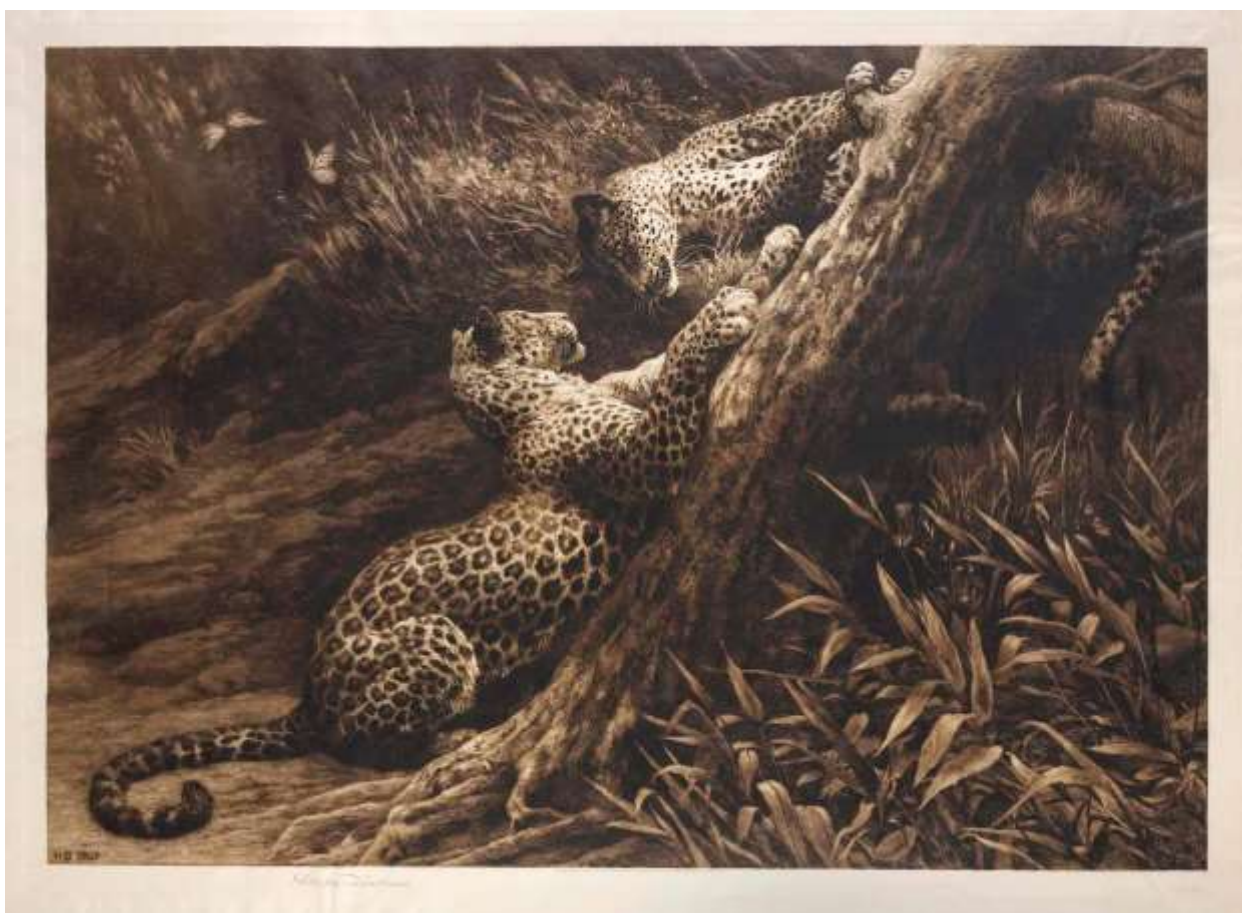


NICHOLAS PRICE
and
THE PARK GALLERY



"Play" Signed. Published in 1907.

