

Private Art Collecting in Saint-Petersburg Around 1900
A Case Study: the Yussupov Collection

By

Irina Sidorenko

Submitted to
Central European University
History Department

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Ilona Sármany-Parsons
Second Reader: Professor Alfred J. Rieber

Budapest, Hungary

2007

Statement of Copyright

“Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.”

Abstract

This thesis deals with the history of private art collecting in Saint-Petersburg at the turn of the 20th century, with the particular focus on the Yussupov collection. It sheds light on the local peculiarities of private art collecting in Saint-Petersburg within a broader national phenomenon of collecting. The description and analysis of the art life and art market of the period is provided to highlight the specifics of private art collecting in Saint-Petersburg around 1900.

The case study of one of the oldest private art collections of the Country, the Yussupov art collection, offers an insight into the collecting activity of the nobility in Saint-Petersburg at the turn of the century. It is used as a prism through which the role of an art collector of the noble origin in collecting and patronising art is defined. The Yussupovs as old collectors and patrons of art are contrasted to the new generation of collectors of various background of both Saint-Petersburg and Moscow. The study of the Yussupov collection demonstrates how collectors of the old type, such as the Yussupovs, adjust to new artistic reality.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to professor Ilona Sármany-Parsons under whose supervision this project was accomplished. I am thankful to prof. Sármany-Parsons for inspiring my interest in the history of art collecting. The constant support of my supervisor was very much appreciated. I am grateful to professor Alfred J. Rieber for helpful comments and useful advices.

I am also thankful to Miklos Lojko and Robin Bellers for helping me to improve my English academic style.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. INTERPRETING ART COLLECTING.....	14
2. ART LIFE OF SAINT-PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW AROUND 1900.....	24
2.1. SAINT-PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW AS CENTRES OF ART LIFE.....	24
2. 2. EXHIBITIONS AND ART MARKET IN SAINT-PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW.....	37
3. ART COLLECTORS: CONTEMPORARIES OF THE LAST YUSUPOVS IN SAINT- PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW.....	43
3.1. ART COLLECTORS IN MOSCOW	43
3.2. ART COLLECTORS IN SAINT-PETERSBURG	51
4. THE YUSSUPOVS – THE FAMILY OF COLLECTORS.....	65
4.1. THE HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLECTION.....	66
4. 2. FAMILY COLLECTION AND THE YUSSUPOV’S ARTISTIC ACTIVITY AROUND 1900.....	75
4.3. THE LAST ACQUISITIONS OF THE YUSSUPOVS. VALENTIN SEROV “THE YUSSUPOV SERIES”	85
CONCLUSIONS.....	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	99

Introduction

Never before in its history had Russia witnessed such a rapid, distinctive and intensive development of art life as it did at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. The art life of the Country was diverse and rich: a great number of art groups, movements, innovative artists, and art magazines appeared at the period. Thus at the end of the 19th century with the development of an art-nouveau movement, Russian artistic culture became part of a bigger entity rather than itself constituting part of European and world heritage. To a large extent its universal and transnational character lay at the heart of the phenomenon of art collecting and patronage of arts.

Art collecting in Saint-Petersburg has been traditionally associated with the names of such noble families as the Yussupovs, the Sheremetevs, the Stroganovs and the Shuvalovs. Under the reign of Russian tsars-patrons of arts, such as Peter I and Catherine II, the great ancestors of these families turned to collecting, partly to please the rulers and gain higher social status, partly out of curiosity and thirst for knowledge. Being educated and privileged to travel they amassed remarkable collection by the beginning of the 20th century. Even with the growing interest of various social groups in art collecting, the nobility constituted the core of collecting in Saint-Petersburg and formed a certain unity of tradition and taste in its own right, hence the special attention that has been traditionally attributed to them.

In contrast, entrepreneurs, merchants and businessmen took the leading role in collecting and patronising arts in Moscow, concentrating in their hands genuine art treasures. Moscovite businessmen often made their fortunes in their own lifetime. In their perception, they had a lifetime to make money and had no more than the same lifetime to spend this wealth in such a way that their memory would survive. The names of outstanding Russian

collectors and patrons, such as Savva Morozov and Sergei Shchukin, the Tretyakov brothers, Savva Mamontov, the Ryabushinskys, Tsvetaiev and many others are well-known not only in Russia, but all over the world as their activity reflected the international context, of which they were aware.

Art collecting is internationally a very topical subject. In the last few years not only artists, but also the patrons of art have become the focus for cultural studies all over the world. One of the reasons why studies of this kind have become popular is that they help not only to contextualise the works of art socially, but also because historians began to realise that collections are a special cultural phenomenon in their own right. Moreover, it is often the case that collections influence the development of artistic trends. The existence of an art collection can give a new stimulus to the emergence and training of innovative artists, many of whom become acknowledged world wide and famous due to an art collection. In addition, private collections play a role of fundamental importance in the art world. Modern museums and galleries constitute the result of activity of numerous collectors: most of the time at first the work of art wins the heart of one person, a private collector, and then of many. Thus the history of a work of art is inseparably intertwined with the history of this or that collection in general. Art collectors traditionally shape art tastes not only of their own generation, but of all successive as well including our own.

Art collecting is one of the traditions of pre-revolutionary Russia that is gradually being revived since the change of regime. Today we witness a veritable renaissance of collectors' activity in Russia, collecting principally Russian works of art. The names of wealthy Russians, such as Viktor Vekselberg, Vladimir Paleev and many others symbolise for the Russians the new elite of collectors. In this sense, there is a tremendous interest in the pre-

revolutionary history of art collecting in Russia. In one word, nowadays the Country rethinks its rich cultural traditions, discovers its cultural heritage and consequently experiences a need in studies and researches in cultural studies, particularly, in the history of art collecting.

The Russian aristocracy's patronage at the turn of the century has not yet been written up, Saint-Petersburg especially has been neglected. Before the revolution, patrons of art and collectors were well known public figures and there was a continuous flow of information about them especially in art magazines such as "Mir Iskusstva", "Starye Godi", "Khudogestvennye Sokrovishcha Rossii", "Apollon" and "Zolotoye Runo". They are of interest for their publications on Russian art life and reviews of private collections of the époque. These sources are of great help for my research as a testimony of the period offering a bright insight into the cultural life of the capital. Art critics writing for the magazines such as Alexander Benois, Adrian Prakhov, Viktor Shchavinsky were often the first to describe this or that contemporary collection of Saint-Petersburg. The evidences that these pioneers provide on the history of contemporary art collecting is of great significance.

This topic was not a common subject for Soviet scholars for ideological reasons. Collecting was not studied systematically as a considerable social phenomenon as it was not regarded as such. Art collecting and patronage of the arts by the nobility was not recognised at all. However, a number of biographies of certain Moscow collectors were published.¹ Most of the publications offered general history of art life in Russia of the period.² This literature on art life often provides detailed information on the art life in Russia in the period, but lacks

¹M. Kopshitzer, *Savva Mamontov* (Moskva, 1993).

²*Russkaya khudogestvennaya kultura kontsa 19 – nachala 20 vekov (1895-1907)* (Russian art life at the turn of the 20th century (1895-1907), Vol. 2 (Moscow, 1969).

in-depth analyses of material. The broad picture of the national art life is not included in the European context, but rather perceived as a closed phenomenon which it never was.

Upon the change of regime, a history of art collecting in Russia has come to light through a spate of publications. After the 90s, the literature focused mainly on the artists and art movements of the fin-de-siècle Russia.³ These studies help to reconstruct the art life of Saint-Petersburg in detail. They contextualise art processes happening in Russia within the broader European framework.

There exist a number of recent publications highlighting the history of collecting and patronage of art in Russia.⁴ Most of the recent researches are dedicated exclusively to the collectors of Moscow, without addressing to the role of their colleagues from Saint-Petersburg. There are questions that have not yet found its researcher, such as the history of art dealers of Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, the history of taste and the network of collectors. Some studies⁵ offer a profound study of this or that art collection, but fail to relate it to the other collections, thus locking them in themselves. There are some broader studies, such as Oleg Neverov, who sheds light on the enigma of art collecting in Russian cultural history and whose book provides a brilliant survey dedicated to the collecting

³Vsevolod Petrov and Aleksandr Kamensky, *The World of Art Movement in Early 20th -Century Russia* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1991).

Dmitry Sarabyanov, *Istoriya russkogo iskusstva XIX-nachala XX veka* (History of Russian art at 19th – beginning of 20th century) (Moscow: AST-PRESS, 2001).

⁴*Collectors and Patrons of Art in Saint-Petersburg 1703-1917* (Saint-Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyy Ermitag, 1995).

Sergei Martinov, *Predprinimateli, blagotvoriteli, metsenaty: Stroganovy, Alekseevy, Tretyakovy, Morozovy, Guchkovy* (Entrepreneurs, philanthropists, patrons of art: the Stroganovs, the Alekseevs, the Tretyakovs, the Morozovs, the Guchkovs) (Saint-Petersburg: Pirs, 1993).

⁵*Stroganovy: metsenaty i kollektsionery: katalog vystavki* (The Stroganovs: the patrons of art and collectors: an exhibition catalogue) (Saint-Petersburg: Slaviia, 2003).

histories of thirty families and individuals of imperial Russia, some famous, some lesser known, from the accession of Peter the Great to the fall of the Romanovs.⁶

Recently a number of researches have been made on the Yussupov collection. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the book entitled “Uchenaya prikhod”: kollektsiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova” which is the unique study of a kind on the Yussupov art collection. Providing profound retrospective historical analysis of the history of the collection at all stages of its development, it is mainly concentrated on the activity of the founder of the collection Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov. In this sense, it is valuable when reconstructing the early history of the Yussupov collection and represents poignant contribution to the history of Yussupov collection. It is the only attempt to reconstruct its full detailed history in all its complexity. A significant contribution into the process of restoring collector’s rightful place in the cultural history of Russia belongs to a number of publications by Savinskaya,⁷ though dedicated to its early history as well. A book compiled of articles on the history of the family and its collection entitled “Yussupovsky dvorets: dvoryanskiye osobnyaki: istoriya roda, usadbi i kollektsii” cannot be ignored. The articles are dedicated to various facets of the family history. Maslenikova⁸ is of particular interest for this work as she sheds light on the history of the collection in the late stage of its development. However, the work is descriptive and does not offer any analysis of the

⁶Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

⁷Lyubov Savinskaya, “Pisma Ya. F. Hakkerta knyazu N. B. Yussupovu (k istorii kollektsionirovaniya v Rossii 1770-1780h godov)” (“Letters of I. F. Hackert to Prince N. B. Yussupov (on the history of art collecting in Russia, 1770-1780)”), *Pamyatniki Kultury: Novie Otkritiya. Pismennost. Iskusstvo.Arheologiya. Egegodnik* 1989 (1990): 232-43.

Lyubov Savinskaya, “Katalog gollandskoy givopisi iz sobraniya muzeya-usadby Arkhangelskoe” (“A Catalogue of Dutch art from the collection of museum-estate Arkhangelskoe”), *Musey 8: Khudogestvennye Sobraniya SSSR* (1987): 204-14.

⁸Ekaterina Maslenikova, “Sudba khudogestvennogo sobraniya knyazey Yussupovikh” (“The fate of art collection of Princes Yussupov”), in *Yussupovsky dvorets: dvoryanskiye osobnyaki: istoriya roda, usadbi i kollektsii* (Yussupov palace: mansions of the nobility: history of the family, of the estate and of the collection) (Saint-Petersburg, 2002), 359-67.

processes characteristic of the art collecting activity of the family in this period. There is no work dedicated exclusively to the artistic activity of the family in this period. There is no work dedicated exclusively to the artistic activity of the last Yussupovs, to their role in patronizing arts at the turn of the century. Perhaps the activity of the last owners of the collection has deserved little attention as it is considered to be less significant than that of their great ancestor Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov. However, no attempts were made to create a complete picture of artistic activity of the last Yussupovs, defining their role in the art life of Saint-Petersburg and analysing both the way they influenced the art world and what influences they were subjected to.

Of significant interest for my research are the memoirs of contemporaries, of artists, of collectors and their correspondence.⁹ These sources represent the true testimonies of the time allowing a researcher to dive into the cultural life of the époque guided by its actors themselves. These offer irreplaceable information on a role of Russian collectors in the life of Russian artists and in art life in general at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The brief historiography review demonstrates that Russians have only slowly come to recognise the importance of their collecting heritage. As for their western colleagues, there is some research in the area. Penelope Hunter-Stiebel¹⁰ familiarizes the English speaking reader with the history of the Stroganoff collection. Christina Burrus and Sue Rose¹¹ make

⁹M. Kamenskaya, *Vospominaniya* (Memoirs) (Moscow: Khudogestvennaya literature, 1991).

Alexander Benois, *Moi vospominaniya* (My memoirs), Vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1980).

Sergei Sherbatov, *Khudogestvennik v ushedshey Rossii* (An artist in gone Russia) (Moscow: Soglasie, 2000).

Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004).

¹⁰Penelope Hunter-Stiebel, ed., *Stroganoff: The Palace and Collections of a Russian Noble Family* (NY; London: Harry N. Abrams, 2000).

¹¹Christina Burrus and Sue Rose, *Art Collectors of Russia: the Private Treasure Revealed* (London: Tauris Parke, 1994).

the western public aware of the great significance for Russian culture of such eminent Russian collectors as Shchukin and Morozov.

One can conclude that the 1990s – 2000 witnessed a lack of publications highlighting the history of collecting in Russia. However, in Russia in the last two decades a lot of attention was dedicated to the famous Moscow art collections of the early 20th century (the Morozovs, the Shchukins, the Mamontovs). Against this, very little was written on the art collections of Saint-Petersburg (Yussupov, Stroganov, Golitsen). So there are plenty of opportunities to investigate the field, to map afresh the cultural activity of the aristocratic families, including the Yussupovs, who were related to the Romanovs. Moreover, as far as one can know there is almost no literature available on the development of the Yussupov art collection around 1900.

In this respect, my paper aims to map the history of art collecting in Russia at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century. This period was chosen as a focus of my study because this was the time when the old, traditional form of collecting activity experiences a transformation and acquires new features. In this period the shift of initiative happens when nobility is no longer at the head of the process, but entrepreneurs and businessmen take over the leading positions. This is the period when private collectors realised that what they possessed should belong to the nation. This is the époque when the old meets the new, when tradition is respected, but new ideas is implemented in life.

In this sense, my work maps the history of the Yussupov art collection on its latest stage of existence and development – in the end of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century, in order to reveal its role and significance in Russian culture. The history of this collection

was chosen as a viewpoint to give a picture of the processes happening in the sphere of traditional art collecting in Saint-Petersburg in the given period. The Yussupov collection was chosen as a model of the imperial tradition of collecting in Saint-Petersburg. Being one of the richest and oldest noble families in Russia, the Yussupovs belonged to the old elite of collectors and had in their possession one of the major art collections of Saint-Petersburg. The collection was assembled both in Russia and in Europe; its composition was diverse (in schools and in time); it was kept in both Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, thus allowing the Yussupovs to familiarise themselves with art life of both artistic centres. Therefore, because of its diverse and multifaceted nature, this collection was the most sensible to any changes which might happen in the art life of the époque, in their city, in their Country and in Europe.

In this respect, I contextualise the Yussupov collection by offering a sketch of leading Saint-Petersburg collections. I provide the relevant information on the most famous art collections within the aristocracy in Saint-Petersburg (the Sheremetevs and the Storganovs) and within different social groups (Piotr Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, Pavel Delarov) in order to define their role in art collecting in Saint-Petersburg around 1900. By contrasting the Yussupov collection to other contemporary collections in Saint-Petersburg, I demonstrate some of the unique features of the collection of art in the possession of the Yusupovs.

Placing the Yussupov collection in the art life of Russia, I review some major art collections of Moscow merchants, such as the Morozovs and the Shchukins. This review aims to trace the new and old tendencies in art collecting in Russia at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries and observe the crucial changes in the concept of art collecting in Russia

in the given period, such as the shift of the initiative in art collecting from noble families to merchants and bourgeoisie; the change of the subjects of collecting and the like.

As the collection included some remarkable contemporary works, I focus especially on the history of the city's art market of the period. In this respect, the relevant study of the Yussupovs' taste is undertaken to explain their choice of exhibits and to acquire a better understanding of their art collection. The investigation of the art life (art societies, contemporary artists, local exhibitions, art auctions) and art market of the city helps to define the niche that the Yussupovs occupied in the art life of Saint-Petersburg at the turn of the century. Consequently, one of my goals is to explore the importance of the existence of the Yussupov collection as a source of influence on the art life of the city, its meaning as a cultural phenomenon in the framework of the cultural history of the Country and its social role in the long time perspective.

In addition, my aim is to define the significance of the Yussupov collection not only on the macro level – its significance for the Country – but on the micro level as well, i.e. the role of the collection in the life of the family. This analysis is undertaken to demonstrate how private is intertwined with public and how they co-exist. Moreover, descriptions and analysis of contemporary reactions on the collection are used to answer the question whether the Yussupov collection had an echo in society or not as they shed light on the role of art collection in the society. Finally, the fate of this unique collection during the tragic events of the Russian revolution of 1917 and its nationalisation is illuminated. Accordingly, the goal is to show that the history of this collection opens a window on the tumultuous cultural, ethical and moral transformations that the Yussupovs, as well as Russia itself, underwent at the beginning of the 20th century.

The main objective of the thesis is to demonstrate the contribution of the Yussupovs to the preservation and promotion of a rich art heritage of the epoch which has left a significant trace in the development of Russian art, social life and artistic culture; the Yussupovs collection – as the example of Russian cultural phenomenon.

The hypothesis of my research is the following: the collecting activity of the Yussupov family, directed at collecting works of art from West European and modern Russian artists, essentially influenced development of Russian art in this period and has played a significant role in the preservation of Russian and world heritage for the Country. The spiritual and artistic life of Saint-Petersburg would be less rich without the contribution of the Yussupov family and of each of its members.

This thesis consists of four chapters, introduction and conclusions. The first chapter offers general theoretical underpinning for the work and provides the necessary theoretical tools to approach the topic. The second chapter is dedicated to the art life of Moscow and St. Petersburg – two inseparable art centres of the Country. So, the second chapter aims to observe the development of art life in Russia in relation to private art collecting at the turn of the century (1890s-1914). A study of the art market and art exhibitions is also undertaken in this chapter. The third chapter offers a sketch of collecting activity of collectors from both Moscow and Saint-Petersburg, thus placing the Yussupov collection within the wide range of collectors (old and new). The last chapter defines the role of the collection in the life of the family and in the artistic life of the Russian society as a whole at the turn of the century. It provides description and analysis of the Yussupov's art activity around 1900.

A complex study of the Yussupov collection in its last stage of development in the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries is still a novelty. On the basis of examination of the historical literature and sources an original viewpoint (analytical with elements of comparative research) is offered on the activity of the Yussupovs as collectors, their features, incentives and objectives for pursuing their activities.

1. Interpreting Art Collecting

This chapter focuses on the phenomenon of private art collecting as a whole, on what the general history of art collecting is about. Based on Joseph Alsop's cultural research of art collecting I touch upon a question important for understanding art collecting i.e. distinctions between the practice of art collecting, the private patronage of arts, and treasure gathering as they may be often confused. As the history of private collecting is the central point of my thesis I find it essential to investigate into how both artistic activity and patronage of art influence art collecting activity. Another major question that deserves special attention in studying private art collecting is concerned with motivation of collectors, with the reasons why they collect. Accordingly, the theoretical chapter provides some necessary theoretical tools that enable me to apply existing theories to the particular case of my interest – private art collecting in Saint-Petersburg.

Art collecting is a tradition that has deep historical roots in human culture. The definition of art collecting was first given by Joseph Alsop in his book called "The Rare Art Traditions: the History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared" in 1982. So Alsop made an attempt to "...provide something that does not exist in the literature: the first precise yet comprehensive definition of art collecting".¹² Alsop's work represents a comparative cultural research of what he calls a universal 'integrated behavioural system' made up of eight linked elements, the so-called 'by-products of art' (namely, art collecting, art history, art market, art museums, art faking, revaluation, antiques and super-prises) with its centre in art collecting.¹³ Therefore, this theoretical underpinning,

¹²Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 36.

¹³Ibid., 16-17, 167.

offered by Joseph Alsop highlights the importance of the study of art collecting that would be based on deep understanding of the whole complex of all its interlinked elements creating the system. In a word, the phenomenon of art collecting should be treated systematically and not separately.

Alsop gives the following definition of art collecting in his book:

To collect is to gather objects belonging to particular category the collector happens to fancy; and art collecting is a form of collecting in which the category is, broadly speaking, works of art.¹⁴

In the late 1980s further attempts to produce definition were undertaken. Aristides offers: 'collection [is] "...an obsession organised".¹⁵ Jean Elsner and Cardinal Roger offer their definition of collecting:

...the history of collecting is the narrative of how human beings have striven to accommodate, to appropriate, and to extend the taxonomies and systems of knowledge they have inherited.¹⁶

The question of definition of history of art collecting belongs to complex theoretic problems and can not be easily resolved.

Above all, Alsop provides theoretical tools that enable a historian to distinguish between the practice of art-collecting, the private patronage of arts and treasure gathering as they may be confused in many cases. The author introduces two notions, 'themes' crucial for the understanding of this question: '*art-for-use-plus-beauty*' and '*art-as-an-end-in-itself*'; the latter is presented as the essence of all art collecting as

...whenever and wherever art collecting has begun, works of art, or at least certain classes of works of art, have become ends in themselves, and they have therefore been collected without regard to usefulness or lack of use.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., 76.

¹⁵Susan M. Pearce, "The Urge to Collect," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 158.

¹⁶Ernest Sturn, review of *The Cultures of Collecting*, by ed. Jean, Elsner and Roger Cardinal, *French Review* 6, Vol. 68 (May 1995): 1082.

¹⁷Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 36-37.

At the same time, Pomian comments on the value of a collected item, saying that its purpose is to be “looked at and admired”.¹⁸ In this respect, Alsop argues that treasure gathers cannot be classified as art-collectors’ because they collect pieces “*for their raw materials’ sake*”,¹⁹ thus following the ‘*art-for-use-plus-beauty*’ principle.

Following this logic Alsop distinguishes between the notions of art-collecting and the patronage of arts. He demonstrates that the theme of ‘*art-for-use-plus-beauty*’ prevails in the activity of patrons of art, who by commissioning works of art from the best artists make their lives more beautiful, more splendid, for example, by commissioning a family portrait from a painter which is a pure form of patronage and not of art collecting.²⁰ Moreover, a historian is offered tools – that allow him to decide on the nature of an activity, either art-collecting or patronage of arts, in each particular case. The so-called ‘*litmus tests*’, invented by Alsop, reveal that an art collector is never potentially interested in usefulness of a work of art: he only buys works of art if he does not share in the process of its creation in any way; an art collector is a connoisseur or uses connoisseur’s services and, finally, that the collected item exists out of any functional or social context.²¹ Thus, a historian is provided with the necessary theoretical approaches when faced with ambiguous situation of differentiating between art activities, such as art collecting and patronage of art.

Alsop invites historians to estimate the significance and results of patronage of art and of art collecting:

Once art collecting begins, in however small a way, the bonds of patronage are naturally loosened. And once works of art start to be seen as ends in themselves, the new way of thinking

¹⁸Pomian Krzysztof, “The collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 162.

¹⁹Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 51.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 59, 66.

²¹*Ibid.*, 93-100.

about art naturally enhances the standing of the more successful artists; and with the higher standing, wider creative freedom naturally goes hand in hand.²²

In this respect, it appears vital to investigate into how both art collecting and patronage of art influence particular art activity as they pursue different aims.

Alsop points out that art-collecting is properly formed only when certain categories of things with its rarities are created by a collector within his collection: "...maturity is reached as soon as collectors adopt clear-cut categories of things they wish to collect".²³ In addition, according to Alsop, the history of taste is one of the most important aspects of art-collecting to be studied within the scope of the examined question. He claims that the way people see and perceive art should be identified in each particular case, as the character of this process undergoes constant change, being influenced by culture, history and various social factors: "Objectively, there is no such thing as "good taste" or "bad taste". There is only the taste "...of a particular time or place, as revealed by the surviving data on the works of art that men have loved or scorned".²⁴ Indeed, in order to understand collecting as cultural activity properly one must take into account its place and role on contemporary aesthetic scene.

Alsop defines the main lines of analyses of art collecting phenomenon and brings out questions that were later developed by other scholars. Thus, one of the major questions that deserves special attention in the study of art collecting concerns the motivation of collectors, the reasons why they collect. There exist a number of approaches to this issue explaining intentions of collectors and motives fostering their activity. Krzysztof Pomian characterises art collecting as a pursuit concerned primarily with creation and preservation of social

²²Ibid., 42.

²³Ibid., 73-74.

