

Galerie

Rembrandt's *Young Lion Resting* Fetches \$18 Million at Auction

The Sotheby's sale benefits Panthera, the world's leading organization dedicated to the conservation of wild cats

BY ALEXANDRIA SILLO

FEBRUARY 4, 2026



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting*, (ca. 1638-42).

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting*, (ca. 1638-42).
PHOTO: COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S

A rare Rembrandt drawing of a lion sold for \$17.86 million at **Sotheby's on Wednesday**, with the proceeds of the sale benefitting Panthera, the world's leading organization dedicated to the conservation of wild cats. The work, which was expected to fetch between \$15-20 million, is the first **Rembrandt** drawing of a lion to come to market in a century, and the only one that remains in a private collection. The remaining five drawings featuring lions, which date from the late 1630s to the 1640s, are in museum collections in **London**, Paris, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam.

Widely regarded as one of the leading painters of the Dutch Golden Age, **Rembrandt**'s dramatic use of light and shadow is evident in this drawing. In this work, offered from the coveted Leiden collection and now the most valuable drawing by the artist ever sold at auction, the depiction of the lion suggests Rembrandt saw the lion live, although it is unclear where exactly he would have seen it. Experts deduce that the artist would have been in his early to mid-thirties at the time of completion.



Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, *Young Lion Resting*, (ca. 1638–42).
PHOTO: COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S

“What is most remarkable about *Young Lion Resting* is the way Rembrandt combines sheer technical mastery with an ability seemingly to see into the very soul of this noble creature,” says Gregory Rubinstein, Sotheby’s Head of Old Master Drawings. “Here, he brings together two very different strands of his genius: his extraordinary gift for the observation of nature, and his unrivaled ability to see to the very heart and soul of his subjects, in his portraits and his history paintings alike. Drawn from life with extraordinary energy and movement, the drawing is a work of breathtaking skill. Only in the greatest drawings does every stroke, every minute modulation of tone, feel so perfectly judged, and convey so much. *Young Lion Resting* is one of the most significant Old Master drawings to appear at auction in decades.”

Ahead of the sale, the work was on a world tour of sorts where it was displayed in Paris, New York, London, **Abu Dhabi**, Hong Kong, and Riyadh.