19¼ x 26½ in / 50 x 67.5 cm

Exhibited: R.A. 1907. Collection: Ex Family

£7,500

HERBERT DICKSEE
1862 - 1942

THE BIG CATS

HERBERT DICKSEE

1862 - 1942

The Big Cat Etchings

Herbert Dicksee was one of the greatest wild animal artists of his generation. A naturally gifted draughtsman, he became an expert in the observation of the character and behaviour of his animal subjects, and in particular his images of the power and majesty of lions, tigers and other big cats of the world. His success in gaining recognition can be seen in the comment by the art critic for the Windsor Magazine of 1906 who wrote: *"His strikingly lifelike presentment of lions and snarling tigers has, of late years, become very familiar with the general public."*

He had the temperament and flair to capture the presence of these grand beasts during the age of the opening up of both the African Continent post Livingstone and Stanley, and the expansion of colonial Britain through India into Burma. What makes his pictures all the more fascinating is the fact that he was working at a time predating the invention of camera zoom lens. Prior to the discovery of close-up photography, artists would either include the depiction of wild beasts in a general topographical scene, or, have to pose a killed and stuffed animal in a studio setting. Hence the importance of the early 20th century expansion of Zoological Gardens to an artist like Herbert Dicksee. He was to become one of the first generation to create images of rampant lions and powerful tigers in such a realistic and awe-inspiring style.



"Suspense" Signed. No publication line but dated in plate 1920.

16¾ x 26¼ in / 42.5 x 66.8 cm.

Collection: Ex Family

£7,500



"Study of a Lion" Signed. Published in 1915
150 impressions. 7½ x 19¼ in / 19 x 49 cm
Exhibited: R.A. 1915. Collection: Ex Family

SOLD



"A Lioness" Signed. Published in 1914
100 impressions. 7½ x 19¼ in / 19 x 49 cm
Collection: Ex Family

SOLD

Although he was equally adept in painting in oils, he distinguished himself in his prints by his naturalism, originality, and daring use of the power of the black & white images. His etchings successfully conveyed the technical virtuosity in his work, and this exhibition shows most of the finest feline works that he produced. His superb etchings were printed to a remarkably high standard, and his skill with the engraving tool was acknowledged in the Country Life magazine of the early years of the 1900s which included the comment: *"It is certainly debatable whether even Landseer would have excelled Mr Dicksee's insight, which is as notable as his skill with an etchers needle."*

A member of a highly talented family of painters, Herbert's first cousin was Sir Frank Dicksee who was appointed President of the Royal Academy in 1924, and both their fathers John Dicksee and Thomas Dicksee respectively were also accomplished painters. In 1852 his father became the Drawing Master at the City of London School and it was here that Herbert was educated from 1875 to 1878. Herbert studied art at the Slade School of Art on a scholarship, but returned every Wednesday and Saturday to assist his father in his teaching. Upon his father's retirement in 1895 Herbert took over as Drawing Master himself, a post he continued to hold until 1927. A remarkable seventy-five year span for father and son.



"The Ambush" Signed. Published in 1926.
200 impressions. 12¾ x 22 in / 32.5 x 56 cm. Exhibited: R.A. 1926. Collection: Ex Family

£4,300



"In the Enemy's Country" Signed. Published in 1900.
20¼ x 28 in / 51.5 x 71 cm. Exhibited: R.A. 1901

SOLD

His first drawings were copies of book illustrations. His love for animals was stimulated by John Charlton (1849-1917) a specialist in sporting scenes, very often in the depiction of hounds. Charlton lent the young Dicksee sketch books and encouraged his interest. Upon enrolling at the Slade at the age of 16 he at once began etching - a popular discipline at the school whose members contributed to the revival in the art which had been started and championed by James Whistler and Sir Francis Seymour Haden some years previously. Dicksee won a scholarship and several medals. A voyage to New Zealand followed, but did not lead to much opportunity for the study of wild animals in their natural habitat.



"Tigers at a pool" Signed. No publication line
Dated in plate 1930. 9½ x 15¾ in / 24.2 x 40 cm
Collection: Ex Family

£3,000



"In the Reeds" No publication line. Initialled
& dated in the plate 1928.

