

Case 1.

Ryoei Saito, former chairperson of Daishowa Paper, paid a record price for two art masterpieces: Van Gogh's Portrait of Dr. Gachet (\$82.5 million), and Renoir's Le Moulin de la Galette (\$78.1 million). The Van Gogh, which hung in Frankfurt's Städtische Galerie, had previously been hidden from the public for several years when, in 1933, the museum's director correctly anticipated the destruction of "degenerate" Expressionist art that would occur under Nazi rule. Hermann Goering tracked down the work in 1937 and sold it for \$53,000. The Kramarsky family later purchased the painting, and brought it with them to New York when they fled Nazi Germany. The Kramarsky family frequently loaned the work for display at the Metropolitan Museum.

After purchasing the paintings in 1990, Saito had them shipped to a secret climate-controlled storeroom in the Tokyo area, where he viewed the paintings for a few hours, then had them packed and locked securely away. Saito would not even allow his family to see the paintings. Over the next seven years, the paintings were taken out of storage only once, for a dinner at a restaurant where Saito entertained a guest from Sotheby's Auction House.

The sale of such significant works to a private individual and their removal from public access caused controversy. However, this controversy was minor compared to the uproar that ensued when Saito declared his intention to have the paintings cremated with him when he died. The paintings were saved from destruction only when they were used as collateral against Saito's loans from Fuji Bank.