

## Star drawing from world's largest private Rembrandt collection could bring \$15m at auction

Thomas S. Kaplan's Leiden Collection will part with one of its earliest acquisitions, "Young Lion Resting", at Sotheby's in February



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting*, around 1638-42, est \$15m-\$20m  
Courtesy Sotheby's

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Over the past two decades, the billionaire entrepreneur Thomas S. Kaplan and his wife Daphne Recanati Kaplan have amassed around 220 works of 17th-century Dutch art that they call the Leiden Collection. Now they are ready to part with one of their earliest acquisitions: Rembrandt's life-like drawing *Young Lion Resting* (around 1638-42). Today (3 November) Sotheby's announced that the work will be offered at an auction during its Old Masters sales in New York on 4 February 2026, with a pre-sale estimate of \$15m to \$20m.

The Kaplans acquired the drawing in 2005, Thomas says, through the twin brothers John and Paul Herring, private New York dealers whose clients also included [↗](#) the New York collectors Ronald Lauder and his brother Leonard Lauder. Several years ago, according to Kaplan, ownership of the Rembrandt drawing came to include Jonathan Ayers, a Florida philanthropist who serves as chairman of the board of Panthera [↗](#), a New York-based conservation organisation devoted to preserving the world's wild-cat species. The Kaplans divide their time between New York and Paris.

Proceeds from the Sotheby's sale will go to Panthera, according to Kaplan, who adds that he and Ayers have chosen to sell the work now in part to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Kaplans' founding of the organisation back in 2006. Kaplan expects the publicity of the sale itself to help promote Panthera's mission. "It's going to be one of the most expensive drawings ever," he says. "That attracts people's attention."



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*Young Lion Resting* is the “the best Rembrandt drawing to come on the market in a long time”, says Gregory Rubenstein, Sotheby’s worldwide head of Old Master drawings. He says the drawing, which he believes was drawn from life, could attract both private and institutional buyers, including everyone from collectors interested in Rembrandt to those enthralled by “the immediacy of the image”.

The current auction record for a Rembrandt drawing was set back in 2000, when *The Bulwark De Rose and the Windmill De Smeerpot, Amsterdam* [↗](#) (around 1649-52) sold for just over \$3.7m at a Christie’s auction in New York. That work in pen, brown ink and wash is now in the collection of New York’s Morgan Library and Museum.

That sale pales in comparison to top sales of other Old Master drawings at auction, which are dominated by works of the Italian Renaissance. The four most expensive, including works by Raphael and Michelangelo, reached prices higher than the top estimate for *Young Lion Resting*.

The Kaplans' Leiden Collection, named after Rembrandt's birthplace, is known for having the only privately-owned Vermeer, as well as the only work in private hands by Rembrandt's star pupil, Carel Fabritius. (Those works and more stand-outs from the Leiden Collection are the subject of a special exhibition at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida, until 29 March 2026.) Now that he is parting with one of his collection's signature works, is Kaplan still acquiring? "I have to admit that I am," he says.

Prior to the New York sale, Sotheby's will take *Young Lion Resting* on an extensive global tour, starting in Paris and including stops in New York, London, Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, before returning to Manhattan in time for the bidding to start at Sotheby's new Breuer Building headquarters.