

Richard Strebel, Bison cornered by mastiffs, 1925, oil on canvas, 61 x 83 cm, signed lower right "Richard Strebel 25", inscribed on the reverse "WISENT VON DOGGEN GESTELLT / WNo. 368.", framed (77 x 99 cm). Condition: good for its age.

Richard Hermann Strebel (Veracruz, Mexico, 1861 – Raitenhaslach, 1940) remains popular today both as an animal painter and for his writings on dog breeding. The son of Hamburg merchant, mollusk researcher, and ethnologist Hermann Strebel (1834–1914), he spent the first six years of his life in Mexico before the family returned to Hamburg. From 1880, he studied under Hermann Knackfuß (1848–1915) and Georg Koch (1819–1899) at the Kassel Art Academy, but in 1881 he transferred to the Grand Ducal Art School of Baden in Karlsruhe to study under Hermann Baisch (1846–1894) and Gustav Schönleber (1851–1917).

After graduating and undertaking numerous study trips, Strebel moved to Munich in 1886 and soon began to specialize in landscape painting and the depiction of animals, particularly dogs. In 1897, he founded the *Luitpold Group* with other Munich artists, which represented a moderately modern style of painting and promoted high artistic quality above all else. Between 1893 and 1919, he lived at various addresses in Munich (Schwanthalerstr. 7, Prinzenstr. 7), Pasing (Waldkolonie, Hermannstr. 18, Parkstr. 45), and Gauting (Waldpromenade 77). He then lived until his death in Trutzhof, a former paper mill belonging to the famous Cistercian monastery of Raitenhaslach near Burghausen.

Richard Strebel was extremely successful with his animal paintings and, above all, his naturalistic depictions of dogs. For decades, he exhibited at the Munich Annual Exhibition in the Glaspalast, as well as at the Munich Art Association, in Hamburg, Berlin, Stuttgart, Cologne, etc., and was awarded a bronze medal at London's Crystal Palace in 1890. In 1944, he was posthumously appointed professor at the Munich Academy of Arts. From 1912 onwards, his paintings were repeatedly used in the magazine *Jugend*.

He also worked as a dog judge and expert and published standard works on dog breeding, illustrated with his own drawings, such as *Die deutschen Hunde und ihre Abstammung* (German Dogs and Their Ancestry, 2 volumes, 1903–1905) and many other specialist articles. He was supported in this by his wife, dog breeder Helene Strebel (née Simons), who bred Schnauzers under the kennel name *Schwabing*.

The painting offered here, probably created in 1925, is likely a second version of a painting with the same motif that was exhibited in 1904 at the annual exhibition in Munich's Glaspalast (catalog number 1149). It was delivered by the artist to the renowned Heinemann Gallery in Munich on May 26, 1925, and returned to him on September 12, 1927. The price was a hefty 500 Reichsmarks. It is possible that Strebel created this version of a successful motif especially for sale at Heinemann. As usual, the cornice frame is not part of the offer, but a free addition.

The large painting depicts a rather brutal hunting scene. Against a backdrop of dense coniferous forest, a large bison is cornered and attacked by a pack of dogs in a sunlit clearing. The ten Great Danes reveal their coordinated hunting behavior: while the dog with the largest collar in the foreground of the picture is probably the leader, others chase the bison until it loses strength, and still others bite into its already bloody body. But the wounded animal remains dangerous, as at least one Great Dane was able to target the bison with its horns. The

fact that the dogs are wearing collars indicates that this is a hunting scene led by humans and not taking place in untouched nature.