

## **The New York entrepreneur behind the biggest private Rembrandt collection**

Highlights of Thomas Kaplan's Leiden Collection go on show at the Louvre this week

By MARTIN BAILEY | 22 February 2017



Thomas Kaplan (Image: © Sue Raya Shaheen)

Thomas Kaplan, a New York entrepreneur, now owns nearly a third of the Rembrandt paintings in private hands. Since 2005, he has bought 11 Rembrandts out of the 35 or so that belong to collectors around the world—the precise number depends on attributional issues. Kaplan describes himself as the largest private collector of the artist “for a couple of hundred years”.

Kaplan's Rembrandts include three of the panels of the five senses painted by the young artist (one was only recently discovered after being auctioned as a 19th century work, with an estimate of \$500-\$800). He also has a self-portrait that used to belong to Steve Wynn, a property investor and casino developer. Kaplan's most expensive Rembrandt is of Minerva; although not disclosing the precise cost, he told The Art Newspaper that it was less than Andy Warhol's 1963 painting Green Car Crash (Green Burning Car I), which sold for \$72m.

Kaplan, whose wealth comes from mineral investments (particularly gold), set up the Leiden Collection, named after the city where Rembrandt was born. Highlights of the collection, which includes works by Gerard Dou, Frans van Mieris, Jan Steen and Johannes Vermeer, will be unveiled today (22 February) at the Louvre, Paris.

After the Louvre exhibition, a much larger show will tour to Shanghai, Beijing and Abu Dhabi. Speaking to The Art Newspaper, Kaplan stresses the show's symbolic significance: "Right now, we need to build bridges between cultures rather than burn them. To lower walls rather than erect them."

Kaplan believes the Leiden Collection has a global role: "We, as collectors, are American. We can use Dutch art, with an exhibition starting at a French museum, to build bridges between the West and China. Then, at the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the paintings will be down the road from Mosul and Palmyra."

*Masterpieces from the Leiden Collection: The Age of Rembrandt*

*Musée du Louvre, Paris*

*22 February-22 May*