy to artmaking in those days.”

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Vivienne Binns

born 1940 Wyong, New South Wales
died 2026 Canberra/Kamberri, Australian Capital Territory

HCTC Enviroment

1974
screenprint

Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1975 2026/E052

The Human Consequence of Technological Change, installation and performance, Sydney University. Commissioned by Professor Donald Brook as part of a conference on art and technology.

In a hallway filled with smoke, conference-goers had to negotiate their way past a figure lying on the floor. Amid the amplified sounds of a theremin, hidden pressure pads triggered sound recordings and smoke bombs.

As Vivienne Binns recalled:

“We did this extraordinary performance thing, with smoke bombs, pressure pads and bodies...as people came out of the conference, they’d tread on the pressure pads. Tim was right into pressure pads, mats, in those days. They’d step on them, and a smoke bomb or something would go

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off, and there would be bodies all over the place. It was all about the problems of technology and Vietnam."

A version of this print, with Albany Cigarette packaging on the verso, is held in the collection of the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art. The use of typically disposable materials was practical, reflecting the artists' economic circumstances, while also recalling the tactics of arte povera (1960s–70s), which utilised materials like cardboard, rags, twigs and soil to challenge the conventions and commercialism of gallery environments.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Fuck

1972
screenprint

Printed at the Tin Sheds Workshops, Sydney University

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia,
gift of Julie Ewington, 2006 2026/E054

In 1972, Tim Burns was arrested for ‘indecent language’ while hiding in a tree during a group protest outside the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Julie Ewington recalls Burns printing this poster and “putting it up on the gallery’s front doors in a furious way”.

‘Laverty’ refers to Peter Laverty, then Director of the Gallery, whose decision to spend the annual acquisitions budget on a self-portrait by Pierre Bonnard provoked the artists’ protest. The artists objected to prioritising a work by a long-deceased painter over support for living artists and arts workers. ‘H. Hukimoko’ was Burns’s protest alias, derived from the American composer, Hugo Montenegro (1925–81).

Tim Burns

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worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Art Castle

1973
screenprint, *Start–Finish Event?* An audience participatory event presented during the Contemporary Art Society (CAS) *Projects Show*, The Arts Castle, Bay Street, Sydney. With assistance from Judi Stack and Dave Meyers.

Printed at The Tin Sheds Workshop, Sydney University

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia,
gift of Julie Ewington, 2006 2026/E053

A widely publicised *Art and Social Politics* forum was being held on the roof of a university building, where a lecture by Vivien Johnson had attracted a large audience. Taking advantage of what he assumed to be a ‘captive audience’, Burns advertised a performance for that evening, without specifying a start time. After waiting unsuccessfully for the performance to begin, bored attendees began to leave.

On exiting, they found all the doorways and exits obstructed by 25-kilogram blocks of ice. Once these were broken through or melted, they discovered the stairs were clogged with polyurethane foam and further stacks of ice. The audience became the work of art in

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their attempt to descend the stairs, recalling Marcel Duchamp's famous painting, *Nude Descending a Staircase No.2* of 1912.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Hill 50

1969
oil on board

Courtesy Robert and Sue Burns 2026/E126

Whilst studying sculpture and painting at WAIT from 1966–69, Burns travelled and worked in the mining industry during the summer holidays. At the Hill 50 Gold Mine in Western Australia (now known as Mount Magnet Gold Mine) he was employed as a shotfirer, handling and using explosives. This experience inspired a number of his later works.

Hill 50 was Australia's most profitable gold mine between 1955 and 1961. This painting depicts the weariness and camaraderie of mine workers during a change of shift. By focusing on human labour, Burns foregrounds the social relations underpinning capitalist extraction, rather than glorifying its end product. This painting was shown in his first solo exhibition at John Gild Galleries in 1969. It is now too fragile to hang on the wall.

Tim Burns

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My 40th Birthday

c1987
acrylic and oilstick on paper

Courtesy Robert and Sue Burns 2026/E125.a-d

Burns explains:

“Life’s mishaps inspired a number of my works. I found the solution was to approach the problem as art.”

