

US aluminium giant sends Warhol to Russia

The Alcoa Corporation is marking its entry into Russia by funding the tour of a Warhol Museum show

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1st September 2005 00:00 BST

The US aluminium corporation Alcoa is funding the Russian tour of a show organised by the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Earlier this year Alcoa paid \$257 million to the Russian aluminium producer Rusal for two of its factories in Samara and Belaya Kalitva, and a spokesperson for the US firm says the Warhol show will “celebrate our entrée into Russia”.

The exhibition of more than 300 paintings, drawings, photographs, films and archival material will be the largest Warhol exhibition to travel to Russia, but it is not the first. In 2000, The Warhol Museum organised a show of around 50 paintings and prints, which travelled to museums in 13 cities including the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Hermitage in St Petersburg, with funding from the US government.

The director of the Warhol Museum, Thomas Sokolowski, said that, in view of the success of the previous show in Russia, he had already been planning another exhibition to tour Russia when Alcoa offered to provide a “seven-figure” subvention that includes a fee for the museum.

“Andy Warhol: artist of modern life” begins its 10-month Russian tour at the Tretyakov in Moscow (13 September-13 November) where the museum will mount a companion show on Russian Pop Art. The exhibition then travels to the State Russian Museum in St Petersburg in December and concludes its tour at the Samara Art Museum in spring 2006.

The Warhol Museum will publish Russian-language catalogues, organise lectures, and an on-line curriculum that can be used as templates for future cultural projects in Russia. There will also be a personnel exchange as part of which Russian teachers will travel to Pittsburgh and vice versa.

Alcoa Corporation is also donating funds to the Tretyakov for the renovation of its Modern art galleries, and the Alcoa Foundation is providing grants to the Samara Art Museum and the State Russian Museum. “We have a proud tradition of supporting Russian art”, says Alcoa chairman and ceo Alain Belda, noting that the Alcoa Foundation is also sponsoring “Russia!” which opens this month at the Guggenheim Museum in New York (16 September-11 January 2006). He says his company has been “part of the landscape” in Russia since the formation of Alcoa Russia in 1993.

The company maintains an office in Moscow and now has 13,000 employees in its new Russian plants, about 10% of Alcoa’s workforce worldwide.

 *Appeared in The Art Newspaper Archive, 161 September 2005*

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