

“Smart warehouse” for art from Bruynzeel Storage Systems charms global museums

Bruynzeel Storage Systems from the Netherlands became market leader in smart storage solutions for museum treasures in a short amount of time. Famous museums like the Louvre in Paris and MoMa in New York are looking towards the Netherlands. In the meantime the Dutch company is already looking towards new high-potential markets.



Mobile storage systems with paintings in a depot in Leeuwarden (The north of the Netherlands) “depot Kolleksjesintrum Fryslân”

FOTO'S: SIESE VEENSTRA FOR FD

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Leeuwarden

After pushing a button, cabinets 108 and 109 move away from each other, without any sound, over two floors.

Owls, cuckoos, parrots and kingfishers emerge. The stuffed birds are only a small part of about a half a million objects that belong to 5 Dutch museums that are stored here. The rust red “Kolleksjesintrum Fryslân” (Collection center Friesland) houses, secured and in a stable climate, everything from paintings, porcelain, weapons, a milking machine, boats and even a Frisian sjees (type of horse carriage).

Everything is mixed together and that is special. Everything is sorted by size and material. It saves a lot of space when collections are not stored separately. Even more space is saved when using cabinets created by Bruynzeel Storage Systems, The cabinets only use one aisle that can open

and close in different locations. Alexander Collot d'Escury: This doubles the storage capacity and saves cost. Museums that are facing budget cuts, that currently store their collections in multiple locations, are very interested in the possibilities of shared collection storage.

The space saving storage systems of the Dutch company are used in multiple projects to store museum treasures.

€60 mln

Turnover for Bruynzeel Storage Systems is €60 mil aiming for €100 mil.

In Amersfoort (the Netherlands) the “Rijksmuseum”, Palace Het Loo, Open air museum Arnhem and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) are implementing a Giga-depot. This depot will have a footprint of five soccer fields and house about 675,000 objects.

Boijmans Van Beuningen, a museum in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) are building an art depot that, the first in the world, be accessible for the public. This allows the museum to show the other 90% of their collection that normally would not be on display.

DELEGATIONS

The news of the Dutch depot at Boijmans Van Beuningen, named the Pot, went all over the world. “After that we received lots of calls”, says Collot d'Escury. It was so innovative that delegations from museums around the world, such as the MoMa in New York, the Louvre in Paris and the Victoria



Alexander Collot d'Escury

and Albert Museum in London, came to take a look. And they know where to find Bruynzeel ever since. “We have become experts in this field. The demand for museum depots has been growing very strongly in the last five years. It now represent more than a third of our turnover.”

Hospitals

The Dutch company, which until the 1980s was part of the Bruynzeel concern that also produced pencils, kitchens and floors, has a few other core markets. The approximately two hundred employees also create and deliver storage systems for archives, libraries and offices. Those markets are growing less than the market for museums. Collot d'Escury does see more demand from hospitals and factories. After previous problems with supplies from China, for example, they want to store more medicines or technical components closer to home. But it is mainly the museum market that makes Bruynzeel Storage Systems, now owned by the Scandinavian investor Altor, expect to be able to grow by double digits next year. These markets

often involve large projects. The depots in Rotterdam and Amersfoort together brought about € 10 million to Bruynzeel's intake. “There is also more art, and in contemporary art, objects are often bigger,” says Collot d'Escury. He thinks he can grow in the next five years - also by buying companies - from the current turnover of about € 60 million to € 100 million.”

The storage systems, for which around 1.6 million shelves are produced annually in Panningen, can be used wherever space is scarce or expensive, according to the CEO. “In a hospital, a square meter costs € 3000. They prefer to use that space for patients and not for storage.”

They are also used in stores such as Nespresso or Hermès. Collot d'Escury also sees growth opportunities in new markets, such as multifunctional use of space in tiny houses, or in urban farming in Asia.