This series of drawings was created by the artist in his New York City studio loft. These works returned to Australia and later survived a significant house fire. They have undergone extensive conservation treatment and been remounted for inclusion in this exhibition.

Tim Burns

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worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

A Pedestrian Series of Postcards

1976
unbound artist book, photocopy print

City of Fremantle Art Collection 2026/E128.1-9

This unbound artist's book reproduces a selection of the postcards Burns sent to Mildura residents from New York City, alongside media and newspaper commentary inspired by the cards' arrival

Nine out of a total 25 book plates are shown.

One of the outcomes of Burns's card campaign included a local councillor running on the promise of the installation of crosswalks. As the artist subsequently reflected, "the successful installation of crosswalks became a symbol of the stopping of the automobile—if only momentarily."

The final page of this book asks the question "Why Cars?", which marks the start of Burns's real objective: the eradication of the private automobile.

He explores this concept in his first super 8 film, *Why Cars? CARnage!* (1977).

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

What about Crosswalks in Mildura?

1976
colour photocopy, ed. 9/10

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased,1976 2026/E129.a-h

This work of was created in response to a near miss Burns had with traffic whilst attempting to cross a busy road in Mildura. He sent out postcards to Mildura residents at random from New York City, asking them the question: *what about crosswalks in Mildura*? The cards initially caused confusion, with many articles appearing in local newspapers attempting to decipher their creator's intentions.

Burns was initially drawn to the site to photograph trees that cast shadows across an Eighth Street intersection in Mildura, producing a nature-made version of a zebra crossing.

It wasn't until Burns was living in New York and reflected on the incident that he realised the significance of this near accident. In Mildura, the roads are named American-style: streets run north and south, and avenues run east and west.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Mildura Sculpture Triennial MINEFIELD (destruction shot on super 8 by Bill Clements)

1973
super 8mm to digital, sound, 6 min

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E135

At the fifth Mildura Sculpture Triennial, *Sculpturscape*, Burns created a 400-square-metre minefield using sand and gunpowder charges buried in the salt flats along the Murray River. The site was surrounded by a fence and silkscreened signs reading: *DANGER MINEFIELD ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK* with a large red X painted through the middle.

During installation, Burns accidentally burned himself when he leaned on a pressure mat, triggering a charge prematurely. The local council intervened, destroying the minefield with a tractor before the exhibition opened. South Australian sculptor Bill Clements captured its destruction on super 8 film.

Fascinated by the possibilities of the then-new super 8 format, Burns was inspired to purchase his own Minolta super 8 camera.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Whistle & Clap (performance video)

1973
super 8mm to digital, sound, 17 min 36 sec

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E136

For the 1973 Liverpool Art Prize, held in a Sydney bank, Burns devised an audience-activated installation comprising silkscreened fruit boxes packed with vermiculite and wired to explode at certain frequencies. When visitors clapped at the exhibition opening, hidden explosive charges detonated, prompting the bank manager to immediately have the remaining boxes disconnected. The prize judge, Professor Donald Brook, had rewritten its terms to admit artists “other than painters and sculptors”, rejecting the “antiquated rules and restrictions pertaining to medium, size and material”. A version of the prize titled *Liverpool +1* toured to Toorak Gallery, Melbourne, later that year. For the work’s second iteration, Burns exhibited 12 boxes instead of the original nine.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Water Explosions

1974
super 8mm to digital, 4 min 11 sec

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E137

A series of small explosions undertaken in stagnant water, pooled at Boya Quarry, Darlington, Western Australia.

Paul Worstead

born 1950 Gadigal/Sydney, New South Wales
works Dharug/Braidwood, New South Wales

Against the Grain - Film Makers Cinema

1981
screen print, printed in colour from five stencils

Courtesy Paul Worstead

2026/E138

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

GTK Episode 827 featuring Tim ‘Dynamite’ Burns and John Forbes, Contemporary Art Society Gallery (published 24th April 1974)

1974
super 8mm to digital, sound, 4 min 29 sec

Reproduced by permission of the
Australian Broadcasting Corporation -
Library Sales GTK © 1974 ABC

2026/E139

The artist explains this work:

“I had asked John Forbes, a poet I met in Sydney who was going to Adelaide for Writer’s Week, if he would live in my space at the gallery while I was also in Adelaide. I was going to mediate between the audience and John, but this became unnecessary, as John related directly to them via a two-way CCTV system.”

