

# KUNKEL FINE ART

Zeichnungen, Gemälde und Skulpturen  
des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts



## OTTO DILL

(1884 Neustadt - 1957 Bad Dürkheim)

### Lion Hunt, 1918

Oil on cardboard

50 : 70 cm

Signed and dated lower right: "Otto Dill 1918"

Inscribed by the artist on the label verso: "Löwenangriff 1918 Otto Dill"

#### Provenance:

Johanna and Casimir Otto Katz

1922 as a birth gift to Claus Bally, grandson of the above-mentioned couple

Private collection

#### Exhibition:

Münchner Kunstausstellung, Glaspalast, Munich 1919, no. 1211

#### Literature:

Wilhelm Weber: *Otto Dill. Leben und Werk*, Neustadt an der Donau 1992, p. 178

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Thanks to the support of a patron, Otto Dill attended the Munich Academy of Fine Arts from 1908, where he became a master student of the animal painter Heinrich von Zügel and was given his own studio. There he learnt to paint in the open air in front of a live model, focusing on capturing anatomy and behaviour. Dill soon developed an impressionism based on realism, as was typical around 1900.

From 1912, Otto Dill was represented with his paintings in the exhibitions of the Munich Secession. In addition to depictions of horses, he specialised in carnivore motifs, which earned him the nickname 'Löwen Dill' ('Lion Dill'). Dill found the models for his lion, tiger and panther paintings in the Munich Zoological Gardens and in the menagerie of the Krone circus. The close-up view and narrowing of the picture detail create a crackling tension that is heightened by dynamic brushwork. Here, mostly muted colours are used in pastose application.

The *Lion Hunt* is one of Otto Dill's major works. It shows a lioness and a lion attacking two oriental riders in the desert. Their attacked horses are rearing up steeply, the riders are struggling to stay in the saddle and at the same time are busy fending off the proud king of beasts and his death-defying mate. The scenery is dominated by drama and all the elements are set in motion, which is heightened by the bold brushwork.



Leonardo da Vinci: *The Battle of Anghiari*, ca. 1503

The *Lion Hunt* is not only a masterpiece of alla prima painting, but also follows a long tradition that Otto Dill confidently carried into the 20th century. It begins with relief depictions on sarcophagi from Roman antiquity and is taken up at the beginning of the modern era by none other than Leonardo da Vinci in the lost painting *The Battle of Anghiari* (ca. 1503).

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Peter Paul Rubens: *Lion Hunt*, 1623  
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This in turn impressed Peter Paul Rubens so much that he subsequently made a drawing (1603), which is now in the Louvre in Paris. Around two decades later, the Flemish Baroque painter created his colossal painting *Lion Hunt* (1623), which shows the oriental equestrian motif in battle with a lion and a lioness and is one of the main attractions of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich. In 1854, it was to inspire the French Romantic painter Eugène Delacroix to create his painting of the same subject, which is now kept in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Otto Dill, in turn, reduces Rubens' well-known painting to the double triad of riders, horses and lions. In doing so, he distils its essence: the eternal struggle for existence.



Eugène Delacroix: *Lion Hunt*, 1854  
©Musée d'Orsay, Paris