²⁴Ibid., 4.

status: “It is the social hierarchy which necessarily leads to the birth of collections...”²⁵

Thus, collectors and patrons who have made their wealth in other areas of life use art as a means to gain status. That is why, they adopt a new role of an art-collector that helps them to occupy new social niche and to distinguish them from the others:

Collections are also a means to demonstrate or to claim high social status, *vis-à-vis* non-collectors as well as other collectors; the distinctiveness of the collection brings distinction to the collector.²⁶

Moreover, collections provide their owners with good reputation, thus enhancing their social status, as Krzysztof Pomian puts it:

...it is observed that their possession confers a certain prestige on their owners, since they serve as proofs of their good taste, of their considerable intellectual curiosity, or even of their wealth and generosity, if not all these qualities at the same time.²⁷

As an activity art collecting enriches social life of a collector in many different ways, therefore contributing to formation of his social status:

It involves regular personal and epistolary contacts with other collectors, with artists, with dealers and with museum staff. In many cases these contacts have broadened his social life by developing into friendships with people with very different personalities and backgrounds.²⁸

Summing up, social status is viewed as one of the major motives for collecting. However, the factor of status and fashion may lose its relevance or become of secondary importance in cases of generational, family collecting activity.

Hand in hand with the motive of social status goes the issue of dominance, social security and a strong desire to “...to extend control of the world”.²⁹ Thus, according to Brenda Danet

²⁵Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 64.

²⁶Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel, “No Two Alike: Play and Aesthetics,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 222.

²⁷Krzysztof Pomian, “The Collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 163.

²⁸Frederick Baekeland, “Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 210.

²⁹Susan M. Pearce, *Museum, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian University Press, 1993), 84.

and Tamar Katriel, the sense of social distinction and of special elevated status that an art collector has as:

...a person who owns something unique, supports the feeling of dominance in them:
The preoccupation of many collectors with owning rare or unique items may also be an expression of a desire to dominate.³⁰

It may serve as an explanation of strong interest of certain art collectors in buying works of art that formerly belonged to a famous, well-known collector "...as if merely by having them their current owner was imbued with the fame, riches, power or special abilities of a former owner".³¹ Hence, a collector demonstrates the need to be identified with the past.

The motives of art collectors discussed above, such as social status, the desire of dominance and control are regarded to be typical features of moneyed collectors. Frederick Baekeland in his essay called "Psychological Aspects of Collecting" studies the range of motives, which may influence art collecting practice. The author investigates into the reasons why rich people like industrialist, tycoons and successful businessmen start collecting. According to Baekeland, most of these people are self-made people and often have no remarkable background. That is why art-collecting is the way to implement their desires of social advancement for them. Baekeland argues that for a tycoon, building an art-collecting is a competitive enterprise which is perceived by such person as a continuation of his regular activity in the sphere of commerce. Baekeland truly notices that "in both the East and the West owning works of art has always been thought to imply education, cultivation and refinement".³² Girardin adds to Baekeland's characteristic of such type of collector saying that:

³⁰Brenda Danet and Tamar Katriel, "No Two Alike: Play and Aesthetics," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 229.

³¹Frederick Baekeland, "Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 209.

³²*Ibid.*, 206.

their motives have included vanity, the pleasure of buying a work from under the nose of a rival and the need to compete with him. Other reasons that have been adduced are emotionally empty lives at homes, acquisitiveness, and the need for immortality.³³

Both historians underline that big moneyed collectors almost always use the services of art-dealers and art-connoisseurs and ask for expert's advice when make their choice of a purchase; a few trust their own taste.

Regardless of the scale of collecting, art collectors are very much interested in their self-glorification which they hope to obtain with the help of a collection: "Collectors seek acclaim through the achievement of building their collections".³⁴ In this sense, a collector often wishes his collection to serve the society in any way so that his deeds were noticed and paid tribute to. So, collectors pursuit various purposes to achieve their major goal. For instance, as Russell W. Belk points out in his essay such desires and related activities

...can give the collector not only a sense of purpose, but a sense of *noble* purpose in supposedly generating knowledge, preserving fragile art, or providing those who see it with a richer sense of history. Having one's collection accepted into a museum collection or in some instances even having it *become* a museum is the ultimate in legitimization of the activity.³⁵

Frederick Baekeland underlines that a collector has great pleasure and satisfaction from applause of the public when his works are exhibited as he is emotionally fulfilled when the works he owns are displayed in public.³⁶

Another collector's purpose directly related to the desire of a collector to exhibit his collection should be mentioned here. Historians agree on the fact that most collectors perceive their art collection as their chance for immortality:

A related need to obtain immortality through leaving their intact collections, bearing their names, to famous museums seems to have been a major motive of many collectors. By willing his

³³Ibid.

³⁴Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf, "Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 241.

³⁵Russell W. Belk "Collectors and Collecting," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 320.

³⁶Frederick Baekeland, "Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting," in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 216.

treasures, the collector leaves behind a part of himself and perpetuates his name for all time, something often not possible through his children or his business and professional activities.³⁷

So, the purpose of a collector is often related to his ambition of immortality. That is why he strives to acquire the best prizes in order to ensure the long lasting memory of his name and deeds.

At the same time, there is much passion in collecting. And Joseph Alsop put it simply by saying that “The fact remains, however, that all truly admirable and disinterested art collectors gather their works of art because they love them”.³⁸ In a word, an art collection brings an aesthetic pleasure to its owner can surround himself with beautiful objects. Sam Lewisohn explains in his essay that “one should buy a picture because one needs it for aesthetic refreshment”.³⁹ In this sense, Joseph Alsop puts particular emphasis on the power of a factor in Western art collecting which is too often forgotten, in fact, the desire for elegant interior decoration.⁴⁰ Finally, Buck and Dodd conclude the reflections on the purpose of art collecting in their book by stating that:

It doesn't matter whether art is amassed for propaganda, prestige or pure pleasure, the impact rather than the intention of the art collector is what Counts. When a collector buys a work of art there are wide repercussions. Art collectors have a direct bearing on the market value of art, they influence the way that art is exhibited, the way that art is perceived and even what kind of art is produced. Art collectors help to make art history, while art history canonises art collectors.⁴¹

In the study of the certain art collection a historian is expected to offer not only the analyses of various components and influences that determined the creation of the collection but also to investigate in to the related question of a collector's identity and the role his collection plays in its formation. Collecting is regarded to be a means of achieving and expressing identity: “The collector's identification with his collection is complex and may manifest

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 77.

³⁹Lewisohn, Sam, “Is Collecting an Art?” *Parnassus* 5, Vol. 6 (October 1934): 14.

⁴⁰Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1982), 422.

⁴¹Louisa Buck and Philip Dodd, *Relative Values: or What's Art Worth?* (London: BBC Books, 1991), 78.

itself in a number of ways”.⁴² Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf perceive a collection to be a clue in understanding a collector by saying that:

Our self-definition is often highly dependent upon our possessions. The collecting is especially implicated in the extended self because it is often visible and undeniably represents the collector’s judgements and taste. In addition, the time and effort spent in assembling a collection means that the collector has literally put a part of self into the collection.⁴³

Analysing the process of self identification these authors underline the fact that completing a collection, in a sense, completes an identity of an individual, thus enhancing his identity work: “In striving for perfection in a collection, the collector also strives for an ideal self”.⁴⁴ Therefore, collection is perceived as a self-extension of its owner, on the one hand, influencing him, on the other hand, being influenced by him in a way that the motives for collecting, such as seeking power, knowledge, reminders of one’s childhood, prestige, mastery and control is enhanced :

Collections spring from existing individual and social constructions, but they also underwrite and perpetuate these constructs. Collections are endowed with a life of their own, which bears the most intimate relationship to that of their collector, so that the collector sees them, in the most literal sense, as parts of himself. But at the heart of this relationship is an ambiguity of control, sometimes the collector shapes the collection and sometimes it shapes him – another way of saying that objects are always both active and passive.⁴⁵

Thus, a broad range of theoretical questions concerning the motives of a collector and his self identity can be treated with the help of historical approach, enriched by deploying psychoanalytical and social-anthropological methods. Another rather innovative approach of studying the issue of art collecting lies in applying gender method. For example, Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf in their essay called “Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting” notice that:

...traits defined as masculine seem especially useful in acquiring objects for a collection, while traits defined as feminine are important in curating and maintaining the resulting collection.⁴⁶

⁴²Frederick Baekeland, “Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 216.

⁴³Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf, “Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 321.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 240.

⁴⁵Susan M. Pearce, *Museum, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian University Press, 1993), 66.

⁴⁶Russell W. Belk and Melanie Wallendorf, “Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting,” in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce (London: Routledge, 2003), 242.

Perhaps, this approach can be best applied when studying the history of collecting of several generations of one family. In this case it might be possible to trace for example female influence (if any) on certain collection. In this sense, gender approach is of practical significance for my work.

Crane in her book dedicated to historical collecting in Germany in the 19th century, demonstrated the importance of considering the factor of collector's networking when studying art collecting phenomenon. Networking can be considered to be one of the markers of art collecting. The study of networking allows us to obtain a deep understanding of each particular collection in any époque:

Collecting involves a network of suppliers and buyers, patrons and clients, performers and audiences. The network intensifies collectors' desires, coordinates their efforts, and brings desirable objects within their scope. The performance which is ownership invariably plays best before an appreciative audience, comprising individuals whose desires to own will also be tantalized. It is not simply that there must be objects to collect before collecting can begin: there must also be inspiration, desire, and shared knowledge.⁴⁷

Hence, networking implies on the existence of certain kind of social system that should be carefully studied as a basis of art collecting activity.

In conclusion, collecting is a complex cultural phenomenon that should be studied regarding various specific features (for instance, time and place of amassing a collection, social networking, collection's owner). In this respect, systematic approach to the history of art collecting proves to be the most reliable and revealing.

⁴⁷Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 64.

2. Art Life of Saint-Petersburg and Moscow around 1900

Private art collecting is a cultural phenomenon that is deeply rooted in the art life of a Country. Therefore, the nature of collecting at the turn of the century cannot be understood without insight into the art life of the period as their development is intertwined. Thus new trends in art life affect art collecting. At the same time, it is often the case that collections influence the development of artistic trends. In addition, the existence of an art collection can give a new stimulus to the emergence and training of innovative artists, many of whom become acknowledged world wide and famous due to an art collection. Moreover, general characteristic of the art life of the period allows us to establish influences imposed by artistic reality on collecting, particularly on the Yussupov collection. The history of this collection is connected with both artistic centres of Russia – Saint-Petersburg and Moscow. It should be emphasised that traditional existence of two cultural centres in Russia – Moscow and Saint-Petersburg – is significant for the development of art life of the period. Many art tendencies of the time were common for both Moscow and Saint-Petersburg but at the same time each of these art centres boasted some unique features. Talking about Saint-Petersburg it is impossible to omit Moscow as interrelations of the two art centres constitute one complete picture of art life of Russia. Thus the first chapter aims to observe the development of art life in the two capitals at the turn of the century (1890s-1914) in relation to private art collecting.

2.1. Saint-Petersburg and Moscow as Centres of Art Life

A fantastic artistic movement spread almost simultaneously through the Countries of Europe in the mid-1890s. In Germany and Austria it was called Jugendstil, in France and Belgium

Art Nouveau, and in Spain Modernismo. The development of this common European artistic process did not exclude Russia, where the new born style was called Style Modern, meaning 'modern' in Russian to stress its renewing nature. Obviously, the appearance of Russian Style Modern signified that the Country had become part of general European culture for the first time in all the decades of development of the art of the new period.⁴⁸

It is worth noting that one of the basic characteristics of Style Modern in Russia was its quite unexpected appearance, without any transition links with the realism. Moreover, this style developed in parallel with other movements (Impressionism, Realism). The abruptness of the jump made by Russian culture from realism to Modern allows us to date the creation of this style in the Country quite precisely to the first half of the 1890s unlike in European art.⁴⁹ In a word, at that period of time the Critical Realism of the Peredvizhniki⁵⁰ [Wanderers]⁵¹ is replaced by the blend of styles, by the combination of Impressionism and Modern that forms a specifically Russian style. The date of the end of Russian Style Modern can also be determined precisely as the middle 1900s, in other words the period of the birth of avant-garde art.⁵²

Style Modern found lots of followers in Russia, so that we can talk about the existence of two schools – the school of Saint-Petersburg and the school of Moscow. In the process of development of this style there was a gradual separation of the main artistic centres, so that each had its own clearly expressed character both in visual arts and in architecture. The first artistic centre was in Saint-Petersburg, the so called Mir Iskusstva [The World of Art]. The

⁴⁸Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 31.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁰The Peredvizhniki group was founded by Moscow artists and represented a group of painters rebelling against the Western art ideals in Russian art and striving for revival of pure Russian art.

⁵¹All translations from Russian into English were made by the author of this thesis.

⁵²Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 33.

World of Art, as Zinaida Gippius, one of its literary contributors, said “...could have been born only in Saint-Petersburg”.⁵³ The creation of this society was possible in Saint-Petersburg due to two people, who lived there and who became the heart and soul of the movement – Alexander Benois⁵⁴ (1870-1960) and Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1829). Among the other members of the group were Konstantin Somov, Dmitriy Filosofov, Valter Nuvel, Lev Bakst, Eugene Lansere and many others. In his essay called “The Beginnings of the World of Art”, Benois reflected on the nature of the World of Art by saying that it was neither an art journal⁵⁵ or exhibition society nor an art group, but rather all of it together, in other words an art group that tried to influence the society, to arouse in people a certain desired attitude to art in the widest sense of the word including literature and music.⁵⁶

Perhaps, due to this mixed nature of the World of Art group managed to open a new stage in the development of Russian art, which could be traced even through the analysis of subject matters of the pictures by the World of Art painters. The Slavophil and populist themes of nineteenth-century history painting were totally alien to the World of Art artists. Benois and his colleagues, in effect, had no affection for old time Russia. They were attracted to the Versailles of Louis XIV, and the personages of the Italian Commedia dell’Arte. However, the source of historic inspiration of their works was Russian life, the times of Peter the Great, 18th century Russia, the Pushkin era, Saint-Petersburg of Catherine the Great and Alexander I, and, the old Russian landed estate. Thus, the distinctive Europeanism of the World of Art artists reflected in their deep respect for the figure and deeds of Peter the

⁵³Quoted from: John E. Bowlt, *The Silver Age: Russian Art of the Early Twentieth Century and the “World of Art” Group*, 2d ed. (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1982), 13.

⁵⁴Alexander Benois – an artist, an art historian, an art collector and an art critic. Being one of the founders of the World of Art group Benois was close to many contemporary artists of the time (Vrubel, Serov, Bakst, Somov, Lansere). He contributed a lot to publication of “the World of Art” magazine, “Starye Godi” and “Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii”. Benois worked in the Hermitage and in the Russian museum.

⁵⁵The World of Art group issued an art journal entitled *The World of Art* (1898-1904).

⁵⁶Alexander Benois, *Vozniknovenie “Mira Iskusstva”* (Beginnings of the World of Art) (Leningrad: kom. populyarizatsii khudogestv. izd. 1928), 6.

Great, the great Russian westerner. The artists of the World of Art group regarded Saint-Petersburg as the best example of the new Europeanized culture that the great tsar created; and Pushkin as a voice of the so-called ‘Petersburg period’ in Russian history.⁵⁷ Dmitry Filosofov, one of the founders of the World of Art, rightly observed that the artists of this group were interested chiefly in the “everyday life, intimacy and aesthetic of history”.⁵⁸ That is to say that there was a definite system in the choice of historical subject of Russian history in their works. The painters of the World of Art group as they looked back to different historical époques and artistic styles added a romantic note to it. The art historian Dmitry Sarabyanov commented on their preferences in style and subject as follows:

They seemed to go from eclecticism to modernism, appealing to cultural memory, at times creating courtly genres in the spirit of Rococo or modest scenes of everyday Biedermeier domesticity, at times turning to antiquity, at times inspired by the style of ancient Rus’, at times evoking the Russian eighteenth century or Versailles.⁵⁹

Moreover, such diversity of artistic influences resulted on the one hand, in diversity of stylistic approaches of the artists within the same art group and on the other hand, in the development of many general features that linked all the painters of the movement, particularly their strong attraction to and interest in the theatre. It is in the theatre and in the ballet where the creativity of the World of Art flowered. Perhaps, this attraction to the stage had to do with the fact that the world of theatre offered the illusion of harmony. Count Sergei Sherbatov wrote in his memoirs that: “It is impossible to serve two masters at the same time, our painters chose stage to be its master and not a wall or a canvas.”⁶⁰ The theatre occupied an exceptional place in the art life of the period as it offered a combination of styles, of ideas, and of art genres.

⁵⁷Vsevolod Petrov and Aleksandr Kamensky, *The World of Art Movement in Early 20th -Century Russia* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1991), 76.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁹Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 11.

⁶⁰Sergei Sherbatov, *Khudognik v ushedshey Rossii* (An artist in gone Russia) (Moscow: Soglasie, 2000), 133.

However, Benois and his friends dreamt to “serve” not only the theatre “nice and wonderful branch of art, but still only the branch”,⁶¹ but to “the art as a whole”.⁶² So, one could conclude that the fundamental doctrine of the World of Art might be formulated as “art for art’s sake”.⁶³ This opinion about the World of Art’s artistic aims prevails in historiography. However, a number of art historians, such as Nekludova, claimed that the members of the group did not follow “art for art’s sake” formula as they did the opposite “they actively intervened in the world around them”.⁶⁴ In this respect, it should be emphasized that the group never published a manifesto or even a code of conduct, as in the words of Benois all the people related to the World of Art group were united by one ideal: “complete freedom of art life”.⁶⁵

Freedom of art life in Saint-Petersburg always went hand in hand with some peculiar features that defined its development from the foundation of the city. The two factors influenced the development of specific art life in the capital. One of them lay in the fact that the life style of Saint-Petersburg was determined by the presence of the court and the tsar. At the end of the 19th century imperial patronage became more active. Thus, Alexander III initiated the creation of the Russian Museum, however it was not inaugurated until 1898, during the reign of his son Nickolas II.⁶⁶ As for the tsar Nickolas II, he supported the World of Art group financially and in 1900 the journal “received an annual subsidy of fifteen

⁶¹Quoted from: Evgeniya Petrova, ed., *Mir iskusstva. K 100-letiu vystavki russkikh i finliandskikh khudozhnikov 1898 goda* (The World of Art. On the occasion of the centenary of the exhibition of Russian and Finnish artists held in 1898) (Saint-Petersburg: Palace Editions, 1998), 22.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³John E. Bowlt, ed., *Russian Art of the Avant-garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902-1934*, rev. and enl. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), xxiii.

⁶⁴Militsa Nekludova, *Traditsii i novatorstvo v russkom iskusstve kontsa 19 – n. 20 veka* (Traditions and innovations in Russian art at the turn of the 20th century) (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1991), 92.

⁶⁵Alexander Benois, *Istoriya russkoi zhivopisi v 19 veke* (Russian art history at 19th century), 3d ed. (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), 342.

⁶⁶Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 159.

thousand per annum for three years”.⁶⁷ The tsar also made purchases from Abramtsevo workshops.⁶⁸ Evidently, art life of Saint-Petersburg always rotated around the court and power.

Another characteristic feature of art life in Saint-Petersburg lay in its developed links with Western Europe, which were traditionally close. These contacts varied greatly and the World of Art group made the greatest use of them in their activities. These included the organisation of exhibitions of Western artists in Saint-Petersburg and the use of Western culture as a source of inspiration in their stylistic work mentioned above. However, despite the clearly western orientation of Saint-Petersburg group of Russian artists and architects, the World of Art group and art life of the period in general was a Russian phenomenon, which constituted an integral part of the whole previous course of development of art life in Russia.

Undoubtedly, Saint-Petersburg with its World of Art group of artists was the focal point of art in the fin-de-siècle Russia. However, the complex conditions of the Russian art scene stimulated a new grouping of forces in the other pole – in Moscow. This process was largely associated with the appearance of the Abramtsevo circle,⁶⁹ an unofficial group of artists drawn together by a well-known Moscow art patron, public figure and a railway tycoon Savva Mamontov (1841-1918) and named after his suburban estate, situated not far from Moscow. Among the members of the group, one can name some of the major Wanderers, who sympathized with the progressively-minded younger generation, but the dominant role

⁶⁷Quoted from: Vsevolod Petrov and Aleksandr Kamensky, *The World of Art Movement in Early 20th -Century Russia* (Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1991), 32.

See more in: Ibid., 32, 34.

The decision of Nickolas II to make his donation was very much influenced by Valentin Serov, his portraitist.

⁶⁸Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 22.

⁶⁹See more about Abramtsevo circle in: Eleonora Paston, *Abramtsevo: iskusstvo i zhizn* (Abramtsevo: art and life) (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 2003).

was played by Konstantin Korovin, Valentin Serov, and Mikhail Vrubel. The other major artists, such as Ilya Repin, the Vasnetsov brothers, Isaac Levitan, Malyutin, Vasily Polenov and Mikhail Nesterov, worked there as well.

The work of the circle's members reflected certain substantial novel tendencies that were subsequently carried forward in the early 20th century. First of all, the vivid interest in the theatre, stage design – united Moscow and Saint-Petersburg art movements. Thus in 1882 Savva Morozov established his private opera company in Moscow, where many prominent artists worked as production designers.⁷⁰ This was the foundation stone for a new type of stage décor which was dramatically different from the traditional one. Secondly, with the beginning of the modernisation of Russia, intense interest in folk art that was at risk as a result of it arose. Therefore, Moscow artists displayed a great interest in craft aiming to preserve the old craft traditions that could be extinguished with the advent of modernisation. So, a Folk Art Museum was founded on the Abramtsevo estate.⁷¹

In addition, the interest of artistic circles in Slavic ideas and ancient Rus' resulted in the crucial turn to study Russian Medieval tradition as practiced by Moscow artists. This choice is of great importance for the understanding of the whole artistic concept of Moscow art group and for highlighting its difference from the Saint-Petersburg art movement. As cultivation of the Slavic idea formed the basis of the so-called National or Neo-Russian style, one of the branches of Style Modern.⁷² Usually, medieval Russian aesthetic penetrated into the very being of Moscow artistic life, and was reflected, for instance, in the multi-coloured and multi-textured wall decorations of Moscow private houses or bright paintings

⁷⁰Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 90.

⁷¹Ibid., 16.

⁷²Ibid., 17.

of Malyavin or works by Vasnetsov. The old tradition inspired Moscow artists in their experiments so that they were pioneers in establishing the Neo-Russian style.

Regardless of some innovative features of the Moscow circle of artists, art historians claim that the Abramtsevo group proved unable to develop the novel forms of creative, educational, and exhibition activity which Russia's visual arts so badly needed.⁷³ The gap between the two art groups of Saint-Petersburg and Moscow was deep.⁷⁴ At the same time, Moscow artistic experience was not isolated from that of the capitals and its impact on the art life of Saint-Petersburg could be traced. In this sense, one can observe that even though in 1900s Moscow and Saint-Petersburg were hardly on speaking terms and had quite separate cultural traditions,⁷⁵ they influenced each other and borrowed some artistic ideas from each other. For instance, if the historicist national style introduced by Moscow circle of artists is seen as one of the initial sources of modern art in Russia, the further impulse comes from the World of Art movement. Thus, World of Art "forged a link between the "European" predilections of St. Petersburg and the more "Russian" inclinations of the Moscow art world".⁷⁶

In spite of all the differences in style and subjects, the two groups shared some common beliefs. The idea of a complete independence of art and its self-sufficiency captured the

⁷³Vsevolod Petrov, *Russian Art Nouveau: The World of Art and Diaghilev's Painters* (England: Parkstone Press, 1997), 15.

⁷⁴An art historian Camilla Gray classified these differences as 'line' that of Saint-Petersburg and 'colour' that of Moscow in terms of artistic devices and techniques of the two art groups. See more in: Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*, rev. and enl. Marian Burleigh-Motley (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 57.

⁷⁵The World of Art exhibition of the year 1900, signalled a split between the Saint-Petersburg and the Moscow artists: the Muscovites rejected the Petersburg hanging jury: they called for limiting Diaghilev's 'dictatorial' powers and wished to assert the artistic primacy of colour and painting over line. The Moscow group headed by Vrubel and Serov, called itself *The 36* and by the next year were mounting their own exhibitions under that name – even including a number of the Petersburg artists. In 1903 this group transforms into *the Union of Russian Artists*. This event puts an end to the artistic hegemony of Saint-Petersburg.

⁷⁶Quoted from: Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 22.

imagination of Russian artists of both schools at the turn of the century. The other common feature typical for both Saint-Petersburg and Moscow circles lay in the essence of the dominant style of the époque. Remarkably, for the first time since the period of Classicism, Style Modern provided a common basis for all forms of art. It developed as a unified style to include practically all forms of art, from the architecture of the private houses to a book cover or a jewellery piece, within its influence. Therefore, the central problem was that of the development of synthesis of various art forms. In this sense, the World of Art artists strived to create big art style uniting art, theatre, music, interior design and architecture. One of the most significant works in this context was the design of Moscow private houses by Fiodor Shekhtel, where the new type of aesthetically designed environment was created by combining the work of the architect, the sculptor and the decorative artist.⁷⁷ So, the World of Art group strived for an all-encompassing unity in their art works, implementing the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. According to Benois, the artistic unity was “...the idea for which our circle was ready to give its soul”.⁷⁸ In this respect, ballet and theatre seemed to express this idea best of all as it required the application of all branches of art. Hence, the growing popularity of these art forms around 1900.

In addition, the striving for synthesis typical for the époque was also manifested by an artist’s desire to try his hand in different areas of art. Like Renaissance masters, Russian artists of the period demonstrated stunning diversity in artistic expression. That is what lay, for example, behind Vrubel’s experiments in majolica sculpture and fireplace design at Abramtsevo estate.⁷⁹ The idea of synthesis made the traditional boundaries between art forms disappear. For instance, at the hands of Boris-Musatov, oil paint could take the

⁷⁷Ibid., 34. See more in: Ibid., 43-65.

