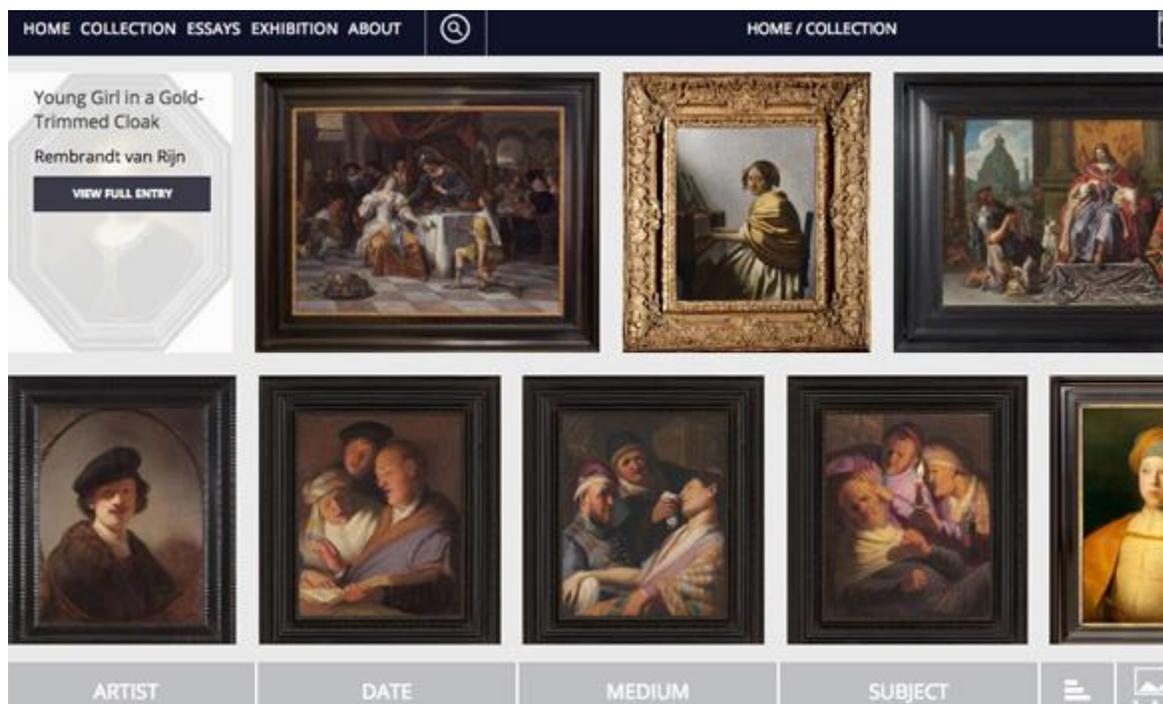




Leiden Collection goes online

January 29 2017



Picture: Leiden Collection

The Leiden Collection, the private collection of Dutch pictures assembled by the financier [Thomas Kaplan](#) and his wife Daphne Recanati Kaplan, has developed an excellent [new website](#). It includes detailed and lengthy essays by leading scholars of Dutch art, including Arthur Wheelock and the late Walter Liedtke, excellent high-resolution photos, and videos too. The collection includes works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Lievens and Dou. Next time someone says there's a 'lack of supply' in the Old Master market, and that you can't buy top works by the big names anymore, just remember that Kaplan has proved them wrong.

In the image above you can see three of Rembrandt's early 'five senses' paintings, which Kaplan has assembled over the years (thereby demonstrating - along with his site and newly commissioned research - the value of collectors to art history). One of these - *Smell* - was completely unknown until it surfaced at auction as a work by an unknown 19th Century artist in [a minor US sale back in 2015](#). One - *Taste* - is still missing. In an essay on the new website, Kaplan describes the moment he first found out about the picture, and decided that he had to have it:

Though amorphously classified by the auction house as being “Continental School” and estimated at \$1,000-\$1,500, it was nonetheless identified correctly as a Rembrandt by two parties who bid the painting to nearly a million dollars. At the time, nobody knew who had made this very clever purchase. Through a quirk of circumstances, an exceptionally talented alumna of The Leiden Collection, Ilona van Tuinen, now at the Morgan Library and Museum, came to learn the identity of the buyers. With the permission of her then employer, the Frits Lugt Collection in Paris, she relayed our interest to the new owners and we fortuitously were given the first look.

I could not wait to see it. I did so only a few short days thereafter, when Ilona accompanied Bernard Gautier of the Parisian gallery Talabardon et Gautier, French dealers with which we had never previously engaged, to meet me in New York. The moment *Unconscious Patient* was placed in my hands, I recognized it as genuine and one of the two pieces from the series that were missing and presumed lost forever. To my mind at least, it also was the most beautiful of the known suite. We bought it on the spot for a multiple of the purchase price. Talabardon et Gautier had taken a risk, even taking out a loan to pay for their speculation. Like explorationists in my businesses, I begrudged them nothing for deservedly profiting, and profiting handsomely, for their acumen.

We learn also that *Smell* is signed, and is thus the earliest signed Rembrandt (he painted it when he was about 18).