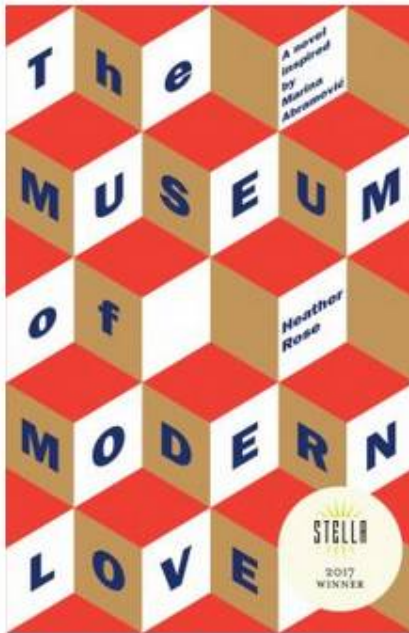


July 2018



July's book is [The Museum of Modern Love](#) by [Heather Rose](#). Winner of the 2017 Stella Prize, the 2017 Christina Stead Prize for Fiction in the NSW Premier's Literary Awards and the 2017 Margaret Scott Prize and the People's Choice Award in the Tasmanian Premier's Literary Prizes, it is set during the performance by artist Marina Abramovic of *The Artist is Present* at MOMA New York in 2010. Around this factual event, the novel introduces the reader to a cast of fictional characters, visitors to the performance, each of whom is grappling with their own life circumstances and challenges. With growing curiosity and attraction to Abramovic's performance, these personalities react to the art and each other.

The Stella prize judges felt "It is rare to encounter a novel with such powerful characterisation, such deep understanding of the consequences of personal and national history, ... and such dazzling and subtle explorations of the important of art in everyday life". The theme of human connection is predominant both in the performance and the novel which is "a meditation on the social, spiritual and artistic importance of seeing and being seen". Many of us agreed with the judges. We enjoyed the narrative style, found the pace compelling and the characters interestingly drawn. We were very impressed with Rose's technical skill at representing a number of different artistic media of work within the book – performance art, musical composition and architecture and the way she explored different perspectives of creativity. Others of us were less engaged especially by the characters, found the writing plodding and uninspiring and the resolution weak.

Heather Rose was born (1964) and raised in Tasmania and has written 4 novels and 3 books for older children over her 20 year writing career. Each novel in format and genre is a radical departure from its predecessor. I very much enjoyed *The Butterfly Man* (2005), winner of the Davitt Award for best crime fiction novel by an Australian woman in 2006. *The River Wife* (2009) is another complete breakaway – a modern adult fairytale. Each work though shares themes, preoccupations and techniques and shows a confidence and willingness to take risks. I look forward to whatever direction her next work will take.

Ratings: Claudia 2.5, Gail 4, Janet 3, Judith 3.5, Kim 3, Margie 3, Michael 3.5, Nicola 4 and Viv 3.5.

Next month we will meet on the 14/8 at 6:30PM at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to continue with this years' list of Australian books. The book to be discussed will be [The Cardboard Crown](#) by [Martin Boyd](#), winner of the 2017 Stella Prize for women's writing.

Hope to see you all there and happy reading!

Other Books We Read

July 2018

Our book of the month was *The Museum of Modern Love* by Heather Rose but we also read other books. Maximum rating is 5.

Flights by Olga Tokarczuk 3.5

The Salmon who Dared to Leap Higher by Ahn Do-hyun 3

The Master and Margarita by Mikail Bulgakov 3.5

Eggshell Skull by Bri Lee, 3

Wild by Cheryl Strayed, 3

Gate of Lilacs: A Verse commentary on Proust, by Clive James 3.5

Such Small Hands by Andres Barba 3

Johnno by David Malouf 4

Remembering Babylon by David Malouf 4

Breath by Tim Winton 3

A Long Way from Home by Peter Carey 3.5

The Quiet American by Graham Greene 3.5

Deep Time Dreaming by Billy Griffiths 5

The Butterfly Man by Heather Rose 3.5

The River Wife by Heather Rose 3

An Echo in the Bone by Diana Gabaldon 3