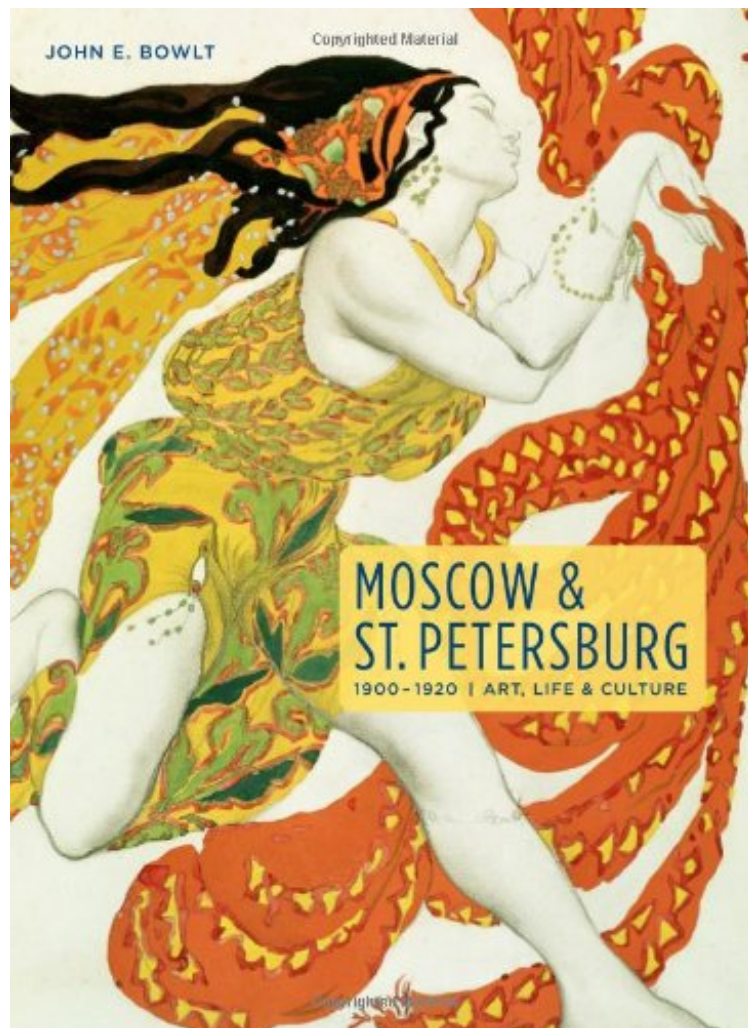


[Free read ebook] Moscow St. Petersburg 1900-1920: Art, Life, Culture of the Russian Silver Age

## Moscow St. Petersburg 1900-1920: Art, Life, Culture of the Russian Silver Age

*John E. Bowl*

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**John E. Bowl : Moscow St. Petersburg 1900-1920: Art, Life, Culture of the Russian Silver Age** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moscow St. Petersburg 1900-1920: Art, Life, Culture of the Russian Silver Age:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Great Visual Feast By D. John Hopper Buying books online can be a hit and miss strategy at the best of times. If you can only view the cover, or have limited access to the contents, it gives you little idea as to the merits of the book. Art and design books are also notorious for placing one good illustration on the cover, giving the impression the insides are up to the same standard, but then finding that they are blatantly not. So, although the book had been sitting on my wish list for ages, I crossed my fingers and bought it,

