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Rubens drawing, other works of art, net Dutch princess €8m at auction Society



Photo: Sotheby's

A drawing by Peter Paul Rubens of a young man owned by princess Christina has been sold at auction in New York for \$8.2m including \$1.2m auction costs. The drawing, plus other works of art, raised a total of some €8m for the princess, who is the youngest sister of former queen Beatrix. The sale had been widely criticised in the Netherlands because the drawing had not been offered first to the Dutch state or domestic museums. The buyer is said to be a very wealthy US collector, named by some as Leon Black, former owner of Chiquita bananas. The works come from the collection of King William II of the Netherlands who died in 1849. William and his Russian wife Anna Pavlovna together assembled a huge collections of paintings and drawings including works by Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens and Rembrandt. Dutch museum directors criticised the sale, in particular Sjarel Ex, director of the Boijmans van Beuningen museum. Ex's museum, which is currently being refurbished, has the largest number of works by Rubens in the country. He urged the Dutch royal family to desist from auctioning off the drawing to allow time to secure the work for his or another Dutch museum. The Rembrandt association, which discourages the sale of art works of national importance abroad reportedly made a bid for the drawing but was not successful. Princess Beatrix is a patron of the association.