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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Art Patron Mikhail Abramov, Dead at 55

The founder of the Museum of the Russian Icon died in a helicopter crash

August 22, 2019



Mikhail Abramov **Museum of Russian Icons**

On Aug. 20 collector and art patron Mikhail Abramov was killed in an accident near Peloponnes, Greece on his way to the international airport and a flight to Moscow. The helicopter he was in crashed into the sea, killing Abramov, another passenger and the pilot.

Abramov was a businessman and collector of ancient Christian art who founded the Museum of the Russian Icon, one of a few large-scale private museums in Russia. He began to collect icons in the early years of this century, establishing a reputation for scrupulous honesty — returning icons discovered to have been stolen to their original owners after meticulous restoration at his expense — and generosity. Abramov was reported to have invested nearly 80% of his income into the museum, while not charging admission.

The museum was opened in a small space in central Moscow in 2006 and then moved to a building made out of two mansions on a quiet street that was specially constructed and

equipped for displaying, restoring, and storing the icons.

The collection houses more than 5,000 icons and artifacts dating back to the 6th century, including Byzantine and Greek icons, Russian icons from all over the country, and icons once belonging to members of the Romanov family.

Abramov was accorded many awards for his work, including the Five Continents medal from UNESCO for his contribution to the preservation of historical heritage, the Order pro Merito Melitensi of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta for the promotion of Christian values and charity, and the Order of Glory and Honor, 2nd Class from the Russian Orthodox Church in recognition of his work to reconstruct the Church of the Transfiguration in Moscow.

Plans for the future of the museum have not yet been made public.

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