

Théodore GERICAULT (Rouen 1791 - Paris 1824)

A Snarling Lion

Pencil on papier calque, laid down on card.
Inscribed Géricault = Etudes de lions - 2 dessins in a modern hand in pencil on the card support.
160 x 212 mm. (6 1/4 x 8 3/8 in.)

Théodore Géricault seems to have been interested in lions from early in his career, as his student sketchbooks include copies after Rubens' paintings of lion hunts. While in London between 1820 and 1821 he made several drawings after wild animals in the zoo, with a particular emphasis on lions.

The attribution of the present sheet to Géricault has been confirmed by Lorenz Eitner. A facsimile of this drawing is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, while two copies of the sheet, attributed to Alexandre Colin, are among a group of traced copies after drawings by Géricault in the collection of Peter Nathan in Zurich.

The present sheet was at one time mounted together with a drawing by Géricault of A Lion Attacking a Horse, also on 'papier calque'.

Provenance:

Dr. Douglas Huntly Gordon, Baltimore, Maryland (his collector's mark [Lugt 1130a] stamped on a museum loan label formerly attached to the old backing board)
Loaned by him to the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland
Anonymous sale ('The Property of a Lady'), New York, Christie's, 24 May 1989, part of lot 335.

Literature:

Germain Bazin, Théodore Géricault: Étude critique, documents et catalogue raisonné, Vol.VII, Paris, 1997, p.31 and pp.149-150, no.2343A.

Artist description:

When Théodore Gericault died in January 1824, at the age of thirty-three, he was best known as the painter of The Raft of the Medusa, which had caused a sensation when it was exhibited at the Salon of 1819. The public at large knew little or nothing of his work as a draughtsman, however, so when the contents of his studio – containing some 220 paintings and several hundred drawings and sketchbooks

- were sold at auction in November 1824, the works on paper were a revelation, and were eagerly acquired by collectors. Several important collections of drawings and watercolours by Gericault were formed in France in the 19th century – by Alfred Armand, Louis Bro, Philippe de Chennevières, Alexandre Colin, L. J. A. Coutan, Horace His de la Salle and François Marcille, among others - and works by the artist have remained popular with collectors and connoisseurs ever since.