

US billionaire Thomas Kaplan plans to send collection of Dutch Old Masters to Russia

Hermitage and Pushkin museums could show Leiden Collection in 2018

By ANNY SHAW | 26 May 2017



Thomas Kaplan (Image: © Sue Raya Shaheen)

Thomas Kaplan, the US billionaire metals investor who owns more Rembrandts than anyone else, plans to send his collection of Dutch Old Masters to Russia as part of its world tour.

The State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg is “in negotiations” to show the Leiden Collection in 2018, a spokeswoman says. The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow has also been earmarked as a possible venue, according to the Economist. The Pushkin could not be reached for comment.

The New York-based Leiden Collection, the largest private collection of 17th-century Dutch painting amassed over 14 years by Kaplan and his wife Daphne Recanati Kaplan, was unveiled at the Musée du Louvre in February. Sixty-eight pictures are now on their way to the National Museum in Beijing for an exhibition opening on 16 June. A bigger show is due to follow at the Long Museum in Shanghai. The Louvre Abu Dhabi will be the final destination on the tour.

Since 2003, and with the assistance of Old Master dealers Johnny van Haften, Otto Naumann and Salomon Lilian, the Kaplans have acquired more than 200 works. They include 11 paintings and two drawings by Rembrandt, the largest number in private hands, and the only privately owned paintings by Vermeer and the highly sought-after Carel Fabritius, a pupil of Rembrandt. There are only around 30 Rembrandts in private hands, according to Kaplan.

The potential loan to Russia comes at a time when US-Russian relations are highly strained. Kaplan previously told The Art Newspaper that he views the tour as an opportunity “to build bridges at a time when so many are being burned all over the world”.