Forbes was confined to a room under 24-hour surveillance, communicating with visitors via a television monitor and microphone. Beneath the room, Burns installed a sign that read: *ASK ME ANYTHING ABOUT JOHN FORBES*.

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In the ABC footage, recorded just over a week into the exhibition, Forbes appears bored. The performance dispenses with the idea of the artist as creative genius, reducing the Romantic figure of the poet to the mundane realities of everyday life.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Property is theft (Pit 1) Before the storm

2011–13
oil on canvas

Purchased through the Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation: TomorrowFund, 2026

2026/0045.a-d

This ‘wide-angle’ painting depicts the lead up to an unseasonable summer dust storm that occurred without warning in York, Western Australia, on 29 January 2011, causing widespread losses of power and damage to local homes and town infrastructure. The painting’s title refers to the artist’s longstanding engagement with the idea that land ownership under capitalism is unethical, particularly in a society fuelled by the resource extraction industries; as well as to the physical layout of the quarry, with its cut rock faces or ‘pits’.

The site the painting depicts is in Gwambygine, Western Australia. Burns purchased the land in the mid-2000s, after he had returned from two decades in the United States. In York, he is reliant on solar power and chooses to live off-grid.

This painting was recently acquired for The State Art Collection.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Facsimile of sign for MINEFIELD

2013
digital print

Courtesy of the artist

2026/E038

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Why Cars? CARnage! Burnout film still, projector catches fire on Richard Larter's postcard, Billboard for the World Trade Centre

1977
digital print

Courtesy of the artist

2026/E039

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Postcard Billboard for the World Trade Centre II

2013
digital print

Courtesy of the artist

2026/E040

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

A Change of Plan

1973/c2010
digital print, artist's proof

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E041

In 1973, Burns was invited to participate in *Recent Australian Art* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He initially planned to exhibit *Fences to Climb II*, a reworking of an earlier installation from 1972, but changed his mind shortly before the exhibition opening, instead proposing a new work.

Titled *A Change of Plan*, the installation placed two performers in a room with closed-circuit television, lent by Sony, prompting gallery-goers to engage with the screen. The work resulted in a court case, an obscenity charge and ultimately its destruction by incensed gallery guides.

The first dedicated video installation shown in Australia, this now-infamous work was, according to curator and art historian Daniel Thomas, "Australia's public debut of what is today called 'new media' art".

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Radical Ecologies Intervention Series:

Facsimile for MINEFIELD

1973, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E043

Exploding Sand Dune

1974, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E047

Exploding TV, Boya Quarry

1974, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E042

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SUCCESS! BLOWN TV (CORDEX) READY FOR AUDIENCE BOYA QUARRY 1974 TIM BURNS

1974, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E048

Postcard of Billboard for the World Trade Centre I

1977, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E044

Postcard of Billboard for the World Trade Centre II

1977, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E045

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Why Cars? CARnage! Burnout film still, projector catches fire on Richard Larter's postcard, Billboard for the World Trade Centre

1977, 2016 {printed}
digital print with road marker

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E046

In 2016, Burns was exhibiting as part of a group exhibition titled *Radical Ecologies* at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA).

A contemporaneous review in Artlink noted of this exhibition:

"When it comes to politically radical art, one of the only artists to explore this terrain is Tim Burns [...] These works address such issues as climate change, fracking and surveillance. Burns was heard to bemoan the absence of radicalism throughout the exhibition and in a gesture of protest on the night of the second opening [...] he sprayed his prints with a lurid pink paint and was removed from the premises."