8½ x 15¼ in / 21.5 x 38.5 cm

Collection: Ex. Family **£2,500**



"The Watcher on the Hill" Signed. Published in 1900. 18¼ x 27 in / 46.5 x 68.5 cm
Exhibited: R.A. 1900 **£3,850**

His growing fascination, however, with lions, tigers and leopards was to send him frequently to sketch in London Zoo of which he was later to become elected a Fellow. Reference again as taken from the 1906 article about Dicksee in the Windsor Magazine *"...he used to rise at 6 o'clock in the morning to visit the Zoological Gardens before visitors could arrive and obstruct his view. There he would be seen, morning after morning, making sketches of the lions and tigers in the reposeful intervals of their restless movements."* And again later: *"Mr Dicksee is a very painstaking artist and spends at least three or four months over each plate."*



"Danger" Signed. Published in 1905. 16 x 27¼ in / 40.5 x 69 cm.
Exhibited: R.A. 1906
£3,250



"His Majesty" Signed. Published in 1888. 23½ x 18½ in / 59.5 x 47 cm
Exhibited: R.A. 1888

£4,000

At the beginning of his professional life he worked for the magazines "Art Journal" and "Portfolio", and in the late 1880s began to etch from his studies at the Zoo. With the assistance of keepers, he used various ruses to persuade the animals to adopt the natural poses he needed to stimulate ideas for pictures. His first lion plate, "His Majesty", showing a dominant, powerful portrait of the head of a lion gazing directly at the viewer, was produced in 1888. Despite the commercial success of this subject, Dicksee initially had some difficulty in getting such etchings published and was advised to vary his output by turning to domestic scenes, often combined with dogs which he was able to observe at home. Yet it was pictures of the big cats which remained his passion throughout his career, and over time the adulation increased to his etchings of wild animals. Publishers, Frost & Reed in particular, as well as the Fine Art Society and Arthur Tooth, regularly began to print his work, using illustrated catalogues to publicise his output. The following years saw a steady stream of spectacular subjects, all based on his studies at the Zoological Gardens, which were conveniently close to his home at the edge of Hampstead Heath. Published photographs of African scenery taken during the Boer War also enabled him to add authenticity to his backgrounds.



"Onward" Signed. No publication line
10½ x 20 in / 26.5 x 51 cm. Exhibited: R.A. 1918
Collection: Ex Family

SOLD



"A Bengal Tiger" Signed. Published in 1915
7½ x 14 in / 19 x 35.5 cm. 100 impressions
Exhibited: R.A. 1915. Collection: Ex Family

£2,800



"Peril" Signed. Published in 1910
11½ x 21¼ in / 29.2 x 54 cm

£1,100



"Leopard drinking" Signed. No publication line
7¾ x 13¾ in / 19.8 x 35 cm. Exhibited: R.A. 1917
Collection: Ex Family

SOLD



"Idlers" Signed. No publication line
200 impressions. 9 x 21 in / 23 x 53.5 cm
Exhibited: R.A. 1921. Collection: Ex Family

