



ART GALLERY SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2015

For the year ended 31 December 2015

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2015 – Engagement and diversification

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

During 2015 the Art Gallery Society developed initiatives to deepen members' engagement with the Art Gallery and diversify the membership base.

The Society continued its proud tradition of providing support to the Art Gallery, particularly by financing the acquisition of works of art for the Collection, while maintaining members' loyalty and connecting with newer audiences.

The Art Gallery's work was effectively communicated through the membership magazine *Look*, online newsletters and an outstanding program of events.

Negotiations towards a Memorandum of Understanding with the Art Gallery continued during the year.

Acquisitions for the Collection

The principal acquisition funded by the Society in 2015 was Ah Xian's *Evolutionaura 13: Taihu Rock-1* 2011-2013, a meditative bust in bronze, gold leaf and rock by the internationally recognised Chinese Australian sculptor. A contemporary work grounded in classical tradition, its closed eyes bring the viewer closer to the eternal, and members gladly supported the funding of the acquisition.

Another acquisition funded was the print by Australian-born Martin Lewis *Stoops in the snow* 1930, depicting a New York street scene. Using drypoint and sandground etching, it demonstrates an exceptional command of tonal range. The acquisition improves the representation of a significant artist in the Works on Paper Collection.

Two works by the Australian artist Dorrit Black were funded from the Dagmar Halas bequest fund: the outstanding still life *The Chinese statuette* 1929 and the landscape *Mirmande (with surrounding hills)* 1934. Both are fitting additions to the modernist works in the Australian collection.

Members contributing to the Collection Circle Acquisition Program donated a minimum of \$200 per year each. They are loyal donors and their names are listed below, starting on p16.

The total funding for acquisitions provided by the Society during the year, including the Dagmar Halas bequest contributions, amounted to \$388,171. This was a lower amount than previously in order to allow members' funds to accumulate after three years of particularly high contributions to the Collection.

Other financial support to the Art Gallery

In 2015 the Society completed its three-year commitment to donate \$240,000 per year to support the Wednesday evening Art After Hours program. The Society is currently negotiating a new agreement.

The annual professional development scholarship for Art Gallery staff, worth \$12,500, was awarded to Matt Nix, graphic designer, who used the grant to research 48 institutions overseas.

Leadership changes

Following the Annual General Meeting in March 2015 Les Moseley continued as President until December when he stepped down and Vice-President Brian Ladd took on the role. At the AGM Councillors Valerie Marteau and Aviva Ziegler completed their terms in office and stood down. Edward Palmisano was elected as a full member, and Paula Latos-Valier was subsequently appointed to a casual vacancy.

Judith White, who had returned to the role of executive director at Council's request in March 2014 on a temporary basis, resigned effective December 2015 and Ron Ramsey, former director of Newcastle Art Gallery, was appointed to the role by Council, to commence in February 2016.

A staff restructure was carried out during the year with the creation of an effective management team, some cost savings and greater efficiency.

General membership

Membership stabilised further in 2015, and the downward trend common among cultural membership organisations since 2008 was reversed. This followed the previous year's benchmarking exercise and the resulting decision to revise membership prices and categories.

Total memberships at the end of the year stood at 16,888 (more than 27,000 cardholders). Retention rates remained above 81% overall, and 2,683 new memberships were added.

Initiatives trialled to reach new potential recruits included a stall at the Sydney Contemporary Art Fair with the distribution of "Member for a Day" vouchers, online campaigns and recruitment at other outreach locations detailed under the Events program report below.

A survey of members carried out during the year confirmed that members remained extremely loyal to the Art Gallery. Members had high educational levels – 78% with a university degree and 37% with a higher degree. The majority visited the Art Gallery at least every two months. One change recorded was a much higher proportion of members using online services.

New members' evenings were held on a monthly basis to provide an introduction to the Gallery's programs and to the benefits of membership.

Fundraising initiatives included the popular annual Travel Draw for members, which once again netted a six-figure sum for acquisition funds.

By decision of Council and with approval of the Art Gallery, new furniture was purchased for the Members Lounge to improve this much-frequented facility.

The issue of a change of name for the Society was deferred by Council in order to focus on ongoing work towards a Memorandum of Understanding with the Art Gallery.

Corporate development

In an increasingly volatile economic environment, the Society's corporate membership program remained the largest and most successful of its kind in Australia. A corporate hospitality program with exhibition viewings on at least 12 nights a year, it brought large numbers of companies and their clients to the Art Gallery.