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Self Portrait as a mine site

2025
acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of Ezra Myers 2026/E230

In this painting Burns plays with the idea that identity is inherently stable. Instead, he enacts a tension between self-expression and self-effacement. In this ‘self-portrait’ in the guise of an open-pit mine, Burns was inspired by found photographs of real mine-sites in Western Australia he discovered in a photography book laying around his York studio. Through incorporating this chance element and fusing his personality into it, Burns proposes that the self is a composite thing; able to be found, as much as it can be made.

Stylistically, this painting is informed by the intense emotional palette and organic curves of Brett Whiteley’s figurative era, where his portraits freely dissolved into and sprang forth from the picture plane. It also embraces the rhythmic surface undulation, use of earthy reds and distinct aerial perspective of Robert Juniper, overlaying these influences with a highly conceptual take. In this work, Burns offers a study of the problematics of inhabiting a space.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Untitled [Naval oranges one bushel]

1971
acrylic and silkscreen on canvas

Courtesy of Cate Taylor Tobin 2026/E231

Some of the silkscreens used in the production of *Extra Fancy* were also used in this work. The image of the pilot is Burns's friend, fellow artist, Robert Dorizzi. The two met as students at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT, now Curtin University), alongside painters Giles Hohnen (b.1947), Jane Martin (b.1949) and Jeremy Kirwan Ward (b.1949).

Burns was born heavily shortsighted and had been blinded in one eye as a teenager. Unlike many of his art school peers, he therefore was exempt from possible conscription to national service to fight in the Vietnam War. After moving to Sydney in 1971, Burns became involved in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations and protests alongside other politically active artists, including detonating smoke bombs in the reflection pool at Hyde Park, Sydney. Burns's feature film *Against the Grain* (1980) compresses ten years of these direct actions.

Loma Printing printer
1971–2000, Melbourne

Arthur Cantrill
born 1938 Gadigal/Sydney, New South Wales
died 2026 Djadjawurung/Castlemaine, New South Wales

Corinne Cantrill
born 1928 Gadigal/Sydney, New South Wales
died 2025 Djadjawurung/Castlemaine, New South Wales

Cantrills *Filmnotes* Issue 29/30
1979
magazine, 72 papes

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E246

Cantrills *Filmnotes* magazine was edited and published by Arthur and Corinne Cantrill in Melbourne from 1971–2000. The independent publication is an essential record of cinema, experimental film and arts practice from across the globe. All topics covered were discussed from the artists' perspectives.

The front cover depicts actor Lindzee Smith in Burns's first super 8 experimental feature film, *Why Cars? CARnage!* (1977) recorded in New York City and Detroit.

Tomato Press

1971–76 Glebe, Gadigal/Sydney,
New South Wales

Contemporary Art Society of Australia Broadsheet, January 1974

1974
periodical

Private Collection 2026/E243

Tomato Press

1971–76 Glebe, Gadigal/Sydney,
New South Wales

Contemporary Art Society of Australia Broadsheet, May 1974

1974
periodical

Private Collection 2026/E244

Everywoman Press, Sydney printer
Vivienne Binns, Ian Burn, Tim Burns, Nigel Lendon, Ian Milliss, Richard Maude, Mark Kuludrovich, Kerryn Stanton, Peter Thorn and Terry Reid contributors

Sydney Biennale, White Elephant or Red Herring?: Comments from the Art Community

1979
magazine, 40 pages

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E247

The late 1970s was a period of considerable political debate and polarisation around issues, including equality of representation for women artists in exhibitions. Many public demonstrations, town hall meetings and street marches coincided with the opening of the 1979 Biennale. The grassroots publication, *Sydney Biennale, White Elephant or Red Herring?: Comments from the Art Community* records some of this debate. The publication of the document contributed to the accelerated formation of the Artworkers Union, an organised group that fought for artist rights and one in which Burns took an active role.

Artists Space

founded 1972 New York City, United States of America

Emergency Films Flyer

c1981
exhibition poster, Xerox

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E248

In 1981 Burns curated an exhibition of super 8 films at Artists Space in New York City.

