

DUKE STREET GALLERY

INFORMATION SHEET



ARTHUR WARDLE (1864-1949)
DISTINGUE, DENDRASPIS AND DILWYN

Materials

Oil on Canvas, Signed
36" x 48"

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Arthur Wardle 1864 – 1949

It is undeniable as a child Arthur Wardle must have been blessed with a strong natural talent to use a pencil and, in due course, the paintbrush. How else can one explain that with virtually no academic training, he was accepted at the Royal Academy when he was only sixteen.

In the years that followed, Arthur Wardle became one of the leading animal painters of the period, especially his paintings of hounds in full cry.

When Wardle exhibited his first work at the Royal Academy in 1880, he was living and working in Camden in Oakley Square. Twelve years later he had become well enough known to be financially secure. He was therefore able to move to the more fashionable area in St John's Wood where he purchased a property in Alma Square.

Although Wardle is best known for his oil paintings, he was also just as successful in the media of watercolour and pastel. He was elected to the Pastel Society in 1911 and became a Member of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolour in 1922. The amount of hard work and dedication that Wardle applied to his art in order to achieve the degree of success that he enjoyed is difficult to appreciate in the light of his lack of training – it is extremely rare that an artist should achieve such success in the field of fine art without his serving an apprenticeship either in an academy or a recognised artists studio. This is not the case today, but at the end of the 19th Century there were strict rules to be followed in the search for success and the acceptance of such by one's peers and the public.

By the time Wardle died at the grand age of eighty-five, having survived the latter days of the 19th Century, two World Wars and half the Twentieth Century, his continued success had taken him to the West End of London. He exhibited with the Fine Arts Society in 1931 and Vicars Brothers in 1935. He also sent works to Paris, to the Salon where he was also much admired. Examples of his work are still to be found in France.

Wardle had a searching eye of the conformation of different animals, but where he excelled was in his large composition of hounds running. He caught exactly the almost fluid motion of a hunting pack, pouring through a gap in the hedge, down a bank or along a gully like flood water. Standing in front of such a canvas, one can almost hear hounds giving tongue, spurred on by the huntsman's horn.

During his long career Arthur Wardle exhibited twenty-one paintings at the Royal Academy, twenty-nine at Suffolk Street, twenty at the New Watercolour Society and twenty-seven subjects at various shows in Paris and the provinces.