

CULTURESCAPE

Two generations of
Russian artists

Express Cultural Correspondent

‘WHITE nights’, an exhibition organised by Habiart at the display gallery at 6, Vakil Lane, presents 247 etchings by Russian artists, till February 19. Chandana Bawa, the curator, informs that White Nights introduces two generations of artists – those who have still to shake off the not-so-pleasant memories of the Soviet Union of old, and those who have blossomed in the new liberal and healthier political climate.

The central feature of the exhibition, however, is “a smaller collection of prints taken from 18th and 19th century plates now in various museums in Moscow”. “Printmaking in Russia has a very deep-rooted tradition extending right from the early folk motifs in woodcut. This greatly influenced the experiments of 20th century artists like Vassily Kandinsky.

In the first few years of the Bolshevik revolution, Russia produced an astonishing generation of artistic revolutionaries who established themselves as the avant-garde of the modernist revolution sweeping across Europe. But with the advent of the Stalinist era and thereafter during the Soviet rule, printmaking, like the other arts, was inducted into the awesome state propaganda machine.

The plethora of still lifes and landscapes produced during this time was in a way a subtle resistance of the artist to this state subversion.”



Peter the Great, a 19th century etching on view at 6, Vakil Lane.