Many of the featured filmmakers were part of the group Colab, or Collaborative Projects Inc, an artist's collective committed to a D-I-Y, democratic artmaking approach. They had only one rule: absolutely no curators.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Collective For Living Cinema

1973–91 New York City, United States of America

Berlin Nights; (NEW) German Cinema

c1984
poster, Xerox

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E249

The collective was an artist-run cooperative that served as an exhibition venue and a centre for discourse. It operated as a revival house for avant-garde cinema, regularly presenting films from outside the commercial mainstream and producing a number of scholarly journals on film. Burns's film *Against the Grain* (1980) screened in West Berlin in 1984 and has been translated into Spanish and Japanese. This flier is one of the examples of DIY publishing the artist created to promote his works, using the simple method of a xerox machine. The image is a drawing of Burns's collaborator Lindzee Smith as seen in *Political Transmission* (1978).

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Curry at Barney's

c1976
poster, Xerox

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E250

In the summer of 1976, Burns set up a curry restaurant on the street outside a favoured artists' bar in New York City, named Barnabus Rex or Barney's. Located off Duane Street, the bar was an important meeting place for many Downtown artists. Customers to Burns's makeshift restaurant included John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

The flier imagery was created with a Xerox collage, including a postcard Burns addressed to his then-girlfriend and collaborator, Judi Stack, and a photocollage of his preferred brand of tobacco. The re-use of these non-art materials demonstrates his commitment to low-tech, ad-hoc creativity and recalls the tactics of arte povera.

George Haynes
born 1938 Kisumu, Kenya
arrived Western Australia 1962
works Boorloo/Perth, Western Australia

Portrait of Tim Burns and Elsie ‘Joy’ Burns
c1980–1990s
oil on board

Courtesy of Ezra Myers

2026/E253

Art Gallery of New South Wales
Daniel Thomas and Frances McCarthy curators
Edwards & Shaw, Sydney/Gadigal, New South Wales printer

Recent Australian Art catalogue [unsigned]

1973
catalogue, 96 pages

Private Collection 2026/E251

Artists Space

founded 1972 New York City, United States of America

Artists Films at Artists Space selected by Regina Cornwall

1978

postcard

Private Collection

2026/E252

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

A Pedestrian Series of Postcards. What about Crosswalks in Mildura? New York-Mildura 1976 Part I

1976
bound book of 50 pages

Courtesy the artist

2026/E254

William (Wim) Boissevain

born 1927 New York City, United States of America
arrived Western Australia 1947
died 2023 Western Australia

Portrait (Tim Burns)

1971
ink and wash, charcoal

Purchased 1971 1971/00D2

This work was the winning entry for the Perth International Drawing Prize in 1971, judged by sculptor Sir Anthony Caro (1924–2013). Boissevain received $1000 in prize money and the work was acquired into the Gallery's permanent collection. As a thanks to Burns for letting him sit for the portrait, Wim gifted him a bottle of whiskey. Boissevain and Burns had met through mutual acquaintances in artistic circles inhabiting Darlington, Western Australia, including George Haynes, Guy Grey-Smith (1916–81) and Robert Juniper (1929–2012). Burns was so impressed by the win he decided to enter the drawing competition himself; however, the prize didn't run the following year. Burns's proposed work was a charcoal drawing, a 'knock-off' of an Andy Warhol picture from Warhol's *Disaster* Series. The artist explains: "I copied it on the grounds that was what Warhol was doing, bootlegging others' images, so I felt that it was appropriate that I do the same to him. The drawing had a deep 6-inch frame that allowed a container of pigs' blood and a pump to be concealed within its structure. It

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included lighting and was plugged into the wall, designed so the container in the back would pump blood over the floor... But the Drawing Prize wasn't on that year, so the work never got past the initial stages. I did pick up on the idea later, in my second show at the Yellow House, Sydney, with the *Car Crash Room*."

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Resumé 73-77

1980
deconstructed artist's book including nine silver gelatin prints

Purchased for the Extension Collection, 1980 1980/Z16Q.1-16

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

For the Sake of Art

1974
performance documentation from 35mm slides, first presented during the *Events/Structures* show at the Ewing and George Paton Galleries, Melbourne, later repeated during Burns's artist residency at Flinders University, Adelaide, 1975.

