

FOR PRESS

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ADDITIONS TO THE NATIONAL ART COLLECTION

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

The Prime Minister announced today that, on the advice of the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board, the Commonwealth had recently acquired a number of important paintings for the National Collection.

The first of these comprise the considerable collection of Australian paintings which belonged to the late Mr. Richard Paul of Sydney. The Commonwealth has been able to acquire this important collection through the generosity of the beneficiary of his estate and the co-operation of his executors, the Perpetual Trustee Company. The result is that for very much less than market value, the Commonwealth has acquired fine examples of the work of Tom Roberts (1856-1931), Sir Arthur Streeton (1867-1943), Elioth Gruner (1882-1939) and George Lambert (1873-1930) as well as many other noted Australian artists.

The Prime Minister also gave details of other purchases which resulted from a great deal of research in England and France leading to the location of some important works by the expatriate Australian painter John Peter Russell (1858-1931). Russell was a fellow student and friend of Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat and other noted French artists of the French Impressionist era. As a result of subsequent negotiations, the Commonwealth has acquired four of Russell's oil paintings: "Paysans a Monte Cassino", "View of the Alpes Maritimes", "Le Pont de Pecq" and "Bougeval near Paris", and three of his watercolours - "Cliffs at Goulphar", "Piazza Lerici 1910" and "Breton Fisherman".

The Prime Minister pointed out that in addition to acquiring these important works by noted artists of an earlier period in our history, the Art Advisory Board is constantly adding examples of the work of contemporary Australian artists to the National Collection, which it is hoped will ultimately be housed in a National Art Gallery in Canberra. In the meantime, many of the paintings acquired for the National Collection are hanging in our Embassies abroad and others are included in travelling exhibitions such as those now in Europe and New Zealand.

CANBERRA,
2nd May, 1965