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**Museums and Art Galleries**

In Britain.

About 100 million people a year, across all social groups, attend some 2000 museums and galleries open to the public, which include the major national collections. There are a lot of galleries and museums in Britain. Some of them are: the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate Gallery and so on and so forth. First of all I would like to draw your attention to the National Gallery in London. It contains one of the richest collections of paintings in the world. The range of the collection is wide. It represents all the leading schools of European painting from the 13th to early 20th centuries, for example pictures of Rembrandt, Turner, Monet, Picasso, Van Gogh and other great masters. Another gallery is the National Portrait Gallery where there are oil paintings, water colors, drawings and sculptures. The Gallery constantly changes displays and holds the annual portrait competition for young artists. The Tate Gallery is one of London’s best-known art galleries, opened with the financial support of Sir Henry Tate, who also gave a collection of 65 paintings. The Gallery contains a unique collection of British paintings from the 16th century to the present day. It regularly holds special exhibitions. The most famous museums in Britain are the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. The Victoria and Albert museum is one of the world’s outstanding art museums. It is situated in south central London. The museum was given its present name in honor of Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert. The British Museum has a priceless collection of antiquities from almost every period and every part of the world. It houses collections of drawings, coins, medals and ethnography.

Stanley Spencer is one of the most original of modern British artists. He was a painter of imaginative and religious subjects, landscapes and occasional portraits. "Swan Upping" is one of Spencer’s best known pictures. This painting has an air of hightened reality; the light reflected from the water suggests moonlight, yet events take place in the foreground in daylight. There is anxiety in the immobilized swans and the face of the woman on the bridge, a mood enhanced by the serrated edges of the clouds and the flame-like branches of the tree on the right. An ordinary scene made to appeal extraordinary. Spencer’s works are well represented in the Tate Gallery collection and the exhibition reveals the full range of his output, from early drawings done while still a student to his late self-portrait, painted a few months before his death in 1959.

American.

Washington museums and art galleries are among the finest in the world. The Smithsonian institution, a scientific and cultural organization sponsored by the US government, consists of different museums. The museum of History and Technology has the collection of First Ladies’ Gowns. The National Gallery of Art houses a wonderful collection of American and European Art. There are some halls devoted to Andrew Wyet – one of the prominent living American painters. He was born in 1917. The son of illustrator – Andrew is the leading member of the dynasty of painters that includes his sisters, their husbands and his own two sons. He won fame at the age of 12 for his illustrations of "Robin Hood". He was 20 when he first exhibited his paintings. Andrew studied with his father and was strongly influenced by him. His father’s style of illustration expresses sentimentality. But very early the young artist gravitated a way from his teacher. Wyet’s style is both precise and minute in detail, he is a realist influenced by photography. He painted portraits, landscapes, seascapes and domestic scenery. His favorite media are tempera and water colors. His works are easily recognized by dimly lit and deserted landscapes in tones of grey and brown which convey the feeling of loveliness and solitude. His famous works are "Christina’s world" and "Inland shell".

Russian.

Moscow is known for its many historical buildings, museums and art galleries. Museums are considered an important part of the National Heritage. There are more than 80 museums in Moscow, the largest are the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and the State Tretjakov Gallery. The Tretjakov Gallery is a major research, artistic, cultural and educational center. The Gallery takes its name from its founder, the merchant Pavel Tretjakov, who began to collect Russian paintings in 1856. The collection was donated as a gift to the city of Moscow in 1882. Later it was supplemented by collections from other museums and private citizens. The Tretjakov Gallery has a rich collection of old Russian Icons from the 11th to the 17th century, many fine examples of Russian paintings from 18th to the early 19th century. The Gallery contains halls devoted to old Russian paintings, to great master such as Ivanov, Serov, Surikov, Repin and Levitan. Levitan was one of the first painters of the Russian scenery to reveal its beauty. He is a real poet of the Russian countryside. Levitan is a very special sort of painter. There is something in his landscapes that reflects our moods. He deeply felt what he wanted to depict. A master of landscape, he never introduced figures into it. Though if you look at "The autumn in Sokolniky" you will notice the figure in the center. Everything seems to underline the loneliness of this figure: the trees loosing their leaves, the remote indifferent sky, the path going off into the distance. But the fact is that it was not Levitan who painted this figure. It was Chekhov’s brother Nikolay who did it. Levitan’s influence over lyrical landscape painters can’t be over estimated. His paintings have won the love and gratitude of people.