

# The New Criterion

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## Should Jeff Koons be worth more than a Rembrandt?

*by James Panero*

Learn what happened when the art dealer Larry Salander asked this question by reading my article in this week's *New York* magazine.

Over the last few years, [Salander] had been trying to apply his passion and alchemy to correcting what he saw to be a dangerous inversion of the art market. To Salander, many contemporary art collectors are philistines. But if he could use his gallery to create a new market for old-master and Renaissance art, perhaps he could shift the paradigms of the international art trade.

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It was an intriguing idea, but it left him in ruin. On the opening evening of a show he hoped would electrify the market, angry investors closed down his multimillion-dollar gallery. A restraining order prevented Salander from entering the gallery or selling art anywhere in the world. He now faces a criminal investigation and lawsuits from

investors who say they were abused, collectors who say they didn't get what they paid for, and artists who say they never got paid. He could be upwards of \$100 million in debt. As our lunch filled the afternoon, Salander spoke for the first time about his plan to rescue the art world from bad taste, and how it ultimately destroyed him.

[Read the entire article here.](#)

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