Membership numbers at the end of 2015 stood at 159, close to par with the previous year, and more than 30 new companies joined.

The program provides introductory-level engagement, opening possibilities for higher-level support and venue hire which are always referred to the relevant departments of the Art Gallery.

The corporate program was also successful in developing sponsorship at levels appropriate to membership activities. Sponsorships maintained during the year are listed below on p18. Several of the companies involved have now been sponsors for 10 years or more; all are closely engaged with membership programs, and the Society is most grateful for their generous support.

Events program

The prestigious program of members' events, which is central to the Society's high levels of engagement, was further refined. Its profitability improved, its reach to new audiences was extended, and it continued to attract large numbers in to the Art Gallery even during periods of low general visitation.

In 2015 there were 495 paying events for members, including lectures, talks, workshops for adults and children, day tours and parties, and bookings increased to a total of 46,819, an 11% increase.

44% of all bookings were online, with only 1% by mail, 50% by phone and 5% over the counter. Events booked on average to 82% of capacity, and this was consistent throughout the year. *Look* and the *Peek* eDM stimulated the majority of bookings.

Lecture courses for members were by far the most popular type of event, accounting for 75% of all bookings.

Art Appreciation Course In its 25th year the Society's flagship lecture course attained new heights with the series *Meet the Masters*, themed to give an in-depth appreciation over 36 weeks of major works in the end-of-year exhibition *The Greats*. It attracted capacity subscription audiences and met with acclaim from the audience and from art professionals. Organised by Society volunteers with input from curators, and delivered by a range of leading curators and art historians, the Art Appreciation adds greatly to the cultural and intellectual life of the community. Former senior curator of European art, Richard Beresford had an important role in programming the 2015 series and his involvement was invaluable. The 2016 Art Appreciation program, *Collectors and Collections*, also sold out rapidly when announced in October. Sponsorship of the series by Resimac, whose principals are regular lecturegoers, now enters its tenth year.

Learning Curve Lecture Series Learning Curve lectures, covering a wide range of cultural interests, continued to attract capacity audiences on Fridays and Saturdays. The principal series presented in 2015 were Susannah Fullerton's literature course *O to be in England and*

Dr Julian Droogan's *For God's Sake III*. In addition there was a short series on Aboriginal art, *Country and Identity*, introduced by former Governor of New South Wales Professor Marie Bashir, which attracted the largest audience the Gallery had seen for lectures on the subject. The Learning Curve series was sponsored once again by Arab Bank Australia.

Outreach programs With the support of sponsor Arab Bank Australia, two key events were held to reach new audiences. The Society's first lecture at Parramatta Riverside Theatre was held in October, when Dr Christopher Hartney, well known to members, spoke on *Parramatta and Civilisation*. The following month the Society was delighted to host the Bankstown Poetry Slam Olympics which packed the Domain Theatre with an audience mostly new to the Art Gallery.

Other lectures A series on *How photography made modern Australia* provided members with an introduction to the historic exhibition *The photograph and Australia*. Lectures on *World War I and the Avant-Garde* by visiting academic Dr Rosamund Bartlett were also popular, as were travel talks relating to the World Art Tours program and *Unwrapping Art*, a series of weekend introductory talks by Jonathan Cooper. The Director, Dr Michael Brand, presented to members on the Sydney Modern Project.

Music Innovative programming helped to raise the popularity of the *Resonate* concert series, sponsored by Artology, with an intriguing mix of the finest classical and contemporary musical performance in intimate connection with the Gallery's Collection. Performers ranged from the magical combination of Yvonne Kenny and Simon Tedeschi to a highly original setting of a Chekhov poem by Bass Extravaganza and readings by David Malouf with piano accompaniment.

Once again benefactor Pat Corrigan, together with Giam Swiegers of Aurecon, supported two sold-out jazz concerts, by James Morrison and by the Dan Barnett Big Band.

Workshops accounted for a high proportion of events and were popular with members of all ages, and while in most cases less profitable than lecture courses were considered an important benefit of membership. The monthly weekend Kids Club, sponsored by Faber-Castell who also support the Young Archie, continued to attract members from a wide demographic across the Greater Sydney region and its end-of-year drawing prize, themed for the Gallery's exhibitions, attracted a high quality of entries.

The plan agreed between Council and Gallery management to create a dedicated workshop space in the Members Lounge atrium was placed on hold pending finalisation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Parties The new early evening format for the Archibald members' preview party proved highly successful, with the event remaining the social highlight of the year, while the end-of-year party also contributed to member satisfaction.