⁷⁸See more in: Steven G Marks, *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2003), 180.

⁷⁹Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 34.

texture of pastel or Gobelin tapestry.⁸⁰ Therefore, a search for synthesis ended up in building bridges between different art forms. For example, artists looked for the synthesis of visual art and theatre. Thus, the members of Abramtsevo circle created the so-called “alive pictures” the subjects for which were often based on well-known pictures or statues. A performer did not play, but stayed motionless and only created a certain image, character or better to say illusion of a statue or even a picture. Sometimes artists of the Abramtsevo circle even painted their works inspired by such “alive pictures”.⁸¹ To sum up, new artistic inspirations resulted in development of the synthetic in its nature art forms, such as theatrical performance, ballet, “alive pictures”, the trends common for both Moscow and Saint-Petersburg.

Another feature that united the two groups was that their members shared the understanding of the importance of art ‘propaganda’. Thus, Muscovites approved the idea of Saint-Petersburg artistic community of organising exhibition society and publishing an art journal bearing the name of the capital’s art movement. Diaghilev being the moving spirit of the group implemented this idea with the support of his friends. From November 1898 till 1904 the World of Art journal was issued and edited by Diaghilev in Saint-Petersburg. Diaghilev’s ambitions for the journal were clear; he wrote that it should be no less than “create a revolution in our artistic life”.⁸² The journal was the leading art periodical of the time. The magazine regularly published reviews of the most important art exhibitions in Russia and Europe, surveys of private art collections of the Country, articles about art life of Europe, essays about works of contemporary Russian artists – Vasnecov, Repin, Korovin, Serov, Vrubel, Levitan and many others. To some extent, the World of Art cause was later

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹See more in: Eleonora Paston, *Abramtsevo: iskusstvo i zhizn* (Abramtsevo: art and life) (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 2003), 319.

⁸²Quoted from: Dmitry Sarabyanov, *Istoriya russkogo iskusstva XIX-nachala XX veka* (History of Russian art at 19th – beginning of 20th century) (Moscow: AST-PRESS, 2001), 35.

matched by Moscow journals “Vesy” (published between 1904-1909), “Zolotoye Runo” (produced by patron of arts Ryabushinsky in 1906-1909); and by Saint-Petersburg periodicals “Starye Gody” (came out between 1907-1916) and “Apollon” (in print between 1909-1917). These art journals represent irreplaceable sources for art historians in reconstructing the art life of the period.

In addition to the publication of art journals, in order to promote art Diaghilev and his colleagues mounted an annual exhibition bearing the same name as the journal. The first exhibition was mounted in 1898 and displayed the works by Russian and European masters.⁸³ The first exhibition established contacts between artists of Moscow and Saint-Petersburg and familiarised them with each others artistic backgrounds.

In 1906 (like for the first exhibition) many contemporary artists of both Saint-Petersburg (Mikhail Vrubel, Konstantin Korovin, Mikhail Larionov) and Moscow (Nikolai Sapunov, Pavel Kuznetsov, Viktor Boris-Musatov) were invited to participate in the last exhibition.⁸⁴ This exhibition underlined the widening artistic rivalry between the Russianness of Moscow artists and stressed the Western orientation of Saint-Petersburg masters. A sense of uncertainty characterized this exhibition, looking forward to the Symbolist Blue Rose group which came together in Moscow in the following year. Among the members of this art group were Pavel Kuznetsov, Nikolai and Vasily Milioti, Sergei Sudeykin, Nikolai Sapunov, Petr Utkin and later Martiros Saryan.⁸⁵ The last World of Art exhibition in a way anticipated the new style in future development of Russian art.

⁸³Vsevolod Petrov, *Russian Art Nouveau: The World of Art and Diaghilev's Painters* (England: Parkstone Press, 1997), 32.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 46.

⁸⁵Michael Raeburn, ed., *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century* (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 29.

Compared with what had been seen before, the paintings by the artist of the Blue Rose were described by one critic as “dreams in azure” and “mystical flowers”,⁸⁶ as they had no real subject other than mood or ambiance.⁸⁷ Some art historians, such as John Bowlt, emphasise that compared to the original art of the Blue Rose Moscow group of artists (active between 1904-1908) “the art produced by the World of Art painters and graphics was not avant-garde, was not especially innovative and was not of universal significance”.⁸⁸ The last Blue Rose exhibition demonstrated the existence of the new trends in Russian art and predetermined its future development of Russian art which resulted in the birth of the Russian avant-garde with Moscow as the scene for it. At the same time, one cannot fully agree with John Bowlt, as the World of Art group had remarkable significance not only for Russian but European art life as well, having outstanding innovative significance. The Style Modern period left its mark in architecture and the fine arts, theatre and literature, music and poetry. Russian Symbolism, especially the World of Art, served as a vital connection between the 19th and 20th centuries, between the old and the new in art. From 1906 the activity of the members of the World of Art group headed by Diaghilev concentrated exclusively on the task of introducing and promoting the new Russian art to the West, accomplishing his dream of “exalting Russian artists in the eyes of the West”.⁸⁹

As an art historian Richard Hare points out in his book:

⁸⁶Ibid., 23.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸John E. Bowlt, *The Silver Age: Russian Art of the Early Twentieth Century and the “World of Art” Group*, 2d ed. (Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1982), 10.

⁸⁹Quoted from: Vsevolod Petrov, *Russian Art Nouveau: The World of Art and Diaghilev’s Painters* (England: Parkstone Press, 1997), 46.

Sergei Diaghilev is considered to be one of the leaders of Russian Style Moderne. He was a talented art critic and a historian of Russian culture, who organised many exhibitions of the new European and Russian art, managed the World of Art journal and group and established the famous *Ballets Russes* in exile in 1909, which following the principle of synthesis of different art forms combined the talents of such artists as Benois, Dobuzhinsky and Bakst, the musical gifts of Starvinsky and the remarkable dancing of Fokine, Nijinsky and Karsavina. He successfully brought Russian culture to Europe. Diaghilev sought to cross visual art, literature and music – a vision which was to find its apotheosis for him with the formation of the Ballets Russes.

Russian art, throughout this crucial period, seems to have been tortured and torn by three mutually incompatible endeavours – the craving to develop a *national* style, the struggle to maintain higher international standards of taste and achievement, inherited from the past, and the fashionable desire to be considered up-to-date and abreast in Western Europe.⁹⁰

Perhaps, this spiritual search predetermined the appearance of a finer taste in Russia, a stronger appreciation of beauty and the revival of art life that characterized the art life of Moscow and Saint-Petersburg of the period. The rivalry of the two capitals was as usually very fruitful. Perhaps, the most important result of the artistic development of the period was that the World of Art and the Abramtsevo circle inspired Russia to appreciate her own indigenous culture. The cultural heritage left by the two artistic groups was extremely valuable for all generations of Russian people because of its inexhaustible artistic richness.

The period of Modernism in Russia coincided with the heyday of patronage. In Saint-Petersburg the patrons of art were usually members of the hereditary aristocracy, such as the Yussupovs, the Stroganovs and the Sheremetievs. Whereas in Moscow they came from a different background, the developing class of commercial and industrial bourgeoisie (the Ryabushinskys, the Mamontovs, the Morozovs). All these patrons had different tastes and preferences in art and various pursuits. Due to the multifaceted character of art life of the period each of them could find his/her niche. All these people invested large amounts of money in art. Examples of this type of support of art were Princess Mariya Tenisheva's subsidies for the publication of the World of Art magazine in Saint-Petersburg, Nikolai Ryabushinsky's publication of "Zolotoye Runo" in Moscow, Prince Sergei Sherbatov's organisation of contemporary art exhibitions, and Savva Mamontov's creation of a Neo-Russian centre at his Abramtsevo estate.

⁹⁰Richard Hare, *The Art and Artists of Russia* (Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1965), 223.

The art life of the period was intensive and could be characterised by the variety of artistic choices and perspectives. Moreover, without losing its national uniqueness, Russian art acquired international features and became more global. The growth of art press and publication of a number of art magazines helped to popularise art, allowed it to enter every day life of people preserving high artistic standards. In addition, rapid development of art became inseparable from high patronage at this period of time. To sum up, Russia, “as befits its divided soul”,⁹¹ has two capital cities. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries Moscow and Saint-Petersburg served not only as cultural centres, each with its distinctive culture, institutions, art groups and sets of traditions, but also as landmarks of Russian culture as a whole. The existence of two art centres – Saint-Petersburg and Moscow – enriched art life and intensified its development.

2. 2. Exhibitions and Art Market in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow

Intensive art life of Saint-Petersburg and Moscow resulted in the development of the art market and growing number of exhibitions that became evident at the turn of the century. According to the “Petersburg Newspaper”, only from September 1899 to march 1900 twenty five exhibitions of paintings (each exhibited two hundred to three hundred works of art) were mounted.⁹² It is worth noting that art groups or better to say exhibiting societies of Saint-Petersburg and Moscow were the main actors in organising different exhibitions. At the same time, they were also major players on the art market of Saint-Petersburg and Moscow performing the role of intermediary between an artist and a buyer. In fact, in Russia art groups replaced art gallery specialists, art agents, and art dealers, who played a

⁹¹Theofanis George Stavrou, ed., *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-century Russia* (Minnesota: Indiana University Press, 1983), 26.

⁹²Vladimir Lapshin, “Vistavochnaya proza: zametki o sobiratelstve, rinke i kriteriyakh vistavochnogo uspekha v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vekov” (“Exhibiting prose: notes on collecting, market and criteria of exhibiting success at the turn of the 20th century”), *Pinakoteka* (№ 6-7, 1998): 64.

leading role in West European art market.⁹³ Art collecting is inseparably linked with art exhibitions as exhibitions were places to buy, to establish contacts between patrons, art collectors and artists and art groups.

In this respect, some art groups - exhibition societies of the period should be mentioned. The 1870 - 80s were marked by a number of Wanderers exhibitions. By the end of 90s they lost their importance. Those artists who belonged to the school of the Academy of Fine Arts traditionally organised their own exhibitions. In addition, the Society of Russian Aquarellist (1880-1918), Saint-Petersburg Artists Group (1890-1918), New Artist's Group (1903-1917), the Union of Russian Artists (1903-1923) were among the leading art groups and regularly held exhibitions.⁹⁴ Obviously, art life became more and more public with the emergence of so many art societies.

The exhibitions organised by Diaghilev stood out from all other exhibitions. He inspired and organised a series of World of Art exhibitions (1898-1906). His exhibitions, especially the first one, held in 1898, were vastly criticised by both the Wanderers and the Academicians. Perhaps, it happened so because these old groups were not yet ready for any changes. However, this first World of Art exhibition, organised by Diaghilev, was extremely important as an awakening impulse for the Russian art. It provided a stimulus for development of art not only on the national level, but on the international one as well. In addition, the World of Art exhibitions revolutionized the aesthetic outlook of the Russian

⁹³Dmitry Severyukhin, "*Vistavochnaya proza*" *Peterburga: iz istorii khudogestvennogo rynka* ("Exhibiting prose" of Saint-Petersburg: on the history of art market) (Saint-Petersburg: Izd-vo im. N.I. Novikova, 2003), 12.

⁹⁴See more about art groups in: Dmitry Severyukhin, *Zolotoy vek khudogestvennikh obedineniy v Rossii i SSSR, 1820-1932* (Golden age of art groups in Russia and in the USSR, 1820-1932) (Saint-Petersburg: Izd-vo Chernysheva, 1992).

intelligentsia, enhanced its cultural development, and cultivated new tastes and a new concept of art in general.

The development of the art market of the beginning of the 20th century required art societies develop new ways of organising exhibitions and finding new wealthy clientele. The World of Art exhibitions organised by Diaghilev were innovative not only from an artistic point of view, but most importantly because he introduced new ideas for commercial success.⁹⁵ In this respect Diaghilev deserves recognition as he adopted commercial strategies and introduced high artistic quality exhibitions. Diaghilev's commercial strategy was in the way he organised his exhibitions. He carefully chose the participants for an exhibition and paid a great deal of attention to the arrangement. Different exhibits, such as paintings, graphic arts, sculptures, works of applied arts and decorative works for theatre performances, were combined in one exhibition. Diaghilev's exhibitions were also notable for their interior design. Diaghilev attributed special attention to the opening day of each exhibition when many distinguished guests were invited. Among the guests of his exhibitions were members of the government, ministers, foreign ambassadors, the vice-president of the Academy of Fine Arts, the director of Imperial theatres and many other important public figures. The so-called "small court" was always present at his exhibitions. The emperor Nickolas II, his wife Alexandra and his mother Maria, frequented the exhibitions organised by Diaghilev. The Russian imperial family regularly bought from the exhibitions inspiring the interest of rich people to exhibitions.⁹⁶ Besides, from the late 1880s the tsars, who were buying more than the middle-class or noble buyers became an important patron (as was already mentioned). Each exhibition was followed by progressive propaganda of chosen art style in

⁹⁵See more in: Vladimir Lapshin, "Vistavohnaya proza: zametki o sobiratelstve, rinke i kriteriyakh vistavohnogo uspekha v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vekov" ("Exhibiting prose: notes on collecting, market and criteria of exhibiting success at the turn of the 20th century"), *Pinakoteka* (№ 6-7, 1998): 62.

⁹⁶See more in: *Ibid.*, 62.

the World of Art magazine. Diaghilev's approach to organising art exhibitions became exemplary in Russia because of his wise combination of aesthetic artistic ideals and commercial strategy.

Art exhibitions were of great significance for art collectors as an exhibition was a place to buy the latest works. However, there were other places where an art collector had a chance to find potential pieces for his collection. In 1849 there were nineteen art shops in Saint-Petersburg.⁹⁷ In addition, art auctions were regularly held in the Passage and in Gostinny dvor - the commercial centres of the capital. Auctions became very frequent after the great reform of 1861, the abolition of serfdom. The change of social and economic situation in the Country caused an afflux of paintings from the Russian province and palaces of the nobility in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow to art markets of these cities. Once serfdom was abolished there was less free money available for the wealthy, therefore they sold out their paintings and art treasures. Thus, the number of paintings available on the art market was so great that Saint-Petersburg was "heaped up with paintings".⁹⁸ Even though the amount of works of art coming to the market started reducing by 1880-90s, the market still had a lot to offer to buyers around 1900. If paintings by old masters available on the market of Saint-Petersburg were in balance with those available on the Moscow market, then works by contemporary masters could be more easily obtained from the latter. Partly, this situation was caused by the activity of Moscow art collectors who bought paintings straightaway from an exhibition. So, most paintings were never even displayed in Saint-Petersburg.⁹⁹ It is not an exaggeration

⁹⁷Tsilov, *Gorodskoy ukazatel ili adresnaya kniga vrachey, khudognikov, remeslennikov, trgovikh mest, remeslennikh zavedeny i.t.p. na 1849 god* (City directory or the address book of doctors, artists, artisans, commercial places, handicraft industries etc. in 1849) (Saint-Petersburg, 1849), 158.

⁹⁸Vasily Shchavinsky, "Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel" ("Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector"), in *Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo*, ed. Nikolai Vrangeli (Saint-Petersburg: O-vo zashchiti i sokhraneniya v Rossii pamyatnikov iskusstva i starini, 1914), 12.

⁹⁹For a long time until the advent of the World of Art exhibitions Moscovites in contrast to artistic elite of Saint-Petersburg were privileged to see the exhibitions of numerous art societies without leaving their city.

to say that Moscovites were more practical and were better dealers. In addition, the fact that the Tretyakov gallery was in Moscow affected the development of the market. Compared to the Museum of Alexander III in Saint-Petersburg or the Academy of Fine Arts, the Tretyakov Gallery was likely to be the leading buyer from different art groups.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, most purchases were made by private collectors and not by public galleries at the time.¹⁰¹

The growing accessibility of paintings and relatively low prices for works of art influenced the approach of collectors to art collecting in general. In the 18th century every art collector of Saint-Petersburg would have works of Italian, French, Dutch and Flemish masters simultaneously; then, from the middle of the 19th century they would form collections only of one chosen school, Italian, French, Dutch or Flemish. Another characteristic feature of the époque was the growing popularity of contemporary art with art collectors. It was a result of the combination of factors such as individual preferences of a collector, existing trends of contemporary market and new fashion.

From 1910 the number of large-scale exhibitions reduced to the point of extinction as art groups did not cooperate with one another and remained isolated. Each group tended to chose its own commercial policy that differed from the others. Therefore, large exhibitions could not be assembled. From 1902 until 1923 the Moscow “Union of Russian Artists” held regular exhibitions. Its activity was matched by “New Artist’s Group” of Saint-Petersburg which remained active till 1915. An art journal, “Zolotoye Runo” and “Blue Rose” art group

Being exhibited in Moscow paintings never or rarely came to Saint-Petersburg. Thus, for a long time works of Vrubel were not known in Saint-Petersburg at all.

See more in: Grigory Sternin, *Russkaya khudogestvennaya kultura vtoroy poloviny 19 – nachala 20 veka* (Russian art life at the turn of the 20th century) (Moscow: Sovetsky khudogolik, 1984), 144.

¹⁰⁰Vladimir Lapshin, “Vstavochneya proza: zametki o sobiratelstve, rinke i kriteriyakh vstavochnogo uspekha v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vekov” (“Exhibiting prose: notes on collecting, market and criteria of exhibiting success at the turn of the 20th century”), *Pinakoteka* (№ 6-7, 1998): 64.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

exhibited in 1907 and 1906 respectively. From 1910 emerging avant-garde artists obtained their chance to exhibit due to the events organised by art groups, such as “Bubnovy Valet” and “Oslinny Hvost”.

All the art groups mentioned above were active not only on the national level, but also on the international. In this sense, typical feature of art exhibiting of the époque was active interrelations with Western art. A number of exhibitions were held to introduce Western art in both Russian capitals. In 1896 the exhibition of such French artists, such as Corot, Courbet, Millet, Monet, Renoir and Sisley, was mounted first in Saint-Petersburg and then in Moscow.¹⁰² In 1910 an exhibition dedicated to French art called “One hundred years of French Art in Russia” was organised. At the same time, Russian art was brought to the West and enjoyed its triumph in 1900 at the Exposition Universelle in Paris, the exhibition that “truly marked Russia’s entry onto the stage of European painting”.¹⁰³

The art market was responsive to the new tendencies in art life of the Country. More and more exhibitions were mounted in the period, thus making the art process more open and transparent. Exhibitions played a significant role in shaping art taste. Art exhibitions made it possible to establish connections between commercial and artistic worlds, which fostered the development of art life in Russia. The specific features of the art market described above allowed art groups and artists unions to dominate art life as they were leading players there. The art life of the period determined art collecting in many ways. Therefore, its specific features will be thoroughly described in the following chapter.

¹⁰² Morozov, Shchukin, *kollektcionery: ot Mone do Picasso: 120 shedevrov iz Ermitaga, Sankt-Peterburg, i muzeya im. A. S. Pushkina, Moskva* (Morozov, Shchukin, collectors: from Monet to Picasso: 120 masterpieces from the Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, and Pushkin Museum, Moscow) (Keln: Knizhnoe izdatelstvo Diumon, 1993), 15.

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, “Opening to Europe,” in *Russian Art and the West: a Century of Dialogue in Painting, Architecture, and Decorative Arts*, ed. Rosalind P. Blakesley and Susan E. Reid (Illinois: Illinois University Press, 2007), 57.

3. Art Collectors: Contemporaries of the last Yusupovs in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow

After the overview of the art life of Moscow and Saint-Petersburg characterising the new art trends and new commercial conditions influencing the development of art collecting, this chapter aims to map the history of the most remarkable private collections of the two cities highlighting the new tendencies in art collecting of the period. The task is to understand the place of the last Yussupovs as collectors among their colleagues from Moscow and Saint-Petersburg. There were at least three hundred considerable private art collections in Russia in more than two hundred years (1700-1917).¹⁰⁴ A significant number of collections were amassed around 1900 both in Saint-Petersburg and in Moscow. Even though art collecting still existed among the aristocracy, the turn of the century was not its golden age. In this period also the intelligentsia and merchants by birth began collecting art actively. This shift in social background of collectors had its roots in the period of reform that was initiated by the tsar after the abolition of serfdom in Russia in 1861.¹⁰⁵ The change of social status of collectors entailed changes in taste.

3.1. Art Collectors in Moscow

“Only England could compete with Moscow in quality and quantity of authentic paintings!”¹⁰⁶ – commented the contemporary press on the existence of a great number of art collectors in Moscow. The growth in number of collectors was rooted in the economic

¹⁰⁴A. P. Bannikov, “Kollektsiya generala Alexeya Ivanovicha Korsakova” (“Collection of a general Alexey Ivanovich Korsakov”), in *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii “Vipperovskie chteniya 1994”, vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials “Vipperovskie readings 1994”, edition XXVII) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyy muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995), 45.

¹⁰⁵Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 157.

¹⁰⁶Aleksandr Chayanov, *Moskovskie sobraniya kartin sto let nazad* (Moscow art collections one hundred years ago) (Moscow: Gorodskaya tipografiya, 1917), 9.

phenomenon of Moscow. This city became a place where wealth was concentrated at the turn of the century. As a result of Industrial Revolution, fortunes were made in textile, chemical and mining industries, in railway construction, and in transport. Wealth from the enterprises strengthened merchants who became a major source of patronage for art. Many eminent art collectors of Moscow were in most cases prosperous merchants who had made their fortunes in the textile business (Soldatenkov,¹⁰⁷ the Tretyakov, Ryabushinsky, Morozov, and Shchukin families), the tea trade (Ostroukhov,¹⁰⁸ the Botkin family), the sugar trade (Kharitonenko¹⁰⁹), banking (the Ryabushinsky family), and building (Mamontov).¹¹⁰ All these people not only collected paintings but also commissioned architecture, applied arts and design in the latest styles. The rapid development of art collecting and art patronage in Moscow was new phenomenon.

There is an opinion that Moscow merchant-art collector originated from nowhere, he descended from himself, having no predecessors of any kind.¹¹¹ Indeed, most of the new collectors did not follow a family tradition of collecting or did not feel obliged to be in line with a certain taste of the society or group of people they belonged to. Thus, they were relatively free from influences and more independent in their choice. Their collection often

¹⁰⁷Kozma Terentevich Soldatenkov (1818-1901) amassed a collection of 269 Russian works of art. The highlights of his collection were works by Levitan, Ivanov, Tropinin and Fedotov. See more in: N. Polunina, *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsiklopedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia) (Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005), 367-69.

¹⁰⁸Ilya Semenovich Ostroukhov (1858-1929) had some works of contemporary French masters such as Dega, Manet, Matisse, Renoir. The most valuable part of his collection was made of 117 icons and 237 paintings by contemporary Russian masters (Vrubel, Serov, Repin). See more in: Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 187-89.

¹⁰⁹Pavel Ivanovich Kharitonenko (1852-1914) his collection comprised works of 19th century French and Russian schools. See more in: Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 245-49.

¹¹⁰Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 156.

¹¹¹S. S. Stepanova, "Sobirатели zapadnoevropeiskoy gravury i zhivopisi iz sredi moskovskoy khudogestvennoy intelligentsii vtoroy treti 20 veka" (Moscow intelligentsia collectors of West-European engravings and works of art at the 20th century), in *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii "Vipperovskie chteniya 1994", vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials "Vipperovskie readings 1994", edition XXVII) (Moscow: Gosudarstvenny muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995), 131.

became their way of self-expression rather than blind pursuit of fashion or tradition. New collectors also adopted progressive strategies of collecting. As a general rule, their collections were opened for public.

In contrast, as a rule, family collections of the Russian nobility were not accessible for general public and were meant for a limited number of people at the turn of the century. A historian Bohanov claimed that it was not very common for aristocrats to patronise arts and sciences for the good of Russian people.¹¹² Obviously, there were some exceptions: Count Rumyantsev founded famous Rumyantsev Museum; Princess Tenisheva supported applied arts by organising an art community in Talashkino village¹¹³ which she described in her memoirs;¹¹⁴ a nobleman Nechaev-Maltsev spent more than two million rubles on the construction of the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and on buying art collections for it. But most of the time these were Russian merchants, industrialists, entrepreneurs and bankers who patronised and supported art. An art critic of the époque Stasov pointed out that “these were Russian merchants of intelligentsia who supported art in our lifetime”.¹¹⁵ To understand the nature of Moscow collecting it is important to map history of some of the most significant collections, such as Soldatenkov, Tretyakov, the Ryabushinskys, the Morozovs, the Shchukins, Ostroukhov, Botkin, Mamontov and Kharitonenko.

Until the end of the 19th century Moscow had no state museum, except for the Armoury museum, which was not easily accessible for public.¹¹⁶ So, many collectors of Moscow

¹¹²Aleksandr Bohanov, *Kolleksionery i metsenaty v Rossii* (Collectors and patrons of art in Russia) (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 9.

¹¹³See more about Talashkino in: Larisa Zhuravleva, *Talashkino* (Smolensk: B.i., 2003).

¹¹⁴Maria Tenisheva, *Vpechatleniya moey zhizni* (Impressions of my life) (Moskva: Molodaya gvardiya, 2006).

