

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM
FINE ARTS

LOUIS JEAN FRANÇOIS LAGRENÉE
THE ELDER

Paris 1724 - id. 1805
French School

RINALDO AND ARMIDA

Oil on canvas
H. 0,60 m; W. 0,70 m
Signed and dated lower right: *L. Lagrenée / 1766*

DATE: 1766

PROVENANCE:

Commissioned in 1766 by 'Monsieur de Saint-Marc', with a pendant, *Perseus and Andromeda* (Sandoz 1983, no. 169, whereabouts unknown), at a cost of 600 livres for each picture (inscribed *S.M.* on the back of the original, unlined canvas).
Private collection, France

LITTERATURE:

Denis Diderot, *Salon de 1767*, éd. J. Seznec et J. Adhémar, vol. III, 1983, p. 22.
Marc Sandoz, *Les Lagrenée I. Louis (Jean François) Lagrenée 1725-1805*, Paris, 1983, p. 364, no. 170.
Camille Laurens, *Les Fiancées du Diable. Enquête sur les femmes terrifiantes*, Paris, 2011, p. 40-41 (ill.).

EXHIBITED:

Paris, Salon de 1767, no. 27.

A pupil of Carle van Loo, Lagrenée won the Rome Prize in 1749. He spent four years in Italy where he copied the great masters and concentrated on developing his technique. On his return to Paris in 1753 he painted *Deianeira Abducted by the Centaur Nessus* (Paris, Musée du Louvre), which enjoyed great success. From 1755, he participated regularly in the Salon. In 1760 the Empress Elizabeth invited him to St. Petersburg where he was appointed director of the Academy of Fine Arts. He left for Russia with his brother and pupil Jean Jacques the Younger, but following the Empress's death in 1762 they returned to France. Back in Paris, he became professor at the Académie and between 1781 and 1787 he held the position of Director of the French Academy in Rome.

An implicated and conscientious artist, Lagrenée created a large number of ancient and mythological scenes, religious paintings and history scenes. His colouring is bright and pleasant and his compositions are skilful, but without rigour. More traditionalist than innovative,

Andlauer Hof, Münsterplatz 17, 4051 Basel, Switzerland
Phone +41 61 681 35 35 - Mobile +41 78 955 77 77
Fax +41 61 681 75 70 - jean.f.heim@galerieheim.ch - www.galerieheim.ch

JEAN-FRANÇOIS HEIM FINE ARTS

Lagrenée is the great artisan of a genre, amiable mythological painting, which ensured France's major influence in Europe during the second half of the 18th century.

This painting was inspired by the famous poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* by Tasso, the first complete edition of which appeared in Italian in 1581. The subject is based on history: it relates to the first Crusade led by Godefroi de Bouillon which led to the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. In this war epic, love and magical themes exist side by side with grand actions. Rinaldo, one of the main Christian knights, is diverted from the conquest of Jerusalem by the magician Armida. Lagrenée has shown Rinaldo, the knight disarmed, at the feet of the seductive Armida in a pyramidal composition, accompanied by Cupids who are preparing to set up a magical mirror in which the lovers will gaze at themselves.