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American Art Critic Donates $2M Collection to Russian Museum

By The Moscow Times

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An American collector has donated an art collection worth $2 million to St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum.

An American art critic and collector has donated an art collection worth $2 million to St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum, saying she believed art could help foster relations between Russia and the U.S.

Helen Drutt English presented the museum with the collection in honor of its 250th anniversary, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday.

Pavel Rodzyanko, the president of the museum's Hermitage Fund, said the collection included 74 items, including ceramics, chairs and wall-mounted designs. The artists featured in the collection are mostly American, he said, but there are some European artists as well.

"Almost every item in the collection is unique. For example, in West Virginia in 2000, two

artists decided to make a brooch dedicated to the U.S.-Russia summit of 2000. [The brooch] features an American eagle shaking the wing of a Russian eagle," Rodzyanko was cited as saying.

The collection will be on display from Dec. 2, and it will be the first exhibition of U.S. artists in Russia in recent years, according to Rodzyanko.

"Relations between Russia and the U.S., two countries divided by an ocean, can develop further with the help of careful dialogue," English was cited as saying at a recent celebration of the Hermitage's anniversary in New York.

"By testing mutual curiosity and respect for each other's achievements in art and culture, our people can continue to engage in the political, social and cultural spheres," she added.

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