World Art Tours The Society's overseas tours for members, programmed by Liz Gibson, explored new destinations and itineraries and once again contributed significantly both to members' appreciation of art and to the Society's operating surplus. Given concerns over both the international situation and the exchange rate for the Australian dollar, programming for 2016 is expected to be slightly more cautious.

Communications

Look magazine was highly valued as a membership benefit, appearing in 11 editions during the year to bring readers regular coverage of the Art Gallery's work. Under the direction of incoming editor John Saxby, innovations included a number of new features, more artists' profiles and some modifications to design.

For the first time in some years advertising income improved, with a broader brief and higher targets, which were met. With a circulation of more than 17,000 copies monthly, and a readership estimated to be two to three times that figure, *Look* remains a leader among art magazines in Australia.

Council and management began an ongoing review of publication options for the format, frequency, design and online presence of the magazine, and benchmarked *Look* against other museum publications. By the end of the year it was decided to continue monthly print publication until at least mid-2016, and to suspend the iPad edition, which had not been well subscribed, and investigate other ways of presenting content online. The review continued.

A Look Advisory Panel of key Society and Gallery staff was established, and was consulted on a regular basis about both forward content and the review of publication options.

Online communication The Society had a growing online presence in 2015 with its three regular email distribution marketing (eDM) channels to Gallery members: *Peek*, *Fuse* and *Corporate*.

Peek, distributed on a fortnightly basis to all members who supply an email address, provides information on Gallery exhibitions and members' events, benefits and fundraising efforts as well as special offers and competitions. Total subscriber numbers increased to approximately 22,000 with an opening rate average of 40%, a click-through rate of 22% and a click-to-open (CTOR) rate of 55%.

Fuse eDM is distributed on the alternate fortnight to Young Members, with a range of content directed to a younger age demographic of 18–40s. It had 12,500 subscribers with an open rate average of 31%, a click-through average of 11% and CTOR average of 35%. The *Corporate* eDM is distributed monthly to 1,100 subscribers among Corporate Members, with an open rate average of 34% in 2015, a click-through average of 6% and CTOR average of 18%.

The Art Gallery of NSW distributes the *Artmail* eDM monthly to approximately 185,000 subscribers. The members are represented in the e-newsletter with a dedicated module to promote joining the Gallery, the benefits of membership, members' events and key fundraising campaigns such as the members' Travel Draw.

The Art Gallery Society also promotes membership and members' events outside the Gallery by leveraging the online communications and social media of partner organisations including Arts Hub, Art and Australia, Alliance Française de Sydney, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Belvoir Theatre, Better Read Than Dead, City of Sydney, eAlmanac, Musica Viva, New Philosopher, Opera Australia, Palace Cinemas, Riverside Theatre, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Talks, Sydney Theatre Company, TimeOut and Urban Walkabout.

Young Members

The Young Members committee, led by president Nicole Monks, worked with events staff on a varied and lively program for members in the 18 to 40 age demographic. The program included a range of workshops, studio and commercial gallery visits and talks by artists, curators and collectors. Many but not all events had a contemporary focus.

The Young Members, previously known as Contempo, have a long tradition of raising funds to support specific acquisitions for the Collection. While the 2015 program was engaging, its profitability was not high, and management staff began working closely with the committee and volunteers to prepare a streamlined program of more profitable events for 2016, with the objective of raising sufficient funds to support further Young Member acquisitions for the Art Gallery.

Volunteer groups

The Art Gallery's four volunteer bodies – the Volunteer Guides, Task Force, Community Ambassadors and Young Member volunteers – have all grown out of the membership body and are integral to its role and its ethos. The Art Gallery has for more than 40 years relied on the goodwill and generosity of spirit of its volunteers and still does so.

In 2015 the Volunteer Guides provided guided tours of the permanent collections and temporary exhibitions for thousands of members, for the general public and for school groups. The Community Ambassadors provided tours in Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean and engaged in outreach work in their respective communities.

Task Force continued to give practical assistance to both the Art Gallery and the Society and their committee worked hard with the management of both bodies to develop new rosters following the end of their exhibition ticketing duties. Overall hours were 30% down on the previous year. The Society was particularly grateful to them for their productive work on the membership desk and for taking on the new task of staffing the Taylors wine bar in the Members Lounge. 14 new members were recruited.

In addition to their duties in the Art Gallery, Task Force once again contributed voluntary labour to Sculpture by the Sea.

