

Rare Rembrandt Lion Drawing Roars to Nearly \$18 Million at Sotheby's

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

A rare drawing by **Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn's** depiction of a resting lion **achieved \$17.86 million at Sotheby's on Wednesday**, setting a new auction record for a drawing by the Dutch master. The sale will directly benefit Panthera, the world's leading organization dedicated to the conservation of wild cats.

Titled *Young Lion Resting* (ca. 1638–42), the work was estimated to sell for between \$15 million and \$20 million and marks the first Rembrandt drawing of a lion to appear at auction in more than a century. It is also the only example from the artist's small group of lion studies to

remain in private hands; the other five known drawings, dating from the late 1630s through the 1640s, are held in major museum collections in London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam.

Offered from the renowned Leiden Collection, the charcoal drawing showcases Rembrandt's extraordinary command of light, shadow, and movement. The lion's alert yet contemplative presence has led scholars to conclude that the artist likely drew the animal from life, though the exact location where Rembrandt encountered the lion remains unknown. Experts believe the work was executed when Rembrandt was in his early to mid-thirties.

Now the most valuable drawing by Rembrandt ever sold at auction, *Young Lion Resting* exemplifies the artist's rare ability to fuse close observation of nature with psychological depth.

"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," said Gregory Rubinstein, Sotheby's Head of Old Master Drawings. "Only in the greatest drawings does every stroke feel so perfectly judged. This is one of the most significant Old Master drawings to appear at auction in decades."

Ahead of the sale, the drawing embarked on a global tour, with public viewings in Paris, New York, London, Abu Dhabi, Hong Kong, and Riyadh, underscoring both its rarity and its broad international appeal.