¹¹⁵Aleksandr Bohanov, *Kolleksionery i metsenaty v Rossii* (Collectors and patrons of art in Russia) (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 168.

¹¹⁶Irina Salnikova, *Mi bili... Iz istorii gosudarstvennogo i chastnogo sobiratelstva proizvedeny russkogo iskusstva 18 – pervoy poloviny 19 veka* (We were... From the history of state and private collecting of Russian art at 18th – first half of 19th century) (Saint-Petersburg: Blits, 2003), 230.

opened their private collections even if not for public then, at least for scientists, artists, poets, and other collectors. Tretyakov was one of the first collectors who opened his home to art lovers in 1881. He made the access to his home gallery free of charge. Tretyakov eagerly made his collection accessible for public, the example which was followed by his contemporaries, such as Shchukin, Morozov and some others. This allowed Russian artists to see works of contemporary European and Russian masters, to learn and to get inspired. An artist Valentin Serov came to Tretyakov's private house-gallery every Sunday to see works by Bastien Lepage.¹¹⁷ From 1910s Sergei's Shchukin's private gallery, nicknamed "academy of left taste",¹¹⁸ gained popularity with young Moscovites (it was opened for visitors every Sunday 11.00 am to 1.00 pm).¹¹⁹ In addition, young artists came there to familiarise themselves with the latest works of contemporary European artists. In addition, Ryabushinsky initiated a project of construction of a Palace of the Arts in Moscow that would represent a combination of a museum, an art gallery and an auction house. This project, combining in itself culture and commerce, was never realised because Ryabushinsky was financially ruined in 1909.¹²⁰ Savva Mamontov had similar idea in 1899: he wanted to build a cultural and commercial centre in Moscow to accommodate his private opera together with a restaurant, a hotel and shops.¹²¹ Unfortunately, neither his nor Ryabushinsky's plans were realised.

¹¹⁷S. S. Stepanova, "Sobirатели zapadnoevropeiskoy gravury i zhivopisi iz sredi moskovskoy khudogestvennoy intelligentsii vtoroy treti 20 veka" (Moscow intelligentsia collectors of West-European engravings and works of art at the 20th century), in *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii "Vipperovskie chteniya 1994", vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials "Vipperovskie readings 1994", edition XXVII) (Moscow: Gosudarstvenny muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995), 131.

¹¹⁸N. Polunina, *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsiklopedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia) (Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005), 499.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Beverly Whitney Kean, *French Painters, Russian Collectors: the Merchant Patrons of Modern art in Pre-revolutionary Russia*, rev. and updated ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), 73.

¹²¹Ibid.

Pavel Tretyakov (1832-1898) assembled the collection of Russian art which formed his museum, the Tretyakov Gallery,¹²² which was donated to the city of Moscow according to his testament in 1892. Tretyakov dedicated thirty five years of his life to collecting works of Russian artists, such as Kiprensky, Tropinin, Brullov, Fedotov and many others. It was a sign of social recognition for an artist when Tretyakov bought his painting. As an artist Nesterov said: "...every young (and not only young) artist's lifelong dream was that his works made part of the Tretyakov gallery".¹²³ A historian Martinov observed that:

Tretyakov wished to assemble not merely the works of a few favoured Russian artists, but rather to reveal a complete image of Russian painting, a survey which would rescue and preserve the neglected masterpieces of the past and develop an audience for a new national art.¹²⁴

In this sense, Tretyakov demonstrated patriotism and desire to serve the best of his Country.

Mikhail Pavlovich Ryabushinsky (1880-1960) also chose to collect Russian art. Ryabushinsky's collection was not large (made only of one hundred paintings) but precious. It consisted of works by Russian masters, such as Serov, Benois, Repin, Vasnetsov, Vrubel and Makovsky, and of paintings by French artists, such as Dega, Pissarro, Monet and Corot.¹²⁵ Mikhail's brother, Nikolai Pavlovich (1880-1960), collected works by old masters such as Bruegel, Cranach and Poussin, van Dongen. At the same time, he was very much interested in contemporary Russian art buying works of Sudeikin, Sapunov, Utkin, Saryan and Kuznetsov.¹²⁶ The Ryabushinsky brothers regularly exhibited paintings from their collections as did all the collectors mentioned above.

¹²²See more in: Ya. V. Bruk, ed., *Gosudarstvennaya Tretyakovskaya galleriya: Ocherki istorii 1856-1917* (The State Tretyakov gallery: history studies 1856-1917) (Leningrad: Khudognik RSFSR, 1981).

¹²³Quoted from: Sergei Martinov, *Predprinimateli, blagotvoriteli, metsenaty: Stroganovy, Alekseevy, Tretyakovy, Morozovy, Guchkovy* (Entrepreneurs, philanthropists, patrons of art: the Stroganovs, the Alekseevs, the Tretyakovs, the Morozovs, the Guchkovs) (Saint-Petersburg: Pirs, 1993), 45.

¹²⁴Beverly Whitney Kean, *French Painters, Russian Collectors: the Merchant Patrons of Modern art in Pre-revolutionary Russia*, rev. and updated ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), 55.

¹²⁵See more in: N. Polunina, *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsiklopedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia) (Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005), 333-34.

¹²⁶See more in: Ibid., 335-36.

Perhaps, some of the innovative for Russia ideas, such as wide popularisation of art, were borrowed by Moscow collectors from the West. Moscow collectors as well as those of Saint-Petersburg were influenced by Western ideas. Many Moscow collectors were closely connected to those of the capital and to the European ones. As the century progressed, communications between the cities improved and news travelled faster. Traditionally, Russian intelligentsia travelled a lot to escape from censorship. Russian artists travelled in Europe extensively and were on good terms with some European masters. Moscow merchants, such as Savva Morozov and Sergei Shchukin, also travelled a lot around Europe. It helped them to build up their remarkable collections of contemporary French art.

The Shchukin brothers came from a Moscow merchant family and belonged to the new generation of Russian collectors. Piotr Shchukin's (1853-1912) collection comprised more than 23,911 items among them historical documents, pieces of applied arts and works of impressionists. His brother, Dmitry (1855-1932), was interested in collecting works of old masters: Italian, Dutch, Flemish and German (he had one hundred forty six paintings and drawings). Ivan (1869-1908) collected prints and old masters. When he moved to Paris he worked in the Louvre for a while and he was even awarded upon a Legion of Honour for his service there.¹²⁷ Ivan wrote articles on art exhibitions in Paris, on the Louvre collections and art news for newspaper "Novoe Vremya" and Moscow art journal "Vesi". His contemporaries considered Ivan to be a "specialist" in Louvre.¹²⁸ During Ivan's stay in Paris his brother, Sergei (1854-1936), influenced his taste and Ivan started collecting works of impressionists. As for Sergei himself he amassed one of the most famous collections of French contemporary art of the époque. Art historians distinguish three stages of his collecting activity: 1898-1904 when he mostly tried to get works by Monet, 1904-1910, the

¹²⁷Natalya Dumova, *Moskovskie metsenaty* (Moscow patrons of art) (Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1992), 34.

¹²⁸Ibid.

period of Cezanne and the last one 1910-1914, which was characterized by his fascination by Matisse, Duren and Picasso.¹²⁹ “If having seen a picture, you experience shock, buy it”¹³⁰ – said Sergei Shchukin. It is worth noting that even after Sergei Shchukin left Russia he continued to declare: “I collected not for myself but for my Country and for the great Russian people”.¹³¹

Mikhail Abramovich (1870-1903) and Ivan Abramovich (1867-1921) Morozov belonged to new type of Moscow collector as well as the Shchukin brothers. Mikhail was one of the first in Russian who turned to collecting works of art by contemporary French masters: “Mikhail’s audacity as a collector stands out against the two prevailing Russian modes, Saint-Petersburg’s linear formality and the fervid works of the Wanderes”.¹³² As for Ivan, his major everlasting collecting interest lay in Russian art and his collection comprised four hundred and thirty Russian works in his possession. After the death of his brother Ivan continued amassing Mikhail’s collection of contemporary French masters such as Renoirs, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Bonnard¹³³. In Ivan Morozov Bonnard found his major patron in Russia and Maurice Denis became his friend and adviser in artistic matters.¹³⁴

Ivan Morozov and Sergei Shchukin made their collectors choice from among the same group of artists but they were not rivals in their artistic taste: for instance, Morozov would

¹²⁹Morozov, Shchukin, *kolleksionery: ot Mone do Picasso: 120 shdevrov iz Ermitaga, Sankt-Peterburg, i muzeya im. A. S. Pushkina, Moskva* (Morozov, Shchukin, collectors: from Monet to Picasso: 120 masterpieces from the Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, and Pushkin Museum, Moscow) (Keln: Knizhnoe izdatelstvo Diumon, 1993), 63.

¹³⁰E. Lopukhin, *Samie znamenitye metsenaty Rossii* (The most eminent Russian patrons of art) (Moscow: Veche, 2003), 321.

¹³¹Quoted from: *From Poussin to Matisse: the Russian taste for French painting: a loan exhibition from the U.S.S.R* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 33.

¹³²Beverly Whitney Kean, *French Painters, Russian Collectors: the Merchant Patrons of Modern art in Pre-revolutionary Russia*, rev. and updated ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), 94.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 96.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*

prefer Bonnard, whereas Shchukin would rather collect Monets in bigger quantities.¹³⁵ Perhaps, the fact that Morozov owned three paintings by Picasso against Shchukin's fifty¹³⁶ is the best illustration of their taste differences. Matisse who often accompanied Shchukin and Morozov to art dealers commented on their taste observing that "Morozov was simpler, less complicated, 'plein de force', whereas Shchukin in comparison was 'plus aigu'".¹³⁷

The industrialists, builders of railroads, bankers, merchants, manufactures and entrepreneurs constituted the backbone of Moscow elite. The names of Tretyakov, Mamontov, Shchukin, Morozov, Soldatenkov, Ryabushinsky among the most famous represent the whole generation of self-made people. They glorified themselves in the world of money and in the world of art, collecting works of art and patronising artists. It happened so that the whole family had passion for collecting: in the Shchukin family five brothers were collectors: Nikolai, Piotr, Sergei, Dmitry and Ivan; brothers Sergei, Stepan, Nikolai and Michail Ryabushinsky; Ivan and Mikhail Morozov, cousins Bakhrushins. Russia had not known such intensive family ties in the world of collectors before. The aristocracy demonstrated examples of generational collectors (five generations of the Sheremetevs collectors) but not such extensive family character as among Moscow collectors at the turn of the century.

Perhaps, this specific feature of family collecting among Moscow merchants can be explained by their desire to acquire family prestige in Russian society and in Europe. Among the major motives of Moscow merchants for collecting art historians highlight that of social status. Thus, Oleg Neverov argues that for the so-called "merchant-Princes" "...forming art collections was, again, a means of confirming their social standing. Yet for some, naked social ambition was tempered by a degree of disinterestedness and altruistic

¹³⁵See more in: Ibid., 100-101.

¹³⁶Ibid., 104.

¹³⁷Ibid., 105.

zeal”.¹³⁸ Some contemporaries criticised Moscow merchant collectors for their collecting activity. Count Sherbatov wrote in his memoirs that keenness on art among new Moscow patrons was:

in part snobbish, in part sincere but not profoundly cultural...To what degree it had to do with true passion and interest and to what extent it was showing off, bragging and desire to epater was hard to say.¹³⁹

For merchants art collecting was a way to establish themselves, to have their status socially acknowledged. However, as patrons of art Moscow collectors did everything dependant on them to support and develop Russian culture and their attempts proved to be successful. Merchant-Princes sincerely supported everything new and their artistic activity often raised the eyebrows of their contemporaries. In a word, Moscow gave a new type of wealthy patron-collector whose important contribution in art life of the époque is undeniable.

3.2. Art Collectors in Saint-Petersburg

Undoubtedly, an art collector of Saint-Petersburg differed from his Moscow colleague. As a capital, Saint-Petersburg was home to a special type of an art collector, the one who belonged to the nobility, to the Russian rulers' inner circle. Under the reign of Catherine II, the enlightened empress who demonstrated strong interest in art, a number of remarkable collectors within the aristocracy emerged. The example of a monarch in Russia was of great importance, therefore building of the tsar's collection went hand in hand with creation of private collections of the nobility. Members of the noble families such as Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yusupov (1750-1831), Count Ivan Ivanovich Shuvalov (1727-1797),¹⁴⁰ Prince

¹³⁸Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 12.

¹³⁹Sergei Sherbatov, *Khudogolik v ushedshey Rossii* (An artist in gone Russia) (Moscow: Soglasie, 2000), 31.

¹⁴⁰Count Ivan Shuvalov possessed the largest private collection of the second half of the 18th century which was formed parallel to the collection of the Hermitage (Italian, Flemish, Dutch, French schools 17-18th centuries). His collection became the core of the museum of Fine Arts in Saint-Petersburg in 1758.

Alexandr Mikhailovich Golitsin (1723-1807),¹⁴¹ Count Nikolai Petrovich Sheremetev (1751-1809), Count Alexander Sergeevich Stroganov (1733-1811) and many others were close to the court – the epicentre of art collecting in Russia. So they became involved in art collecting putting together remarkable collections. Highly ranked diplomats and grandees, these highly educated had opportunity to travel, to visit exhibitions and to stay in contact with European art dealers and artists. Demonstrating impeccable taste, passionate enthusiasm and individual approach many members of Russian aristocracy dedicated their lives to art collecting.

Among the most famous family collections of Saint-Petersburg nobility ranked those of the Stroganovs, the Yussupovs and the Sheremetievs. The founder of the Stroganov collection was Sergei Grigorevich Stroganov (1707-1756). His son Alexander Sergeievich continued his collection in the époque of Catherine II. It resulted in amassing one of the largest collections of his time. His collection was made up of the works of west European artists: about one third of which constituted works by Italian masters of High Renaissance (Sarto, Bassano, Tintoretto), Dutch and Flemish schools were well represented (Rembrandt, Rubens, van Dyke), whereas French school was modestly represented.¹⁴² As for the Yussupovs collection, its core was also formed in times of Catherine II by Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov. The pride of the collection was French school of the end of the 18th beginning of the 19th century. The art collection of the Sheremetevs was initiated by Boris Petrovich Sheremetev (1652-1719) in times of Peter the Great and was consequently enlarged by four generations of the family. The Sheremetev picture gallery included works of Italian, Dutch, Austrian and French (17-19th century) masters. Italian and Dutch schools

¹⁴¹Collection of West-European art of Alexander Golitsin was assembled along with that of the Hermitage. It was sold out in 1817-1818.

¹⁴²See more in: N. Polunina, *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsikolpedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia) (Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005), 370.

were represented more fully compared to all other schools.¹⁴³ All three collections survived till 1917¹⁴⁴ and served as perfect example of art collecting within the aristocracy of Saint-Petersburg offering insight into tastes of Russian nobility.

The old family collections of the nobility were not enlarged as fast as they were in previous époques around 1900. Brothers Sheremetievs – Sergei and Alexander did not buy any paintings to add to their collection at the turn of the century. However, they did not sell anything of their possessions, keeping the collections that they inherited from their great ancestors intact.¹⁴⁵ At the same time, in 1914 one of the Stroganovs, Count Sergei Alexandrovich or his sister Olga decided to open their palace for general public.¹⁴⁶ They also prepared a catalogue of their collection but World War I prevented its publication. One of the last owners of the collection Count Grigory Sergeevich Stroganov (1829-1911) lived in Italy and was a well-known art-connoisseur and assembled his collection there. However, the scale of his collecting activity could not be compared to that of his ancestors-collectors. In the end of his life he was ready to donate to the Hermitage a number of pieces from his collection. After his death his heirs gave sixteen pieces from his collection to the Hermitage, including a painting “Madonna” by Simone Martini; the rest of his collection was sold out at

¹⁴³See more in: Ibid., 464-76

¹⁴⁴After the Russian Revolution of 1917 great private collections of the Russian nobility seized their existence. The Stroganoff collection was nationalized in 1918; the Stroganoff mansion was declared a palace-museum in 1919 and in it was turned into a department of the Hermitage museum in 1924. Though very soon all the paintings from this department were taken to the Hermitage, the Russian museum, the Tretyakov gallery, the Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and the others.

Some of the mansions and estates of the Sheremetievs were turned into museums after the revolution. Soon all the paintings were taken to various museums of the Country, such as the Hermitage, the Russian museum and the others.

¹⁴⁵See more in: V. A. Rakin, “Sheremetevy – sobirately zapadnoevropeiskoy zhivopisi” (“The Sheremetievs – the collectors of West-European art”), in *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii “Vipperovskie chteniya 1994”, vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials “Vipperovskie readings 1994”, edition XXVII) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyy muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995), 25.

¹⁴⁶*Stroganovy: metsenaty i kollektsionery: katalog vystavki* (The Stroganovs: the patrons of art and collectors: an exhibition catalogue) (Saint-Petersburg: Slaviia, 2003), 48.

the auction in a couple of years.¹⁴⁷ The fact that his heirs donated some of the works from his collection to the Hermitage right after his death demonstrated that the nobility wanted their private collections to serve public goals.

In this sense, for Russian nobility art collecting was more than personal pleasure. Most importantly, they regarded their activity as being beneficial not only for themselves but for their Country. Their activity should be also seen in the international context as Russian elite constituted part of the European elite. Moreover, collections of Russian aristocracy had imperial touch to them as tastes of the aristocracy were predetermined by their political views and interests. So, even though many of the noble connoisseurs of Russia (the Yussupovs, the Sheremetevs) kept their art treasures in their mansions in Moscow, the character of collection was inspired by the culture and tastes of Imperial Saint-Petersburg. Close, intimate interrelation of imperial and private in art collecting was true for Saint-Petersburg from the first days of the city as the capital of the Empire till the fall of the Romanovs.

However, Russian collectors in Saint-Petersburg did not necessarily belong to the noble family. Even though Saint-Petersburg collecting was traditionally associated with the nobility, private art collecting gained popularity with people of different social status, such as intelligentsia, officials, soldiers, students and merchants, around 1900. People from different strata of the society, even of the most modest means, were able to become collectors as the art market of Saint-Petersburg was overfilled and offered a lot for relatively little money. It seems essential to give an overview of such collections and to underline tendencies that determined their creation. The largest and most famous private collections of

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

this type, those of Semyonov-Tian-Shansky and Delarov deserve special attention as they allow us to deduce more information about the character of non-aristocratic art collection in the capital as opposed to the aristocratic ones, the Yussupov collection in this case.

In this sense, it is of interest to characterise art collections of Russian bureaucracy briefly. Vladimir Pavlovich Zurov collected predominantly old Dutch masters. He also had works of old Italian, Flemish, French, German and English masters. In 1916 according to his will the Hermitage was given his permission to choose paintings from his collection to add to the collection of the museum and as a consequence forty six paintings from his collection went to the Hermitage.¹⁴⁸ Chemist by profession Vasiliy Aleksandrovich Shchavinsky collected works by the Netherlands School and Dutch masters, such as Breugel, van Goyen, Molenaar, Ostade, Terborch, Teniers, van Dyke and the others.¹⁴⁹ Collection of F.F. Uteman was relatively small, nevertheless, in the opinion of Benois, was "...of great significance not only for Russia but for Europe".¹⁵⁰ Uteman collected mostly pieces of applied art and furniture. However, among some works by French and Dutch masters he possessed a portrait by George Romney and a landscape by George Morland. It distinguished Uteman among his contemporary fellow-collectors of Saint-Petersburg as only the Yussupovs, I. A.

¹⁴⁸D. A. Shmidt, "Dar V. P. Zurova Imperatorskomu Ermitagu" ("Gift of V. P. Zurov to the Imperial Hermitage"), *Starye Gody* 3 (1916): 24.

¹⁴⁹*Sobranie kartin V. A. Shchavinskogo: katalog* (Art collection of V. A. Shchavinsky: a catalogue). (Petrograd, 1917).

¹⁵⁰Alexander Benois, "Sobranie F. F. Uteman v Sankt-Peterburge" ("Art collection of F. F. Uteman in Saint-Petersburg"), *Starye Gody* 4 (1908): 181.

Vsevolodsky and A.Z. Khitrovo¹⁵¹ possessed by English masters at the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁵²

Large in number and made of works by Russian and old European artists was the collection belonging to a military engineer, a tsar's official Mikhail Platonovich Fabricius. Shchavinsky wrote about Fabricius that he was "...not only a passionate lover of art and an art collector, but an art connoisseur".¹⁵³ His collecting activity that lasted for thirty years resulted in publication of the catalogue of his collection: two hundred thirty works by one hundred sixty Russian artists and foreign masters who worked in Russia appear in the first part of the catalogue; second part represented seventy two paintings by sixty two Italian, Flemish, Dutch, French, German and Spanish schools (15-17th century).¹⁵⁴

Among the collectors of Saint-Petersburg Pavel Delarov and Piotr Semyonov-Tian-Shansky deserve special attention as their collection were the largest and most famous around 1900. Pavel Viktorovich Delarov (1851-1913) worked as a lawyer in the Ministry of Communications in Saint-Petersburg. He started his collecting activity in the end of 1880s and the core of his collection was already formed by the beginning of the 20th century. His collection comprised paintings, drawings and sculptures by all European schools of 15-19th centuries. In the opinion of Trubnikov, who studied his paintings in 1912, "there was

¹⁵¹Alexander Zakharovich Khitrovo was a privy counsellor at the Russian court whose art collection was famous for a number of outstanding works of English masters of the 18th century such as Geinsborough, Reynolds, Rayburn, Romney, Lawrence, Hopner and some others. His collection was unusual for its time as it was not typical to collect English masters in the beginning of the 20th century. In 1910 according to the will of the collector all his paintings became part of the Hermitage collection. See more in: I. Lazarevsky, "Sobirateli i antikvary proshlogo. A. Z. Khitrovo" ("Collectors and antiquarians of the past. A. Z. Khitrovo"), *Sredi Kollektionerov* 6-7 (1923): 30.

¹⁵²Alexander Benois, "Sobranie F. F. Uteman v Sankt-Peterburge" ("Art collection of F. F. Uteman in Saint-Petersburg"), *Starye Gody* 4 (1908): 182.

¹⁵³"M. P. Fabricius. Nekrolog" ("M. P. Fabricius. An obituary notice"), *Starye Gody* 7-8 (1915): 116.

¹⁵⁴M. P. Fabricius, *Kartiny Sobraniya M. P. Fabricius* (Paintings from the collection of M. P. Fabricius) (Saint-Petersburg: Tipografiya E. E. Novitskogo, 1906).

material to characterise any school and any époque”.¹⁵⁵ The art market of Saint-Petersburg had a lot to offer to an art collector at the époque so along with European auctions it became the main source for Delarov of building up his collection: every day he visited all old-clothes dealers of the capital seeking for new pieces for his collection.¹⁵⁶ As a result of his activity by the beginning of the 20th century his collection of paintings and sculptures counted two thousand pieces out of which five hundred were paintings by Russian masters.¹⁵⁷ Delarov’s collection was well-known with the contemporaries. Alexander Benois visited the collector’s house and wrote about his impressions in his memoirs:

I was amazed by Delarov’s collection, of which I have heard so much. Quantitatively it was a proper museum...but how messy was all it arranged! And what a medley of schools, époques and merits! The walls not only of the living room, the study and the dining-room but also of the bedroom were covered. Paintings hang over children’s beds, in the corridors and even in the toilet!¹⁵⁸

Benois also visited Delarov’s study at work full with large sized paintings, among which an art critic highlighted works by Giordano, Jordaens and Snyders.¹⁵⁹ The fact that Delarov neglected systematic approach to storing his collection and did not classify the paintings in his possession is very surprising for a collector of his level.

In the opinion of Vrangél,¹⁶⁰ Delarov was one of the most prominent Russian art collectors.¹⁶¹ He was also known with contemporaries as an art connoisseur of the Netherlandish and Italian art.¹⁶² He delivered brilliant lectures in the Institute of Fine Arts of

¹⁵⁵A. P. Bannikov, “Kollektsiya generala Alexeya Ivanovicha Korsakova” (“Collection of a general Alexey Ivanovich Korsakov”), in *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii “Vipperovskie chteniya 1994”, vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials “Vipperovskie readings 1994”, edition XXVII) (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyy muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995), 53-54.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁵⁷N. Polunina, *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsiklopedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia) (Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005), 146.

¹⁵⁸Alexander Benois, *Moi vospominaniya* (My memoirs), Vol. 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 324.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 325.

¹⁶⁰Baron Nikolai Nikolaivich Vrangél (1880-1915) – an art historian, specialist in Russian art. Worked as a curator in a museum since 1906. Contributed a lot by writing articles to publication of an art magazine “Starye Gody”.

¹⁶¹Nikolai Vrangél, “Pavel Viktorovich Delarov,” *Starye Gody* (March, 1913): 62.

