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$2.2 Million in Paintings Stolen From Rural Russian Museum

By The Moscow Times

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Levitan's "Water Margin (Pond)," one of the paintings stolen.

Five paintings by 19th-century Russian artist Isaac Levitan, a master of the "mood landscape" genre, were stolen in the early hours of Tuesday morning from an estate museum in a rural Russian town where he lived.

The works, which had been insured for a total $2.2 million, were presumably taken by two thieves who gained entry to the museum by breaking a window, culture department head Svetlana Shmeleva told the Interfax news agency.

Levitan (1860-1900) spent three summers in the town, Plyos, about 350 kilometers northeast of Moscow on the Volga River. He painted hundreds of works during his travels around the Volga.

Tuesday's heist included "The Halt," "Roses," "Ravine with Fence," "Water Margin (Pond)"

and "Quiet Stream." Shmeleva said this was not the first time that thieves attempted to break in to the museum.

The previous attempt, about a year ago, was thwarted when the alarm system went off, notifying police. The alarm was also triggered on Tuesday, but police were unable to catch the suspects in time, Shmeleva said.

A police spokesperson told Interfax that a team of the region's "most experienced investigators" has been put together to retrieve the paintings.

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