Looking Ahead

The Society's Council once more ended the year looking forward to concluding a Memorandum of Understanding with the Art Gallery's Board of Trustees and management.

The Society's business plan for 2016 again included membership growth initiatives, innovative event programming and development of the organisation's communications in coordination with those of the Art Gallery. It aims to continue to engage the core audience in a cultural membership program without equal.

Brian Ladd
Acting President

Ron Ramsey
Executive Director

PATRON

His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales.

HONORARY LIFE GOVERNORS

The Hon Bronwyn Bishop
Mr Peter Flick
Mr Raymond Kidd
Mrs Carolyn Ward

COUNCILLORS from March 2015

Les Moseley
Christopher Wokes
Brian Ladd
Sue Dadswell
Jacqueline De Diana
Jill Keyte
Edward Palmisano
Paula Latos-Valier
Ex-Officio
Dr Michael Brand
The Hon Ashley Dawson-Damer

IMMEDIATE PAST COUNCILLORS

Valerie Marteau
Aviva Ziegler

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Allens Linklater:
Gavin Smith
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Isabelle Guyot

VOLUNTEER GUIDES COMMITTEE 2015**GUIDES COORDINATOR**

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CHILDREN'S GUIDES COORDINATOR

Christine Moulton

ASSISTANT GUIDES COORDINATOR/**ACCESS COORDINATOR** Pia Hughes**COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS****COORDINATOR**

Kyumi Lee

PAST COORDINATOR

Annabel Baxter

ASSISTANT COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS**COORDINATOR** Peter Chan (retired ill)**SECRETARY / TREASURER**

Susan Urwin

VOLUNTEER GUIDES 2015

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Jan Angus

Margaret Anthony

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Robyn Bathurst

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Marie Huxtable

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Shirley Lilienthal

Susan Ma

Catherine Mairs

Susan Marjoram

Sandra Marsh

Joan Massey

Jann McClintock

Judy McComas

Ashley McDonald

Frances McNally

Cherry McWilliam

Carolyn Memmott

Susan Mitchell

Les Moseley

Christine Moulton

Catherine Muir

Maureen Murphy

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Sally Young
Linda Zurnamer

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Sue Dadswell

ASSISTANT COORDINATOR

Judy Embrey

SECRETARY/TREASURER

Ruth Attwood

REGISTRAR

Lea Clarke

MEMBERS DESK ROSTER OFFICER

Judy Tribe

NEW MEMBERS OFFICER/ CONCIERGE**ROSTER OFFICER**

Mary Grice

FUNCTIONS ROSTER OFFICER

Sandra Beesley

FAMILY ROOM ROSTER OFFICER

Ruth Attwood

COLOUR WHEEL

Lea Clarke

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Julie Apps

Greta Archbold

Paula Arnell

Mara Ashmore

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Meredith Aveling

Pamela Azar

Margot Bain

Chris Baines

Julia Baldo

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Susan Charlton

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Annie S Clarke

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Ann Dodd

John Doherty

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Jutta Dubiel

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Eva Feher

Coralie Fergus

Phillip Forsyth

Monique Gingell

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Maria Greene

Mary Grice

Georgina Gye

Janette Habel

Aiko Hagiwara

Sue Hancock

Karen Hannon

Ine Harrison-Latour

Susan Hartigan

Lisa Head

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Ann Henderson

Mary Hillier

Madeline Hunter

Joy Huxley

Teresa Jakubowski

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Krystyna John	Jenny Parker	Anne Taylor
Nita Jones	Di Pellizzer	Liz Tebb
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Vere Kenny	Judy Proudfoot	Susan Tompkins
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Ursula Knight	Zorica Rapaich	Ursula Ure
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RESIGNED IN 2015

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Averil Hargreaves	Ray Moss	Julie Wallace

DECEASED

Peter Whawell

YOUNG MEMBERS COMMITTEE 2015

Sarah Close	Megan Monte	Rosemary Nunes-Silva
Miriam Green	Carrie Mulford	Peter Plustwik
Brian Greenacre	Longzhen Han	Clare Veal
Nicole Monks	Alison McDonald	Rebecca Williams