¹⁶²*Ibid.*

Count V.P. Zubov where the best art historians of the time such as Benois, Vrangeli, Shmidt, Kurbatov, Lipgart and the others worked.¹⁶³ Delarov wrote an article about Russian artist Brullov and a book about the Imperial Hermitage.¹⁶⁴ His authority of an outstanding connoisseur was recognised not only in Russia but abroad. At the same time, his reputation of an art collector was dubious. Delarov considered himself to be great art connoisseur and a restorer, so at certain point he started getting rid of the paintings with doubtful ascriptions often exchanging them or selling to other collectors as genuine masterpieces. As a result, very soon he was no longer trusted in the circle of collectors.¹⁶⁵

Being aware of high artistic value of his collection, Delarov gave his paintings for various exhibitions that took place in London, Berlin and Hague where they were studied by art historians.¹⁶⁶ Delarov preferred to establish contacts in the world of collectors abroad rather than in Russia. The collector complained that if he needed a word of advice on a newly acquired piece he would seek for it abroad, not in Russia as scientifically-grounded collecting in his Country was almost unknown, in his view. Delarov explained that this was the reason why he showed his collection reluctantly in Russia.¹⁶⁷ Benois wanted to write a series of articles about Delarov's collection¹⁶⁸ but this plan was never accomplished because of collector's death. In 1913 Delarov's heirs decided to sell his collection. First, it was offered to the state but neither the Hermitage nor different public funds or organisations did

¹⁶³A. P. Bannikov, "Kollektsiya P. V. Delarova i ee sudba" ("Collection of P. V. Delarov and its fate"), in *Znatochestvo, kollektsionirovanie, metsenatstvo* (Connoisseurship, collecting, patronage of art), ed. N. S. Kuteinikova (Saint-Petersburg: Institut zhivopisi, skulptury i arkhitektury, 1992), 54.

¹⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 52.

¹⁶⁶Nikolai Vrangeli, "Prodaga sobraniya P. V. Delarova" ("Sale of P. V. Delarov's collection"), *Starye Gody* (№ 11, 1913): 47.

¹⁶⁷I. Lazarevsky, "Po povodu" ("On the occasion"), *Sredi Kollektionerov* (№ 1, 1922): 37.

¹⁶⁸A.P. Bannikov, "Kollektsiya P. V. Delarova i ee sudba" ("Collection of P. V. Delarov and its fate"), in *Znatochestvo, kollektsionirovanie, metsenatstvo* (Connoisseurship, collecting, patronage of art), ed. N. S. Kuteinikova (Saint-Petersburg: Institut zhivopisi, skulptury i arkhitektury, 1992), 54.

not find money to buy this unique collection for Russia.¹⁶⁹ The collection included paintings by Dutch masters, such as Rembrandt, Steen, Goyen, Lastman, Hooch, Terborch, Ruysdael; Flemish, Jordan, Teniers, Sneiders; Italian, Mantegna, Bronzino, Fetti, Cambiaso, Guardi, Messina and French, Bouchet, Fragonard, Boilley, Barbier and Robert to name just some of the masters.¹⁷⁰ The biggest part of the collection was estimated in one million francs and taken to Paris to be sold in the auction in April 1914; ninety nine paintings and drawings of Russian school together with some works of European masters which experts did not recommend to take to France were sold in Saint-Petersburg.¹⁷¹ Thus, remarkable collection was lost for Russia forever. A number of works from his collection can be found in museums of Amsterdam, Berlin, Warsaw, New York, Madrid and some others.¹⁷²

Another outstanding collection of equal artistic value belonged to Piotr Semyonov-Tian-Shansky (1827-1914). Chiefly Semyonov-Tian-Shansky is known not as an art collector and an art connoisseur but as a scientist-naturalist, a geographer, a permanent vice-president and a head of Russian Geographic Society, an explorer of Central Asia, an honorary member of more than forty Russian and foreign scientific societies, and a director of the statistics committee, who did a lot for development of Russia.¹⁷³

Semyonov-Tian-Shansky became interested in art during his first travel abroad (1853-1855) when he went to Switzerland, Italy, Germany and France to study geography and geology.

¹⁶⁹Nikolai Vrangeli, "Prodaga sobraniya P. V. Delarova" ("Sale of P. V. Delarov's collection"), *Starye Gody* (№ 11, 1913): 46-47.

¹⁷⁰A.P. Bannikov, "Kollektsiya P. V. Delarova i ee sudba" ("Collection of P. V. Delarov and its fate"), in *Znatochestvo, kolleksionirovanie, metsenatstvo* (Connoisseurship, collecting, patronage of art), ed. N. S. Kuteinikova (Saint-Petersburg: Institut zhivopisi, skulptury i arkhitektury, 1992), 55.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²See more in: P. I. Myagkov, "O kartinakh zapadnoevropeiskikh masterov iz kollektsii P. V. Delarova" ("On the pictures by West-European masters from P. V. Delarov's collection"), in *Kollektsionery v Sankt-Peterburge 1703-1917: Tezisy dokladov konferentsii* (Saint-Petersburg collectors 1703-1917: conference materials) (Sankt-Peterburg: Gosudarstvennyy Ermitag, 1995), 34.

¹⁷³See more in: Bruce W. Lincoln, *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: the Life of a Russian Geographer* (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980).

This was the time when art became integral part of his life. Having visited European museums, such as the Louvre, Semyonov-Tian-Shansky became deeply interested in art.¹⁷⁴ His activity as an art collector started around 1861 and very soon the collector fully concentrated his efforts on assembling his collection of Dutch and Flemish masters, mainly of the 17th century.¹⁷⁵ As a result, by the end of his life Semyonov-Tian-Shansky formed precious collection which was considered to be the second largest collection of Dutch and Flamish masters in Europe.¹⁷⁶ The collection was of remarkable significance, for instance, in the 1870s such important works came into his collection as “An Old Woman Counting Coins” by Mathhias Stomer, “The Concert” by Herman van Aldewerelt, “the Torment of St Lawrence” by Willem de Porter, the grisaille “Joseph in Egypt” by D. Tivart, and “Ruth and Boaz” by Barent Fabritius.¹⁷⁷

Indeed, his collection did contain masterpieces. Although, Semyonov-Tian-Shansky was not exceptionally rich person, with relatively modes means. That is why he chose to collect small Dutch masters whose works were quite affordable at the époque. He wanted his collection to differ from that of the Hermitage – rich in works by Rembrandt, Van Dyck and Rubens but lacking some works by many of the small Dutch masters. He did not want to compete with the Hermitage collection, but rather to add to it one day. With the idea to complete already existing Hermitage collection (that he was well familiar with), Semyonov-Tian-Shansky assembled his own.¹⁷⁸ Such determination was exceptional and very modern

¹⁷⁴Piotr Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Vol. 1 (Petrograd, 1917), 252.

¹⁷⁵See more in: D. A. Shmidt, *Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel gollandskoy zhivopisi* (Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector of Dutch art) (Leningrad, 1928), 2.

¹⁷⁶"Sobranie Petra Petrovicha Semyonova v Sankt-Peterburge" ("Art collection of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov in Saint-Petersburg"), *Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii* Vol. 1 (1901): 119.

¹⁷⁷*A Collector's Taste: Dutch Paintings of the 16th and 17th Centuries from the Collection of Piotr Petrovich Semenov-Tian-Shansky*, <http://www.codart.nl/exhibitions/details/1049/>. Last accessed 18.05.07.

¹⁷⁸D. A. Shmidt, *Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel gollandskoy zhivopisi* (Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector of Dutch art) (Leningrad, 1928), 2.

for the time. Thus private collection of Semyonov-Tian-Shansky in his own thought was meant to serve public goal from its very foundation.

Semyonov-Tian-Shansky acquired most of his works in the auctions in Europe as he had an opportunity to travel a lot for his work. He also visited art markets of Saint-Petersburg and Moscow searching for works for his art collection. However, a number of works were bought straightaway from private collectors without using services of a mediator.¹⁷⁹ Semyonov-Tian-Shansky was in correspondence with some art dealers in Amsterdam such as Muller and Mezing. He bought some paintings with their help choosing them through catalogues and ordering them by post; the paintings were delivered to Saint-Petersburg by train or sent by mail.¹⁸⁰

Semyonov-Tian-Shansky's activity was not exclusively focused on collecting works of art. In 1913 he was writing a book on the history of the Netherlandish Art. In spite of his age, he worked intensively ten hours a day without rest even on holidays.¹⁸¹ Unfortunately, his death prevented him from finishing this work. His authority was recognised by art historians after his publication of a two volume work entitled "Etudes sur les peintres des écoles hollandaise, flamande et néerlandaise qu'on trouve dans la collection Semenov et les autres collections publiques et privées de St. Petersbourg" in 1885.¹⁸² Art collectors often sought

¹⁷⁹Vasily Shchavinsky, "Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel" ("Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector"), in *Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo*, comp. Nikolai Vrangeli (Saint-Petersburg: O-vo zashchiti i sokhraneniya v Rossii pamyatnikov iskusstva i starini, 1914), 14.

¹⁸⁰I. A. Sokolova, "Novoe o kollektsii Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo" ("New on the collection of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky"), in *Kollektsionery v Sankt-Peterburge 1703-1917: Tezisy dokladov konferentsii* (Saint-Petersburg collectors 1703-1917: conference materials) (Saint-Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyy Ermitag, 1995), 30.

¹⁸¹Vasily Shchavinsky, "Piotr Petrovich Semenov-Tian-Shansky," *Starye Gody* (№ 3, 1914): 59.

¹⁸²Piotr Semenov, *Etudy po istorii Niderlandskoy zhivopisi na osnovanii ee obraztsov nakhodyashchikhsya v publitsnikh i chastnikh sobraniyakh Peterburga: prilozhenie k "Vestniku Izyashnikh Iskusstv"* (Studies on the history of the Netherlandish art based on its examples kept in public and private collections of Saint-Petersburg: a supplement to "Vestnik Izyashnikh Iskusstv"), Vol. 1-2 (Saint-Petersburg: Tipografiya M.M. Stasyulevicha, 1885, 1890).

help of Semyonov-Tian-Shansky in attributing paintings of small Dutch masters and his home was always opened for the specialists in art who wanted to see his collection. Semyonov-Tian-Shansky was in touch with Wilhelm von Bode, Abraham Bredius and Hofstede de Groot, leading art historians who appreciated Semenov-Tian-Shansky a lot.¹⁸³ The collector was well-known in commercial circles of Europe. In 1911 Dutch company “Frederick Muller & Co” celebrated fifty years of contacts with Semenov Tian-Shansky, famous Russian connoisseur of Dutch art and an art collector.¹⁸⁴

Around two thousand works painted by about four hundred fifty Netherlandish masters could be found in Saint-Petersburg at the beginning of the 20th century. About one forth of this works belonged to Semenov-Tyan-Shansky; in 1901 works by three hundred forty masters could be found in his collection, out of which one hundred ninety were not represented in the collection of the Hermitage.¹⁸⁵ In 1914 the collector already possessed seven hundred nineteen paintings.¹⁸⁶

Semyonov-Tian-Shansky published a catalogue of his collection. Most importantly, he carefully systematised his collection¹⁸⁷ at the time when some museums did not do it so thoroughly. In this respect, his approach differed a lot from that of Delarov. Semyonov-Tian-Shansky often repeated one phrase: “Above all – system, system – this is all!”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³Shmidt, D. A. “Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel i issledovatel gollandskoy zhivopisi.” (“Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector and a connoisseur of Dutch art”), in Dostoevsky, A. A. *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: ego zhizn i deyatelnost* (Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: his life and activity) (Leningrad, 1928), 240.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 241.

¹⁸⁵“Sobranie Petra Petrovicha Semyonova v Sankt-Peterburge” (“Art collection of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov in Saint-Petersburg”), *Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii* Vol. 1 (1901): 119.

¹⁸⁶Nikolai Vrangeli. “Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo” (“In memory of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky”), in *Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo* (In memory of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky), comp. Nikolai Vrangeli (Saint-Petersburg, 1914), 5.

¹⁸⁷Semyonov-Tian-Shansky classified the paintings in his collection; studied every work in his collection, defined its place in among the works of a painter; took a photo of every work in his collection.

¹⁸⁸L. Finogeeva, “Semyonov-Tian-Shansky – iskusstvoved i kollektzioner” (“Semyonov-Tian-Shansky – an art historian and an art collector”), *Khudogolik* 9 (1976): 31.

In 1910 Semyonov-Tian-Shansky suggested the Hermitage to buy his collection. The Hermitage agreed to purchase it for the price of 250,000 rubles which was determined by its owner. The price was only half of the estimated cost for the collection, that constituted half a million roubles.¹⁸⁹ Along with Semyonov-Tian-Shansky's collection of paintings the Hermitage acquired his collection of 3,500 engravings which he gave to the museum as a gift in 1910.¹⁹⁰ According to the wish of Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, his collection stayed in his flat till his death in 1914.¹⁹¹ Contemporaries observed that after the acquisition of this collection the Hermitage became the gallery with the largest number of works by Dutch masters.¹⁹² Now the enlarged museum collection demonstrated the evolution of the Netherlandish School. Moreover, having acquired the collection of Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, the Hermitage opened special research department (Studiensammlungen) of the gallery according to "the Boston idea".¹⁹³ Thus the museum started functioning on the new modern level.

In conclusion, the taste of Saint-Petersburg collectors was traditionally formed by court and bureaucracy which remained true to a certain extent even for the beginning of the 20th century. In the end of the nineteenth century collecting became more differentiated than in any other époque: collectors tended to specialise in assembling one or two certain school in preference to others. Local market offered them opportunities to assemble collections of old Dutch, Flemish, Italian, English masters without leaving Saint-Petersburg which would be impossible in the 18th century. The most popular among the collectors remained old

¹⁸⁹D. A. Shmidt, "Novoe priobretenie Ermitaga" ("New acquisition of the Hermitage"), *Starye Gody* 7-9 (1910): 204.

¹⁹⁰Bruce W. Lincoln, *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: the Life of a Russian Geographer* (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980), 75.

¹⁹¹I. V. Kozlov, *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, 1827-1914* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 197.

¹⁹²"Otradne vesti iz Ermitaga" ("Good news from the Hermitage"), *Starye Gody* 7-9 (1910): 203.

¹⁹³D. A. Shmidt, *Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel gollandskoy zhivopisi* (Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector of Dutch art) (Leningrad, 1928), 3.

European schools. Partly, because these works could be found in abundance on the market, and partly because they were the most popular pieces with Saint-Petersburg collectors, that corresponded to their conservative taste. Contemporary art was neglected by collectors of the capital: "...public taste in painting remained oddly old-fashioned in a city which valued the latest European influences".¹⁹⁴ As Théophile Gautier truly observed on his travels in Russia in 1858-59: "...in St. Petersburg art collections had always lagged behind contemporary developments in art".¹⁹⁵ In this sense, the subject of collecting constituted the difference between Moscow and Saint-Petersburg as the latter could not boast significant private art collections of modern art.

'New' collectors of intelligentsia did not compete with the 'old' collections of the nobility but rather established their own networking. Collecting was in most cases connoisseurship at that period of time. Art collectors published art catalogues, wrote books and articles. Most of the collectors established contact with the Imperial Hermitage and hoped their private collections to become part of public collection one day. Some of the collectors we know about were diplomats, soldiers, courtiers, officials, travellers, university professors and art dealers whose efforts in art collecting were very significant at the period. At the same time, the collections of the nobility constituted the core of collecting in Saint-Petersburg and formed a certain unity of tradition and taste in its own right, hence, the special attention that has been traditionally attributed to them.

¹⁹⁴Beverly Whitney Kean, *French Painters, Russian Collectors: the Merchant Patrons of Modern art in Pre-revolutionary Russia*, rev. and updated ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), 24.

¹⁹⁵Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 159.

4. The Yussupovs – the Family of Collectors

The previous chapter represented an overview of art collecting in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg; the leading collectors of the époque were characterised in it, thus highlighting the place of the Yussupovs among them. The Yussupovs belonged to one of the richest and oldest noble families in Russia and had the largest private land possessions in Russia, in seventeen provinces of the Country, and owned beet-sugar, brick plants, a saw-mill, textile factories, mines and a distillery by the beginning of the 20th century. The Yussupovs were traditionally loyal to the Russian tsars and faithfully served their Country.¹⁹⁶ However, this family was known in Russia and in Europe not only for their good service to the state, but also for the remarkable art collection that the Yussupov family amassed over more than one hundred years of its collecting activity. Tracing the fate of the collection from its foundation to the last days of its existence, I focus on the analyses of history of the collection on the last stage of its development and aim to define its role in the life of the family and in the artistic life of Russian society as a whole at the turn of the century. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the way traditional Russian collectors, such as the Yussupovs, adjusted to the new artistic reality of the Country; the new reality that demanded from them openness and the right feel of the époque.

¹⁹⁶See more about the family and their service in: Nikolai Yussupov. *O rode knyazey Yussupovikh: sobranie gizneopisaniy ih, gramot i pisem k nim rossiiskikh gosudarey s 16 do poloviny 19 veka i drugikh familnikh bumag, s prisovokupleniem pokolennoy rospisi predkov knyazey Yussupovikh s 14 veka* (On the Yussupov family: a set of their biographies, documents and letters to them of the Russian rulers from 16th till the middle of 19th century and other family papers, with signatures of ancestors of Princes Yussupov of 14th century), Vol. 1 (Saint-Petersburg, 1866).

4.1. *The History of Development of the Collection*

Amidst the treasures in possession of the Yussupovs, the family's art collection was of special value and fame. Countess Kamenskaya, who had a chance to see the collection, wrote in her memoirs published in 1894 during her lifetime that the Yussupovs' house was known by contemporaries for "all its luxury, riches and wonders of fine arts".¹⁹⁷ The process of building up the Yussupov collection was relatively long and not immediate and this fact affected greatly its composition. Though once established, the character of the collection did not change considerably over the years.

Good understanding of different stages of assembling the Yussupov collection is essential in for analysis of its history on last stage of its development, around 1900. The founder of the collection was Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov (1751-1831), a grandee of the Russian court.¹⁹⁸ His taste in art combined with his understanding of art collecting determined the charter of the family collection once and for all. It is likely that Nikolai Yussupov made the initial purchases during his first trip to the West undertaken in 1774 and lasting three years.¹⁹⁹ When in Europe, he got a chance to visit auctions, establish contacts in the artistic world and make commissions. His grand tour must have been very inspiring for Prince Yussupov, as once aroused the passion for collecting was never restrained. During his travels that started the first stage of his activity, Prince Nikolai became very much interested

¹⁹⁷M. Kamenskaya, *Vospominaniya* (Memoirs) (Moscow: Khudogestvennaya literature, 1991), 249.

¹⁹⁸Prince Nikolai Yussupov was charged with different responsibilities at the court. And almost all his activities as a courtier had something to do with the arts so that he was considered to be a kind of "a minister of Fine Arts". Nikolai Borisovich was appointed the director of the Hermitage; he also administered the court theatres, was responsible for porcelain and glass factories, and was in charge of tapestry manufacture in Saint-Petersburg.

¹⁹⁹Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 89.

in contemporary French art, buying works by François Boucher, Carle Van Loo, and Jean Honoré Fragonard, nevertheless he appreciated the Dutch genre masters as well.²⁰⁰

His private interest in art and curiosity must have been considerably fostered and influenced by those of the empress, Catherine the Great, an avid collector herself. In this period of time Prince Yussupov was in correspondence with Catherine the Great and her son the heir to the Russian throne, Paul. In his letters, Prince Yussupov expresses sincere desire to “bring all the best”,²⁰¹ of the artistic world to Saint-Petersburg. He bought the most excellent works he could find in Europe to assist in assembling the collection of the tsars. In 1782, Prince Nikolai Yussupov accompanied the heir to the throne, Paul, and his wife Maria on their European grand tour. Together they visited the studios of the most famous contemporary artists such as Pompeo Batoni, Angelika Kauffmann, Jakob Philipp Hackert, Claude Joseph Vernet, Hubert Robert, Jean-Baptiste Greuze, and Jean-Antoine Houdon.²⁰² Though buying for the galleries of the Hermitage, Gatchina and Pavlovsk, and acting as an agent in artistic matters for Russian royalty, Nikolai Borisovich he did not forget his own private gallery. For a relatively short time he amassed a wonderful collection of west-European paintings, sculptures, drawings, and rare prints. In this sense it is important to underline that the Yussupov collection was formed under the strong impression of the tsarist collecting activity. By the time of Catherine the Great the Yussupovs had already acquired high social standing but undoubtedly they were very interested in securing their position at the court. Art collecting, passion of Russian emperors, secured this position. The Yussupov private collection was meant to be ranked with that of the Russian tsars. So that in the beginning of the 20th century there is no hint on the rivalry of the Yussupovs with the emerging new

²⁰⁰ *From Poussin to Matisse: the Russian taste for French painting: a loan exhibition from the U.S.S.R* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 18.

²⁰¹ T. A. Soloveva, *Osobnyaki Yussupovikh v Peterburge* (Mansions of the Yussupovs in Saint-Petersburg) (Saint-Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1995), 174.

²⁰² Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 89.

collectors of Moscow or Saint-Petersburg as this collection belonged to another époque. The Yussupov collection was meant to be unrivalled and it has always been perceived as a match to the collection of the tsars.

The first mention of the Yussupov collection dates from 1778, when it was seen and described as a remarkable collection by a German astronomer Iogann Bernoulli in his travel notes.²⁰³ He wrote that the number of paintings in the collection was relatively small but all works were of the highest quality: two paintings by Venix and Domenichino, “Lying Venice” attributed to Titian, male portrait by Velasquez, “An Old Man with a Child” by Rembrandt.²⁰⁴ A few years later in 1802, a German traveller, Heinrich von Reimers, gave a thorough description of the Yussupov collection.²⁰⁵ Among the collection’s treasures, von Reimers mentioned Canova’s Cupid and Psyche, works by Tiepolo and two portraits by Rembrandt in his account. In addition to these, von Reimers talks about old masters of the Italian school (Titian, Correggio, Domenichino, Albani, Furini, Caracci, Schedoni and Ricci), the Dutch school (Victors, Bol, Potter, Wouwerman, and Dujardin) and the French school (Poussin, Claude, Bourdon, Le Brun, Valentin de Boulogne, and la Hyre) in addition to the works of contemporary painters including Mengs, Demarne and Boilly.²⁰⁶ Thus from its earliest days of the collection’s existence it was not hidden away. There are evidences that it was seen and reflected on. The scale of it must not have been wide yet, the level of openness corresponded to the spirit of the age. Intensification of the activity aimed at popularisation of the collection together with conscious attempts to exhibit works from the collection, to have them professionally written up, were to come later, around 1900.

²⁰³Ibid.

²⁰⁴T. A. Soloveva, *Osobnyaki Yussupovikh v Peterburge* (Mansions of the Yussupovs in Saint-Petersburg) (Saint-Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1995), 179.

²⁰⁵See more in: Lyubov Savinskaya, “Katalog gollandskoy givopisi iz sobraniya muzeya-usadby “Arkhangelskoe”” (“A Catalogue of Dutch art from the collection of museum-estate “Arkhangelskoe”), *Musey 8: Khudogestvennye Sobraniya SSSR* (1987): 204.

²⁰⁶Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 93.

However, the first steps in this direction were made much earlier by Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov.

The next stage of collecting activity of Nikolai Borisovich started in 1783 when Prince Yussupov was appointed Russian ambassador to the Kingdom of Sardinia at Turin where he stayed for six years.²⁰⁷ He was very active there as a collector and as an art agent of the royalty so that he amassed his own collection from the same sources as the collection of the Russian tsars. It was Prince Yussupov who received the permission from the Pope to make copies of Rafael's Vatican loggias by Russian masters for the Hermitage.²⁰⁸ At the same time Prince Nikolai commissioned from the eminent painters of the time such as Hackert, Batoni, Kaufmann, Vernet, Robert and Greuze to enlarge his private collection; he corresponded with many of them²⁰⁹ and was very much interested in acquiring works by Fragonard, Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun and François-André Vincent.²¹⁰ Yussupov's activity was the best proof of the fact that the first collector of the Yussupovs was a true art connoisseur. Having seen the Yussupov collection Polish king Stanislav Avgust Poniatovsky said that among those who travelled around Italy there were a few so knowledgeable about arts, loving it so much as that grandee [Nikolai Yussupov].²¹¹ Being an art connoisseur was "a virtue" very much loved by the tsars, who needed trustworthy people to work on assembling their own collection. In the course of time the tsars resorted to the help of the nobles like the Yussupovs less frequently. But for the Yussupovs the

²⁰⁷ *From Poussin to Matisse: the Russian taste for French painting: a loan exhibition from the U.S.S.R* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 18.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Correspondence with the German painter Hackert and Prince Yussupov represents an interesting source and reveals more about his activity as a collector. See more in: Lyubov Savinskaya, "Pisma Ya. F. Hakkerta knyazu N. B. Yussupovu (k istorii kollektsionirovaniya v Rossii 1770-1780h godov)" ("Letters of I. F. Hackert to Prince N. B. Yussupov (on the history of art collecting in Russia, 1770-1780)"), *Pamyatniki Kultury: Novie Otkritiya. Pismennost. Iskusstvo. Arheologiya. Egegodnik 1989* (1990): 232-243.

²¹⁰ Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 91.

²¹¹ "Uchenaya prikhot": kollektsiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova ("Uchenaya prikhot": the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudogolik i kniga, 2001), 37.

connoisseurship became hereditary. At the same time, their taste was established within a certain family and social tradition once and for all. And it was not subdued to any change around 1900.

