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Hermitage Opens New Restoration Center With Funding by Coca-Cola

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's largest museum, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, has opened a new restoration center for glass, ceramic and porcelain artworks, made possible with support from the world's largest non-alcoholic beverage maker, the U.S.-based Coca-Cola Company.

The "Old Village" restoration center and archive was opened on Dec. 8 with funding provided by Coca-Cola to honor the museum's 250th anniversary as part of an ongoing partnership for more than two decades, the company said in a press release.

In 1993, Coca-Cola funded a restoration center for tempera paintings at the Hermitage, and since then the company's sponsorship has included financing under a program of "preservation of cultural heritage together." Coca-Cola was the first international partner company of the Hermitage and one of the first corporate members of the international program "Club of Friends of the Hermitage."

In addition to two restoration laboratories, Coca-Cola has helped equip the lecture hall of the

Hermitage School Center with modern multimedia complexes and has made possible the restoration of unique works of art, such as the lattice gate of the Winter Palace's Great Courtyard and the traditional Chinese painting "The Capture of Bai Ju-hua."

The company has contributed to the children's educational program "Fairy Tale Hermitage" and the "The Museum of Modern Art" project, and has provided grants to Hermitage restorers as they received training in five countries and transferred the lessons they learned to their colleagues.

Another joint project was a national contest for high school students: "What Should a Museum of the 21st Century Be Like?" The contest's winner, Irene Knyazeva, visited the Guggenheim Museum in New York with Hermitage director Mikhail Piotrovsky.

The new restoration center's official opening ceremony was attended by Piotrovsky and the head of Coca-Cola in Russia, Ljubo Grujic, as well as reporters for local and national media.

Piotrovsky, who is also a professor and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences said: "The Hermitage is the largest museum in Russia. Here we not only keep monuments of culture, but also restore them — many of the items at our exhibitions were restored by our masters. Moreover, many museums around the world seek the help of our experts. Therefore, the presence of our own restoration laboratory equipped with modern equipment — that's a priority issue for us, and we are grateful to Coca-Cola for their support and cooperation in this area, as well as in helping to preserve our priceless cultural heritage. Twenty years ago, our collaboration began with the opening of a new laboratory for the restoration of tempera paintings, and today we celebrate this date with the opening of another new laboratory. "

Grujic, the CEO of Coca-Cola in Russia, said: "Works of art retaining the imprint of their time — this is the cultural heritage not only of Russia, but of the whole world. Over the past 20 years, Coca-Cola and the Hermitage State Museum have been bound by warm friendship and partnership, and the opening of this restoration laboratory is the next step in the implementation of remarkable joint initiatives."

Coca-Cola has the largest non-alcoholic beverage distribution system in the world, and every day more than 1.9 billion beverages of Coca-Cola are served across some 200 countries.

Coca-Cola is one of the largest investors in the Russian economy. To date, Coca-Cola investments in Russia exceed $3 billion. Beverages registered as trademarks of Coca-Cola are produced by 13 plants throughout Russia, from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok.

Coca-Cola in Russia, which brings together the company Coca-Cola and its bottler partner Coca-Cola Hellenic, provides jobs for more than 13,000 highly skilled workers.

Coca-Cola is one of the most long-standing partners of the Federal International Football Association (FIFA). Coca-Cola's official sponsorship of the FIFA World Cup began in 1978 and will last at least until 2022, including the World Cup FIFA 2018, to be held in Russia.

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