

Friday 22nd February Art Appreciation Group visit to the Art Gallery of New South Wales



Friday morning nine members of various U3APP art classes met at the AGNSW in Sydney under the organisation of our art historian/tutor Diana Stock. The purpose was to view the extraordinary collection of Impressionist and other works by influential figures of modern art on loan from the State Hermitage Collection in St Petersburg, Russia.

With our own dedicated Gallery guide Annie, and an exclusive entrée to the Gallery before official opening time, we were treated with a privileged opportunity to follow the development of modern art from the late 1800s through the First World War. Principally the collection was based on the evolving works of the impressionists and the subsequent movements such as the fauvists, expressionists, surrealists, cubists etc. Some well known artists included Monet, Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso and Gauguin; in all, 65 priceless works of art.



Interestingly the genesis of this collection was the result of two wealthy industrialists – Sergey Shchukin and Ivan Morozov who had befriended some of the artists and simply bought, literally in competition with each other, anything that they felt was significant and



pleased them. The War constrained their purchasing and finally the Revolution in 1918 saw the State assume ownership of both collections and store them in St Petersburg. Surviving further political turmoil and another war they were finally brought to light and displayed to the public.

Subsequent to this members visited another exhibition, titled “Brett Whiteley: drawing is everything” , which focused on the central place of drawing in Whiteley’s work. The pictures on display have rarely been seen and ranged from his early work in Sydney and Europe through to his great abstracts that brought him international fame in the 1960s, up to his untimely death in 1992.



For more information on the Hermitage exhibition can I suggest you visit:

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media-office/masters-modern-art-hermitage/>

Mark Denniston