The last stage of the collecting activity of Prince Nikolai Yussupov started in 1801 when he retired from state service and had more time to dedicate to the expansion of his collection. He traveled to Paris where he became fascinated with the works of his contemporaries, French masters such as Jacques-Louis David, Pierre-Paul Prudhon, Nicolas Taunay, Louis-Léopold Boilly, Horace Vernet, and Baron Antoine Jean Gros, Napoleon's favourite painter.²¹² When not on a move, in Russia, Nikolai Yussupov continued to enlarge his collection acquiring paintings at the auctions and lotteries and buying them from foreign artists living in Russia.²¹³ When in Russia, the doors of his house were opened for people of his circle and for the guests of the house. One of the contemporaries of Prince Nikolai Yussupov – Elizaveta Yankova wrote in her memoirs about Yussupov's passion for collecting:

He loved paintings, marbles, bronzes and different expensive and good things and he gathered in Arkhangelskoye²¹⁴ so many rarities, that no other private collection in Russia could equal his collection, unless the Sheremetev's one.²¹⁵

²¹²Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 93.

²¹³See more in: Lyubov Savinskaya, "Katalog gollandskoy givopisi iz sobraniya muzeya-usadby Arkhangelskoe" ("A Catalogue of Dutch art from the collection of museum-estate Arkhangelskoe"), *Musey 8: Khudogestvennye Sobraniya SSSR* (1987): 205.

²¹⁴From 1791, for about fifteen years, the Yussupov's collection was kept in Saint-Petersburg in the mansion situated on Fontanka river embankment. In 1810 after the return from his last travel to France, Prince Yussupov bought Arkhangelskoye estate, situated not far from Moscow. Very soon after the war of 1812 with Napoleon the biggest part of his already well-known collection was transferred to Moscow and was accommodated in the Moscow mansion and in Arkhangelskoe (the biggest part) by Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov.

See more about Arkhangelskoye in: L. Bulavina, V. Rapoport, and N. Unanyants, *Arkhangelskoe* (Moscow, 1981).

²¹⁵Quoted from: *Rasskazi babushki: iz vospominaniy pyati pokoleny zapisannyye i sobrannyye ee vnukom D. Blagovo* (Grandmother's tales: from the memoirs of five generations written and collected by her grandson D. Blagovo) (Leningrad: Nauka, 1989), 170.

After the death of Nikolai Yusupov his only son Prince Boris Nikolaievich Yussupov (1794-1849) inherited his fortune. In 1837 Boris moved the gallery from Moscow and Arkhangelskoye estate back to Saint-Petersburg to his palace situated on Moika river embankment Arkhangelskoe and accommodated it in a special gallery built for this purpose.²¹⁶ In 1839 the new owner of the collection published the first catalogue²¹⁷ of his private picture gallery in French.²¹⁸ In this Boris Nikolaievich continued the beginnings of his ancestor.²¹⁹ So continuity of certain traditions was characteristic for this family. And this will remain true till the end of existence of the collection.

From 1830-40s there were no new acquisitions made by Prince Boris Nikolaievich Yussupov. However, his son Nikolai Borisovich the younger (1827-1891), an amateur musician, a composer who was well-known for his love of music and his collection of musical instruments (his collection comprised violins by Amati, Stradivari and Gvarneri)²²⁰ demonstrated a stronger interest in art. Nikolai's parents fostered love of art in their only son. His father, Prince Boris Nikolaievich Yussupov, wrote to his son Nikolai, a student of Saint-Petersburg University, in one of his letters: "I am very content that you take your studies seriously...do not neglect art in your hours of leisure".²²¹ So it cannot be denied that the Yussupovs realised the importance of artistic education for their children. Art

²¹⁶See more in: G. I. Sveshnikova, ed. *Yussupovsky dvorets* (Yussupov palace) (Saint-Petersburg, 2004).

²¹⁷Musée du Prince Youssoupoff, contenant les tableaux, marbre, ivoires et porcelains qui se trouvent dans l'hôtel de son Excellence, à St. Petersburg (Saint-Petersburg, 1839).

²¹⁸In his catalogue Boris Nikolaievich indicated not only each painting itself but the place where it hang in his gallery.

²¹⁹The result of the fifty year period of collecting activity of his father, Prince Nikolai Yussupov, was reflected in the first catalogue of the collection consisting of three big albums comprising outline pen-and-wash sketches of his 520 paintings and 290 sculptures and other works that could be found in the Moscow mansion of the Yussupovs and in their family estate Arkhangelskoe in 1827. See more in: Lyubov Savinskaya, "Katalog gollandskoy givopisi iz sobraniya muzeya-usadby Arkhangelskoe" ("A Catalogue of Dutch art from the collection of museum-estate Arkhangelskoe"), *Musey 8: Khudogestvennye Sobraniya SSSR* (1987): 205.

²²⁰Ekaterina Maslenikova, "Sudba khudogestvennogo sobraniya knyazey Yussupovikh" ("The fate of art collection of Princes Yussupov"), in *Yussupovsky dvorets: dvoryanskie osobnyaki: istoriya roda, usadbi i kollektzii* (Yussupov palace: mansions of the nobility: history of the family, of the estate and of the collection) (Saint-Petersburg, 2002), 359.

²²¹Quoted from: I. V. Nikiforova, *Materialy biografii knyazya N.B. Yussupova-mladshego* (Materials on the biography of N. B. Yussupov the younger) (Moscow: Kompaniya Sputnik, 2003), 6.

constituted an integral part of their private life. By that time private art collecting was no longer linked to that of the tsars. Many collectors of the nobility, such as the Shuvalovs, the Golitsins, Count Orlov whose collecting activity started as well as that of the Yussupovs in pursue of fashion, desire to be closer to the ruler, to belong to the elite, seized to exist. As this early motives for collecting of the nobles transformed into exclusively private (family) choice that had less and less to do with the initiative of the rulers. The subsequent analyses of the Yussupovs activity at the turn of the century demonstrates that this private choice was to serve public goals finally.

From 1849 after the death of his father, Prince Nikolai his mother Zinaida Ivanovna (1810-1893) enlarged the collection to a great extent in a short period of time. Thus they bought a large number of works of contemporary European masters such as Corot, Trouyon, Maysoniet, Izabée, Rotman, Guden, Boner, di Asa and many other painters who were considered to be the best masters of the time.²²² Due to the activity of Prince Nikolai Yussupov and his mother, the new section of the gallery dedicated to the West-European art of the 19th century was established. This was the time when first works of Russian artists, such as Shchukin, Brullov and Ayvasovsky started to be represented in the collection²²³. Undeniably, the number of paintings in the collection augmented at the time. Though it happened so that the choice of the paintings made by Nikolai and Zinaida was often random and the quality of the works of art that came to the gallery at this period was not as high as in previous years.²²⁴ At the beginning of the 19th century, the collection consisted of predominantly original works of art, but by the middle of the 19th century the character of

²²²T. A. Soloveva, *Osobnyaki Yussupovikh v Peterburge* (Mansions of the Yussupovs in Saint-Petersburg) (Saint-Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1995), 185.

²²³“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudogrik i kniga, 2001), 62.

²²⁴T. A. Soloveva, *Osobnyaki Yussupovikh v Peterburge* (Mansions of the Yussupovs in Saint-Petersburg) (Saint-Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1995), 186.

the collection had changed and copies constituted part of the collection along with the originals. Later in 1850-60s some paintings of no great artistic value were bought.²²⁵ Perhaps, it indicated that the collection became rather a matter of aesthetic pleasure than an issue of possessing the best pictures. The choice was not always determined by the price or quality of a work. First of all they wanted to have copies of the works that they liked; the Yussupovs were guided by their own taste.

In this period of time the Yussupovs not only continued to collect, but adhered another family tradition of showing their collection. It was opened for the nobility as well as for art specialists. In the beginning of the 60s the director of an art gallery of the Berlin museum, one of the best experts on old masters, Gustav Wagen, saw Yussupov collection and dedicated a few pages to it in his book about the art collections of Saint-Petersburg which brought European fame to it.²²⁶ Wilhelm Bodé, an eminent art historian of the time described four paintings from the Yussupov collection in his book,²²⁷ which proved once again that the collection took an important stand among European collections. The Yussupovs fully associated themselves with the European aristocracy, so it was only natural for them to establish and develop contacts in the sphere of arts in the West and to promote their collection there. Being characteristic feature of their artistic activity it will be developed later.

What was the role of the Yussupov collection in Russia? How reputed was it in the middle of the 19th century? By the middle of the 18th century Saint-Petersburg boasted a number of private collections of Count A. Stroganov, Prince A. Bezborodko, Count N. Sheremetev,

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudogolik i kniga, 2001), 63.

²²⁷Ibid.

Count A. Beloselsky, Count I. Chernishev, N. Mordvinov, A Korsanov and many others.²²⁸

In the opinion of a famous art historian, Ernst, among many outstanding collections of the time the Yussupovs' ranked first in the number of paintings that comprised it as well as in the quality of the works.²²⁹ To sum up, Italian masters (more than 200 works) and French masters of 17-19th century (about 150 works); Dutch and Flemish painters of the 17th century together with English and German masters of the 18th century formed the core of the Yussupov collection created by Nikolai Yussupov.²³⁰ The heart of the collection could be considered French school. It constituted the backbone of the Yussupov collection:²³¹ "...indeed nowhere else in private possessions can one find it [Art of French school] so fully represented as in this collection, and among the public galleries only the Hermitage, the Louvre and Potsdam can compete with it in this".²³²

To sum up, the establishment of the collection initiated by Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov and its consequent development, both artistic and "social", laid the foundation of all the traditions and factors that will define the development of the collection around 1900.

²²⁸See more about collectors, contemporaries of Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov in: *Collectors in Saint-Petersburg* (Amsterdam, 2006).

²²⁹T. A. Soloveva, *Osobnyaki Yussupovikh v Peterburge* (Mansions of the Yussupovs in Saint-Petersburg) (Saint-Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1995), 179.

²³⁰"*Uchenaya prikhot*": *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* ("Uchenaya prikhot": the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudognik i kniga, 2001), 73.

²³¹See more in: Sergei Ernst. *Yussupovskaya galereya. Frantsuzskaya shkola* (Yussupov gallery. French school) (Leningrad, 1924).

And in: N. T. Unanyants, *Frantsuzskaya zhivopis v Arkhangelskom: katalog* (French art in Arkhangelskoe : a catalogue) (Moscow, 1970).

²³²Quoted from: Alexander Benois, "Yussupovskaya galereya" ("Yussupov gallery"), *Mir Iskusstva* 13-24 Vol. 4, (1900): 130.

4. 2. Family Collection and the Yussupov's Artistic Activity Around 1900

By the end of the 19th century, the Yussupov palace on Moika river embankment was full with art treasures. Prince Felix Yussupov the younger²³³ (1887-1967) wrote in his memoirs that “the works of art filled it in great numbers. So that the house resembled a museum. Walk around and look for ever and ever”.²³⁴ What was the collection for the last owners? What constituted the priority in the art activity of the Yussupovs around 1900? How did the family react to the latest tendencies and events in the art life of Saint-Petersburg and the Country? Answers to these questions reveal the history of their artistic activity. In this respect, it is worth noting that the last Yussupovs lived in the time when the idea that a private collection should sooner or later become public gained popularity in Russian society and most importantly among the collectors themselves. Thus in 1892 Tretyakov gave his art gallery as a gift to the city of Moscow and the Museum of Old Saint-Petersburg was formed from the private collection of Veyner, Benois and Count Argutinsky-Dolgorukov.²³⁵ Moscow merchants such as Morozov and Shchukin exhibited their collections in their private houses. These tendencies were new but widely supported from the very beginning by the Country's cultural elite. Moreover, the leading art trend of the époque, the World of Art Group, popularised art by arranging numerous exhibitions and publishing art magazines at the same time it set high artistic standards. The history of artistic activity of the Yussupovs shows how the traditional family collecting activity corresponded with the new artistic trends of the époque.

²³³Felix Yussupov the younger is famous for inspiration, organisation and accomplishment of political assassination of Grigory Rasputin on December 16, 1916. See more in: Felix, Yussupov, *Rasputin: his malignant influence and his assassination* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927).

²³⁴Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004), 55.

²³⁵“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudogolik i kniga, 2001), 64.

The Yussupovs did not stay away from the ongoing change of role of a private collection in society that was happening in Russia at the turn of the century. Thus Zinaida Yussupova (1861-1939), daughter of Prince Nikolai Borisovich was the first among the Yussupovs to undertake systematic attempts to make her family collection public. Under Zinaida Nikolaievna the paintings from the family gallery started to be widely represented in exhibitions both in Russia and abroad.²³⁶ “Exhibition of Ancient works of art and paintings for the benefit of the establishments under the patronage of Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna” held in 1897; two portraits by Rembrandt were offered for an anniversary Rembrandt exhibition²³⁷ organised in Amsterdam in 1898 and they were considered to be its embellishment, so that Benois commented on it that the two Rembrandts of the Yussupovs belonged to one of the best works of the master.²³⁸ The paintings from the Yussupov gallery were displayed in the exhibition of “150 years of Russian portrait”²³⁹ in 1902; on the 7th exhibition of Berlin Secessionists in 1903; on the “Historical artistic exhibition of Russian portraits arranged in Taurida palace” in 1905; on “Russian art” exposition held in Paris in 1906, Berlin show of German art in 1906.²⁴⁰ Zinaida Yussupova gave the best pictures of the gallery for the exhibition “Starye Gody” organised by the magazine bearing the same name in 1908: works of Rembrandt, Claude Lorraine, Lorenzo Lotto, Peter de Hoch, Teneers, Troost, Tiepolo, Gvardi, Lankre, Boucher, Hubert Robert, Louis-Léopold Boilly.²⁴¹

²³⁶Zinaida offered for the exhibitions not only paintings but objects of art as well. For example, she gave 11 objects from her family’s private collection for the Historical Exhibition of Objects of Art held in Saint-Petersburg in 1904. See more in: Prakhov, Adrian, *Albom istoricheskoy vystavki predmetov iskusstva, ustroennoy v 1904 godu, v Sankt-Peterburge* (Album of the historical exhibition of objects of art, arranged in Saint-Petersburg in 1904) (Saint-Petersburg, 1907).

²³⁷*Rembrandt: Collection des Oeuvres du Maître réunies, à l’occasion de l’inauguration de S.M. la Reine Wilhelmine, au Musée de la Ville à Amsterdam 8 septembre – 31 octobre 1898* (Amsterdam, 1898). One of the organisers of the Rembrandt exhibition of the year 1898, the director of Amsterdam Royal Museum, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, even visited the Yussupov’s mansion in Saint-Petersburg to see the collection in 1902.

²³⁸Alexander Benois, “Yussupovskaya galereya” (“Yussupov gallery”), *Mir Iskusstva* 13-24 Vol. 4 (1900): 146.

²³⁹*Podrobnny illustrirovanny katalog Vystavki Russkoy Portretnoy Zhivopisi za 150 let, 1700-1850* (A detailed illustrated catalogue of the exhibition of Russian portrait for 150 years, 1700-1850) (Saint-Petersburg, 1902).

²⁴⁰Sergei Ernst. *Yussupovskaya galereya. Frantsuzskaya shkola* (Yussupov gallery. French school) (Leningrad, 1924), xxi.

²⁴¹*Ibid.*

The works of the French masters mentioned above were offered for the huge exhibition “One hundred years of French art” held in Saint-Petersburg in 1912. The organisers of the exhibition said of the event:

It was the first exhibition outside of France that represented the development of French art over the last century...It did not focus our attention on established academic or salon painters, who had often enjoyed in Russia greater reputation than they deserved. It focused rather on painters who are leaders, artists who, in their time, opened new paths and still managed to preserve the wonderful old traditions of the French school.²⁴²

Exhibiting their collection was of primary concern for the Yussupovs at the turn of the century as it made their collection public and well-known not only in Russia but in Europe as well. The scale of exhibiting activity of the Yussupovs was remarkable as Zinaida Yussupova provided paintings for many major exhibitions of the period on such a scale that had never been known before. It demonstrates her interest in the art life of Saint-Petersburg, Russia and Europe. In this sense, the Yussupovs stand out among the other old noble family collectors, such as the Sheremetievs or the Stroganovs, whose exhibition activity was less significant compared to that of the Yussupovs.

The paintings from the Yussupov collection exhibited in different shows impressed the contemporaries very much. The collection attracted the attention of professional art critics such as Alexander Benois and Adrian Prakhov who actively started the popularisation of the collection in the press. Alexander Benois was introduced to Zinaida Yussupova by Sergei Botkin,²⁴³ an eminent doctor and a passionate art collector, who was on friendly terms with the artistic elite of the time. In 1900 Benois had a chance to describe the core of the Yussupov collection on the pages of “The World of Art” magazine being the first to state

²⁴²Quoted from: *From Poussin to Matisse: the Russian taste for French painting: a loan exhibition from the U.S.S.R* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990), 23.

²⁴³See more in: N. Polunina, *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsikolpedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia) (Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005), 57.

that the collection “belongs to the most remarkable private treasures of Europe”.²⁴⁴ It was the first description of the Yussupov private collection in one hundred years of its existence that gave a deep insight into the composition and character of the collection. Being shaped in the end of the 18th – first quarter of the 19th century by Nikolai Yussupov, in the words of Benois, the Yussupov collection had distinguished merits as well as demerits that characterised all the other collections assembled at the same time: the abundance of works of the Bologna school, plenty of works by French and Dutch masters, not many works of “the Golden Age” and the complete lack of primitives.²⁴⁵ Writing his essays on the Yussupov collection in the beginning of the 20th century, Alexander Benois pointed out that the collection is not “modern” in its composition, in his impression it is “...a bit cold, gala, but at the same time it may offer inexhaustible pleasure”.²⁴⁶ Moreover, Benois visited Arkhangelskoe several times which resulted in his essay dedicated to it written under the pseudonym of B. Veniaminov.²⁴⁷

The work started by Benois was continued by Adrian Prakhov.²⁴⁸ There is a reason to assume that he was very close to the Yussupov family as he accompanied Felix Yussupov junior in his trip around Italy in 1902.²⁴⁹ In 1903 in the series of articles called “Art Treasures of Princes Yussupov”, he thoroughly described the paintings of the Yussupov collection by grouping them by masters they were executed by.²⁵⁰ Almost all the articles

²⁴⁴Alexander Benois, “Yussupovskaya galereya” (“Yussupov gallery”), *Mir Iskusstva* 13-24 Vol. 4 (1900): 140.

²⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 129.

²⁴⁶Quoted from: Alexander Benois, “Yussupovskaya galereya” (“Yussupov gallery”), *Mir Iskusstva* 13-24 Vol. 4 (1900): 129.

²⁴⁷B. Veniaminov, “Arkhnagelskoe,” *Mir Iskusstva* 2 Vol. 11 (1906): 31.

²⁴⁸Adrian Prakhov - an editor of “The Treasures of Art in Russia”, an art historian, an art collector and an archaeologist.

²⁴⁹“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“Uchenaya prikhot”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudogolik i kniga, 2001), 65.

²⁵⁰See more in: Adrian Prakhov, “Khudogestvennoe sobranie knyazey Yussupovikh” (“Art collection of Princes Yussupov”), *Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii* 8-12 (1906): 167-217; 1 (1907): 3-16; 2 (1907): 17-40; 3 (1907): 46-51; 4 (1907): 62-71; 5 (1907): 106-10; 7 (1907): 129-45; 8 (1907): 149-64; 9 (1907): 165-74; 10 (1907): 177-85; 11 (1907): 191-204; 12 (1907): 208-23.

were entirely dedicated to the French school that was well represented in the Yussupov collection. Prakhov provided biographies of selected artists whose works could be found in the Yussupov gallery and commented on subjects of paintings without deep art-historical analysis. Prakhov did not publish the results of the whole research he conducted on the Yussupov collection,²⁵¹ working in the family archives, in the mansions in Saint-Petersburg, in Moscow and in Arkhangelskoe estate.²⁵²

It is an interesting fact that during World War I there were arranged public paid visits to the Yussupov Gallery by the owners. The gained money was for the benefit of nourishing-bandaging centres for wounded.²⁵³ I would suggest that the Yussupovs did not want to make their collection public in the full sense of the word, completely opening their house for visitors - making a kind of museum out of their dwelling (as was common at that époque with Moscow merchant-collectors). They wanted it to be seen only by the guests of the house. But because of World War I – the great trouble that the Country experienced; and perhaps being aware of the interest in their collection (by the beginning of the war the collection must have been well known in Saint-Petersburg in light of the publications and exhibitions) they opened it for everybody who could pay the price, making it accessible to public. The price must have been symbolic as it usually was in such cases in order to collect more money. The Yussupov collection served their people as the money gained from this little enterprise was destined to help common soldiers.

²⁵¹ Later the results of his research were partially used in the book published in 1924 entitled *Yussupov Gallery. French School*. See: Sergei Ernst. *Yussupovskaya galereya. Frantsuzskaya shkola* (Yussupov gallery. French school) (Leningrad, 1924).

²⁵² “*Uchenaya prikhot*”: *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“Uchenaya prikhot”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudognik i kniga, 2001), 65.

²⁵³ Ekaterina Maslenikova, “*Sudba khudogestvennogo sobraniya knyazey Yussupovikh*” (“The fate of art collection of Princes Yussupov”), in *Yussupovskiy dvorets: dvoryanskie osobnyaki: istoriya roda, usadbi i kolleksii* (Yussupov palace: mansions of the nobility: history of the family, of the estate and of the collection) (Saint-Petersburg, 2002), 360.

At the same time, one should not forget that the collection had never been hidden from visitors. The Yussupovs had always loved social life and balls and receptions were frequently held in their palaces in Moscow and in Saint-Petersburg. The high society of both capitals considered it an honour to be invited to their reception. I would like to provide an example of a kind of traditional degree of openness of the Yussupov collection to highlight the steps made towards democratisation of the collection by its last owners. In her memoirs Countess Kamenskaya describes the ball “that the contemporaries could not forget for a long time, so splendid was it”.²⁵⁴ This one was organised in the Yussupov palace on Moika river embankment in 1837. Kamenskaya wrote that during the break at the ball (it happened because the empress Alexandra was leaving the ball) the guests could freely walk around the beautiful palace and enjoy the works of art that were kept not only in the gallery, but scattered all around the palace. Kamenskaya’s father was an artist so he did not want to miss a chance to see among others Canova’s sculpture “Cupid and Psyche” placed in the gala bedroom of the owners, put at the foot of the bed draped with blue damask. This was how a twenty year old girl described her impressions of the sight: “Unbelievably beautifully and mysteriously came into view out of the blue drapery these two marble enamoured deities. And how beautiful and transparent seemed marble against the blue background”.²⁵⁵ Then Kamenskaya and her father proceeded by examining the collection and went to see ancient Italian mosaics; the young Countess regretted not enjoying this beauty fully as the empress left and the ball recommenced.²⁵⁶

Indeed, the collection had always been the pride of the owners and they did not mean to hide their treasures. Being spread out around the palace paintings and objects of art often constituted an interior itself. Art and art collection was not isolated from the life of its

²⁵⁴M. Kamenskaya, *Vospominaniya* (Memoirs) (Moscow: Khudogestvennaya literature, 1991), 249.

²⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 253.

²⁵⁶*Ibid.*

owners, but was part of it. When guests came to the house they could freely enjoy the riches of the private collection. It is obvious that it was “opened” only for the very wealthy, for those who belonged to the high society.

Sharing their collections with the broader audience was the tendency of the time as well as intensification of exhibiting activity. Another leading trend of the époque had to do with the growing role of the theatre, which dominated other arts at the turn of the century. Thus a passion for theatre of the Yussupov family should be stressed especially. It could be the case that as the Yussupovs dedicated more time to their home theatre than to their art collection. Zinaida Yussupova was known for her talent in acting and dancing and love of the stage.²⁵⁷ Her son Nikolai was also very fond of theatre and was even the head of the amateur acting troop at the age of twenty two. However, his father Count Felix Felixovich did not approve of this hobby and refused to give Nikolai their home theatre for his activity.²⁵⁸ Felix Yussupov the younger did not like to act himself,²⁵⁹ but was a big theatre-goer and was on friendly terms with some actors and ballet-dancers.²⁶⁰ Home theatres of the family in Saint-Petersburg and in Arkhangelskoe were often venues for various theatrical and musical performances.²⁶¹ It was the époque when theatre and art were often intertwined and an artist often chose to be at the service of the theatre. I did not find any evidence that would prove that at this period of time the Yussupovs chose to patronise theatre rather than concentrated on their art collection. Obviously, theatre was integral part of their life. Today we do not know the names of the artists who worked for the Yussupovs to create theatre settings for their home theatres. Nothing is known about their activity as patrons of public theatres or

²⁵⁷Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004), 31.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 34.

²⁵⁹See more in: *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰N. V. Zaitseva, *Nastupaet Serebryanny vek: Yussupovskiy dvorets* (Silver Age comes: Yussupov palace) (Sankt-Peterburg, 2005), 4.

²⁶¹See more in: Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004), 35. And in: G. I. Sveshnikova, ed. *Yussupovskiy dvorets* (Yussupov palace) (Saint-Petersburg, 2004), 43.

actors. But it is essential to underline that tastes of the family were very much defined by their love of theatre.