YOUNG MEMBERS VOLUNTEERS January to December 2015

Louise Adamson	Peter George	Sirima Mayusiri
Ettore Altomare	Petra Glattbach	Skye McLennan
Sherie Anderson	Rosie Grady	Corinne Mendham
Alexios Antonopoulos	Cecelia Gray	Elise Meng
Kate Armstrong	Celeste Greeves	Anna Meyerowitz
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Karola Brent	Nathan James	Joanna North
Christina Busby	Janelle Jefferies	Marina Oliveira
Daniel Cap	Annie Jiang	David O'Sullivan
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Bernard Dabrowski	Lynne Lancaster	Linda Starke
Amelia Davis	Sophie Lanigan	Naomi Stucchi
Katherine Day	Paola Laurenzi	Didi Sun
Elaine Dong	Claire Lawley	Neil Sura
Melissa Dooley	Allison Lenard	Zachery Thompson
Bronwyn Dowling	Jasmine Llanes	Henry Tilly
Millie Elsmore	Philippa Louey	Amanda Townsend
Marilyn Escosa	Christine Luo	Jo Vandeleur
Christina Fernandez	Margaret Magennis	Craig White
Isabella Feros	Rebecca Mason	Bec Wickham
Ella Finney	Chantelle Matthews	Tracy Wright

COLLECTION CIRCLE AND ACKNOWLEDGED DONORS January – December 2015

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A Alford	G Brann	E Clerehan
J Allen	F Breen & C Hunter	B Cohen
K & G Allen	J Briggs	S Cole
C Allison	V Brooke	K & G Comerford
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K Bennett	J Cheng	I & G Dodd
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R Bischoff	E Chua	B Dundas
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M & R Elliott	D Hardy & M Seale	C Kelly
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S Fullerton	S & P Howes	C Lea & D Savage
C Furniss & J Bevins	M Hudson & J De Mole	T & J Leahy
A Galbraith	J & B Hunt	D Leaver
B Gardiner-Hill	P & R Hunter	M Lederman
J Garske & Y Mounier	R & A Hunyor	J Lee
S Gibb & S Begbie	S & G Ianitto	B Lennon
E Gilkes & S Kulmar	J & M Ikenberg	D & A Levine
S Gilmore & M Devine	D & N Illingworth	C & S Lilienthal
S Glasgow	B & P Inder	L & I Littlemore
C & J Goodwin	P Ippolito	J Littman
L Gough	B & J Irvine	J Livesey & E West
R & M Goyal	A & G Isles	S Llewellyn-Jones
C & G Grace	G Jabbour	K Lobel
M & C Green	S James & J Jensen	J Logan
R & A Green	J & C Jarvis	P Lowbridge
K & S Gresham	C Jasek	P & G Macdonald
P Griffin	D & P Jeremy	J Mackay & J Barnes
P Guest	S & L Johns	E MacKenzie & M
S Guest	R & H Johnson	Bremner
C Gunn & S Smith	B Jones	M Mackisack
C Guy	P Jungfer & R Postema	D & N Magill
A Hagiwara	A Karpin	D & P Malin
A Hale	M Kavanagh & K Dever	L Mallon
B & K Hall	M Kearns	M Malota & M Davis
E & G Hammond	C Keightley & R Patman	R Marsh & S Branch
J Hannoush & T Hamilton	W Keith	N & S Marsh

R Martin-Weber	S Ng	V Roadley
P Massie Greene	V Nguyen	S Roberts
R & L Max	J & G Nisbet	R & A Roche
K Mbothu	P Norsa	A & H Rose
S & K McCabe	G North	A & E Roth
L McCarthy	P Novikoff	B Roughley
L McDermott	G & L Olsen	L Rudd
C & R McDiven	J O'Reilly	S Ryan
R & G McDougall	R & J Osborn	G & G Rygate
E McGill	M Owyong	L Saliba
A McIntyre	R Pal	J Salisbury
E McLachlan & I McGrath	C Pamenter	M & R Sampson
D McMahon	N Pantazis & A Harris	M Sankey
R & G Meares	A Pardoe	P Sansom
R & F Michell	J Parkinson	B Sarvay
N Millar	K & S Paton	G Scarf & M Blaxill
I Miller & K Harding	M & H Paul	G Scarra
H & B Miller	R & M Pearse	C Schadel
G Millin	D Perik	N Keightley
C Mills & N Pelham	D & G Perry	M Segaert & K Onslow
K Mills & S Breen	A Pethebridge & D	M Sharp
N Milne & R Larking	Galbraith	J Sheldon
S Milroy	M & C Phillips	M Sheridan
N & C Minogue	B & W Pike	D Simkin
A & J Minto	J & J Playfair	J Skinner
J Mitchell & E Kim	D Poddar & A Flannery	A Skinner
P & G Mitchell	C & J Pollitt	A Sloan
Y Mizukoshi	G Pritchard	A & G Smallwood
S Mokesch	A & T Purcell	E & D Smith
M Morel	J Radosavljevic	J & A Smith
G Morgan	A Raffel	T & L Smith
W Morrison	M Ranallo	I & J Smith
N & G Morrissey	R & A Ranger	S Smith
L & L Moseley	B & S Rankine	J Smyth-Davey & P Smyth
J Moylan	J Rapee	C & E Solomon
F Muecke	K Reed	V & G Sonogo
M Munro	C Reed	M & M Sowell
K Murphy	P & A Reeves	K Spiegel-Keighley
S & B Murray	M Regan	S Sproats
K Murray	T & J Reid	S & G Sproule
L Musgrove	J & G Reilly	J Stafford & J Nicholson
H Myers	G Rhyder	N & M Standish
G Nairn	T Rice	N Stegemann & S Hussey
I Nebenzahl	P Richardson	S Stevens
D & C Nelson	K Richmond	C Stewart
J & G Neustein	F Riggs	D Stewart-Hunter & S Fox
P & J Newman	L Rippon	R Stone & A Kesson

