

JOHN BENNETT fine paintings

Foxhounds and a Fox Terrier by a kennel
WRIGHT BARKER

£ POA



Description

WRIGHT BARKER R.B.A.1863-1941 English School Oil on canvas, signed and dated 1889 Foxhounds and a Fox Terrier by a kennel 92 x 122 cms
 36 1/4 x 48 ins Overall framed size 110.4 x 141 cms 43½ x 55½ ins Sometimes known as John Wright Barker, this artist was a highly proficient painter who depicted dogs, – both domestic and sporting - horses, hunting scenes, highland cattle, birds and occasionally landscapes and portraits. He also occasionally produced bronzes, one of which was of the champion race horse St Simon. He was born in Bradford to parents who worked in the textile industry and it is known that their son was initially being employed in the same work as he is recorded as working in the weft room of a worsted mill. However, in 1885 he left his home in Yorkshire and moved to Edwinstowe in Derbyshire. The reasons for this are not known and as there are only sketchy records of him receiving formal academic training as a pupil from a well-known artist, one can only surmise that there must have been a driving ambition on his part to become a painter. The family home was not far from the Bradford Art School so possibly he gained some tuition there. In a newspaper obituary to Wright Barker, it states that he was painting when young in Bradford, had joined the recently founded Bradford Art Guild and had three works in the Guild's first exhibition in 1884. His name is also mentioned in the list of artists associated with the Académie Julian in Paris, an institution with connections to Matisse, Gauguin and Fernand Léger. The census of 1891 has his profession given as 'artist' when he was living at the Beeches, Ollerton near Newark and this is the address from which he sent his first painting which was accepted for inclusion in the Royal Academy exhibition of that year. The title was In forest's depths unseen and was followed by twenty-one other works shown there between 1891 and 1904. Apart from these RA exhibits, throughout his career he also showed twenty-eight at the Royal Society of British Artists, four at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and others at the Royal Scottish Academy, Manchester City Art Gallery, Royal Society of Artists and Birmingham and Nottingham Museum and Art Gallery. Some other titles include: The day before the Fair; A moorland incident; My children and their pets; The shearer; and Full Cry. Barker was as astute observer of the animals and subjects which he portrayed on canvas and his palette was rich in tone and depth with bold and confident brushstrokes. They lack the sentimentality of the earlier Victorian Landseer inspired artists and his working dogs, including hounds, are seen in natural poses. It is clear that Barker also enjoyed painting packs of hounds in Sherwood Forest and his fine work "Rufford Hunt Hounds in Kennel" is certainly comparable to examples by John Emms or John Sargeant Noble. His work became popular with the public and he gained many commissions, particularly of dogs and horses. One of the most famous of these occurred in 1905 at Rufford Abbey when he was commi...