The Yussupovs patronised arts in all its various forms. A professor of Moscow University, an art collector, Tsvetaev, initiated the creation of the Museum of Classic Art in Moscow in 1894. Many of those who worked on the creation of the museum with him, such as Klein, Prakhov and Bodet, knew the Yussupovs personally; Tsvetaev himself looked for the financial support from this rich noble family. In 1912 the Yussupovs responded to the requests of help and the design of one of the halls of the museum was made at their expense, hence its name after the great ancestor, the founder of their private collection– N.B. Yussupov Roman hall.²⁶²

The Yussupovs approved the creation of the public museum in the Country and even donated some money for this purpose. Perhaps, they were not quite yet ready for converting their own collection into a museum in the beginning of the 20th century, but they definitely wanted to stay in Russia forever and to serve their people. In 1900 Zinaida Yussupova and her husband Felix Sumarokov-Elston (1856-1928) made their will for themselves and for their little sons Nikolai and Felix, where they stated above all that if there was no heir to their fortune they wanted the state to receive all their art treasures, collections and rarities: “...for these collections to be preserved in the Russian Empire to serve the aesthetic and scientific purposes of our motherland”.²⁶³ Thus in their will the Yussupovs clearly expressed their desire to serve their Country with the help of their collection and to contribute to the process of artistic education of the people.

²⁶² “*Uchenaya prikhot*”: *kolleksiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“*Uchenaya prikhot*”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov) (Moscow: Khudogolik i kniga, 2001), 66.

²⁶³ Quoted from: Ibid.

It seems essential that the Yussupovs believed in the educative power of art and in the importance of their collection in this sense. In this respect, it is revealing to read Felix Yussupov's memoirs where he wrote about his dream:

...of turning Arkhangelskoe into an art centre, building lots of dwellings...in the neighbourhood for artists, musicians, poets, actors. There would be an academy, a conservatoire and a theatre. The palace itself I would turn into a museum, reserving several rooms for future exhibitions...The mansions on Moika river and in Moscow would be turned into museums comprising the best paintings.²⁶⁴

Obviously, the members of the Yussupov family had the most advanced views concerning art, museums, culture and cultural heritage. Perhaps, they had no time to carry out their plans and implement their ideas into reality.

Felix Yussupov, the only person to inherit the family fortune after the death of his brother Nikolai at a duel, was a person of high artistic sensitivity. He had artistic inclinations and demonstrated a strong interest in the art life of the époque. In England, where he studied at Oxford University, he met Diaghilev, Anna Pavlova and the latter became his close friend.²⁶⁵ After Felix finished his studies and came back to Saint-Petersburg he became close to the members of the "World of Art" group: he even rented out one of his mansions in the centre of Saint-Petersburg to them to organise the first "Petersburg cabaret" – this gesture very much surprised Benois as he could not understand why Felix did it.²⁶⁶ Presumably, Felix did it because he wanted to be better involved in the art world and to be closer to the people of art. It is very unlikely that Felix did it for money, as being exceptionally rich he had no need in any extra income whatsoever. Felix's contacts with the artists of the World of Art movement influenced his artistic taste. As far as it is known, Felix did not buy any paintings from them at the time but he commissioned Andrey

²⁶⁴Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004), 95.

²⁶⁵See more in: N. V. Zaitseva, *Nastupaet Serebryanny vek: Yussupovskiy dvorets* (Silver Age comes: Yussupov palace) (Sankt-Peterburg, 2005), 4.

²⁶⁶Ibid., 5.

Beloborodov – a pupil of Leonty Benois’s studio, to design the interior in his part of the palace on Moika river following the artistic canon of the World of Art group to which Beloborodov belonged.²⁶⁷ Perhaps, the interest of Yussupov in the ideas of “the World of Art” group could be explained by their artistic position that appealed to him: the integration of art into common life: when everyday life and art is intertwined.

The artistic activity of the Yussupovs was abruptly finished when the Russian revolution happened. They had to leave the Country forever. In 1919 according to the inventory, the Yussupov gallery comprised more than a thousand paintings, not to Count sculptures by Canova, Vitali, Tolstoy, Kozlovsky, Girardon, Falconet and Tricornia. Except for the collection of paintings and sculptures, the Yussupovs possessed a collection of musical instruments (128 pieces) a collection of precious stones²⁶⁸ started by Princess Tatiana (1769-1841) and tapestries, not to forget a collection of carved stones, porcelain, silver, precious books collection and the collection of autographs of famous people. Unfortunately, the collection was divided and the 45,295 paintings and objects that were housed in the Yussupov’s mansion in Saint-Petersburg were spread around different museums of the Country.²⁶⁹ Moreover, a significant number of works of art and objects were sold out abroad. Thus the Yussupov collection was completely dispersed.

The Yussupovs artistic activity can be characterised as very active and prolific at the turn of the century. The Yussupovs were personally acquainted with the people of art and Zinaida Yussupova was the first in the history of the family to give paintings for different

²⁶⁷See more in: Ibid., 9.

²⁶⁸See more in: E. F. Petinova, ed. *Znamenitie rossiyane 18-19 vekov: po izd. Velikogo knyazya Nikolaya Mikhailovicha “Russkiy portret 18 i 19 stoletiy”* (Eminent Russians of 18-19th century: based on the edition of Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich “Russian portrait of 18th - 19th century”) (Saint-Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1996), 643.

²⁶⁹Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 102.

exhibitions held not only in Russia but abroad. It proves that the Yussupovs shared the common idea of the time that art should be seen by a wider circle of people rather than by a number of privileged persons – guests of the house. In a way, the last Yussupovs elaborated on the tradition that had already existed among their ancestors, the tradition of openness to those interested in art, to those who sought to see the collection.

At the time the efforts of Zinaida Yussupova were concentrated on making her collection known, on making it part of the national heritage and public memory to a certain degree. Hence, art critics of the time got free access to the paintings and to the archives of the family. They were given an opportunity to write on the pages of famous art magazines about one of the largest and one of the most remarkable art collections of the époque. I argue that the Yussupovs as true patriots pursued the aim of serving the cause of education, enlightenment and cultural enrichment of the Country and its people by sharing the most valuable of all their treasures – by sharing with their people their priceless collection. In a word, art collecting for the Yussupov family had nothing to do with mere money investment or means of underlining its wealth or weight in society. And it had never been perceived as an end in itself.

4.3. The last acquisitions of the Yussupovs. Valentin Serov “The Yussupov series”

The artistic activity of the Yussupovs was quite intensive and multifaceted around 1900. By the end of the 19th century, the Yussupov collection was remarkably large and it was composed mostly of old masters. Almost all old European schools were represented in it. The collection had also a special section of family portraits which was traditionally extensive.

The collection was not enlarged much – only a few paintings were bought by the last owners. They bought a painting by Giovanni Segantini, which was the only work of the artist in Russia at the time²⁷⁰. Another purchase made by Zinaida Yussupova's husband Felix Felixovich was a painting by Louis-Léopold Boilly "We are Watched".²⁷¹ Boilly painted this genre scene in 1792. It is obvious that Prince Felix intended to add this painting to the already substantial number of works by this master in his collection. The following six works by Boilly had been acquired much earlier as they were included in the catalogue of 1839: "Portrait", "Faint", "Old Cure", "Release from Prison", "A Female Artist in her Studio at Work", "Billiard".²⁷² The Yussupovs bought one of the best portraits by Alexander Roslin "Zoya Marucci" from E.A. Botkin.²⁷³ Roslin was a Swedish portrait painter who moved to France and worked in Paris from 1750. In the middle of the 18th century he was quite popular with Russian aristocracy as portraits of Ivan Betskoi and Ivan Shuvalov among the others were commissioned from him. The purchases of works by Boilly and Roslin seem to be quite natural in the sense that these masters belonged to the French school of the end of the 18th century that constituted the core of the Yussupov collection. These were relatively modest acquisitions compared to the activity of the founder of the collection, Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov. At the same time, the purchase of these works of old French masters can be considered as a kind of a bridge that linked the generations, as an act of demonstration the same taste and of the continuity of certain collecting activity within one family. Whereas the acquisition of the work by Italian Art Nouveau master Segantini, whose works were not very well known in Russia, is more unexpected. I could not find the

²⁷⁰Sergei Ernst. *Yussupovskaya galereya. Frantsuzskaya shkola* (Yussupov gallery. French school) (Leningrad, 1924), xx.

²⁷¹See more in: Adrian Prakhov, "Khudogestvennoe sobranie knyazey Yussupovikh" ("Art collection of Princes Yussupov"), *Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii* 8-12 (1906): 213.

²⁷²Ibid.

²⁷³Sergei Ernst. *Yussupovskaya galereya. Frantsuzskaya shkola* (Yussupov gallery. French school) (Leningrad, 1924), xx.

explanation why the Yussupovs chose the work of this master for their collection. It can only be assumed that the Yussupovs choice was influenced by the people they knew, such as Benois, Diaghilev or Prakhov. Such choice could be determined by Felix Yussupov, who was closer to the modern art circles.

Even though the last of the Yussupovs did not make large acquisitions they added some paintings to the collection of family portraits. The family portraits had been traditionally painted by the best European artists (some of them were court painters of European monarchs) such as Rotari, Fuger, Lampi, Voual, Vigée Le Brun, Moniet, Gros, Robertson, Vintergalter and Dubuff.²⁷⁴ Zinaida Yussupova commissioned family portraits from French masters François Fleming “Portrait of Zinaida Nikolaievna Yussupova with her Children in a Park” (1894), “Portrait of Zinaida Nikolaievna Yussupov” (1894) and N. Becker; Konstantin Makovsky painted “Portrait of Princess Zinaida Nikolaievna Yussupova in Russian Costume” (1900); Viktor Shtember “Portrait of Felix Felixovich Yussupov, Count Sumarokov-Elston”; Konstantin Stepanov executed “Portrait of Zinaida Nikolaievna Yussupova”; Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky was commissioned for “Portrait of Nikolai Felixovich Yussupov” (1900s) and “Portrait of Felix Felixovich Yussupov” (1911) and Valentin Serov worked on a series of family portraits. The fact that with the exception of two Western masters all the family portraits were commissioned from Russian masters deserves attention. It differs a lot from the approach of the previous generations of the family, who were much more West orientated in this sense and would prefer a French painter to a Russian one.

²⁷⁴Ibid.

It is essential to underline that it was one of the first times in the history of creation of family portraits when the Yussupovs chose a Russian painter to execute their portraits. Partly this could be explained by the fact that Valentin Serov was chosen by tsar Nickolas II, as well as by some Grand Dukes and Grand Dutchess to have their portraits painted. The Yussupovs were well aware of this fact and must have taken it into consideration making their choice of a portraitist. Indeed, they wanted to be as close to the monarchs as possible. As a rich noble family in Russia they could not strive for more than to be closer related to the tsars. These attempts resulted in the marriage of Felix Yussupov to a niece of Russian tsar Nickolas II, Irina Romanova.

In my opinion, there was another reason that determined the choice of Valentin Serov that lay in the fact that by the end of the nineteenth century Russian nobility felt themselves to be truly Russian. Moreover, from the end of the 19th century Russian style and ‘Russianness’ came into fashion. The Yussupovs no longer needed and no longer wanted to underline their belonging to the European aristocracy and elite, as they were simply proud to be Russian. I believe that this feeling of patriotism and pride could partly explain the choice of Serov as their main portraitist and of the other Russian painters such as Makovsky, Bogdanov-Belsky, Stepanov and Shtember.

Thus the family tradition of commissioning family portraits from the best contemporary artists was continued by commissions from mostly Russian masters at the turn of the century. I would like to concentrate on the works of Valentin Serov, who painted a series of portraits of the Yussupov family: three portraits of Zinaida Yussupova, of her husband Felix Sumarokov-Elston, and their sons Nickolai and Felix. The story of creation of this series of portraits over which Serov worked from 1901 to 1903 in Saint-Petersburg and in

Arkhangeskoe²⁷⁵ opens up the relations of a painter and a commissioner, of a painter and a model. It proves to be possible to reconstruct their interrelations due to the memoirs left by Felix Felixovich Yussupov the younger and the letters of Valentin Serov written to his wife in this period of time.

Before the analysis of a patron-artist interrelations I would like to stress that Zinaida Yussupova knew Serov before she commissioned from him. She must have been also acquainted with many other Russian artists as she took part in the so-called drawing evenings. The fact of her participation in such evenings that were meant to give painters a chance to get together, to improve their drawing skills and to establish new contacts or even to find a patron is almost unknown today. Such evenings were usually organised either by professional painters or by art lovers. Those organised by the latter were a combination of drawing and meetings of high society. Princess Golitsina was famous for organising such evenings in Moscow at the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century. In the drawing evenings held in her house, noble ladies of exceptional beauty posed for artists. A large hall of the palace was reserved for such drawing sessions. In the neighbouring halls guests of the house were treated with tea, sandwiches and fruit. A painter at work was often observed by the guests of the house, many of whom were of high rank. Painters Leonid Pasternak, father of a writer Boris Pasternak, and Valentin Serov frequented such evenings. One evening Leonid Pasternak was drawing a portrait of Zinaida Yussupova. He remembered of that by her beauty, by the elegance of her clothes and by her aristocratic bearing Zinaida Yussupova resembled a marchioness from 18th century portrait. Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, general-governor, a patron of Moscow School of Arts and Sculpture observed Pasternak at

²⁷⁵Igor Grabar, *Serov: zhizn i tvorchestvo 1865-1911* (Serov: life and work 1865-1911) (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1980), 190.

work. “Oh what a night! ...Could give five roubles to enter!”²⁷⁶ with a smile commented Serov on this evening. Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich must have loved the work of the artist as on the Wonderers exhibition of 1898 he bought some of his drawings including the portrait of Princess Yussupova.²⁷⁷ Thus this drawing was not added to the Yussupov collection.

Zinaida Yussupova was not painted by Serov at that evening. It happened later when Serov executed his famous Yussupov series, a series of works where every portrait was a silent characteristic. Benois was one of the first art critics to notice that in his works Serov penetrated into the psychology of the portrayed face delicately.²⁷⁸ Contemporaries believed that Serov showed on the portrait the inner world of his model. Serov worked slowly and took his time to adjust to his model before “taking” it: he always fixed ninety sittings when he painted a portrait, every time placing a person he portrayed in one and the same place, in one and the same pose, but perceiving her/him from different points of view.²⁷⁹ At times, Serov experienced hard times in his pursuit of “taking” his model. So that the artist himself acknowledged that “every portrait...was the whole illness for him”.²⁸⁰

Igor Grabar, Serov’s biographer, wrote that the painter worked a lot on the portraits of the Yussupov family, especially admiring charming Zinaida Nikolaievna .²⁸¹ Serov started his portrait of Zinaida Yussupova in 1900 in Saint-Petersburg. The portrait was finished only in

²⁷⁶Quoted from: Rahel Likht. *Chernovik biografii Borisa Pasternaka : chast I: “O detstvo! Kovsh dushevnoi glubi!” (1889-1903)* (“Draft of Boris Pasternak’s biography: part I: “O detstvo! Kovsh dushevnoi glubi!” (1889-1903)”), <http://www.port-folio.org/2007/part239.html>. Last accessed 17.05.07.

²⁷⁷Ibid.

²⁷⁸Alexander Benois, *Istoriya russkoi zhivopisi v 19 veke* (Russian art history at 19th century), 3d ed, (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), 359.

²⁷⁹Militsa Nekludova, *Traditsii i novatorstvo v russkom iskusstve kontsa 19 – n. 20 veka* (Traditions and innovations in Russian art at the turn of the 20th century) (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1991), 164.

²⁸⁰Ibid., 160.

²⁸¹Igor Grabar, *Serov: zhizn i tvorchestvo 1865-1911* (Serov: life and work 1865-1911) (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1980), 190.

two years so that the work on it lasted much longer than the usual three months sitting session. Zinaida posed gladly, was nice and Serov enjoyed his work. In one of the letters to his wife the painter told her that the Yussupovs were very kind and attentive to him and received him warmly every time he came, stressing that Princess Zinaida Yussupova who was very much praised by people was indeed a very nice, good-natured and understanding person.²⁸²

It is a well-known fact that Yussupovs themselves wanted to cut the head of Zinaida Nikolaievna out of the portrait and to frame it anew as they did not like the portrait as a whole. Fortunately they never had it done. Benois praised the portrait of Zinaida Yussupova by Serov by saying that the painter could then be compared to the greatest masters of woman's beauty and he regretted very much that in the eyes of some of his contemporaries this work deserved despise.²⁸³ Serov enjoyed painting Zinaida Yussupova and, except for the gala portrait painted in Saint-Petersburg, Yussupov made two pastels of the Princess (on one of them he managed to render the way she laughed; this is what charmed Serov in her) and one minor portrait of her.²⁸⁴

It was usual for Serov to work on several portraits at the same time. So parallel to his work on the gala portrait of Zinaida Yussupova, he made a series of the Yussupov's portraits in Arkhangelskoye. Serov loved Arkhangelskoye saying that: "Arkhangelskoye with its

²⁸²Ibid., 191.

²⁸³Alexander Benois, *Istoriya russkoi zhivopisi v 19 veke* (Russian art history at 19th century), 3d ed, (Moscow: Respublika, 1999), 359.

²⁸⁴V. A. Lenyashin, *Portretnaya zhivopis V.A. Serova 1900-h godov: osnovnye problemy* (Portraits by V. A. Serov of 1900: major issues) (Leningrad: Khudognik RSFSR, 1980), 100.

sculptures and trimmed trees, with a beautiful view over the other bank of Moskva river was very, very beautiful”.²⁸⁵

Serov remembered the time spent there as of one of the best periods in his life. The painter was very much pleased with his noble commissioners. When Serov compared the Yussupovs to his merchant-patrons or “monsters-merchants” as he called them, a painter noted that his soul had rested with these people [the Yussupovs].²⁸⁶ Serov never had to worry about payment for his work, as the Yussupovs, unlike merchants, were generous:

...Prince Yussupov kindly mentioned that he did not ask about the price – he would pay any price I set – this is Princely, I approve of it...Though I think I will not charge him much – we will see.²⁸⁷

Serov did not conceal his kind attitude to the Yussupovs. Thus Felix Yussupov remembered in his memoirs that the painter once said that: “...if all rich people were like my parents there would be no need for revolution”.²⁸⁸

In his letters to his wife Serov described his interrelations with Zinaida Yussupova. Serov mentioned an episode when during one of his visits to Arkhangelskoe, Zinaida Yussupova demonstrated the painter his present (Serov could not think of a present he made to Princess Zinaida) which happened to be a photograph of a portrait of Nickolas II given by Serov to the Princess two years ago and which she framed and kept in her study.²⁸⁹ At times, he was irritated by her advice, for example he did not like her idea about her younger son Felix wearing a blue jacket. In his opinion, it would look horrible and would make one feel sick, so he made his own choice of the model’s clothing ignoring the desire of his

²⁸⁵Quoted from: Igor Grabar, *Serov: zhizn i tvorchestvo 1865-1911* (Serov: life and work 1865-1911) (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1980), 192.

²⁸⁶Ibid., 190.

²⁸⁷Quoted from: Ibid., 194.

²⁸⁸Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004), 69.

²⁸⁹Igor Grabar, *Serov: zhizn i tvorchestvo 1865-1911* (Serov: life and work 1865-1911) (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1980), 192.

commissioner.²⁹⁰ Their tastes were not always common, but both Zinaida Yussupova and Serov were interested in the work to be completed. Serov described how Zinaida Yussupova helped him by persuading her older son Nikolai to pose for him. Her urgings did not help much and Nikolai kept refusing to sit for the portrait under any plausible or not plausible excuse.²⁹¹ This portrait did not come easily to Serov as in his expression he could not “take” his model and it took him a while to do so.²⁹²

It was easier for Serov to work on the portrait of Felix Yussupov the younger. In the portrait, as many art critics noticed, the painter managed to capture “...with great sensitivity the young man’s artistic temperament, as well as his eccentric flamboyance”.²⁹³ There is evidence of Felix’s own feeling about his portrait, which he had once after taking a good look at and noticing that a true physiognomist Serov rendered his character as nobody could depicting him as a “proud, conceited and a heartless”²⁹⁴ young man. Felix Yussupov and Valentin Serov seemed to be close when the painter worked on the portrait of the Prince. Felix Yussupov wrote in his memoirs that:

Out of all great artists that I have ever met in my life in Russia and abroad, the memory of him was the brightest. We became friends from the first sight. His admiration of Arkhangelskoye was the basis of our friendship. ...His ideas influenced my way of thinking a lot.²⁹⁵

Unfortunately, no remarks are found on their interrelations with Felix in Serov’s letters.

Serov was content with the results of his work: he himself and the Princes liked the portrait of Felix the younger, of which there is a testimony provided by Felix Yussupov in his memoirs:

²⁹⁰Ibid., 193.

²⁹¹Ibid.

²⁹²Ibid., 194.

²⁹³Quoted from: Oleg Neverov, *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 93.

²⁹⁴Felix Yussupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs) (Moskva: Zakharov, 2004), 104.

²⁹⁵Ibid., 69

Serov was happy with my portrait. Diaghilev took it from us for the exhibition of Russian art that he organised in Venice in 1907. The painting brought unnecessary fame to me. My parents did not like it and they asked Diaghilev not to exhibit it.²⁹⁶

The painter completed the portrait of Felix's father's on horseback, when, in his own words, he fulfilled the wish of the Prince by making the portrait rather of the horse than of him and stayed happy with this.²⁹⁷ Serov painted a number of portraits of Zinaida Yussupova as well. Once, Igor Grabar talked to Valentin Serov about the painter's best works: Serov handed his private biographer the list containing fifteen of his works that the painter himself considered to be the best. To the surprise of Grabar, all fifteen works were portraits. The list contained two portraits of the Yussupovs: the portrait of the Princess Zinaida Yussupova and of her husband Felix Yussupov.²⁹⁸ Perhaps, this is the highest judgement of all – the judgement of a painter on his own work.

The Yussupovs commissioned their family portraits from the leading contemporary artists preferring Russian masters to Western. Assumingly, it demonstrated significant changes in their perception of Russian art. Perhaps, the Yussupovs did not start collecting contemporary Russian art because that would contradict the nature of the already existing collection, where the number of works executed by Russian masters was very limited. Nevertheless, the Yussupovs extended the Russian section of their collection commissioning portraits from Russian artists. Modest purchases for their collection characteristic of the period (works by Boilly and Roslin) demonstrate that the owners must have thought of their collection as of being complete and thought it was unnecessary to enlarge it. However, the acquisition of one work by Segantini can signify their interest in contemporary art of the époque. However, for some reason they chose not to embark on collecting it on a serious

²⁹⁶Ibid., 70

²⁹⁷V. Byalik, "Portrety knyazey Yussupovikh" ("Portraits of Princes Yussupov"), *Yuny Khudogolik*, 4 (2000), 11.

²⁹⁸Igor Grabar, *Serov: zhizn i tvorchestvo 1865-1911* (Serov: life and work 1865-1911) (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1980), in appendix.

basis. Among the members of the Yussupov family were no avid and dedicated collectors at this period of time. The activity of the Yussupovs that had to do with their collection was concentrated mostly on exhibiting and popularising their collection rather than on extending it.

Conclusions

By the beginning of the 20th century private art collecting in Saint-Petersburg had already undergone a two century long process of development. Furthermore, art collecting was a very bright phenomenon of artistic life of Saint-Petersburg around 1900. It was characterised by the process of continuous widening of social background of collectors which started in the second half of the 19th century in Saint-Petersburg. At the same time, collectors of all social backgrounds and material means became more and more involved in the artistic network of the time on both national and international levels. In addition, the general level of art collectors can be characterised as connoisseurship, which reflected a high level of collecting activity. Moreover, the new tendency to assemble narrowly specialised art collections (rather than collections made up of all different art schools) prevailed in this period of time among the collectors of the capital. Often private collection transformed into a home museum for Saint-Petersburg collectors.

This social activity proved to be imbedded into artistic reality of the époque. However, the advent of modern art groups (World of Art Group) and innovative painters, characteristic of the époque, did not change the traditional mode of collecting in Saint-Petersburg as happened in Moscow. These were Moscow collectors out of merchants and intelligentsia who collected and patronised modern Russian and European art not those of Saint-Petersburg. Saint-Petersburg collectors of the time demonstrated strong adherence to traditional collecting, so that their choice of collecting pieces was limited to old European schools most of the time. Thus the taste of collectors from Saint-Petersburg (both of noble origin and of different background) can be considered conservative compared to that of their Moscow colleagues.

The world of Saint-Petersburg collectors proved to be open and receptive to the challenges of the time. Hence paintings from private collections were widely exhibited and collections were opened for art critics. Thus very often collectors themselves initiated the process of studying of their collections which pushed further development of art history in Russia. Many collectors demonstrated their willingness to popularize and to donate their collections to the Hermitage thus they wanted to serve the best of their Country and their people. The growing number of collectors and intensification of their activity that could be observed in Saint-Petersburg was caused to a large extent by rapid development of the art market and art business.

A case study of the Yussupov collection served to demonstrate how well a traditional aristocratic collection (which developed historically and reflected European art of old schools) could adjust to the new demands of modernised art life around 1900. It also shows the individual strategies of patronage at the turn of the century. The case study reflects the relative openness of the young generation of the family to modern contemporary art trends and tendencies. The eagerness of the Yussupovs to popularise their collection was remarkable at the turn of the century. The paintings from their collection were offered for different exhibitions (those held in Russia and abroad). Taking part in various art exhibitions constituted the core activity of the Yussupovs. They perceived their collection as complete and did not expand it significantly at this period of time.