purely for the fact that I both loved the front cover, a gorgeously colourful Leon Bakst costume for the Ballets Russes, as well as loving the period in Russian artistic history. As soon as it arrived, it turned into one of my favourite books. At nearly four hundred pages and with at least two illustrations per page, many in colour, the book is stuffed with visual information. From fine art, to the crafts, from literature to dance, the period 1900 to 1920 was an explosion of individual and group creative talent never before seen in Russia. Whether you are interested in the formative years of Russian modernist fine art and its development into wild experimentation during the early Soviet years, or the formation of the Ballets Russes under the leadership of Serge Diaghilev and Vaslav Nijinsky and then its development into the creative phenomenon that brought in so many of the leading artist and designers of the period. Perhaps you are interested in the Russian Arts and Crafts Movement, with its belief in the continuation of Russian tradition through innovation in architecture, textiles, wood, metal, ceramics and glass. All this and more seemingly crammed into Bowlt's book. 1900 to 1920 was a momentous period in history for Europe. Starting with an enthusiastic embrace of all that was new, novel and intriguingly creative in the new century, it soon turned into a pointless, devastating and tragically avoidable continent-wide conflict with the resulting collapse of Empires and dynasties. However, in many ways perhaps Russia suffered more than most, but also perhaps gave the most creatively as well. The period from the Russian Empire to the Soviet Union is one whereby a whole range of Russian artists, designers and craftspeople, many of whom I had never heard of until this book, were producing work that could, with fairness, be said to have been influenced by what was going on creatively in the rest of Europe. However, there were also large numbers of creative individuals across Russia who were producing work that paid little if any heed to European influence, being more in tune to the traditions that were so much a part of Russian life. The book, in its title, signifies that it concentrates on what was going on creatively in the two significant cities of Russia, then as now, Moscow and St. Petersburg. However, this does not imply that the book concentrates on just the native creative talent of both cities. Both Moscow and St. Petersburg were magnets to creativity and brought in talent from across the old Russian Empire and later the newly formed Soviet Union. Both Bowlt and Vendome, the publishers, have done a great job in producing Moscow and St. Petersburg, 1900-1920, and if like me you are fascinated by this particular period in history, and Russia in particular, I highly recommend the title. I was so thrilled by this book that I actually ordered another Vendome title in the same format as the Russian book, Christian Brandstatter's Vienna 1900. 48 of 51 people found the following review helpful. interesting subject and coverage but the book is too small By Ivor E. Zetler While agreeing with the generally laudatory comments posted by the other reviewers of this book, I would like to inform the prospective purchaser of a few negative aspects to take into consideration. Firstly the size of the publication is roughly equivalent to that of a large paperback novel; ideally given its nature it should be bigger. The book is very liberally illustrated—an average of 2 photographs per page (although they tend to be clumped together). Thus some of the reproductions—which are of good quality—can be very small in dimension. Furthermore the print size of the text is also small and not particularly comfortable to read. I realise I might be sounding picky, but had the publishers presented this book in a more generous dimension, it would be far more recommendable. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A brilliant touch on Russian art by my professor By K. Yao I still kept this book even after my graduation. I took a Russian Modern Art class with Professor Bowlt and it was my favorite class at USC. This book is very well written, dives deep on the subject matter and opens my horizon regarding the Russian art.

Lavishly illustrated, Moscow St. Petersburg 1900–1920 is the quintessential guide to Russia's vibrant and influential Silver Age. In this elegantly written narrative survey, John E. Bowlt sheds new light on Russia's Silver Age, the period of artistic renaissance that flourished as Imperial Russia's power waned. Much of the creative energy could be attributed to the Symbolist movement, whose proponents sought to transcend the barriers of bourgeois civility and whose unconventional lifestyles led some critics to label them Decadents and Degenerates. But, as Sergei Diaghilev declared, theirs was not a moral or artistic decline, but a voyage of inner discovery and a reinvention of a national culture. Bowlt's richly textured volume focuses not only on Russia's best known artists from this period—Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, Igor Stravinsky, Anna Pavlova and poet Anna Akhmatova—but also on lesser known movements of the period—experimental theater, Nikolai Kalmakov's innovative painting, and the free dance practiced by followers of Duncan and Dalcroze. Praise for Moscow St. Petersburg: "This book will serve as a reference resource. . . . This ambitious English-language publication aims to cover not only every art group of the time but every aspect of the Russian culture. The pictorial layout of John Bowlt's book renders the sheer proliferation of new ideas immediately apparent. The highly charged text charts the medley of productions, groups, and individuals, all loosely associated with the symbolist movement, that make up the vast canvas. As the leading specialist in the Russian 20th-century avant-garde, Professor Bowlt is well qualified to place the silver age in context." ~ The Art Newspaper "This lushly illustrated volume captures the artistic explosion that was Russia's Silver Age." ~ Russian Life "An authoritative feast of a book." ~ The Irish Times "Splendidly illustrated, beautifully designed. . . ." ~ Shepherd Express "A truly seminal work. . . ." ~ Midwest Book Review "Lavishly illustrated and elegantly written narrative survey." ~ Panache Privée "A dazzling array of color illustrations and period photos displaying the glories of Russia's art, architecture and scientific achievements." ~ California Literary Review

About the Author John E. Bowlt is a specialist in Russian art history of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and has authored books on Symbolism, the avant-garde, and Socialist Realism. He has curated or co-curated numerous exhibitions and is currently a professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.