Courtesy the artist

During a group exhibition, a videotaped TV monitor played a tape titled *The ICI Explosive Users Guide*, when it suddenly exploded in front of a live audience. A second video recorder captured that event. The resulting footage was then played on another monitor, which also exploded, creating a chain of recordings and destructions. Burns staged the work three times, including once during his 1975 artist residency at Flinders University, Adelaide.

Burns explains the contents of the original video, *The ICI Explosive Users Guide*:

"This was a twenty-three-minute video tape of me talking about explosives – reading from the ICI (International Chemical Industries) guide, filmed by David Perry

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outside Sue Howe's place in Chippendale. Firstly, I read a definition of various explosives, then I drew on the road the construction of the device and the TV, talking about the type of explosives I would use to blow up the TV the audience were looking at. There was a count down at the end from 10 to 0 where I would fire an electric detonator and the TV would blow, thus revealing the subject and object of the drawing."

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Why Cars? CARnage!

1977
super 8mm to digital, sound, 1 hr 13 min

Showing times:
10.15am, 12.30pm, 2.50pm

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E131

Camera: Antony McCall; sound: Robert Cooney; starring: Tim Burns, Margaret DeWys; with assistance from Lindzee Smith, Paula Longendyke, Robert Cooney, Phillip Frazer, Eric Mitchell, Julia Heyward, Terry Sullivan, Kevin Coleman

Source Material:
A Pedestrian Series of Postcards, Tim Burns; "Private Cars Who Needs Them?", *New China Magazine*; "Insane Folly of Westway", *The Village Voice*; "Dangers of Texas Beach", *The New York Times; Flesh metal and glass*, Freydun Manocherian; *Diary from a Negro Worker's Notebook*, James Boggs; *Leaving the 20th Century*, International Situationists; *Fitzroy Yank* by Phil Motherwell; five articles by Chairman Mao Tse Tung

This film received the New York State Council Film Award 1978, and was selected for the *Situationist International 1957–72* exhibition tour, curated by Peter Wollen

This film chronicles a desperate attempt to abolish automobiles in New York and Detroit following a successful installation of crosswalks in Mildura, a country town in Australia.

Featuring documentary footage, experimental narrative and propaganda recorded from theatre screens, the film

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picks up where Burns's artist book *A Pedestrian Series of Postcards* (1976) finishes, beginning with the question: Why Cars?

This work was scripted by collaging excerpts from the source material, creating what the artist called a "theatre of fact."

Originally, it was shot and shown in several separate sequences. It was filmed on Kodak E160 Sound Film with a Sankyo XL60S camera, in New York City and Detroit.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Lindzee Smith

born 1940 Wathawurrung/Geelong, Victoria
worked Boorloo/Perth, Gadigal/Sydney, Boorloo/Melbourne and New York City
died 2007, Wathawurrung/Geelong, Victoria

Political Transmission

1978
super 8mm to digital, sound 38 min 56 sec

Showing times:
11.30am, 1.45pm, 4.05pm

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E132

Co-produced with Nightshift

This experimental documentary is about lupus, the disease that afflicted Burns's long-time collaborator, Nightshift theatre director Lindzee Smith. The title comes from the first chapter of Ivan Illich's *The Medical Nemesis* (1975), "The Political Transmission of Iatrogenic Disease," which addresses illness caused by a society.

This film shows male nudity on-screen.

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Tim Burns
born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Lindzee Smith
born 1940 Wathawurrung/Geelong, Victoria
worked Boorloo/Perth, Gadigal/Sydney, Boorloo/Melbourne and New York City
died 2007, Wathawurrung/Geelong, Victoria

Thus Went Phillipa
1981
super 8mm and 16mm to digital, sound,
15 min 37 sec

Showing times:
12.10pm, 2.30pm, 4.45pm

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E133

Co-produced with Nightshift

With its iconography of urban decay and destruction, this film is recorded indoors to avoid capturing the people and residents who inhabited the streets of the Lower East Side, an area the New York Times once described as “a drug-infested no man’s land.”