Obviously, the last owners of the family collection, Princess Zinaida Yussupova and her son Prince Felix managed to combine good taste and a sense for high quality and high artistic standards in art with promoting one of the most famous Russian art-nouveau artists,

Valentin Serov, and some other modernists like Makovsky, Stepanov and Bogdanov-Belsky. Commissions from Russian painters indicate that the Yussupovs followed the general trend of the époque – active patronage of Russian, not foreign artists. At the same time, the Yussupovs stayed on the conservative side in their taste and artistic preferences, so the scale of their patronage activity could not be compared to that of some of their contemporaries (Moscow merchant patrons) being more reserved. Naturally individual interest and preferences always influence patronage and leave an impact on its nature. So in the case of the Yussupovs, it was more passion for the stage and the theatre that captured them rather than patronage of arts and art collecting. The special role that the theatre played in the art life of the époque must have influenced their artistic preferences.

Evidently, the Yussupovs were Russian patriots even if they were conservatives and in this sense they regarded their collection to be an integral part of Russia's artistic heritage. That is why they collaborated with many of the art exhibitions of the age and supported the museum foundations of the others too. The Yussupovs served their Country well and wanted their collection to do so by contributing into creation of the new even better cultured national elite. The culmination of this Yussupovs desire can be considered their will where they wanted the state to obtain their art treasures in case their family line stopped. As for the youngest member of the family, Felix Yussupov, he had ideas of turning his family estate Arkhangelskoe into an art centre. Unfortunately, because of the Russian revolution none of the plans of the Yussupovs were accomplished. After the revolution the family left the Country on board of the Marlboro leaving all their art treasures in Russia.

Bibliography

Memoirs

Benois, Alexander. *Moi vospominaniya* (My memoirs). Vol. 2. Moscow: Nauka, 1980.

Rasskazi babushki: iz vospominaniy pyati pokoleny zapisannye i sobrannye ee vnukom D. Blagovo (Grandmother's tales: from the memoirs of five generations written and collected by her grandson D. Blagovo). Leningrad: Nauka, 1989.

Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, Piotr. *Memuary* (Memoirs). Vol. 1. Petrograd, 1917.

Tenisheva, Maria. *Vpechatleniya moey zhizni* (Impressions of my life). Moskva: Molodaya gvardiya, 2006.

Yussupov, Nikolai. *O rode knyazey Yussupovikh: sobranie gizneopisaniy ih, gramot i pisem k nim rossiiskikh gosudarey s 16 do poloviny 19 veka i drugikh familnikh bumag, s prisovokupleniem pokolennoy rospisi predkov knyazey Yussupovikh s 14 veka* (On the Yussupov family: a set of their biographies, documents and letters to them of the Russian rulers from 16th till the middle of 19th century and other family papers, with signatures of ancestors of Princes Yussupov of 14th century). Vol. 1. Saint-Petersburg, 1866.

Yussupov, Felix. *Memuary* (Memoirs). Moskva: Zakharov, 2004.

_____. *Rasputin: his malignant influence and his assassination*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1927.

Contemporary art critics

Benois, Alexander. *Istoriya russkoi zhivopisi v 19 veke* (Russian art history at 19th century), 3d ed. Moscow: Respublika, 1999.

_____. "Sobranie F. F. Uteman v Sankt-Peterburge" ("Art collection of F. F. Uteman in Saint-Petersburg"). *Starye Gody* 4 (1908): 181-82.

_____. *Vozniknovenie "Mira Iskusstva"* (Beginnings of the World of Art). Leningrad: kom. populyarizatsii khudogestv. izd. 1928.

_____. "Yussupovskaya galereya" ("Yussupov gallery"). *Mir Iskusstva* 13-24 Vol. 4 (1900): 129-52.

"M. P. Fabricius. Nekrolog" ("M. P. Fabricius. An obituary notice"). *Starye Gody* 7-8 (1915): 116.

"Otradne vesty iz Ermitaga" ("Good news from the Hermitage"). *Starye Gody* 7-9 (1910): 209.

Prakhov, Adrian. "Khudogestvennoe sobranie knyazey Yussupovikh" ("Art collection of Princes Yussupov"). *Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii* 8-12 (1906): 167-217; 1

(1907): 3-16; 2 (1907): 17-40; 3 (1907): 46-51; 4 (1907): 62-71; 5 (1907): 106-10; 7 (1907): 129-45; 8 (1907): 149-64; 9 (1907): 165-74; 10 (1907): 177-85; 11 (1907): 191-204; 12 (1907): 208-23.

Semenov, Piotr. *Etudy po istorii Niderlandskoy zhivopisi na osnovanii ee obraztsov nakhodyashchikhsya v publichnikh i chastnikh sobraniyakh Peterburga: prilogenie k "Vestniku Izyashnikh Iskusstv"* (Studies on the history of the Netherlandish art based on its examples kept in public and private collections of Saint-Petersburg: a supplement to "Vestnik Izyashnikh Iskusstv"). Vol. 1-2. Saint-Petersburg: Tipografiya M.M. Stasyulevicha, 1885, 1890.

Shchavinsky, Vasily. "Piotr Petrovich Semenov-Tian-Shansky." *Starye Gody* 3 (1914): 57-59.

Shmidt, D. A. "Dar V. P. Zurova Imperatorskomu Ermitagu" ("Gift of V. P. Zurov to the Imperial Hermitage"). *Starye Gody* 3 (1916): 24.

_____. "Novoe priobretenie Ermitaga" ("New acquisition of the Hermitage"). *Starye Gody* 7-9 (1910): 204-07.

"Sobranie Petra Petrovicha Semyonova v Sankt-Peterburge" ("Art collection of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov in Saint-Petersburg"). *Khudogestvennye Sokrovisha Rossii* Vol. 1 (1901): 119.

Veniaminov, B. "Arkhnagelskoe." *Mir Iskusstva* 2 Vol. 11 (1906): 64-67.

Vrangel, Nikolai. "Pavel Viktorovich Delarov." *Starye Gody* (March, 1913): 62.

_____. "Prodaga sobraniya P. V. Delarova" ("Sale of P. V. Delarov's collection"). *Starye Gody* 11 (1913): 46-47.

Catalogues

Fabricius, M. P. *Kartiny Sobraniya M. P. Fabricius* (Paintings from the collection of M. P. Fabricius). Saint-Petersburg: Tipografiya E. E. Novitskogo, 1906.

Musée du Prince Youssoupoff, contenant les tableaux, marbre, ivoires et porcelains qui se trouvent dans l'hôtel de son Excellence, à St. Petersbourg. Saint-Petersburg, 1839.

Podrobny illustrirovanny catalog Vystavki Russkoy Portretnoy Zhivopisi za 150 let, 1700-1850 (A detailed illustrated catalogue of the exhibition of Russian portrait for 150 years, 1700-1850). Saint-Peterburg, 1902.

Prakhov, Adrian. *Albom istoricheskoy vistavki predmetov iskusstva, ustroennoy v 1904 godu, v Sankt-Peterburge* (Album of the historical exhibition of objects of art, arranged in Saint-Petersburg in 1904). Saint-Petersburg, 1907.

Rembrandt: Collection des Oeuvres du Maîtres réunies, à l'occasion de l'inauguration de S.M. la Reine Wilhelmine, au Musée de la Ville à Amsterdam 8 septembre – 31 octobre 1898. Amsterdam, 1898.

Savinskaya, Lyubov, comp. "Katalog gollandskoy givopisi iz sobraniya muzeya-usadby Arkhangel'skoe" ("A Catalogue of Dutch art from the collection of museum-estate Arkhangel'skoe"). *Musey 8: Khudogestvennyye Sobraniya SSSR* (1987): 204-14.

Sobranie kartin V. A. Shchavinskogo: katalog (Art collection of V. A. Shchavinsky: a catalogue). Petrograd, 1917.

Secondary sources

A Collector's Taste: Dutch Paintings of the 16th and 17th Centuries from the Collection of Piotr Petrovich Semenov-Tian-Shansky.
<http://www.codart.nl/exhibitions/details/1049/>. Last accessed 18.05.07.

Alsop, Joseph. *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1982.

Baekeland, Frederick. "Psychological Aspects of Art Collecting." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce, 205-19. London: Routledge, 2003.

Bannikov, A. P. "Kollektsiya generala Alexeya Ivanovicha Korsakova" ("Collection of a general Alexey Ivanovich Korsakov"). In *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii "Vipperovskie chteniya 1994", vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials "Vipperovskie readings 1994", edition XXVII), 45-46. Moscow: Gosudarstvennyy muzey izobrazitel'nykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995.

_____. "Kollektsiya P. V. Delarova i ee sudba" ("Collection of P. V. Delarov and its fate"). In *Znatochestvo, kollektsionirovanie, metsenatstvo* (Connoisseurship, collecting, patronage of art), ed. N. S. Kuteinikova, 51-57. Saint-Petersburg: Institut zhivopisi, skulptury i arkhitektury, 1992.

Belk, Russell W. "Collectors and Collecting." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce, 317-26. London: Routledge, 2003.

Belk, Russell W., and Melanie Wallendorf. "Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce, 240-53. London: Routledge, 2003.

Bohanov, Aleksandr. *Kollektsionery i metsenaty v Rossii* (Collectors and patrons of art in Russia). Moscow: Nauka, 1989.

Bowlit, John E. *The Silver Age: Russian Art of the Early Twentieth Century and the "World of Art" Group*, 2d ed. Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1982.

_____, ed. *Russian Art of the Avant-garde: Theory and Criticism, 1902-1934*, rev. and enl. ed. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988.

- Bruck, Ya. V., ed. *Gosudarstvennaya Tretyakovskaya galleriya: Ocherki istorii 1856-1917*. (The State Tretyakov gallery: history studies 1856-1917) Leningrad: Khudogolik RSFSR, 1981.
- Buck, Louisa, and Philip Dodd. *Relative Values: or What's Art Worth?* London: BBC Books, 1991.
- Bulavina, L., V. Rapoport, and N. Unanyants, *Arkhangelskoe*. Moscow, 1981.
- Burrus, Christina, and Sue Rose. *Art Collectors of Russia: the Private Treasure Revealed*. London: Tauris Parke, 1994.
- Butorov, A. *Sobiratel'i i metsenaty Angliiskogo kluba* (Collectors and patrons of art of the English club). Moscow: Izd. Moskovskogo Angliiskogo kluba, 2002.
- Byalik, V. "Portrety knyazey Yussupovikh" ("Portraits of Princes Yussupov"). *Yuny Khudogolik*, 4 (2000), 10-12.
- Chayanov, Aleksandr. *Moskovskie sobraniya kartin sto let nazad* (Moscow art collections one hundred years ago). Moscow: Gorodskaya tipografiya, 1917.
- Collectors and Patrons of Art in Saint-Petersburg 1703-1917*. Saint-Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyy Ermitag, 1995.
- Collectors in Saint-Petersburg*. Amsterdam, 2006.
- Crane, Susan A. *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Danet, Brenda, and Tamar Katriel. "No Two Alike: Play and Aesthetics." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce, 220-39. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Dumova, Natalya. *Moskovskie metsenaty* (Moscow patrons of art). Moscow: Molodaya gvardiya, 1992.
- Ernst, Sergei. *Yussupovskaya galereya. Frantsuzskaya shkola* (Yussupov gallery. French school). Leningrad, 1924.
- Finogeeva, L. "Semyonov-Tian-Shansky – iskusstvoved i kollektsioner" ("Semyonov-Tian-Shansky – an art historian and an art collector"). *Khudogolik* 9 (1976): 30-31.
- From Poussin to Matisse: the Russian taste for French painting: a loan exhibition from the U.S.S.R.* Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990.
- Grabar, Igor. *Serov: zhizn i tvorchestvo 1865-1911* (Serov: life and work 1865-1911). Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1980.
- Gray, Camilla. *The Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*. Rev. and enl. Marian Burleigh-Motley. London: Thames and Hudson, 1986.

- Hare, Richard. *The Art and Artists of Russia*. Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1965.
- Hunter-Stiebel, Penelope, ed. *Stroganoff: The Palace and Collections of a Russian Noble Family*. NY; London: Harry N. Abrams, 2000.
- Kamenskaya, M. *Vospominaniya* (Memoirs). Moscow: Khudogestvennaya literature, 1991.
- Karlina, N. N., comp. *Russkie metsenaty: beseda o knigakh* (Russian patrons of art: book talk). Moscow: RGUB, 1995.
- Kean, Beverly Whitney. *French Painters, Russian Collectors: the Merchant Patrons of Modern art in Pre-revolutionary Russia*, rev. and updated ed. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994.
- Kopshits, M. *Savva Mamontov*. Moskva, 1993.
- Kozlov, I. V. *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky, 1827-1914*. Moscow: Nauka, 1991.
- Lapshin, Vladimir. "Vistavochnaya proza: zametki o sobiratelstve, rinke i kriteriyakh vistavochnogo uspekha v kontse 19 – nachale 20 vekov" ("Exhibiting prose: notes on collecting, market and criteria of exhibiting success at the turn of the 20th century"). *Pinakoteka* 6-7 (1998): 61-69.
- Lazarevsky, I. "Po povodu" ("On the occasion"). *Sredi Kollektionerov* 1 (1922): 36-37.
- _____. "Sobirатели i antikvary proshlogo. A. Z. Khitrovo" ("Collectors and antiquarians of the past. A. Z. Khitrovo"). *Sredi Kollektionerov* 6-7 (1923): 30.
- Lenyashin, V. A. *Portretnaya zhivopis V.A. Serova 1900-h godov: osnovnye problemy* (Portraits by V. A. Serov of 1900: major issues). Leningrad: Khudognik RSFSR, 1980.
- Lewisohn, Sam "Is Collecting an Art?" *Parnassus* 5, Vol. 6 (October 1934): 14-15.
- Likht, Rahel. *Chernovik biografii Borisa Pasternaka : chast I: "O detstvo! Kovsh dushevnoi glubi!" (1889-1903)"* ("Draft of Boris Pasternak's biography: part I: "O detstvo! Kovsh dushevnoi glubi!" (1889-1903)"). <http://www.portfolio.org/2007/part239.html>. Last accessed 17.05.07.
- Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: the Life of a Russian Geographer*. Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980.
- Lopukhin, E. *Samie znamenitye metsenaty Rossii* (The most eminent Russian patrons of art). Moscow: Veche, 2003.

- Marks, Steven G. *How Russia Shaped the Modern World: From Art to Anti-Semitism, Ballet to Bolshevism*. Princeton: Princeton University, 2003.
- Martinov, Sergei. *Predprinimateli, blagotvoriteli, metsenaty: Stroganovy, Alekseevy, Tretyakovy, Morozovy, Guchkovy*. (Entrepreneurs, philanthropists, patrons of art: the Stroganovs, the Alekseevs, the Tretyakovs, the Morozovs, the Guchkovs). Saint-Petersburg: Pirs, 1993.
- Maslenikova, Ekaterina. "Sudba khudogestvennogo sobraniya knyazey Yussupovikh" ("The fate of art collection of Princes Yussupov"). In *Yussupovsky dvorets: dvoryanskie osobnyaki: istoriya roda, usadbi i kolleksii* (Yussupov palace: mansions of the nobility: history of the family, of the estate and of the collection), 359-67. Saint-Petersburg, 2002.
- Morozov, Shchukin, *kolleksionery: ot Mone do Picasso: 120 shedevrov iz Ermitaga, Sankt-Peterburg, i muzeya im. A. S. Pushkina, Moskva* (Morozov, Shchukin, collectors: from Monet to Picasso: 120 masterpieces from the Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg, and Pushkin Museum, Moscow). Keln: Knizhnoe izdatelstvo Diumon, 1993.
- Myagkov, P. I. "O kartinakh zapadnoevropeiskikh masterov iz kolleksii P. V. Delarova" ("On the pictures by West-European masters from P. V. Delarov's collection"). In *Kolleksionery v Sankt-Peterburge 1703-1917: Tezisy dokladov konferentsii* (Saint-Petersburg collectors 1703-1917: conference materials), 34-37. Sankt-Peterburg: Gosudarstvennyy Ermitag, 1995.
- Neklodova, Militsa. *Traditsii i novatorstvo v russkom iskusstve kontsa 19 – n. 20 veka* (Traditions and innovations in Russian art at the turn of the 20th century). Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1991.
- Neverov, Oleg. *Great Private Collections of Imperial Russia*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- Nikiforova, I. V. *Materialy biografii knyazya N.B. Yussupova-mladshego* (Materials on the biography of N. B. Yussupov the younger). Moscow: Kompaniya Sputnik, 2003.
- Paston, Eleonora. *Abramtsevo: iskusstvo i zhizn*. (Abramtsevo: art and life). Moscow: Iskusstvo, 2003.
- Pearce, Susan M. *Museum, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian University Press, 1993.
- _____. "The Urge to Collect." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce, 157-59. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Petinova, E. F., ed. *Znamenitie rossiyan 18-19 vekov: Po izd. Velikogo knyazya Nikolaya Mikhailovicha "Russkiy portret 18 i 19 stoletiy"* (Eminent Russians of 18-19th century: based on the edition of Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich "Russian portrait of 18th - 19th century"). Saint-Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1996.

- Petrov, Vsevolod. *Russian Art Nouveau: The World of Art and Diaghilev's Painters*. England: Parkstone Press, 1997.
- Petrov, Vsevolod, and Aleksandr Kamensky. *The World of Art Movement in Early 20th - Century Russia*. Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1991.
- Petrova, Evgeniya, ed. *Mir iskusstva. K 100-letiu vystavki russkikh i finliandskikh khudozhnikov 1898 goda* (The World of Art. On the occasion of the centenary of the exhibition of Russian and Finnish artists held in 1898). Saint-Petersburg: Palace Editions, 1998.
- Polunina, N. *Kollektsionery Rossii 17-nachalo 20 vv.: entsiklopedichesky slovar* (Russian collectors 17th-beginning 20th century: encyclopaedia). Moscow: RIPOL classic, 2005.
- _____. *Kollektsionery staroy Moskvi: illustrirovanny biografichesky slovar* (Collectors of old Moscow: illustrated biographies). Moscow: Nezavisimaya gazeta, 1997.
- Pomian, Krzysztof. "The Collection: Between the Visible and the Invisible." In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan M. Pearce, 160-74. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Raeburn, Michael, ed. *The Twilight of the Tsars: Russian Art of the Turn of the Century*. London: South Bank Centre, 1991.
- Rakin, V. A. "Sheremetevy – sobirатели zapadnoevropeiskoy zhivopisi" ("The Sheremetievs – the collectors of West-European art"). In *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii "Vipperovskie chteniya 1994"*, vypusk XXVII (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials "Vipperovskie readings 1994", edition XXVII), 28. Moscow: Gosudarstvenny muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995.
- Russkaya khudogestvennaya kultura kontsa 19 – nachala 20 vekov (1895-1907)* (Russian art life at the turn of the 20th century (1895-1907). Vol. 2. Moscow, 1969.
- Salnikova, Irina. *Mi bili...Iz istorii gosudarstvennogo i chastnogo sobiratelstva proizvedeny russkogo iskusstva 18 – pervoy poloviny 19 veka* (We were...From the history of state and private collecting of Russian art at 18th – first half of 19th century). Saint-Petersburg: Blits, 2003.
- Sarabyanov, Dmitry. *Istoriya russkogo iskusstva XIX-nachala XX veka* (History of Russian art at 19th – beginning of 20th century). Moscow: AST-PRESS, 2001.
- Savinskaya, Lyubov. "Katalog gollandskoy givopisi iz sobraniya muzeya-usadby Arkhangel'skoe" ("A Catalogue of Dutch art from the collection of museum-estate Arkhangel'skoe"). *Musey 8: Khudogestvennyye Sobraniya SSSR* (1987): 204-14.

- _____. “Pisma Ya. F. Hakkerta knyazu N. B. Yussupovu (k istorii kollektсионirovaniya v Rossii 1770-1780h godov)” (“Letters of I. F. Hackert to Prince N. B. Yussupov (on the history of art collecting in Russia, 1770-1780)”). *Pamyatniki Kultury: Novie Otkritiya. Pismennost. Iskusstvo. Arheologiya. Egegodnik 1989* (1990): 232-43.
- _____. “Uchenaya prikhot: kollektsiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova” (“Uchenaya prikhot: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov”). *Nashe Nasledie* 63-64 (2002): 8-33.
- _____. “Znatok zhivet izucheniem: khudogetsvenny rynok pervoy poloviny 19 veka i russkie kollektсионery zapadno-evropeiskoy zhivopisi” (“A connoisseur lives by studying: art market at the first half of 19th century and Russian collectors of West-European art”). *Mir Muzeya* 2 (1995): 25-29.
- Severyukhin, Dmitry. “Vistavochnaya proza” *Peterburga: iz istorii khudogestvennogo rynka* (“Exhibiting prose” of Saint-Petersburg: on the history of art market). Saint-Petersburg: Izd-vo im. N.I. Novikova, 2003.
- _____. *Zolotoy vek khudogestvennikh obedineniy v Rossii i SSSR, 1820-1932* (Golden age of art groups in Russia and in the USSR, 1820-1932). Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo Chernysheva, 1992.
- Shchavinsky, Vasily. “Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel” (“Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector”). In *Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo*, comp. Nikolai Vrangeli, 10-15. Saint-Petersburg: O-vo zashchiti i sokhraneniya v Rossii pamyatnikov iskusstva i starini, 1914.
- Sherbatov, Sergei. *Khudogestvennik v ushedshey Rossii* (An artist in gone Russia). Moscow: Soglasie, 2000.
- Shmidt, D. A. “Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel i issledovatel gollandskoy zhivopisi” (“Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector and a connoisseur of Dutch art”). In Dostoevsky, A. A. *Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: ego zhizn i deyatelnost* (Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky: his life and activity), 235-342. Leningrad, 1928.
- _____. *Semyonov-Tian-Shansky kak sobiratel gollandskoy zhivopisi* (Semyonov-Tian-Shansky as a collector of Dutch art). Leningrad, 1928.
- Sokolova, I. A. “Novoe o kollektsii Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo” (“New on the collection of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky”). In *Kollektsionery v Sankt-Peterburge 1703-1917: Tezisy dokladov konferentsii* (Saint-Petersburg collectors 1703-1917: conference materials), 29-31. Saint-Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyy Ermitag, 1995.
- Soloveva, T. A. *Osobnyaki Yussupovikh v Peterburge* (Mansions of the Yussupovs in Saint-Petersburg). Saint-Petersburg: Beloe i chernoe, 1995.

- Stavrou, Theofanis George, ed. *Art and Culture in Nineteenth-century Russia*. Minnesota: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- Sternin, Grigory. *Russkaya khudogestvennaya kultura vtoroy poloviny 19 – nachala 20 veka* (Russian art life at the turn of the 20th century). Moscow: Sovetsky khudogolik, 1984.
- Stepanova S. S. “Sobirатели zapadnoevropeiskoy gravury i zhivopisi iz sredi moskovskoy khudogestvennoy intelligentsii vtoroy treti 20 veka.” (Moscow intelligentsia collectors of West- European engravings and works of art at the 20th century). In *Chastnoe kollektsionirovanie v Rossii: materialy nauchnoy konferentsii “Vipperovskie chteniya 1994”, vypusk XXVII* (Private collecting in Russia: conference materials “Vipperovskie readings 1994”, edition XXVII), 130-31. Moscow: Gosudarstvenny muzey izobrazitelnykh iskusstv imeni A. S. Pushkina, 1995.
- Stroganovy: metsenaty i kollektsionery: katalog vystavki* (The Stroganovs: the patrons of art and collectors: an exhibition catalogue). Saint-Petersburg: Slaviia, 2003.
- Sturn, Ernest. Review of *The Cultures of Collecting*, by ed. Jean, Elsner and Roger Cardinal. *French Review* 6, Vol. 68 (May 1995): 1082-83.
- Sveshnikova, G. I., ed. *Yussupovskiy dvorets* (Yussupov palace). Saint-Petersburg, 2004.
- Tsilov. *Gorodskoy ukazatel ili adresnaya kniga vrachey, khudogolikov, remeslennikov, trgovikh mest, remeslennikh zavedeny i.t.p. na 1849 god* (City directory or the address book of doctors, artists, artisans, commercial places, handicraft industries etc. in 1849). Saint-Petersburg, 1849.
- “*Uchenaya prikhod*”: *kollektsiya knyazya Nikolaya Borisovicha Yussupova* (“*Uchenaya prikhod*”: the collection of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Yussupov). Moscow: Khudogolik i kniga, 2001.
- Unanyants, N. T. *Frantsuzskaya zhivopis v Arkhangel'skom: katalog* (French art in Arkhangel'skoe : a catalogue). Moscow, 1970.
- Valkenier, Elizabeth Kridl. “Opening to Europe.” In *Russian Art and the West: a Century of Dialogue in Painting, Architecture, and Decorative Arts*, ed. Rosalind P. Blakesley and Susan E. Reid, 51-58. Illinois: Illinois University Press, 2007.
- Vrangel, Nikolai. “Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo” (“In memory of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky”). In *Pamyati Petra Petrovicha Semyonova-Tian-Shanskogo* (In memory of Piotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tian-Shansky), comp. Nikolai Vrangel, 1-10. Saint-Petersburg, 1914.
- Zaitseva N. V. *Nastupaet Serebryanny vek: Yussupovskiy dvorets* (Silver Age comes: Yussupov palace). Sankt-Peterburg, 2005.
- Zhuravleva, Larisa. *Talashkino*. Smolensk: B.i., 2003.