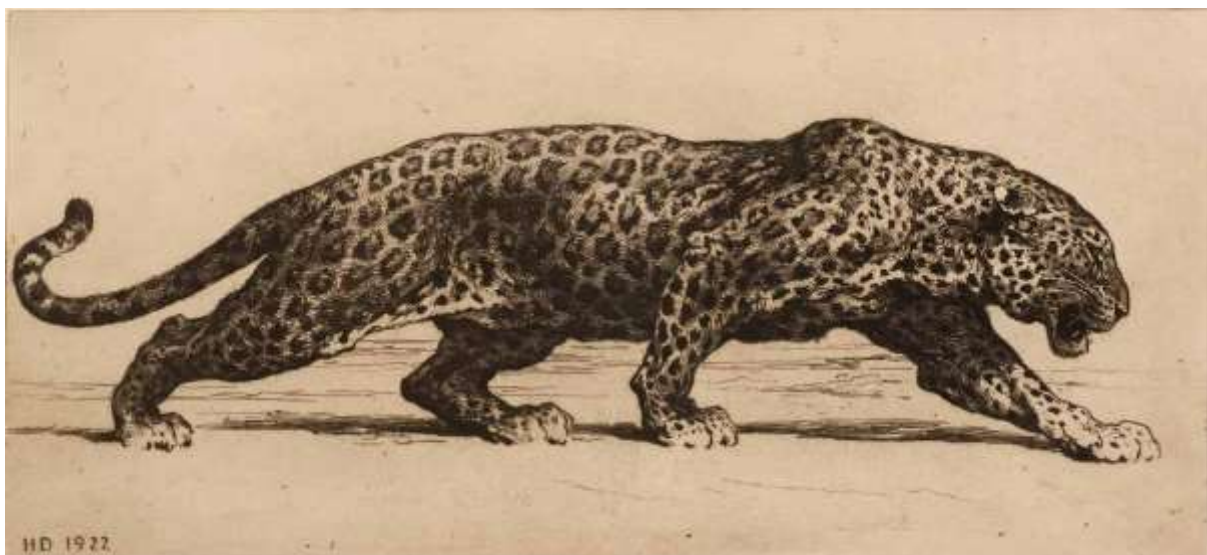
£1,850



"Study of a tiger eating" Signed. No publication line.
100 impressions. 7½ x 17¾ in / 19 x 45 cm
Exhibited: R.A. 1916. Collection: Ex Family

£1,600

Dicksee was a most meticulous exponent of his technique, yet he also shows, on many occasions, a notably free facility of line. A naturally gifted draughtsman with a profound knowledge of the character and behaviour of his animal subjects, his etchings were produced to a remarkably high standard. His seemingly effortless ability made him a perfect exponent for the interpretation of the feelings and thoughts, as well as both the power and gentleness, of his subjects. The art of printmaking took time because of all the detail. Once the design had been worked out the outline was etched onto the plate; this required good, lively drawing with work that also required great skill and judgement - especially since each correction reduced the number of prints that the plate would yield. As a draftsman whose technical curiosity led him to bend the normal conventions of printmaking to his own purposes, Dicksee was able to produce works of exquisite delicacy and beauty with fine effects of light and shade. He would produce only one, fully finished, state of each subject in almost photographic quality. It would be fair to regard him as truly a master of his art, whose engravings should be considered to be very much the work of a printmaker in his exploration of the medium.



"Study of a Leopard" Signed. No publication line but dated in the plate 1922.

100 impressions. 7 x 16 in / 17.8 x 40.5 cm.

Exhibited: R.A. 1922

£3,500

His first painting in oils was exhibited in 1881, and thereafter well over 300 of his works were shown in various galleries which included the Fine Arts Society, Walker Art Gallery Liverpool, Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts, and the Manchester City Art Gallery. The majority by far, however, were displayed at the Royal Society of Painters, Etchers and Engravers as well as at the Royal Academy where 97 images were hung between the years 1885-1933. It is worth noting that of his 14 exhibits displayed at the R.A. from 1920 onwards, only one was in oils.



"The Destroyers" Signed. Published in 1904. 16 x 27 in / 40.5 x 68.5 cm. Exhibited: R.A. 1905
£3,000



"An African Monarch" Signed. Published in 1915. 19 x 16¼ in / 48.3 x 41.5 cm **SOLD**



"Lion drinking at a pool" Signed in plate
 No publication line. 6¾ x 9¾ in / 17 x 24.8 cm
 Exhibited: R.A. 1891
£850



"Along the Ridge" Signed. Dated in plate 1927
 No publication line. 150 impressions
 9¾ x 17¾ in / 24.8 x 45 cm. Exhibited: RA 1928
 Collection: Ex Family **£3,250**



"The Alarm" Signed. Published in 1918.

18½ x 29 in / 47 x 73.5 cm.

Exhibited: R.A. 1918

£3,800

The artist married Ella Crump in 1896, and they had two children, Maurice, who was killed in the First World War, and Dorothy who also studied art. After Dicksee's death in 1942 in Hampstead, his daughter Dorothy as the executor of his will, was directed to destroy most of the plates for her father's etchings. This explains the scarcity of supply and the importance of this large assemblage of his work. Many of the engravings offered for sale here were probably artist proofs and remained in the possession of the Dicksee family. Hence the superb quality of the impressions, half of which have never been framed before this exhibition.

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