This short work is based upon the play “The Needle Vestal” by South African beat poet, Sinclair Beiles (1930-2000). Beiles was known for developing the “cut-up”

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technique of writing, alongside William S. Burroughs (1914-97).

Please be aware this film shows intravenous drug use on-screen.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Against the Grain: More Meat than Wheat

1980
16mm to digital, sound, 1 hr 18 min

Showing times:
10.20am, 12pm, 1.40pm, 3.20pm

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E130

Co-produced with Nightshift, the Australian Film Commission and the 1979 Sydney Biennale; written by Tim Burns and Michael Callaghan; cinematography: Louis Irving; additional camera: Brendon Stretch, John Clark; sound recording: Dash Ross; production and post production sound: Laurie Fitzgerald; stills photography: Sandy Edwards; assistant producers: Michael Zerman, Chris Maudson; editors: Chris Cordeaux, Peter Gailey, Melissa Woods; assistant editors: Mary Callaghan, Pam Barnetta; starring: Michael Callaghan, Sandy Edwards, Joy Burns, Letham Burns, Mary Burns, George Sutton, Prince Leonard; music: Flying Lizards, Black Chrome, Randy Newman, Federico Fellini, SUICIDE, Mental as Anything

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Source Material:
79 Springs by Santiago Alvarez (1969); Four Corners News (ABC); Red Alert (William Hale/ Paramount 1977); *Violence et brutalité* by Jean Genet (1977); *How it all began* by Bommi Baumann (1975); *The Rebel* by Albert Camus (1951); *On Photography* by Susan Sontag (1977); *Terrorism on the left* by Andrew Mack (1978); *Le Paysan de Paris* by Walter Benjamin and Louis Aragon (1926)

Inspired by Jean Genet's writings on terrorism, real-life political action groups such as the Baader-Meinhof gang and Burns's own art career, this semi-narrative, quasi-documentary experimental film follows Ray Unit (Michael Callaghan) as he flees home to Western Australia after detonating a smoke bomb at a Sydney ANZAC Day parade.

Please be aware this film contains scenes of animal slaughter on a working farm, male nudity and strong themes.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Ros Sultan

born 1953 Eastern Arrernte and Gurindji

Luke's Party

1991
16mm to digital, sound, 15 min 46 sec

Showing times:
10am, 11.40am, 1.20pm, 3pm

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E134

Written by Ros Sultan; director of photography: Jenny Brown; produced and edited by Nigel Buesst; starring Ros Sultan

This film received the Cinema du Reel Award, Paris; the Golden Gate Special Jury Award for Short Fiction, San Francisco Film Society 1992; the Short Fiction Innovation Award, Frames Film Festival 1992; the Erwin Rado Prize for Best Australian Short Film, Melbourne International Film Festival 1991

A woman picks up a video camera to make a documentary about growing up as a First Nations person in South Australia. As the camera starts rolling, she is continually interrupted by the demands of children, friends, telephone repair people, neighbours, salesmen and representatives from a range of government bureaucracies.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this exhibition space contains names and artworks by community members and may also contain images and likenesses of, and references to, deceased community members.

Tim Burns

born 1947 Cunderdin, Western Australia
worked New York City, United States of America
works Walyalup/Fremantle and York, Western Australia

Not ceasing to loiter

1975
artist's book, photography, photograph, spiral-bound

Courtesy of the artist 2026/E049

The artist explains:

"I was arrested on the charge of 'not ceasing to loiter' at a pool hall in Adelaide because I complained about the treatment the police were dishing out to a guy there. This started an ongoing series of self-defence performances that have been based around several court cases. I placed posters around town and sent out invites to my performance defending myself. I got a lot of legal help in the preparation of the case. It went on a couple of times over a few months and ultimately I lost... But I was later pardoned by the Attorney General of South Australia when he called me in New York and invited me out for a drink.

See the thing is, you never lose if you turn it into artwork. You tend to get something back, and you can also devote real energy to it because it is now part of what you do as an artist. I have been able to produce something out of a negative event. Instead of brushing it under the carpet, I celebrate misfortunes and make them 'the work'."