

FLEMISH SCHOOL, WORKSHOP OF PIERRE-PAUL RUBENS

STUDY OF TWO LIONS WALKING



OIL ON CANVAS

17TH CENTURY

DIMENSIONS:

HEIGHT : 48,3 IN - WIDTH: 72,9 IN.

27, Quai Voltaire, 75007 Paris

Symbols of strength and power of King Henry IV, the two lions in the walking position, shown in our painting, are directly inspired from the *Entrevue du roi et de Marie de Médicis à Lyon le 9 novembre 1600*, painting executed by Pierre-Paul Rubens (1577-1640) and illustrated below in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Pierre Paul Rubens, *Entrevue du roi et de Marie de Médicis à Lyon le 9 novembre 1600*, 1621-1625, 3,94 m x 2,95 m, Paris, Musée du Louvre, INV1775

This composition depicts two lions pulling the chariot of the allegory of the city of Lyon welcoming the future Queen of France. This work is part of a series of twenty-four paintings comprising the *Cycle de la vie de Marie de Médicis* as regent ordered between 1621 and 1625 to the Flemish painter, for her palace of Luxembourg.

The lower half of Rubens' painting is dominated by the imposing image of the lions and it is not surprising that one would dedicate a painting to this subject, such as our piece, because of the strong symbolism attached to these animals. Our canvas, whose preparatory drawing is preserved in the Musée du Louvre and illustrated below in Figure 2, fits perfectly into the artistic movement of the time as well as in the technical mastery as a painter like Rubens himself or his workshop.



Figure 2. Flemish School after Pierre Paul Rubens, Two lions walking toward the left, Red chalk and white highlights on paper, Paris, Musée du Louvre, graphic arts department, INV 20347, recto

Pierre-Paul Rubens (1577-1640):

Rubens produced a considerable work by performing mainly important religious and mythological projects in addition to important series of historical paintings. He works with a very large workshop and a number of prestigious collaborators such as Frans Snyders, Jacob Jordaens, Anthony Van Dyck and Paul de Vos.

He also plays an important diplomatic role in Spain, France and England, which will allow him to benefit from an unrivaled social position compared to other artists of his time. His combined talents of painter and diplomat will allow him to establish a relationship of trust with the great characters of the European courts including Queen Marie de Medici who will command him in particular the series of the cycle of the life of Marie de Medici (1621-1625) and it is at his home that she will find refuge when she is struck by exile by her son Louis XIII.

Iconography:

Entrevue du roi et de Marie de Médicis à Lyon le 9 novembre 1600, Pierre-Paul Rubens, 1621-1625, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Inventory number: INV1775.

Two lions walking toward the left, Flemish School after Pierre-Paul Rubens, 17th century, Red chalk and white highlights on paper, Paris, Musée du Louvre, graphic arts department, Inventory number : INV 20347, recto.