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Experts Believe 19th-Century Painting Estimated At \$800 At Auction Could Be An Authentic Rembrandt

BY **LISA KARCZEWSKI** ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 POSTED IN **ART VALUATION**

I came across an intriguing story reported by [Artnet](#) about an artwork described as a 19th-century “Continental School” painting and estimated at around \$500 to \$800 at auction that soared to a closing bid of \$870,000 earlier this week fueling discussion that the competing bidders believed it could be an early **Rembrandt**. The artwork eventually was sold to a European phone bidder. A New Jersey auction house, which refers to itself as “The New Jersey alternative to the New York Auction House”, offered the oil painting entitled “*Triple Portrait with Lady Fainting*”. In instances where experts are unable to support an “ironclad” attribution, especially where Old Masters are concerned, less specific or broad descriptions or labels such as “school of,” or “follower of,” or “circle of,” are typically used.

The painting had come to the attention of some Old Master dealers and is believed to be a long lost panel by a young Rembrandt. In particular, the artwork was thought to be a depiction of *Smell*, which is part of Rembrandt’s series on the *Five Senses*. The series dates back to around 1625 and is considered to be among Rembrandt’s first paintings, possibly completed while the artist was still a young student in Dutch painter **Pieter Lastman’s** studio.

Remarkably, a similar Old Master coup occurred last year when a successful bidder acquired an “unattributed painting at a Christie’s auction for \$5,000, cleaned it up, spent some time and money on authenticating it as a work by **John Constable**, and then sold it at Sotheby’s” for a staggering \$5 million.