Guggenheim Establishes Conservation Fellowship with Support from Trustee Vladimir Potanin

Announcement made in conjunction with discussion “Preserving the Future: Conserving Contemporary Art in the Digital Age” at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice

(VENICE, ITALY/NEW YORK, NY—May 9, 2019)—At a special event at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, held on the occasion of the vernissage of the 2019 Venice Biennale, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation announced the establishment of an international fellowship program in the conservation of modern and contemporary art made possible through an endowment by Guggenheim Trustee Vladimir Potanin.

To illustrate the range of issues the fellowship program will address, the announcement was made in conjunction with a panel discussion titled “Preserving the Future: Conserving Contemporary Art in the Digital Age,” led by Lena Stringari, Deputy Director and Chief Conservator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The Vladimir Potanin Conservation Fellowship will give an outstanding Russian-speaking conservation professional the opportunity to deeply engage with the work of the Guggenheim for a period of twelve to eighteen months and to consider, through first-hand experience, the role of conservation in an increasingly global world. The program was supported by and developed in collaboration with the Vladimir Potanin Foundation and Vladimir Potanin, a Trustee of the Board of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation since 2002 and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg since 2003.

Richard Armstrong, Director of the Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, said in a statement: “Ambitious cross-cultural initiatives such as the Vladimir Potanin Conservation Fellowship can ensure that new generations are engaged stakeholders in preserving cultural heritage. Thanks to the generous support and foresight of Vladimir Potanin, this fellowship will contribute significantly to the international field of conservation, encourage new areas of scholarship, and bring together conservators, artists, scientists and historians to explore complex issues around the preservation of materials and methods of modern and contemporary art. We are grateful to our friend and trustee Vladimir Potanin for his generosity, but even more so for his prescience in recognizing the critical need for this work.”
Vladimir Potanin said in a statement: “In today’s world, it is more urgent than ever to develop and support platforms that combine creativity with knowledge, innovation with heritage, and establish dialogue between cultures and communities. Having preservation and conservation as their primary goals, modern museums must address local and global societal issues and share solutions across geographic and political boundaries. The Guggenheim is a leader among museums for its global outlook, intellectual daring, and record of achievement in scholarship and conservation. No institution is better prepared to undertake this fellowship program in modern and contemporary art. I am proud that the Vladimir Potanin Conservation Fellows will contribute to these vital efforts to advance understanding in the field, cultivate new talent, and promote cross-cultural exchange.”

While in residence at the Guggenheim in New York, the Potanin Conservation Fellow will contribute to ongoing collection research and to preparation for exhibitions in various stages of development, working alongside the Guggenheim Museum’s team to learn conservation techniques. The program will be designed to consider Guggenheim priorities as well as those of the fellow’s home museum and the fellow’s background and interests. The inaugural fellow in 2020 will work closely with Guggenheim conservators on an in-depth study of paintings in the museum’s collection by Vasily Kandinsky, to elucidate the artist’s methods and to assist in the preparation the canvases for a traveling exhibition.

The Conservation Department at the Guggenheim Museum is currently accepting applications for the Vladimir Potanin Conservation Fellowship through its website (www.guggenheim.org/careers); the deadline is June 15, 2019 for a projected January 2020 start date.

Under the leadership of Lena Stringari, the Guggenheim’s Conservation Department collaborates with curators, scholars, engineers, scientists, and artists by conducting art-historical and scientific research on works in the museum’s collection; implementing policies and procedures to ensure the maintenance and long-term preservation of the works; establishing best practices for storage, transportation, and art handling; and undertaking projects designed to address new conservation issues. The Guggenheim’s conservation team has made important contributions to the field of time-based media and has developed new methodologies for treating unconventional artworks and for preserving both tangible and intangible resources. Together, these activities in research, treatment, and findings have made the Guggenheim a leader in the field of conservation.

The panel discussion “Preserving the Future: Conserving Contemporary Art in the Digital Age” was led by Stringari, who has overseen didactic exhibitions including Imageless: The Scientific Study and Experimental Treatment of an Ad Reinhardt Black Painting (2008) and Jackson Pollock: Exploring Alchemy (2017). She played a key role in formulating the Panza Collection Initiative and the Variable Media Initiative at the Guggenheim. She has served as an adjunct professor at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and has lectured extensively on the conservation of contemporary art.

Stringari was joined by:

- Ysbrand Hummelen, Senior Researcher at the State Heritage Laboratory of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.
About the Vladimir Potanin Foundation

The Vladimir Potanin Foundation, one of the largest private grant-making organizations in Russia, was established in 1999 by entrepreneur Vladimir Potanin to implement socially significant long-term projects in education and culture.

The mission of the Foundation is to bring together creative professionals who play a key role in solving current public issues and work to develop a culture of strategic philanthropy in Russia. Through joint training programs aimed at strengthening partnerships and networking within the museum-professional community, the Foundation has engaged with such institutions as the Trust for Mutual Understanding, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Institut Français de Russie, la Caixa Foundation, the University of Oxford’s Saïd Business School, and others. The program of cultural leadership run in partnership with the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, has featured the participation of cultural leaders from around the world, including Eike Schmidt, Director of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence; filmmaker Alexander Sokurov; Laurence des Cars, Director of the Musée d’Orsay, Paris; Richard Armstrong, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation; and Alistair Spalding, Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Sadler’s Wells Theatre, London. Some of the recent projects supported by the Foundation will be showcased at the Venice Biennale, including NEMOSKVA, a project of interregional cooperation in the field of contemporary art that will present an exhibition at BOZAR, Brussels, in July.

Many of the projects and programs initiated and administrated by the Foundation have been acknowledged as role models in Russia, and technologies it developed are widely used by other foundations, nongovernmental bodies, and cultural and educational organizations. Over the past twenty years, more than four hundred Russian museums have benefited from the support of the Foundation.

About Vladimir Potanin

Vladimir Potanin is a Moscow-born businessman, investor, and philanthropist. Throughout his career, Potanin has devoted a major portion of his time and resources to charity projects. In order to structure these efforts effectively, he founded the Vladimir Potanin Foundation in 1999 to foster the development of strategic philanthropy in Russia. In 2010 Potanin made a public commitment to give a majority of his wealth to philanthropic causes, and in 2013 he became the first Russian corporate leader to join the Giving Pledge initiative announced by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett.

He has been a Trustee of the Board of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation since 2002 and was elected Chairman of the Board of the State Hermitage Museum in 2003. Along with General Director Mikhail Piotrovsky, Potanin is the founder of the Endowment Fund of the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.
Potanin has inspired and supported significant projects that promote Russian culture globally, such as the Russian Lounge project in the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, Washington, D.C., and a major exhibition *When Russia Spoke French: Paris–St. Petersburg 1800–1830* at the Hotel des Invalides, Paris (2003). In 2005 the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum presented *Russia!*, an exhibition supported by the Vladimir Potanin Foundation, which featured more than 275 masterpieces from collections of the State Hermitage Museum; State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg; Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; and the Kremlin State Historical and Cultural Museum and Heritage Site, Moscow.

In recognition of his role in an extraordinary collective donation of more than 250 works of Soviet and Russian contemporary art to the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Republic of France inducted Potanin into the Légion d’honneur in 2016.

**About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation**

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The Guggenheim international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. In 2019, the Frank Lloyd Wright–designed Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum celebrates 60 years as an architectural icon and “temple of spirit” where radical art and architecture meet. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim’s activities around the world, visit [guggenheim.org](http://guggenheim.org).

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