J & J Strutt	D Triggs	W Whiteford
L Sultmann	D Truss	M & P Wikramanayake
E Symonds	I Turner & Z Marresh	K Wilhelm & P Taylor
J Symons	V Vargassoff	I & H Wilkey
E & E Tang	T & G Wales	C Wilkinson
P & S Taylor	R Walker	P & V Williams
C & T Tey	J & G Ward	C Wilson & J Chang
B Thampan	R Watkins	A Wilson & L Black
J Thirlwell & R Jones	R Watkinson	T & E Wolfe
A Thomas	M Watson	A & A Wood
A Thomas	J Watts	M & I Woodforth
D Thomas & B Peters	P Webb	E & N Wright
F & P Thornhill	M & G Weir	E & A Wrobel
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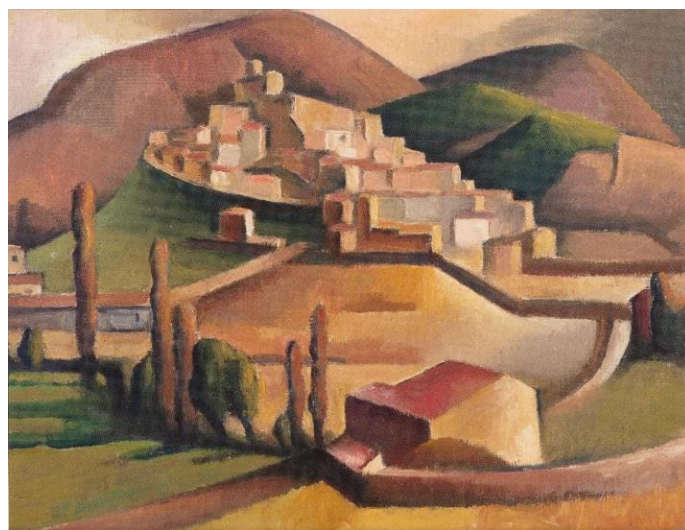
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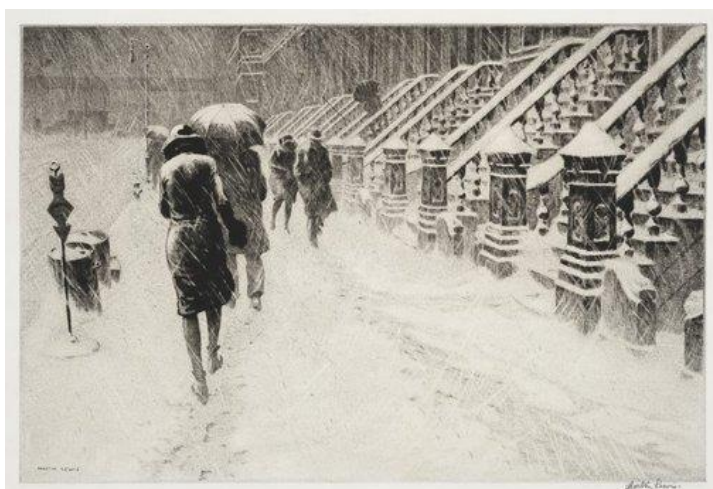
Ah Xian

Evolutionaura13: Taihu Rock-1



Dorrit Black

Mirmande



Martin Lewis

Stoops in the snow



Dorrit Black

The Chinese statuette

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