

KYNANCE FINE ART

A Barbary Lamb

Dame Laura Knight DBE RA RE RWS (1877 -1970)



REF:

Description

Charcoal on Paper Signed & dated lower right 'Laura Knight 1937'25 x 35.7 cm (9.8 x 14 ins)

Note: With a handwritten and signed note from the artist attached to the reverse of the frame which reads: "This little lamb joins one in sending best wishes for your future happiness, wit fondest love, Laura" The card bears the address "16 Lanford Place, NW8" where the artist moved with her husband, Harold Knight, in the 1920s and lived in until her death. Provenance: A Private Collection This beautiful charcoal drawing of a Barbary lamb illustrates a species of caprine, native to the rocky mountains of the Sahara in North Africa. It is considered a rare breed these days due to their dwindling numbers in the wild, although protected from extinction by those introduced to Europe and North America around 1900. Dame Laura Knight was born Laura Johnson on 4th August 1877 in Long Eaton, Derbyshire. Her father abandoned the family shortly after her birth, leaving Laura, her mother and two sisters to face financial difficulties. Her mother, Charlotte Johnson taught part-time at the Nottingham School of Art and managed to get Laura accepted as an "artisan" student, paying no fees, at the age of 13. Two years later, Laura took over her mother's role as she became seriously ill with cancer and won a scholarship. She met one of the School of Art's most promising students, Harold Knight, then aged 17. They became friends and later married in 1903. The couple had visited Staithes on the Yorkshire coast for a holiday and found a colony of artists, so went to live and work there. Laura would draw the people of the fishing village, the surrounding farms and local children would sit for her giving her the opportunity to develop her figure painting skills. She recorded the hardship of the life there, producing very few oil paintings during that period due to her lack of funds. She later recalled: 'Even though my studio was often warmed by burning canvases and drawings I do not regret all the experimental work done and destroyed... I developed a visual memory which has stood me in good stead'. In 1904 Harold and Laura made their first of several visits to the artist's colony at Laren in the Netherlands. In 1907, they moved to Cornwall where they lived primarily at Newlyn and then moved to Lamorna. By March 1908 both had work exhibited at the Newlyn Art Gallery. Harold became an established portrait painter and Laura spent much time painting en-plein air on the beach, often on the cliff tops or the rocks, in a more Impressionist style than she had displayed before. By 1909 her work was being shown at the Royal Academy and one work was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada. Although she excelled at seaside paintings, she often painted female models who came down from London and who were prepared to pose in the nude, which were not so well received in London at the Academy. Her Self-Portrait with Nude 1913 was a reaction to these stuffy rules. After her death the painting now simply known as Self Portrait was purchased by the National Portrait Gallery and is considered a key work in female self-portraiture and a symbol of female emancipation. During World War One...