



## PAIR OF POLYCHROME KHMER GUARDIAN LIONS

**\$8,800**

c. 1850 • Southeast Asia • Pigment, Wood, Crystal • Collection #CMCL094

W: 24.0" D: 37.5" H: 54.0"

Grand and imposing, these monumental lion sculptures offer protection to all those who stand before them. Dated to the mid-19th century, the majestic pair is sculpted of carved wood and molded plaster with a gilt and polychrome finish, with decorative accents of rock crystal and cut glass. Beautifully worked with artful craftsmanship and terrific scale, the lions are attributed to Khmer artisans of Cambodia and southeast Asia, and crafted in a traditional style popularized during the Khmer Empire (802-1431).

An important part of traditional Khmer iconography, the lion is a powerful symbol that emphasizes the authority of the king. Continued...



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Guardian lions such as these were known to flank the entryways of Khmer temples and other sacred sites, serving both as greeters and defenders. The lion, representing royalty, strength, and courage, is identified as the personal symbol of the Khmer deified rulers. Therefore, the lion was believed to ward off evil through both divine and royal protection.

This pair of temple lions is finely crafted with intricate detailing and rich depth of color. A red-brown polychrome underlayer darkens the surface, enlivened by traces of the original gilt finish. The mane and chest are meticulously carved with wavy locks of hair and ornate geometric patterns. At the center of the chest is a flower in bloom surrounded by various swirling and braided embellishments. Adorning the lions' face are striking eyes of domed rock crystal, outlined with stylized teardrop eyebrows. A similar detail of inlaid cut glass can be seen lining the tails, adding a pop of green color to the brown-gold finish. With their alert postures and incredible artistry, these mythical lions are the ultimate protectors of the home.

Significant restorations to plaster finish on the legs and back.

