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## Sotheby's Brings Rare Rembrandt to Saudi Arabia in Vote of Market Confidence

The 17th-century masterpiece will make a stop in Diriyah ahead of its blockbuster New York sale, where it's estimated to sell for \$15 million.



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting*, (ca. 1638–42). Black chalk, white chalk heightening, and gray wash, on brown laid paper, 11.5 × 15 cm. Image courtesy of The Leiden Collection.

A rare Rembrandt drawing poised to become one of the most expensive works on paper ever sold at auction is heading to Saudi Arabia next week, ahead of the drawing's blockbuster New York sale.

The work, *Young Lion Resting* (ca. 1638–43), will carry a \$15 million to \$20 million estimate when it goes under the hammer at Sotheby's New York on February 4—far above the artist's current \$3.7 million auction record for a drawing—and has been billed by the auction house as the most important Rembrandt drawing to reach the market in half a century. Its brief public display in Diriyah, comes as Sotheby's deepens its presence in Saudi Arabia after staging its first-ever auction in the country last year, and reflects how top-tier works are increasingly being leveraged in the region's broader cultural and market ambitions.

Believed to have been drawn from life by Rembrandt, the work comes from the collection of Thomas S. Kaplan and Daphne Recanati Kaplan, who own the world's largest private collection of Rembrandt works—17 paintings, just five fewer than the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. In total, the Kaplans hold around 220 works by Dutch Masters in their "Leiden Collection," named after Rembrandt's birthplace. *Young Lion Resting* was their first Rembrandt acquisition, purchased through the New York dealers John and Paul Herring in 2005.



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting* (ca. 1638–42). Courtesy of Sotheby's.

The Kaplans are venturesome collectors radical ideas. In September, Kaplan revealed plans in September to fractionalize his Leiden Collection and launch it as an IPO, with the aim of democratizing access to 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch masterpieces by allowing investors to own portions of the collection.

The lion drawing is co-owned by Jonathan Ayers, the chairman of the board of Panthera, a New York-based wild cat conservation charity co-founded by the Kaplans, which will be the recipient of the proceeds raised through its sale.

“Rembrandt had an unparalleled ability to reach the very soul of his subject, whether human or drawn from the natural world, and that sensitivity is powerfully felt in this remarkably intimate study,” said Sotheby’s worldwide head of Old Master drawings, Gregory Rubinstein.

The work has already toured to Paris, London, Abu Dhabi, and Hong Kong. Its Saudi Arabian detour, where the artwork will be on public view at Diriyah’s Bujairi Terrace January 24 and 25, comes at a “fitting moment” according to Rubenstein, as Panthera is currently supporting initiatives to reintroduce critically endangered native leopards to AlUla, the ancient Arabian desert in the kingdom’s Medina province. “It offers a poignant dialogue between art, place, and the enduring presence of big cats in the region’s past and future.”

The Rembrandt drawing’s display will coincide with the opening of the preview exhibition for Sotheby’s second sale in the Saudi capital of Riyadh, “Origins II,” on January 31. The 64-lot sale features headline lots by Pablo Picasso, Anish Kapoor, Andy Warhol and major works by Middle Eastern artists like Safeya Binzagr. The house held its first auction held in the country, “Origins,” last February, which brought in \$17 million in total.