

Basic Detail Report



Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom

Date

1807-1808

Primary Maker

Washington Allston

Medium

oil and chalk on canvas

Description

Washington Allston is a seminal figure in the development of American art after the American Revolution. Although he favored neoclassicism while studying art abroad after his graduation from Harvard, he abandoned such influences upon returning to the United States. America's first Romantic artist, he explored a broad range of subject matter, from landscape to portraiture. The subject matter of the museum's painting derives from Allston's knowledge of classical sources, as well as a series of designs on the same subject made by Jakob Asmus Carstens (1754-1798). The heroic-size composition, which is geometrically ordered around a central statue, remains incomplete. Some areas are roughly sketched in, and other areas of coloration lack glazes. As the principal figure of Jason was never executed, it is the figure of Jason's uncle, Pelias, that dominates the composition. Note the lower right corner of the painting, where the artist has improvised a palette. The canvas, abandoned in Rome when Allston returned to the United States, was sent to Boston after the artist's death. It remains a powerful reminder of Allston's early classical training.

Dimensions

Sight: 168 x 240 in. (426.7 x 609.6 cm)