

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS: RUBENS AND HIS LEGACY

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Michael Cole-Fontayn: At BNY Mellon, we are invested in social responsibility, including helping to enrich the cultural life of our local communities around the world. This is reflected in our enduring commitment to access to the arts as part of our global philanthropic endeavors.

Since 2007, we have been privileged to partner with the Royal Academy of Arts in London across a number of projects, and earlier today I caught up with Royal Academy Curator Arturo Galansino to talk about Rubens and His Legacy, an exhibition that we are supporting at the RA from the 24th of January to the 10th of April.

Arturo, thank you for joining us today.

Arturo Galansino: Thank you, Michael.

Michael Cole-Fontayn: I know this fabulous exhibition has been a long time in the planning, and we're going to talk a little bit about one of your favorite pieces in this Rubens' exhibition, Rubens and His Legacy, The Tiger, Lion and the Leopard Hunt. What is it about this man-versus-beast portrait that is so symbolic and special to you?

Arturo Galansino: Yes, you're right. Of course, it's one of my favorite paintings. It's one of the most iconic Rubens' paintings. It contains everything about Rubens, everything about baroque art. The sense of this style. The sense of this moment, of this artistic moment.

In this painting, Rubens is really expressing his poetic. It's the opposite of the minimalist motto, less is more. Here, Rubens is saying that more is better. Everything, many things are going on in this painting. It's really a battle scene between beast and man. As you can see, it is kind of an artificial idea. It's difficult in nature to find a tiger, lions and leopard in the same ground. So, it's a concept.

For this reason, this very gruesome and spine-chilling violence of this image at the end is a fiction. And it's clearly a fiction.



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Michael Cole-Fontayn: This giant hunting scene created the first type of market for this painting, and who were the buyers of these types of paintings?

Arturo Galansino: Yes, I think that Rubens knew very well that these kinds of scenes could be very appealing for a certain male clientele. In the case of the tiger hunt that we are talking about, it was part of a series of paintings bought by Maximilian I of Bavaria.

This painting, as many others, was the starting point for a series of prints. Rubens was a very skilled man of market and a very, I would say, great entrepreneur. He understood that thanks to the print, his art would now be famous, and prints were so fashionable that they were a big part of his income.

Michael Cole-Fontayn: Of course, Rubens and His Legacy explores not only the work of Rubens, but also his influence from the 17th century onwards on other artists.

Arturo Galansino: Yes, the sense of the exhibition is really giving the idea to the public about the dimension of the influence of Rubens on art history, an influence very strong already during the life of the artist where he had big worship. He was very influential all over Europe, but also his influence through the centuries. How the artists of other generations considered themselves later follower of the master.

Michael Cole-Fontayn: With such an incredible range of artists showcased in this exhibition, it must have been a major undertaking to secure some of these works from around the world. Can you give us a little insight?

Arturo Galansino: Yes, all of our dealings with other institutions are of course confidential, but you are definitely right. This exhibition has been planned many years ago. We started working on the loans since the beginning. Some of them are incredible. Of course, the battle scene that we are talking about is an incredible loan. To secure this kind of loan, we had to convince the owner about the importance, the scholarly importance, of the project.

Michael Cole-Fontayn: Arturo, you've inspired us. Thank you very much for decoding these paintings for us.

Arturo Galansino: Thank you very much to you.

Michael Cole-Fontayn: Thank you.

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