

World



**\$20m Rembrandt lion is Sotheby's top draw**

A rare drawing of a lion by the 17th-century Dutch master Rembrandt has been unveiled before its auction in New York next year (Adam Sage writes). *Young Lion Resting* is to be sold with an estimate of \$15 million to \$20 million, by Sotheby's. But Thomas Kaplan, the

Franco-American art lover who has the biggest private Rembrandt collection, hoped it would become the most expensive drawing ever, beating the \$47.8 million paid for Raphael's *Head of a Young Apostle* in 2012. "£50 million is a fine target," Kaplan said. Sotheby's said the charcoal-and-chalk work was "among the most important Old



Young Lion Resting is due to be sold in February. The *Night Watch* by Rembrandt is one of the most famous Dutch Golden Age works

Master drawings to come to auction in recent decades". The Leiden Collection, Kaplan's charity, is selling the work to create an endowment for Panthera, the wild cat conservation charity he co-founded in 2006. He pledged that the proceeds would go to the collection, which is named after Leiden, the town where Rembrandt was born in 1606. When Rembrandt produced *Young Lion Resting* in the 1630s, there were an estimated one million lions in the world. Today, it is estimated that between 23,000 and 39,000 lions remain in the wild, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature. At a presentation of the work in Paris,

Kaplan, 63, said: "The lion consists of the literal embodiment of my two greatest passions: Rembrandt and big cats." Kaplan, who made his fortune investing in silver, platinum, gold and hydrocarbons, said Rembrandt had drawn the lion after moving to Amsterdam. He is likely to have seen it in a menagerie there. The Dutch East India Company would bring animals from north Africa. "For me Rembrandt is the most impactful painter of all time," he said. "Very, very few painters can give as much inner life to a human as Rembrandt gives to the lion." Sotheby's said the drawing conveyed "the quiet intensity that speaks to the true essence of the creature". *Young Lion Resting* will be displayed in London later this month and sold in New York in February.

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**Doctors urged to prescribe WFH instead of sick leave**

**France**  
**David Chazan** Paris

Doctors could prescribe working from home as an alternative to sick leave, French MPs suggested, in a proposal that prompted fierce left-wing opposition.

A parliamentary committee grappling with France's large public deficit has voted to add the measure to the budget bill that is before the National Assembly. "This will allow people to work if they are capable of resuming part of their work from home, and it will allow companies to regain productivity and the health service to reduce its costs," said Stéphane Viry, an independent MP.

Left-wing parties said they would vote against the change. "Who are we to meddle in the doctor-patient relationship?" said Ségolène Amiot, from the radical left France Unbowed.

Hendrik Davi, a Green MP, said: "The basis of this bill is the supposition that the increase in sick leave is due to an increase in fraud, and that is wrong." He said the main causes were an ageing population and the conse-

quences of the pandemic. Benoît Serre, co-chairman of Cercle Humana, France's largest human resources think tank, made a different case for rejecting the measure. "In no way can working from home be considered to be a medicine or a way of treating the sick. This is a bizarre proposal that does not make sense legally. If you're ill you have to be put on sick leave, or if you're not ill you can work. In any case 70 per cent of employees in France cannot work from home because of the nature of their jobs."

A survey last month suggested that three quarters of those eligible to work from home had done so while on sick leave. "This practice is already a reality," said the financial daily Les Échos after a survey by the Remote Working Observatory, which is backed by unions and advises employers and the government on working from home.

Dominique Tibi, a GP in Paris, confirmed that French doctors already issued letters advising employers that patients should work from home. "We only do this occasionally and for a limited period, when a patient can't

go to the office but can sit in front of a computer at home," she said. "Some cases are very obvious, if a patient has broken an ankle, for example."

Tibi declined to comment on whether a law was needed to make the practice official and give a doctor's advice the same status as a sick note. The bill before parliament would authorise doctors to prescribe working from home if the patient agrees, and oblige employers to comply. Proponents say it could apply to people suffering from depression or anxiety, as well as other illnesses.

French healthcare is often held up as a model of efficiency compared with the NHS. However, the social security budget, which includes the health service, is projected to run a €20 billion deficit by 2028. Sick leave cost the social security system more than €16 billion last year, including daily sickness benefits for employees.

The bill, if passed, would also compel patients to get their GP to renew sick notes every two weeks. France provides universal state health care but most people also have private top-up insurance.

**Worker rescued after Rome tower collapse**

**Italy**  
**Tom Kington** Rome

A Romanian worker was rescued last night after spending nearly 12 hours trapped under the rubble of a medieval tower in Rome.

The Torre dei Conti, which overlooks the ancient Forum, partly collapsed yesterday morning, sending a cloud of dust and debris over tourists. The trapped man was one of five workers who had been working inside the 29m-tall building.

"He has been pulled out and taken to hospital by ambulance," Lamberto Giannini, the Rome prefect, told the



Dust from the 13th-century Torre dei Conti by the Forum covered tourists

state TV network Rai, adding that the man was in "a serious condition."

The 13th-century tower stands at the intersection of Rome's busy Via Cavour and the pedestrianised road leading through the Roman Forum. At 11.20am an external section of the tower crumbled. Firefighters evacuated four other men who had been working inside and "put up some protection" around the trapped man, which helped to shield him from a second collapse at 1pm, Giannini said.

Roberto Gualtieri, the mayor of Rome, said: "We hope that he will pull through." Magistrates have begun an investigation into the incident.