

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Self made man (Tycoon) 1932

linocut

Collection of Andrew Reeves

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

War or Peace 1950

portfolio of twelve linocuts; edition 68/300

Colin Holden Charitable Trust

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Demonstration 1978

linocut; AP, edition of 10

Courtesy of the Estate of Mrs P Counihan

Masses, vol. I, no. 1, November 1932

cover illustration by Jack Maughan

facsimile from State Library Victoria

Proletariat, vol. I, no. 2, July 1932

cover illustration by Noel Counihan

Collection of Andrew Reeves

Proletariat, vol. II, no. 2, July 1933

cover illustration by Noel Counihan

Collection of Andrew Reeves

Proletariat, vol. II, no. 3, October 1933

cover illustration by Jack Maughan

Collection of Andrew Reeves

Anti-Fascist Exhibition catalogue

The Contemporary Art Society of Australia,
Melbourne, 1942

Heide Museum of Modern Art Archive

Two Exciting Arrests Stir Shopping Crowd in Brunswick!

Sun News-Pictorial, Melbourne, Saturday 20 May
1933, p. 2

Speech From Steel Cage: Young Artist Fined £15

The Herald, Melbourne, Monday 22 May 1933, p. 10

Speech From a Cage: Obstruction of Street

The Argus, Melbourne, Tuesday 23 May 1933, p. 5

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Self made man 1932

linocut

Collection of Andrew Reeves

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Lino cuts Counihan '59 1959

portfolio of six linocuts; edition 3/50

Peace means life

Albert Namatjira

An old man

A memory of Italy

Hunger

Strontium 90

Colin Holden Charitable Trust

Broadsheet Publishers

active 1967–71

The Broadsheet 6: A time for peace

1970

relief print; 699/1000

Courtesy of the Estate of Mrs P Counihan

The Broadsheet 6: A time for peace, features a single, stark linocut by Noel Counihan. It was produced in May 1970 for the Vietnam moratorium campaign, a series of protest rallies organised by anti-war groups from across Australia. They were the largest public demonstrations in Australia's history at that time and signalled the growing opposition of the Australian people to the government's commitment to the Vietnam War and conscription.

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Against Capitalism, Vote Communism 1972

screenprint

Art Gallery of Ballarat

Gift of Noel Counihan, 1981

This is one of two campaign posters produced by Counihan with his son Michael for Max Ogden, the Communist Party of Australia candidate for the seat of Melbourne in the 1972 Federal election, which saw Gough Whitlam's Labor Party gain power after two decades of continuous Coalition government.

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Tycoon 1931

linocut

Art Gallery of Ballarat

Gift of Noel Counihan, 1981

In 1931, at the age of eighteen, Noel Counihan produced his first two prints, *Tycoon* and *A sexless parson*. Both linocuts, they were made with cutting tools supplied by Eric Thake and printed by James Flett on his flatbed press. *Tycoon*, originated as a caricature based on the managing director of Marks and Saulwick's warehouses where Counihan worked from the age of sixteen until his dismissal in 1932 for advocating for better overtime rates.

Tycoon was produced at a pivotal moment in Counihan's life as he began to forge an independent life and establish his political identity.

'I was really introduced to serious adult life, to new exciting experiences in the world of art, and to a political view of life, to Marxism and to the company of interesting people from eastern Europe who brought European culture to me at first hand in terms of their flesh and blood experience... They were my revolt against the bourgeois way of life, against the mediocrity of my daytime environment, the world of business, commodity worship and the fetish of money'.

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

The miners 1947

set of six linocuts; edition of 50

The young wheeler

The miner

The cough ... stone dust

In the narrow seam

In the shadow of disaster ... the wife

Brace boy ... first step to the pits

Art Gallery of Ballarat

Purchased, 1974

The miners portfolio is regarded as Counihan's first major statement in printmaking. It was produced in response to Counihan's first-hand experience of the Wonthaggi coal mines in 1944. Counihan had negotiated access to the mines with the Miners Union, accompanying the workers as they extracted coal under brutal conditions. He recalled the experience in a 1979 interview with James Gleeson:

'I was there a month. I went down every day; I went everywhere they went. It was a revelation, and something I have never forgotten. When I came up I had a sketchbook full of very rough documentary drawings. ... I had a light; I wore a helmet. I was in areas in the narrow seam where there was longwall mining. The distance between the roof, which they called 'the ground', and what we would call the ground is only eighteen inches. So a miner spent eight hours a day swinging a pick, lying on his side in a wet, dripping space eighteen inches in height. The wall went along fifty or sixty feet. The men worked in pairs at intervals along it. There were underground fires and underground lakes. It is an extraordinary atmosphere.'

Noel COUNIHAN

Australian 1913–1986

Lithographs by Noel Counihan 1948

1948

portfolio of seven lithographs; edition 51/100

A child's head

The artist's mother

Furnaceman

A worker resting

In a foundry

An important conversation

Colin Holden Charitable Trust

In 1948 Counihan produced his first lithographs which were issued as a folio of six prints, with a foreword by left-wing literary figure, Vance Palmer. The six images vary from intimate portrait studies of his mother and young son Michael to depictions of workers that Counihan had observed on a visit to an iron foundry in Richmond. The dignity of these workers is in stark contrast to the overdressed pair lampooned in the satirical *An important conversation*.

The images were drawn on stone at the Melbourne home of artist and Communist Party comrade Alexander Rembrandt (Rem) McClintock, who printed them.

The sale of the portfolio went towards a benefit fund established by Palmer to enable Counihan to travel overseas the following year, when, as a proxy for several Melbourne trade unions, he attended the first Congress for the Defence of Peace and Culture in Paris. This and his travels through post-war Europe galvanised his anti-war stance and commitment to peace activism.

Melbourne Popular Art Group

active 1950s

Eureka 1854–1954 1954

portfolio of fourteen linocuts by ten artists; edition of 500

Colin Holden Charitable Trust

In 1954 Counihan worked with the Melbourne Popular Art Group to produce *Eureka 1854–1954*, a print portfolio made to commemorate the centenary of the miners' revolt at the Eureka Stockade.

This left-wing Melbourne collective was sympathetic to the unionist sentiments of the Ballarat miners, whose uprising became emblematic for the Australian labour movement.

Most of the contributors were members of the Communist Party of Australia and involved with Melbourne's Realist Group of artist-activists. Their individual images relate to printed texts from various contemporary and historical sources that refer to the events of the Eureka Stockade.

Broadsheet Publishers

active 1967–71

The Broadsheet 1: Napalm Sunday

1967

relief print; 824/1000

The Broadsheet 2: The Great Australian Summer 1967

relief print; 90/750

The Broadsheet 4: Up you, Cazaly!

1968

relief print; 56/750

Heide Museum of Modern Art

Gift of Michael Dugan, 1995

Broadsheet Publishers was a loose collective of artists, writers and poets working in Melbourne between 1967 and 1971. It was established by writer, historian and activist Ian Turner with artists Noel Counihan and Udo Sellbach. The group published eight Broadsheets in total, each with an overarching theme that responded to social and political events of the day. The Broadsheets featured linocuts and etchings printed individually from the artist's original blocks, and poems printed by letterpress, each one editioned by hand and distributed through a network of students. The issues displayed here respond to the Vietnam War and are recognised as some of Australia's earliest artistic responses to this conflict.